Constructing Men and Women

The Use of Morality in Literary Character Representation

During Times of Crisis

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INTRODUCTION

In 218 BC the Carthaginian general Hanibal crossed the Alps and invaded Italy.[1] Later that year, he defeated the Romans twice at Rivers Ticinus and Trebbia. In the next year, the Romans were crushed at Lake Trasimere, and in the year after that, at Cannae. So many military losses caused financial straits in Rome where stores started to close down. It was during this national crisis that Gaius Oppius, a tribune of the plebs, proposed a law, known as the *Lex Oppia*, to decrease the display of wealth by women. If the Senate passed the law, women could possess no more than half an ounce of gold. In this way, the remaining wealth would be shifted towards the defence of Rome.[2] The Senate enacted the law in 215 BC.[3]

In 146 BC, Rome finally won the war on Carthage and became the leading power in the Mediterranean. The Romans enriched with the wealth from Carthage and the expansion of their dominions. Yet the *Lex Oppia* remained active. However, in 195 BC Lucius Valerius proposed its repeal by stating that a law proposed during a war, must be abolished during peace.[4] The reason for which the law was enacted no longer existed. However, not everybody agreed with Lucius Valerius. The Roman historian Livy dramatised the debate that presumably happened, and he stated that Cato the Elder was against the repeal. Livy's Cato said that the repeal was dangerous, for it could make women powerful. Thus, he argued, that women would "review all laws concerning women, which your fathers used to hinder their

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[1] H.W.Bird, 'An Early Instance of Feminist Militancy: The Repeal of the Oppian Law', *Chitty's Law Journal* 24:1 (1976), 31-33, there, 31.

[2] Lucas Rentschler and Christopher J. Dawe, 'Lex Oppia: An Ancient Example of the Persistence of Emergency Powers', *Laissez-Faire* 34 (2011), 21-29, there, 22.

[3] Phyllis Culham, 'The Lex Oppia', *Latomus* 41:4 (1982), 786-793, there 786.

[4] Livy, *On the History of Rome*, 34.

recklessness and through which the women were placed under the control of men".[5] He also believed that the expansion of Roman dominions brought indulgent luxury to Rome, and luxury, he states, threatens the stability of empires.[6] Thus, to Livy's Cato, the law that helped to stop Hannibal might also stop luxury and powerful women.[7]

Livy's Cato arguments is an excellent example of how morality could be used in literary narratives to attempt to control political processes. Also, how morality was used to idealise the roles of men and women. He uses *mos maiorum*, ancestral custom, and the place of women in Roman society as an argumentative strategy to not have the law repealed.[8] The present thesis focuses on this use of morality in literary character representation to attempt to control the outcome of political processes during the final years of the Late Republic. The political upheavals between Mark Antony and Octavian were marked by their efforts to ruin each other's reputation. Consequently, the perception we have on these two men is thanks to the bias nature of literary sources. Thus, this thesis proposes the following research question: How did Roman *mos* influence the literary representation of Mark Antony and Octavian, and the women associated with them, during the crisis of 44BC-30BC?

For clarity sake, some explanations on this research question are necessary. By women associated with Mark Antony and Octavian, we are referring to Fulvia, Cleopatra and

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[5] Ibidem, 34.3.

[6] Ibidem, 34.4.

[7] Rentschler and Dawe, 'Lex Oppia', 27-28.

[8] Livy, *On the History of Rome*, 34.3.

Octavia.[9] Nonetheless, we will return to these three women and the crisis we are dealing with later.

This thesis is rooted in the field of 'gender studies', and thus, it is necessary to emphasise that the underlying research distinguishes sex from gender. Sex is a biological category given to us by nature. According to this category, one can be born male, female or in rare cases, hermaphrodite. The concept of gender, on the other hand, refers to the characteristics and expectations imposed by society, government, religion, among other things, on the sexes. Gender, for example, refers to the kind of vestment men and women should wear; the type of job they 'can' or should have; the role they play within the household.[10]

1. Status Quaestionis

Although recent scholarship has increasingly paid attention to the use of the concept of gender, in the past, it was not always present in historical analysis. The firsts studies on women's history considered women a separate social category, isolated from the rest of history.[11] However, the publication of Pomeroy's 'Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves', in 1975, revolutionary at its time, had an impact on the studies on women's history. In this study, Pomeroy wondered "what women were doing while men were active in all the area

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[9] This thesis will not focus on other women, besides Fulvia, Octavia and Cleopatra, like Livia due to the limitations imposed by the criterion of evaluation on the number of words in this present work. For more information on Livia see, for instance: Guy de La Bédoyère, *Domina: The Women Who Made Imperial Rome* (Yale 2018); Anthony Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (Yale 2004); Matthew Dennison, *Empress of Rome: The Life of Livia* (New York 2010).

[10] Judith Buter, 'Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex', *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986), 35-49, there, 35.

[11] See, for instance, Dacre Balsdon, *Roman Women: Their History and Habits* (London 1962); Charles Seltman, *Women in Antiquity* (New York 1956).

traditionally emphasized by classical scholars?"[12] She was one of the first who argued that ancient sources omitted the participation of women in history.

The academic landscape changed again when Joan Scott suggested the use of gender in historical analysis, in 1986, in the article 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis'.[13] In this article, Scott explains how the concept of gender is usually only used in research whose topics involve family, women and children, but rarely used as a historical analytical category in research whose topics are war, diplomacy or politics.[14] That imposes a problem, according to Scott, because the use of gender in research only involving family, women and children does not sufficiently contribute to the understanding of "why these relationships are constructed as they are, how they work, or how they change".[15] What is the utility of gender, for example, during wars? By analysing the role of women in warfare as a separate topic, without examining the external factors that 'decided' what the utility of women in a war would be, would make the knowledge on war itself incomplete.[16] Thus, by analysing the roles of men and women played, for example, in the economy or war, we can have a new perspective on women as visible participants of history.[17]

Therefore, gender is far more complicated than merely defining how men and women should behave or dress, because gender has been used to construct relations of power, and it has been employed in governmental agendas as a mechanism to justify political actions. How gender was 'used' to justify or promote governmental actions can be noticed in different

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[12] Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, & Slaves* (London 1994) xiv.

[13] Joan W. Scott, 'A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986) 1053-1075.

[14] Ibidem, 1057.

[15] Ibidem.

[16] Ibidem, 1073.

[17] Ibidem, 1075.

periods in history. For example, during the Third Reich, German women became central figures in Nazi propaganda. They were used to promote women's role as Aryan mothers. The German government advised German women to have as many children as possible in order to increase the number of 'racial purity' among the German people. The women that opposed this propaganda were disgraced as biologically inferior and suffered terrible punishments from the Nazi regime.[18] Also, in 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini became the Supreme Leader of Iran, and one of his first acts as ruler was to remove women from political positions because of his belief that women lack the mental capacity to make a judgment based on Shariah law. Khomeini's regime advocated for a specific female role (submission to men) that would maintain, according to him, the order in Iran.[19] Because of historical examples like these, Scott contemplates that conventional politics defined and imposed the role of women in society and of men by correlating war and power with manliness. In this way, women were perceived as outsiders in statecraft, and their submission was secured by laws enacted to regulate their bodies and behaviour.[20] Thus, Scott suggests that the use of gender as a category for historical analysis would reexamine not only women's history but history itself.

The ideas of Scott influenced scholarship on ancient Roman women. In the late 1980s and in the 1990s, researchers began to use the term gender to examine both men and women. The idea that men and women are categories structured by a cultured society blossomed, and scholars, following the footsteps of Pomeroy, acknowledged the bias nature of literary sources

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[18] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Women in the Third Reich', *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/women-in-the-third-reich (accessed 4 February 2019).

[19] James Zumwalt, 'Setback in Women's Rights Is Khomeini's Trademark', *Human Events: Powerful Conservative Voices,* 27 July 2009, http://humanevents.com/2009/07/27/setback-in-womens-rights-is-khomeinis-trademark/ (accessed 4 February 2019).

[20] Scott, 'Gender', 1072.

and no longer 'accepted' the information provided by ancient sources at face value. The literary representation of women by ancient Roman authors, who decided, for example, that Antonia Minor was a good woman, and Fulvia was not a good woman, were questioned. Thus, the portrayal of women by ancient writers, like Tacitus' Messalina, and of female characters, such as Livy's Lucretia and Verginia, became an object of attention among scholars who decided to focus on the purpose and strategic use of literary representations of women by ancient authors.[21]

In conclusion, Scott's suggestion to analyse gender ideologies in the context of broader social structures, like politics or war, flourished in the 1990s and 2000s. Scholars no longer studied gender apart from the historical context that shaped it, but instead, they began to consider how gender took part in the creation of the historical context. That is the current tendency on scholarship, to see women and men of Antiquity as cultural products, a creation of their on time.

2. Method

Before turning to the sources, we must first highlight the theoretical concepts applied in this thesis. As mentioned in the research question, this thesis focuses on the period of 44BC (death of Julius Caesar) until 30BC (death of Mark Antony and Cleopatra). We understand that this period was a period of crisis. Mark Antony wanted to take possession of Cisalpine Gaul, Fulvia waged war against Octavian, the prescriptions took place, Mark Antony and Octavian

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[21] See, for instance, S.R. Joshel, 'The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia' in: A. Richlin ed., *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (Oxford 1991) 112-130; S.R. Joshel, 'Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus' Messalina' in: J.P Hallett and M.B Skinner eds., *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton 1997) 221-254; Tom Stevenson, 'Women of Early Rome as Exempla in Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* Book 1', *The Classical World* 104:2 (2011) 175-189.

had a fragile alliance that resulted in a final war in Actium. Thus, it is necessary to present a definition of crisis. Gregory Golden defines crisis as a situation perceived by a community, a group or an individual as a threat to them or to what they considered to be valued.[22] The scenario of Cicero's Philippics and Plutarch's Life of Antony are set in the period mentioned above. Both authors constructed the characters we are dealing with based on how they perceived the crisis and what they considered the threat to be.

Another cornerstone in this study is the Roman concept of *mos*. *Mos* (or the plural form *mores*) was how the Romans referred to their social norms or their unwritten customs that dictated what was right and wrong; what was accepted by their society and what was not. Politics and morals were not kept apart; they overlapped in Roman moral discourse. Poor behaviour could signify that the entire state was in danger. Consequently, the immoral actions of one group or individual became a topic of great preoccupation among leaders and elite members in Rome. Therefore, morality is essential in this study because morality is implicated in the consequences of men's and women's performance. Thus, by analysing how men and women fit in Roman *mos,* we can create a perspective on how advocating for the male and female ideal could be used as a tool to manage the outcome of political processes during a crisis. This leads us to the idea of male and female idealisation, i.e., the socially constructed roles of men and women that prescribed the highest standards of excellence to one's gender. This thesis understands that these Roman gender ideals derived from *mos*.

3. Sources

Literary sources cannot be taken at face value, for they are cultural products of their time. Therefore, to come closer to the representation of men and women described in ancient

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[22] Gregory K. Golden, *Crisis Management During the Roman Republic: The Role of Political Institutions in Emergencies* (Cambridge 2013) 4.

sources, one must interpret them without ignoring the cultural context in which the author was living in. Some authors will be mentioned briefly such as Sallust, Cato the Elder, Pliny the Younger, Livy and Juvenal. However, the works from Cicero and Plutarch will be analysed more profoundly within this thesis.

Cicero is relevant to us because his work Philippics aims to defend the Republic against those who are threatening its stability and the liberty of the Roman people on the cost of Roman principles. He states in this work that Rome faces a crisis (although he does not use this word to describe the situation) caused by the government of Julius Caesar (murdered before Cicero delivered the first *Philippica* to the senators on September 2 of 44 BC) and his ally Mark Antony. Consequently, Cicero's Mark Antony is portrayed as the reason for all public disasters.[23] What this thesis seeks to analyse within the Philippics are the strategies used by Cicero in his moralistic discourse to portray a Mark Antony that is the opposite of Roman idealisations of masculinity.[24] Another factor that makes Cicero intriguing is his portrayal of Octavian as the defender of the Republic against Mark Antony in the same work.[25] Because the representation of Octavian as a hero is absent from Cicero's letters, that

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[23] D.R Shackleton Bailey, 'Introduction' in: D.R. Shackleton Bailey ed., *Cicero, Philippics 1-6* (Massachusetts, 2009) xxv.

[24] It should be noted that the entire *corpus* of the Philippics (and other ancient sources) will not be used in this thesis, but instead certain passages that are regarded by this thesis to be sufficient to demonstrate the arguments this work wishes to make.

[25] Bailey, 'Introduction', xxii. The name Philippics was not a random choice. Cicero invited a comparison between himself and the Athenian orator Demosthenes in an attempt that Cicero could be his Roman counterpart. Thus, with the Philippics Cicero also wanted to show himself as a better man. However, this thesis will not focus on Cicero's self-portrait, but, as already mentioned, his portrait of Octavian and Mark Antony. For more information on Cicero and Demosthenes, see, for instance: Cecil W. Wooten, *Cicero's Philippics and the Demosthenic Model: The Rhetoric of Crisis* (North Carolina 2011); Cecil W. Wooten, 'Cicero and Quintilian on the Style of Demosthenes', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 15:2 (1997) 177-192; Lionel Pearson, '*Cicero's Debt to Demosthenes: The Verrienes*', *Pacific Coast Philology* 3 (1968) 49-54;

were not meant to be known by the public, were not published, makes us think that the Philippics might have been 'approved' by Octavian as part of their short-lived collaboration to eliminate Mark Antony.[26] Thus, the Philippics can be considered a work that helped Octavian to propagate the vulgar image of Mark Antony.

However, Octavia and Cleopatra are not present in the Philippics, but they are present in Life of Antony.[27] Plutarch's Parallel Lives had the purpose of providing a repertoire of examples of conduct to the men of his own day.[28] He wrote 48 bibliographies including one on Mark Antony. The difficulty one faces when dealing with Life of Antony is that Plutarch was not a contemporary of any of the characters we are concerned with. He lived during the period of 46AD-120AD. However, Plutarch is very concerned with Octavia, Fulvia and Cleopatra, and also, he pays more attention to Fulvia than Cicero did. Also, it is generally accepted by modern scholars that Plutarch consulted historical sources from writers that were contemporaries of the characters under consideration, and often, participated in the events he

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[26] Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 15.12.2; 16.9; 16.14.1.

[27] Cicero mentions Cleopatra in one of the letters to Atticus where he describes her as arrogant. For that, check: Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, XV.15.

[28] D.A. Russell, 'On Reading Plutarch's 'Lives'', *Greece & Rome* 13:2 (1966), 139-154, there, 141.

described in the Life of Antony.[29] Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia were characterised by their husband's (Mark Antony) enemies point of view and Octavian allies. Fulvia and Cleopatra were depicted as bad women, whereas Octavia as a good woman.[30] These are the portrayals that 'arrived' in the hands of Plutarch. Modern scholars understand that Plutarch adapted some of his sources by adding his own contribution to the portrayal of his heroes and villains.[31] However, in his work, Fulvia and Cleopatra are still portrayed as bad women and Octavia as a good woman.

In conclusion, with this thesis, I intend to contribute to the debate with a better understanding of how men and women were represented in Roman moralist discourse during times of crisis in Rome. More specifically on how *mos* influenced the literary representation of Mark Antony and Octavia in the Philippics, and Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia in the Life of Antony.

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[29] B.X de Wet, 'Contemporary Sources in Plutarch's Life of Antony', *Hermes* 118:1 (1990), 80-90, there, 80-88. Asinius Pollo was one of Plutarch's sources for the late Republican period. Plutarch tells us that he also used the Memoirs of Augustus. For the accounts of Mark Antony's stay in Egypt, it seems that he relied on the accounts of an eyewitness identified as Dellius, who served with Antony in the Parthian Campaign. For descriptions on the court of Cleopatra, Plutarch informs us that he used the eyewitness of Philotas and Olympos. Moreover, it seems that Plutarch made use of one of Mark Antony's replies to the Philippics (no longer available to us). The other possible authors of the late Republican period consulted by Plutarch to write Life of Antony were: Volumnius, Livy, Sallust, Fenestella, Nepos, Strabo, Nicolaus, Timagenes, Valerius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus, Florus and Cicero. For more information on the sources used by Plutarch, see, for instance: Christopher Pelling, 'Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 99 (1979) 74-96; Christopher Pelling, 'Plutarch's Adaptation of His Source Material', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980) 127-140; Alfred Gudeman, *The Source of Plutarch's Life of Cicero* (Philadelphia 1902); Joseph Geiger, 'Nepos and Plutarch: From Latin to Greek Political Biography', *Illinois Classical Studies* 13:2 (1988) 245-256.

[30] Barbara Levick, *Augustus, Image and Substance* (New York 2010) 52-57.

[31] De Wet, 'Contemporary Sources in Plutarch's Life of Antony', 82.

4. Structure

As for the structure, this thesis will be divided into three chapters. Chapter One will serve as an introductory chapter to the topic as it focuses on the Roman lives of men and women, both real and idealised. The questions that will be central in this chapter are: Was there a gender ideal to be followed? If so, what was its purpose? Were such ideals incorporated in the daily lives of men and women?

In Chapter Two, I will analyse the presence of immorality in Roman moralist discourse as well as how the upper-class understood morality. Moreover, I will explore the threat immorality imposed in Roman society and its advantageous political use. The questions to be asked here are: How did Romans perceive morality and immorality? What constituted poor behaviour, and how was this behaviour verbalised in ancient sources? What were the consequences of immorality? How did the behaviour of men and women influence the well-being of Rome?

In Chapter Three, we will focus on the influence *mos* played in the literary construction of Mark Antony and Octavian by Cicero in the Philippics. Also, on Fulvia's, Cleopatra's and Octavia's portrayal by Plutarch on Life of Antony. Questions to be asked in this analysis are: Which literary strategies were used by these authors to construct (or re-construct) these characters? How *mos* influenced the construction of these characters?

Chapter 1

Roman Men, Roman Women: Reality and Ideal

One cannot understand why Octavia and Octavian were regarded as ideal Romans, and Fulvia and Mark Antony, as Romans who ashamed this ideal before understanding what Roman society considered ideal genders to be. To understand how *mos* influenced the literary representation of men and women, it is necessary first to understand the reality of their lives, and, especially, how Roman society expected their lives to be. Thus, this chapter will present a general overview of the lives, real and idealised, of Roman men and women.

1.1 Roman Lives: Men and Women

It is a well-known fact that societies have constructed images of groups according to the interest of the dominant group. Natives created the image of foreigners; the old created images of the young; the elite created the images of the plebs; men created images of women.[32] As it is still prevalent today, Romans linked specific characteristics, expectations, rights and obligations, to those who were born either male or female. Despite all the differences and similarities between men and women in Rome, it is clear that there was also a hierarchy between them. Although Roman women possessed much greater freedom than Greek and Jewish women, they were still submissive to their men.

Marcus Cato the Elder, a highly conservative Roman, whom we already encountered in the context of the debate on the repeal of the *Lex Oppia*, supposedly, epitomised this notion, in the 2nd century BC, in Rome, with these following words, on the right of a husband to punish his unfaithful wife:

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[32] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Paris 1949) 32-35.

"If you catch your wife in adultery, you can kill her with impunity; she, however, cannot dare to lay a finger on you if you commit adultery, nor is it the law".[33]

He makes it clear that the opposite, a woman punishing her husband for adultery, could not happen, because the law, usually, did not give women the same rights as it gave to men.

The Roman *familia* was centred around the *paterfamilias*, who was the oldest living male member in the household and possessed *patria potestas*, or 'power of the father'.[34] In Roman law, *patria potestas* meant that the head of the family exercised full power over all his relatives. He had the power to adopt children, punish them with death, and acquire to himself all the properties that belonged to them. The *patria potestas* only ceased when the *paterfamilias* died. After his death, his children, male and female, and his wife ceased to be *alieni iuris* (dependent) to become *sui iuris* (independent).[35] However, whereas a son gained the right of complete legal independence to, for example, make a will, and could become a

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[33] Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights,* 10.23.

[34] Scholarship appears divided within the definition of *pater familias*. Gardner understands that the *pater familia* was a man that had his *familia* under his authority (Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law & Society* (Kent 1986) 5). On the other hand, Cornelis Willem van Galen understands that a citizen who had *sui iuris* (independence from the power of another citizen) was the head of his own *familia*. That is because his understanding of Roman *familia* is more extensive than Gardner, who understands *familia* as a family group under the authority of the *pater familias*. Van Galen's agrees that *familia* could be a group controlled by a *pater familia*. However, to him, *familia* can also mean *patrimonium* (property and paternal inheritance), a body of slaves in possession of the owner and patrilineage (people that can link their descendants through the male line to a common ancestor). Moreover, Van Galen recognises that a Roman men *sui iuris*, even without children, were referred to as a *pater familia*. Thus, the meaning of *pater familias* could include Roman woman *sui iuris* when used as a generic term if she owned property or slaves. For more information on Van Galen's views on the Roman *familia*, see, Cornelis Willem van Galen, Women and Citizenship: in the Late Roman Republic and the Early Empire (PhD dissertation, Radboud University, Nijmegen 2016) 79-164.

[35] Gardner, *Women in Roman Law & Society,* 6.

paterfamilias himself*,* a woman did not have these rights.[36]Although women had rights to participate in legal actions, her participation was limited by her tutor, a male guardian, whose authorisation was necessary for several legal actions.[37] For example, a woman was entitled to own land and all forms of property, yet she could only transfer property if she had the approval of her guardian.[38] A tutor would generally be appointed by a husband or a father in their will, or by a magistrate.

As previously mentioned, Roman women had more freedom than other women from stratified societies. Roman women dined with men on a regular basis, the complete opposite of an Athenian woman who lived a secluded life in a gendered house.[39] A Roman woman could own slaves, proceed with legal actions (as mentioned, only authorised by her guardian), buy or sell properties, and they could have jobs. In fact, many women had jobs in 'typical' feminine occupations, being the most common the *ornatrix* (hairdresser).[40] However, women could also find employment as a wet-nurse, midwives, doctors, or in the production of clothing.[41] They could be a dresser, a masseuse or a personal attendant.[42] Some women found

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[36] Ibidem, 11.

[37] Ibidem.

[38] Susan Treggiari, 'Women in Society' in: Diana E.E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson eds., *I Clavdia: Women in Ancient Rome* (Connecticut 1996) 119.

[39] Mary Beard, *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (London 2016) 307. On gendered houses in Ancient Rome, see, for instance: Lien Foubert, 'The Palatine dwelling of the *mater familias*: houses as symbolic space in the Julio-Claudian period', *Klio* 92:1 (2010) 65-82; Richard P. Saller, '*Pater Familias*, *Mater Familias*, and the Gendered Semantics of the Roman Household', *Classical Philology* 94:2 (1999) 182-197.

[40] Miriam J. Groen Vallinga, 'Female Participation in the Roman Urban Labour Market' in: E. Hemelrijk and G. Woolf eds., *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West* (Leiden 2013), 296-312, there, 304.

[41] Ibidem, 304-305.

[42] Hilary Becker, 'Roman women in the urban economy: occupations, social connections, and gendered exclusions' in: J. Turfa and S. Budin eds., *Women in Antiquity: Real Women Across the Ancient World* (New York 2016), 915-931, there, 916.

employment in the family business. Low paying and 'degrading' jobs that served to entertain the public, in a fun and sensual manner, were also a possibility. Many Roman women were singers, dancers, gladiators and prostitutes. A graffiti found in Pompeii, advertising sex with waitresses in a bar, shows that likely, Romans considered waitressing a degrading occupation.[43]

Although Roman women had jobs, they were not related to politics. Roman women could not be lawyers, magistrates, senators, let alone, consuls. However, they had enough power to advance their families, like their son's political careers or to arrange advantageous conjugal unions.[44] By the Late Republic, like men, women gathered and distributed information about politics, which notifies us that they were updated on the political events of Rome.[45]

Upper-class women could also be educated. After all, as aforementioned, women ran their households, and sold and bought property. Women also attended parties with their husbands or had to entertain guests when hosting a party. While their husbands were away from Rome, in military campaigns or in exile, some women maintained their husbands' political contacts, kept them informed, through letters, about whichever was occurring in Rome during their absence. Although a wealthy woman could afford a secretary, or own a learned slave to take care of all of that, these tasks would require, at least, a certain level of literacy.[46]

Educating girls could also have served the purpose of enhancing their family's social status. Education was a privilege, for private tutors, possession of books and time to learn cost

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[43] Ibidem.

[44] Diana E. E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson, 'Introduction' in: D.E. E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson eds., *I Clavdia II: Women in Roman Art and Society* (Austin 2000), 1-16, there, 7-8.

[45] Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York 2003) 12.

[46] Emily A. Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman Élite From Cornelia to Julia Domna* (London 1999) 71.

a considerable amount of money. If the role of women in Roman society was related to domesticity - and as mentioned above, most female jobs were also related to household tasks - there was no real need for educating a woman on the matters of Greek literature and language, for example.[47] Therefore, it might have served the purpose to dazzle others, because showing off such a well-read girl was a sign that her family could spend money on such 'unnecessary' things.[48]

Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, who lived in the second century BC, is a perfect case of a highly educated Roman woman. She was proficient in Greek, a good entertainer and she even patronised Greek scholars in her villa in Misenum.[49] However, the display of female intellect could backfire. Some women, like Sempronia and Clodia Metelli, allegedly, wrote and published poetry, becoming victims of male criticism. The Roman writer Sallust, who acknowledged Sempronia's impressive education in his work *Bellum Catilinae*, perceived her skills in Greek and Latin literature as malicious or as "instruments of wantonness".[50] To him, Sempronia's poetry proved that she lived a life of sexual lust.

In contrast to women's role, the ability to provide and protect the family was considered, as in many cultures, a masculine duty in Rome. Although women could have jobs, it was never expected that the woman would be the provider or at least the sole provider. Similar to women, men could also find employment in the family business, as the owner of a shop, or in the entertainment business, like prostitutes or owners of gladiators. The military was, however, the institution that hired, exclusively, men to serve as soldiers. During the Republican period, Romans served the Republic primarily as soldiers. Even upper-class

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[47] Ibidem, 72.

[48] Ibidem.

[49] Ibidem, 24.

[50] Sallust, *The War With Catiline*, 25.2-4.

Romans were expected to, at some point, hold a position in the army.[51] Magistrates, for example, could only obtain the office after certain years of military service.[52] Not surprisingly, preparing the youth to become soldiers was one of the main features of a young man's education in Rome.[53]

A boy ended his *pueritia* (childhood), normally, at the age of seventeen, or when the *paterfamilias* desired, entering *iuventa* (adulthood) as a man. The transition from *pueritia* to *iuventa* was a rite of passage, marked by a religious ceremony, in which the boy, or 'man-to-be', exchanged togas. During childhood, boys and girls would wear the toga *praetexta* and the *bulla*. The message that the wearer of the toga *praetexta* passed to the observer was that, with its border of purple (*praetexta*), that Roman was a child and therefore, *sacer* (inviolable). This toga also indicated that that child should be treated with respect, and lascive language should not be used in their presence.[54]

The arrival of puberty in boys and girls was signalised by the growth of pubic hair and facial hair, in case of boys. The youth shaved his beard and dedicated to the household gods, an act that meant that he achieved sexual maturity, which implied that he was old enough to fulfil his job as a mature male in the role of a soldier. From this moment onwards, the youth would assume the *toga virilis*, a plain white toga, and begin his military training.[55] This rite of passage to celebrate manhood also took place in a festival called the Liberalia, on March 17. During this celebration, there was a procession through the city into the forum where young men became citizens. Besides symbolising male adulthood, this ceremony also represented

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[51] Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness* (New York 2006) 181.

[52] Ibidem.

[53] Ibidem.

[54] Judith Lynn Sebesta, 'Women's Costume and Feminine Civic Morality in Augustan Rome', *Gender & History* 9:3 (1997), 529-541, there, 532.

[55] Ibidem, 533-534.

the passage of men's lives in the private sphere, *familia*, to the public sphere of the *res publica* whereas women would remain, officially, in the private sphere during their entire lives.[56] However, while the *paterfamilias* was alive he remained as the 'true' men of the house and his sons would only gain full power when he died. Under the power of his father, a Roman son, whatever his age, had, in the private sphere, the same status as a woman or a child.[57] The difference, as mentioned, was that, unlike his sisters and mother, a son could enter the public sphere, because to serve the *res publica* was the most crucial role of a men's lives. It was so important that in the public sphere, a son was equal to his father.[58] It was in the service of the *res publica*, that a Roman male had the chance to show off his manliness.

Yet, although the previous paragraphs summarized the everyday life of Roman women and men in Rome, there was an ideal of femininity and masculinity that dictated not how things were, but how they should be.

1.2 Roman Ideals of Femininity and Masculinity

What did it mean to be an ideal man and woman in ancient Rome? Firstly, 'ideal' can be defined as something or someone who is a model for imitation, for it encompasses the standards of excellence determined by societies' social norms. Roman norms defined that, when an honourable upper-class Roman woman married she was known as a *matrona*. This 'title' referred to her status as a wife as well as her potential to become a mother. The term *matrona* also embodied the virtues of an ideal Roman woman. A Roman woman was considered ideal if she was chaste, beautiful, fertile and faithful to her husband and *familia*. *Materfamilias* was also a term used to refer to a wife, a woman who had come under the

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[56] McDonnell, *Roman Manliness,* 178.

[57] Ibidem, 179.

[58] Ibidem, 180.

manus, the power, of her husband.[59] It was a term somewhat equivalent to *matrona* for it was also used for a woman who lived a honourable life.[60]

This feminine ideal (and its opposite) could be noticed in clothing, because fashion was one of the 'visual languages' that could tell if a woman was a *matrona*, a prostitute, rich or poor. Roman society exchanged information through different languages, one of them was a 'visual' one. In other words, the person being observed could transfer information about him self or herself to the observer. The look of a respectable woman consisted of a dress known as *stola*, whose aim was to communicate to others that the wearer protected her sexuality and that her body belonged only to her husband.[61] She deserved respect from others because she was valued and protected.

Besides her body, her head also had to be covered with a rectangular mantle known as *palla*. The concern of a woman covering her head during the Republic was shown by Sulpicius Gallus, a consul in 166 BC when he divorced his wife after she had left the house with her head uncovered. He said: "By law, only my eyes should see you… That you should be seen by other eyes … links you to suspicion and guilt".[62] Once the veil that protected her face from strangers was gone, the 'visual message' being transmitted changed. Her image, according to Sulpicius Gallus, was now suspicious and linked to guilt, probably he meant that people could assume that his wife was not faithful to him. Similarly, the excuse from the elder Seneca for a woman to wear the veil was to prevent public gaze as well as solicitations by men.[63]

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[59] van Galen, *Women and Citizenship,* 72.

[60] Ibidem, 95.

[61] Sebesta, 'Women's Costume and Feminine Civic Morality in Augustan Rome', 531.

[62] Ibidem, 535.

[63] Kelly Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman: Self-Presentation and Society* (New York 2008) 33.

These ideal female characteristics, described above, as well as others, were celebrated in funerary epithets as the following:[64]

> Here lies Amymone wife of Marcus best and most beautiful, worker in wool, pious, chaste, thrifty, faithful, a stayer-at-home. [65]

This message above is from a Roman epitaph, from the 1st century BC, dedicated to Amymone, probably by her husband, Marcus. The message praises Amymone for having been a good housewife to her husband when she was alive, and it provides the characteristics possessed by Amymone that made her an ideal woman. As it reads in the epitaph, she was beautiful, a worker in wool, prayerful and non-sexual, thrifty, faithful, and a stayer-at-home wife.

The quality of being a 'worker in wool' (*lanificium*) has been praised by Roman writers along the history of Rome.[66] One of the most memorable acts of Lucretia, a role model for the wives of Rome, is when she was found at her home, by Sextus Tarquinius, working in wool, while other women were found scattering themselves with food and wine. According to Livy, Lucretia's female qualities were what 'made' Sextus Tarquinius desired her.[67] Working in

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[64] For more epithets depicting the ideal Roman woman, see: Diana E. E. Kleiner and Susan B. Matheson, 'Funerary Realm' in: D.E.E. Kleiner and S.B. Matheson eds., *I Clavdia: Women in Ancient Rome* (Connecticut 1996), 195-213, there 199-213; Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's life in Greece and Rome: a source book in translation* (Baltimore 2005).

[65] (ILS 8402.L).

[66] Lena Larsson Lovén, 'Female Work and Identity in Roman Textile Production and Trade: A Methodological Discussion' in: M.Gleba and J.Pásztókai-Szeőke eds., *Making Textiles in pre-Roman and Roman Times* (Oxford 2013), 109- 125, there, 110.

[67] Livy, *On the History of Rome*, 1.57.

wool also signified good household management, a wifely duty.[68] In Roman mentality, domesticity was an essential quality of a woman's life. A woman was expected to be a *custos domi*, a housekeeper or, as it is in the epitaph, a 'stayer-at-home wife'.[69] Keeping the household encompassed maternal and domestic duties. A woman was responsible for raising a child. If the woman was poor, with no meaning to own a slave, she was also responsible for cooking and cleaning. It was also expected from women to take care of their husband's welfare, by cultivating a happy and healthy emotional bond between her and her husband.[70]

Romans perceived beauty as a feminine virtue.[71] A woman praised by her beauty could have her image associated with the goddess Venus. During the Julio-Claudian rule, it was a common thing among women, especially from the elite, to copy the hairstyle of the virtuous women from the imperial family. By having the same hairstyle of a well-known virtuous woman, like Octavia and Livia, a woman would create an image of virtuosity to herself. Livia, the wife of the emperor Augustus, was highly praised for her femininity, being considered by the people and aristocrats of Rome as the ultimate ideal woman.[72] Thus, a woman that styled her hair in the same way that Livia's hairdressers did, worked as well as another visual language, like the *stola* and the *palla*, to show everyone that like Livia, she too possessed all the ethical conduct that a Roman woman should have.[73]

Roman women should also be faithful and chaste. The reasons for these ideals stemmed from the belief that female sexual freedom contributed to the birth of illegitimate children and

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[68] E. E. Kleiner and B. Matheson, *I Clavdia II: Women in Roman Art and Society*, 12.

[69] Ibidem, 13.

[70] Ibidem.

[71] Ibidem, 11.

[72] Ibidem, 12.

[73] Ibidem, 11-12.

a husband's social disgrace. On the other hand, the illegitimate children a married man had with a woman from an inferior rank was not a concern of his, or society.[74] As already mentioned, Cato informs that a Roman wife could not "lay a finger" on her husband if he was caught in adultery, because that is not what Roman law informs. The law, however, informs the contrary. The rationalisations behind the repulse against uncontrolled female sexuality will be thoroughly examined in chapter Two.

Not exclusively as the previous characteristics, being religious and thrifty, like Amymone, were characteristics desired not just for women, but all Romans. Draining a husband's money on apparel, for instance, was perceived as an inconsiderable act against him, who was the only provider (or the primary provider), and thus a 'spender' was considered to possess a voracious appetite for luxury.[75] Romans, male or female that spent their time worrying about leisure and lust, and not on their duties as citizens could attract negative attention to themselves, and their families. Similarly, it was expected from all Romans to honour the gods in the belief that by doing so the *pax deorum*, or 'peace of the gods', would be maintained, and consequently, Rome would enjoy both peace and success.[76] Therefore, religious people were admired because the well-being of their community was in their interest.[77]

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[74] Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality* (Cambridge 2002) 49-54. Catharine Edwards' work will be cited often in this thesis since the author has drained the subject of morality and immorality in ancient Rome. However, for other works on the topic, see, for instance: Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2007); Catalina Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana: Politics and Morality in the Roman Historians: Studies in the History of Greece and Rome* (North Carolina 2017); Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 2006).

[75] Claude-Emmanuelle Centlivres Challet, *Like Man, Like Woman: Roman Women, Gender Qualities and Conjugal Relationships at the Turn of the First Century* (Bern 2013) 63.

[76] Celia E. Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic* (North Carolina 2006) 1.

[77] For more on Roman women and religion, see, for instance: Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins* (London 1998).

However, we cannot know for sure that Amymone possessed the characteristics embedded in the tomb, nor can we know for sure that it was her husband, and not someone else, that commissioned this message. It is not the aim of this thesis to know who wrote it. What is clear, and what this chapter would like to emphasise, is that a wife could influence, for better or worse, her husband's reputation by having the characteristics of an ideal or non-ideal woman. Pliny made it clear what a 'bad woman' could do to a man's reputation:

> "Many distinguished men have been dishonoured by an ill-considered choice of wife or weakness in not getting rid of her; thus their fame abroad was damaged by their loss of reputation at home, and their relative failure as husbands denied them complete success as citizens".[78]

Therefore, the funerary inscriptions and literary representations of men and women should not be taken at face value, for the deceased's qualities, there represented, might be untrue. A tombstone with an extensive message, like the one above, was an expensive item to acquire.[79] Her husband could have truly loved her and did not care on spending a certain amount of money for no other reason than to honour her. However, there is another motive for such an extensive and praising message. Publicising the feminine ideal in epithets was a mechanism to also publicise to, literary, everyone, that passed by the grave, that his wife served the standards expected by her social class. Thus, instead of representing the deceased's daily-life

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[78] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 83, 2-4.

[79] Susan Fischler, 'Social Stereotypes and Historical Analysis: The Case of the Imperial Women at Rome' in: L.J. Archer, S. Fischler and M. Wyke eds., *Women in Ancient Societies* (London 1994), 115- 133, there, 117.

or true personality, these descriptions represented the virtues Romans associated with women.[80]

Having an ideal wife signified, at least for the sake of appearances, that the husband cultivated his *virtus*. Unlike the domestic virtues such as wool working, and the qualities of chastity, frugality and obedience, that made a woman ideal, *virtus* characterised the ideal behaviour of a man.[81] Cicero wrote that *virtus*:

> "… is the badge of the Roman race and breed. Cling fast to it, I beg you men of Rome, as a heritage that your ancestors bequeathed to you. All else is false and doubtful, ephemeral and changeful: only *virtus* stands firmly fixed, its roots run deep, it can never be shaken by any violence, never moved from its place. With this *virtus* your ancestors conquered all Italy first, then razed Carthage, overthrew Numantia, brought the most powerful kings and the most warlike peoples under the sway of this empire."[82]

This passage describes that *virtus* was the reason of Roman greatness. It was *virtus* that made Roman men better than foreign men, for *virtus*, a concept so ancient that, it was believed, came from the foundation of Rome, bred and shaped the Roman race.[83] Because that 'race' cultivated *virtus*, they conquered all their enemies. *Virtus* itself was not one characteristic, but rather a concept, or an ideal, that encompassed or represented several virtuous masculine

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[80] Ibidem.

[81] McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 2.

[82] Cicero, *Philippics,* 4.13.

[83] McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 3.

characteristics.[84] According to this concept, a man was valued for qualities such as courage, self-control, and his abilities in both politics and warfare.[85]

The quality of having self-control was crucial. A man without self-control was far from being an ideal man because it was believed that he possessed a threat to the Roman community.[86] Moreover, a man that could not control himself was thought of being incapable of controlling others, and of being an easy 'target' to be controlled by others, making him unfit to occupy the positions of male elite Romans: warfare and politics.[87] On the other hand, a man that had total control over himself could justify his control over others, including his wife.[88] Along with self-control, courage was expected not only from the elite but from all male Romans. Courage in battle, or martial courage, was utterly expected from soldiers, which comes as no surprise from a society that spent centuries sending their men to fight in wars.[89] It was expected from males to invest their lives in the service of the *res publica.*

1.3 Conclusion

Although a great deal of the 'gender ideal' was present in the daily lives of men and women, being a mother, a wife, and being a soldier and provider, 'counter-ideals' were also present. As it was discussed, women could and had jobs, and some elite women were, besides literate,

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[84] Ibidem, 159.

[85] Emily A. Hemelrijk, 'Masculinity and Femininity in the Laudatio Turiae', *Classical Quarter* 54:1 (2004), 185-197, there, 189.

[86] McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 195.

[87] Hemelrijk, 'Masculinity and Femininity in the Laudatio Turiae', 189.

[88] Ibidem.

[89] McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 185.

poets. Therefore, the ideal characteristics of 'stayer-at-home wife', conflicts with the daily necessity of some women having jobs. Real life, that is, everyday life, gave women more freedom than the idealisation of the perfect woman Roman men desired. Surely some women had the same characteristics of Amymone, but we know that many women had not. As explained, some wealthy families bragged about having such an educated wife or daughter, because it showed the amount of money these families could spend on the random act of educating women. Undoubtedly, some women sought employment because more money was needed, maybe because their husbands did not make enough or because they were widows.

Thus, it is too limited to perceive Roman women only as wives and mothers. However, Roman women were subordinated to their men. Their submissiveness might seem to some modern societies, oppressive. However, we cannot know if Roman women, and men, had any feelings of frustration regarding their social position in society. Certainly, some women found satisfaction in their role as mother and wives, and men who treasured the life of a soldier as well as the political game. If there were any dislikes, on their part, to the demands of their daily lives as men and women, that caused serious consideration to question it and rebelled against it, as there is in the present, we do not know. What is known, is that there was an ideal to be followed or, at least, to pretend that it was followed. As it was shown, these 'perfect' female and male characteristics revel to be more a desired ideal than the realities of daily life. However, the reasons why such ideals were exposed was because of their 'utility'. Making use of an ideal, taking advantage of social standards of excellence, seemed to have been a mechanism for social aggrandisement as well as to avoid social criticism. These ideals of men and women were social creations of the dominant group, men.

Chapter 2

What Lies Behind *Mos*: Morality and Immorality in the Late Republic

While the previous chapter has dealt with the characteristics that made men and women ideal in Roman conception, this chapter will focus on immorality and the reasons why it was present in Roman moralistic discourse. However, before addressing immorality itself, this chapter will begin by examining morality and how upper-class Romans understood it. Then, this chapter moves on to analyse the behaviours, specifically of sexual nature, that were perceived as immoral within the sphere of Roman *mos*. Finally, this chapter will examine the consequences of immorality to the *res publica* and its advantageous political use by the elite.

2.1 The Conception of Morality in Roman Thought

Morality can be defined as an unwritten code of a belief system that separates right from wrong.[90] Nowadays, this belief system is changeable and open to criticism (at least in some countries), and it is not unique. Within one country, citizens produce diverse views and judgments on the same behaviour. In the United States, for example, there is no common belief system that dictates when the behaviour of a man that dresses as a woman, or acts like a woman, or undergo an estrogen hormone therapy is right or wrong. There are Americans who consider these behaviour to be morally acceptable, and there are some who think the opposite.[91] On the other hand, the idea of morality in Rome, at least when it comes to gender, seems to have remained unchanged through the centuries. Romans shared the belief that men

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[90] On the subject of morality, see, for instance: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol.2* (New York 1990) 25-78.

[91] Noma Nazish, 'Trans Rights: Americans Still Divided On Gender Identity', *Forbes*, 2018. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nomanazish/2018/02/26/trans-rights-americans-still-divided-on-gender-identity/ (accessed 27.05.2019).

who acted as women were immoral. This conclusion is based on the ancient literary sources that have survived, in which none mention effeminate men in a positive way. The role played by an effeminate man in Roman moral discourse will be addressed later.

In the 'Roman vocabulary', *mos*, and its plural form *mores*, meant both the customs and morals of the Roman people. Unlike law, customs and morals were unwritten and passed from one generation to the other. Thus, when *mos* is qualified by *maiorum*, it refers to the customs of the Roman predecessors.[92] When seeking how to act in the present, Romans observed the past. Most societies, from antiquity to nowadays, share the belief of a time when their society achieved its peak of perfection when every citizen led a safe and happy life. This past is usually referred to as the golden age, and when it ceases to exist, people longed for it, especially in times of crisis. When everybody is content, with the economy, politics and agriculture, there is no reason to think of the 'good old days', because it is being experienced it. However, when this life of content is interrupted by a crisis, the past becomes idealised. Nevertheless, this past never really existed, at least not with the perfection that it was credited with. Thus, the golden age is a myth. Rarely can the golden age be put precisely in a timeline, differently to times of crisis, which will be discussed later, that generally have a date.[93]

Therefore, it is hard to define the precise time in Roman history which Romans referred to as the 'ideal days', when customs where obeyed, and also who these Roman ancestors were. Certainly Romulus, for being the 'hero' who founded the city, and Lucius Junius Brutus who established the Republic. However, what it is essential to point out is that this past,

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[92] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality,* 4.

[93] Indeed, there are exceptions when the golden age can be put in a timeline. For instance, an American citizen from a state that was a member of the Confederate States of America, that is in favour of racial segregation might recognize the period from the late 19th century until 1965, as the golden age of the USA, since this is the period when the Jim Crow laws where active (Nikki I.M Brown and Barry M.Stentiford, *The Jim Crown Encyclopedia* (Greenwood 2008) xvii).

whatever its date, has been referred to as a time when people were simple and possessed great discipline, particularly martial discipline.[94] It was, in the same way, a time when people did not put their interest before that of the state, and when men and women acted accordingly to their 'nature'. It was, as the roles of men and women discussed in the previous chapter, highly idealised and used as an unrealistic model for replication. Despite how hard it was to act accordingly to the past (and ideals), it still served as a point of reference, especially when certain aspects of society seemed to have been 'getting out of line'. That is the purpose of a golden age.[95]

It seems that the Romans were unanimous about a specific past in their history when Rome was in the 'glimpse of its glory', although this past has no official date. Romans valued the influential figure of Romulus as the founding father of Rome and as a representative of Roman *mos*. Nonetheless, there is no such thing as a founding moment of the city of Rome.[96] In fact, most cities foundations are products of a sense of identity and organisation as well as a change in the population that lead to construction (or reconstruction) of a foundation myth.[97] Livy recognises in his work that the foundation of Rome is rather "adorned with poetic legends than based upon trustworthy historical proofs".[98] If Romans declare that the grandfather of their founder was none other than Mars, so Livy claims, all the nations of the

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[94] Livy, *On the History of Rome*, preface, 10.

[95] For information about the idea of the golden age, see, for instance: Kenneth J. Reckford, 'Some Appearances of the Golden Age', *The Classical Association of the Middle west and South* 54:2 (1958) 79-87. For information on the golden age on Greek and Roman mythology, see, for instance: Dimitri El Murr, 'Hediod, Plato and the Golden Age: Hesiodic Motifs in the Myth of the Politicus' in: J. Haubold and G. Boys-Stones eds., *Plato and Hesiod* (Oxford 2010) 276-297; Helen van Noorden, *Playing Hesiod: The Myth of the Races in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 2015).

[96] Beard, *SPQR,* 71.

[97] Ibidem.

[98] Livy, *On the History of Rome*, preface, 6.

earth may well submit to this as they submit to Rome's authority.[99] However, he manifests no concern with the authenticity of these stories; what matters to him are the lessons his audience can take from them.[100] Other Roman texts concerning the history of Rome all have the same message: if good things happened in the past, they happened because morality was present.

As aforementioned, times of crisis usually can be placed in the timeline of Roman history. Sallust, for instance, accused Sulla of instigating the civil war of 83-82 BC that brought *luxuria* and *licentia* to Rome.[101] He also blames the indulgence of Catiline for almost breaking down the Republic.[102] However, he is convinced that the vices of Sulla and Catiline only came to exist because of the destruction of Carthage, which made Romans greedy in the first place.[103] On the other hand, Polybius recognised the war with Perseus in 168 BC as the main immoral crisis of Rome.[104] Despite the fact that these writers disagree on the exact crisis that made Romans 'corrupt', they agree that the causes of it were that the Roman virtues were put aside because of foreign influence and *incontinentia* (the latter will be discussed later). As for foreigners, their influence was a topic of anxiety. Association with the alien caused feelings of cultural inferiority, mainly when Roman culture was compared with the Greek one.[105] The appropriation of foreign culture was regarded as anti-Roman, a threat to the ancestral legacies.

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[99] Ibidem, 7.

[100] Ibidem, 9-10.

[101] Sallust, *The War With Catiline*, 11.

[102] Ibidem, 16.4.

[103] Ibidem, 10.

[104] Polybius, *Histories*, 31.25.

[105] For the influence of Greek culture in Roman culture, see, for instance: Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life* (London 1998); Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge 2015).

Thus, morality was a worldview that not only established right behaviour but affirmed the very essence of what nowadays historians refer to as *romanitas*, that is, the cultural and political customs by which the Romans defined themselves.[106] It set who was Roman and who was the 'other'. Although a person could be in fact Roman by having citizenship, if he or she acted on the contrary to what *romanitas* dictated, they could be considered 'anti-Roman'.[107] The criticism of immorality was then a way to protect and to determine the boundaries of morality, or better, to determinate what and who was Roman. This idea was so dominant that satire, a literary genre that is concerned with the criticism on immorality, was assumed in antiquity to have been invented by the Romans.[108]

2.2 Behaviours as Signifiers of Immorality

Contrary to morality, immorality can be defined as the behaviour that exceed the boundaries of what is considered acceptable by societies' unwritten belief system defined above. The Romans associated certain behaviour with immorality. Although certain immoral behaviour could be completely different from each other, they were perceived as having the same cause. Romans did not separate sexual immorality from luxury (*luxuria*), for instance. It was understood that those who engaged in sexual license would also indulge in overeating, over-drinking and overspending. That is because all acts of immorality were perceived as being

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[106] Ryan K. Balot, 'Roman Citizenship, Republican Theory, and the Cpntemporary Political Unconscious' in: A. Shachar, R. Bauboeck, I.Bloemraad and M. Vink eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (Oxford 2017), 17-25, there, 23.

[107] Ibidem, 22-25.

[108] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 2.

manifestations of *incontinentia*, or 'lack of self-control'.[109] In their narratives, Livy and Sallust associate certain vices (*luxuria* and *licentia*, *luxus* and *libido*) to a particular character. However, the reason of such vices exist in their characters in the first place was because their characters had *incontinentia*.[110] This chapter will specifically address the vices of *mollitia* and adultery, considering that the criticism of these vices was strongly associated with gender roles in ancient Rome.

2.2.1 Mollitia

A simple movement of the body could create doubt on a man's *virtus*. Plutarch tells that Cicero, supposedly, stated the following about Julius Caesar:

> "And yet", said he, "when I consider how finely he combeth his fair bush of hair, and how smooth it lieth, and that I see him scratch his head with one finger only, my mind gives me then, that such a kind of man should not have so wicked a thought in his head, as to overthrow the state of the commonwealth." [111]

The fact that Caesar scratched his head with one finger, an act that does not mean much nowadays, made Cicero question Caesar's manliness. The connection is that during the Late Republic (and Early Empire) that act was associated with *mollitia*, which can be interpreted as

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[109] Ibidem, 5.

[110] Sallust, *The War With Catiline*, 11-13; Livy, *On the History of Rome*, preface, 12.

[111] Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 4.4.

'effeminacy'. To be accused of *mollitia,* a man had to pay too much attention to how he dressed, thus showing a feminine or exotic touch. He would wear perfume, wax his body, and take more baths than necessary.[112] An effeminate man walked like a woman or a dancer. In the patriarchal society of Rome, it was common for men to compare effeminate men with women.[113] Since Caesar displayed a 'non-male movement' Cicero believed that Caesar was not a threat - he would never overthrow the Republic -, not because he was a decent man, but because he was not 'man enough'. Roman moralists associated *mollitia* with weakness.[114]

As discussed in the previous chapter, clothing and looks served as a visual language that informed the observer about the observed's status in society. Likewise, a man that wore clothes that resembled that of a woman, and showed body characteristics of a woman (like depilated legs) informed his observer that he was an effeminate man. However, unlike the look of a *matrona,* the visual language shown by an effeminate man was a negative one. A man that was behaving like a woman was inferior to other men in that he was promiscuous, lazy, and that he thought too much about sex, just like a non-ideal woman would. His sexual appetite was uncontrollable, and he fancied the passive role in bed more than the 'ideal' active role of a man.[115]

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[112] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 68.

[113] Ibidem, 65.

[114] Ibidem.

[115] Ibidem, 78-81.

2.2.2 *Adultery*

The Late Republic was a period depicted in moralising texts as the pick of uncontrolled sexuality of elite men and women. Julius Caesar, Cicero, Servilia, the half-sister of Cato, Catiline, Sempronia, Fausta, Sulla's daughter were among the several aristocrats that were accused of adultery.[116] Although both men and women could be branded as adulterous the consequences of adultery differed if the adulterer was male or female. A man was entitled to take for a lover a woman of a lower class because such a relationship did not cause any threat. However, male adultery was not entirely ignored. Stoics such as Epictetus and Seneca condemned male adulterers because it could create distrust among friends.[117]

Why was the law on adultery and custom much more repressive towards women than to men? Many societies condemn female adulterer more severely than male ones because of the fear of illegitimate children. However, there is no significant amount of ancient Roman text showing a preoccupation with bastardy during the Late Republic and Early Principate.[118] A child only became a father's son or daughter after being recognised by him. Before recognition, the child did not even legally exist. It was also common to adopt children from other families. Therefore, it seems that bloodline was not as important as a family name. However, many texts emphasise the preoccupation of sexual affairs between upper-class

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[116] Ibidem, 35.

[117] Ibidem, 57.

[118] Ronald Syme, 'Bastards in Roman Aristocracy', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Social* 104:3 (1960), 323-327, there, 323.

women and lower-class men such as freedman or slaves.[119] Thus, the threat was not of having illegitimate children with a lover, but it was the lover himself and masculinity.

The more powerful a wife was - by being richer or by having lovers - the less masculine a husband was. Adultery committed by a wife with a man of a lower rank was particularly perceived as disturbing. It was an affront not just to her husband, but to the entire social class system, which conferred people with an identity. If her lover shared her upper-class rank, the adultery remained disturbing because an adulteress' capital offence was to confront her husband's masculinity.[120] The husband would be thought of as being incapable of controlling his wife as well as being made fun of by the fact that his wife preferred to be with another man (a commoner or not). He could be accused of 'allowing' the affair for he did not have an interest in his wife, perhaps because he would rather be penetrated than to penetrate, play the passive part rather than the active part. That is, he could be accused of *mollitia*.[121]

Thus, the reasons why the Romans were more preoccupied with female adultery was because female power over masculine power was unacceptable in their patriarchal society. In order to regain his masculinity, a husband from the Late Republic would divorce his wife. When it became public that Clodius, a nobleman, took Pompeia, the wife of Julius Caesar, for a mistress Caesar publicly accused Clodius. The fact that Clodius was also a nobleman did not

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[119] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 52. For ancient authors that show preoccupation on sexual affairs or attraction between upper class women and lower class men, see, for instance: Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, 31, 36, 38, 49; Petronius, *Satyricon*, 69.3, 75.11, 126.5-11.

[120] Ibidem.

[121] Ibidem, 54.

cause 'rank disrespect', but it put Caesar's masculinity in check which in response to it he divorced his wife.[122]

As noticed, Romans tend to accuse one another of immorality, and even those that presented themselves as righteous could be accused of hypocrisy. Sallust refers to himself as having a mind "stranger to evil practices" and thanks to it, he was able to avoid the "shamelessness, bribery and greed" of politics.[123] After manifesting his morals, he moves on to discuss the immoral conduct of Catiline accusing him of having affairs with a priestess of Vesta and with a maiden of noble rank.[124] He also criticised Sempronia, wife of Decimus Junius Brutus, accusing her of often having "committed many crimes of masculine daring".[125] Although he compliments her for having knowledge of Roman and Greek literature, being skillful with the lyre and dance, he simultaneously links her accomplishments to "voluptuousness".[126] To him, Sempronia was everything a *matrona* should not be, and her greatest crime was to join Catiline in his conspiracy putting aside her husband and children.[127]

Sallust proclaimed himself to be an honourable man. However, he is accused of immorality in two sources. The first one is from Gellius, who writes that Marcus Varro, "a man of great trustworthiness and authority in his writings and in his life," stated that Sallust had an affair with Fausta, Sulla's daughter, and wife of Milo.[128] Cicero, in a work referred to

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[122] Plutarch, *Life of Cicero,* 28.1-4. For other cases where men divorced their wives in response of adultery, see, for instance: Suetonius, *Life of Julius Caesar*, 50; Plutarch, *Life of Lucullus*, 34; Cicero, *For Milo*, 73. Although not many, some husbands forgave their wives, as Titidius Labeo did with his wife Vistilia (Tacitus, *Annals.* 2.85).

[123] Sallust, *The War With Catiline*, 3.5.

[124] Ibidem, 15.

[125] Ibidem, 25.2.

[126] Ibidem, 25.3.

[127] Ibidem, 25.1.

[128] Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, XVIII.

as *An Invective against Sallustius Crispus*, accuses Sallust of also being an adulterer (Cicero does not mention any lover's name) and having committed other immoralities.[129] Cicero also accused other opponents such as Catiline and Publius Clodius for seducing the wives of other men.[130] Plus, he accuses Clodius' sister of unchastity referring to her as *meretrix* (prostitute).[131] However, Cicero himself was accused of adultery by Cassius Dio who accused him of coveting to divorce his wife to be with his lover Caerellia.[132]

2.3 The Consequences of Immorality and Its Advantageous Political Use

The veracity of these sources on adultery and *mollitia* cannot be taken at face value when attempting to reconstruct an individual, for they are unreliable guides of one's behaviour. Likely, the truth of an individual behaviour will never be known. However, what these sources mentioned above show is a concern with immorality. Therefore, the questions that arise are: what were the reasons for accusing others of immorality? What was the purpose of Roman moralistic discourse?

The fact that some behaviour were perceived as immoral and people took time to comment on them shows that immorality was a matter of concern. As already mentioned, one of the preoccupations with it lies within the fact that immorality broke the connection between past and present. The past that serves as the equivalent of righteousness must remain present. By displaying unacceptable behaviour, the past is forgotten.

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[129] Cicero, *An Invective against Sallustius Crispus*, 1-8.

[130] Cicero, *Catilinarian Orations*, 2.23; Cicero, *De Haruspicium Responso*, 21.44.9.

[131] Cicero, *For Marcus Caelius,* 49-51.

[132] Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 46.3-6.

Moreover, what all these sources mentioned above have in common is that they are overwhelmingly concerned with upper-class individuals, and not the plebs.[133] That is because the upper-class, a class to which moralists belonged or 'infiltrated' in, believed that the plebs naturally lacked in virtue.[134] For instance, Juvenal, coined the term 'bread and circuses' to refer to the plebs' obsession for recreation and food while neglecting their responsibility to serve the Republic as soldiers. However, Juvenal blames the elite for this 'plebeian problem' and not the plebs itself. He blames the game and grain providers that granted them to gain political influence.[135] Juvenal criticised them because the elite was supposed to serve as role models. Thus, it was their behaviour that mattered.[136]

In consequence, moralising was a habit among the elite members, and this thesis understands that it had two primary purposes.[137] First, moralising was useful to distinguish the elite from others (plebs, foreigners and slaves). Dictating the rules of morality justified their privileged position that was kept due to their ability of self-control, which, according to them, lacked in other social groups.[138] As aforementioned, the elite believed they should serve as role models to the plebs and other elite members. The gender ideals discussed in the previous chapter were expected to be observed by elite members more than by the plebs. After all, members of the plebs were not in charge of the Republic; the rules of morality (and

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[133] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality,* 24.

[134] Famous moralists as the elder Cato and Cicero who were new men were the first in their families to become senators (Allen Lane, *Cicero: A Portrait* (London 1975) 1-29). Cato's family was originally Italian, from Tusculum, and not Roman (Alan E. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978) 1).The Senecas were originally from Spain. Pliny's family were from Comum, that only became Roman after Julius Caesar's conquests (Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 17).

[135] Juvenal, *Saturae*, 10.77-81.

[136] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality,* 24.

[137] The only texts that criticize the upper-class behavior that have survived were written by aristocrats.

[138] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality,* 25.

everything else) came from above. Thus, if the elite was to rule, they had to be faithful to their elitist idea of self-control, which was nothing more than possessing the virtues associated with their gender. An elite male had to cultivate *virtus* while elite women their chastity. If they neglected these ideals, they failed as members of the upper-class. The second purpose of moralising would be to decrease the influence of opponents. In order to sustain a family's status the male members had to compete with other males of high rank to gain access to higher offices, as magistracies, a place in the Senate and to a few, consulship.[139]

To succeed, an elite male needed to have personal glory (*gloria*), a good reputation (*fama*) and political authority (*auctoritas*). None of that would be possible without the display of moral worth.[140] Thus, the pursuit or at the very least the appearance of morality was an upper-class ambition. By having this societal distinction, a man could be a favourite (or at least respected and admired) by the people that would give him *populi beneficium* (the people's support).[141] In the competition for positions to keep or gain status, attacks on a man's or his family's morals were a political strategy. Also, it was used as a tool to prevent upper-class individuals from pursuing their own ends while ignoring the interests of the rest of the elite.[142] As aforementioned, Sallust wrote about being a "stranger to evil practices", but then he also informs his reader that "the craving for public office made me the victim of the same ill-repute and jealousy as the rest."[143] It seems then that Sallust was aware of the utility of moralistic discourse to gain a certain political advantage as well as to dishonor opponents. Thus, he warns his audience that his opponents might accuse him of the worst to ruin his

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[139] Isak Hammar, *Making Enemies: the Logic of Immorality in Ciceronian Oratory* (Stockholm 2013) 89.

[140] Ibidem.

[141] Ibidem.

[142] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 26.

[143] Sallust, *The Wat With Catiline*, 3.5.

reputation. The fact that accusations against him might be true does not matter. What matters is that he 'prepares' his audience by 'explaining' that current and future accusations against him are the product of "jealousy", in that way he is 'attacking' his opponents before they attack him.

If a man's capability of self-control legitimised him as a member of the elite, the lack of self-control made him unfit for the position.[144] Romans justified national problems by associating them to individuals' poor behaviour. Problems in the economy, war and politics were explained by the individuals' greed or ambition that put the entire state in jeopardy.[145] Not surprisingly, any deviation of conduct from an elite member could be used by his opponent to diminish him politically. If a man who occupied a position of importance was accused of immorality would be perceived as incapable of doing his job with excellence. He would be accused of putting Rome itself in danger of a crisis. Consequently, he had to be removed. Moreover, if the elite was to serve as an example to the commoners, the moment they begin to exhibit poor behaviour, there was a risk of the commoners being negatively influenced. Again, the 'influencer' should be turned away.

Thus, the presence of immorality in moral discourse can create a crisis, that, according to the same moral discourse, could only be solved if the 'trouble-maker' either embraced virtue or was removed by a more virtuous individual. Not surprisingly, moralising was embedded in political disputes. It was used as a tool to prevent upper-class individuals from pursuing their own ends while ignoring the interests of the rest of the elite.[146]

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[144] Ibidem, 25.

[145] Ibidem, 4.

[146] Ibidem, 26.

2.4 Conclusion

The Roman moral system was built on an idealized past, which, according to several texts, was a period when the Roman *mos* was instituted and consistently practised. It was from this unwritten system of morals that the ideal behaviour pattern of men and women emerged, and everything contrary to this pattern was seen as immoral. A moral man was self-controlled. Thus, signs of intemperance was a signifier of immorality. Being effeminate was a sign of weak *virtus*, which was not in line with the Roman understanding of masculinity; thus, an effeminate, was immoral. The same goes for women. If they did not settle in their place in society, they were perceived as unprincipled. Taking advantage of this moral belief system, Roman authors used moral discourse as a narrative strategy to criticize their opponents.

Chapter 3

Mos and Character Representation

In the previous chapter, we dealt with the presence of morality and immorality in Roman moral discourse. This third and final chapter will analyse the literary construction of Mark Antony, Octavian, Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia. We will begin with the literary representation of the male characters by Cicero in his work Philippics. Then, we move on to the literary representation of the female characters by Plutarch in his work Life of Antony. This chapter aims to present and analyse examples of how these authors made use of *mos* to literary construct the identities of these characters and which literary strategies they used.[147]

3.1. Literary Construction of Characters

Aristotle said that "moral character, so to speak, constitutes the most effective source of persuasion".[148] To this Greek philosopher, character, or *ethos*, is an essential element of persuasion.[149] Every written (and spoken) language that presents a character has the power to influence the perception of an audience about the character.[150] The author himself needs to have an honourable reputation, so his judgment on the *ethos* of others can be taken seriously by his audience.[151] Cicero, as it is widely known, was a well-respected and admired orator by

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[147] Plutarch's representation of Mark Antony and Octavian and Cicero's representation of Fulvia will also be observed but to a lesser extent.

[148] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.1.1356a13.

[149] James M. May, *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos* (North Carolina 2009) 1.

[150] Ibidem.

[151] Ibidem, 1-2.

his colleagues at the Senate. Plutarch was an internationally acclaimed scholar in his lifetime granted with the *ornamenta consularia*, a mark of academic renown.[152]

Cicero, who had applied the 'Aristotelian style of verbal persuasion' in his works took advantage of the opinions of right and wrong (analysed in chapters One and Two) that were already formed in the minds of his audience to construct the character of his opponent and his new ally Octavian. With the Philippics, Cicero sought to persuade his audience that Mark Antony is the sole cause of all the calamities faced by the Republic after the death of Julius Caesar. Aristotelian doctrines are also the basis of Plutarch's literary character construction.[153] Let us begin with Cicero and his portrayal of Mark Antony and Octavian.

3.1.1 Cicero's Mark Antony and Octavian

One of Cicero's literary strategies in the Philippics was to persuade his audience that the Republic is under a severe crisis caused by Mark Antony. He uses a rhetoric of crisis by setting a conflict between the Republic, and all 'good Romans', against Mark Antony the 'public enemy'. The nature of his work is one of 'Republic vs tyranny' and 'war vs peace'.[154] Regularly, when Cicero mentions the downfall of the Republic, the name of Mark Antony emerges as the cause.[155] The crisis began, according to Cicero, due to the tyrannical rule of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, but since Caesar was dead - and his will was valid - Cicero turned his attacks on Mark Antony.[156] For Cicero, the crisis was enduring because of Mark

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[152] C.B.R. Pelling, 'Introduction' in: C.B.R. Pelling ed., *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Oxford 1988) 2-3.

[153] D.A. Russell, 'On Reading Plutarch's 'Lives', *Greece & Rome* 13 (1966) 144.

[154] John T. Ramsey, 'Introduction' in: D.R.S. Bailey ed., *Cicero Orations Philippics 1-6* (London 2009), xvii-xxxi, there, xx.

[155] For passages in the Philippics linking Mark Antony to the downfall of the Republic, see, for instance: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.9, 2.16-17, 2.36, 2.51, 2.52, 2.54, 2.55, 3.5.

[156] George Alexander Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World: 300 BC-300AD* (Princeton 1972) 268.

Antony's unethical nature that was responsible for his reckless behaviour.[157] Nevertheless, there was one action of Mark Antony that, according to Cicero, kept the crisis going. Cicero notifies his audience that in his will, Julius Caesar named Decimus Junius Brutus to be governor of the province of Cisalpine Gaul, and Mark Antony was due to governing Macedonia. However, because of its strategic location, Mark Antony preferred Cisalpine Gaul. Thus, he decided to take it by force. In what seemed to be a strategic move to secure himself from Antony, Decimus Junius Brutus wrote to the Senate on December 20 of 43BC stating that he would keep Cisalpine Gaul under the control of the Senate and the people of Rome.[158] On the same day, Cicero delivered the Third Philippic, insisting that the Senate must support Decimus Junius Brutus and that the new consuls Hirtus and Pansa must protect the province against an invasion by Mark Antony, who should be declared a public enemy (hostis).[159] Also, that the Senate should grant authority to Octavian to defend the Republic. In the Fifth Philippic, delivered on January 1th, 43BC, Cicero states that Pansa's father in law, Quintus Fufius Calenus, asked the Senate to send an envoy to Mark Antony demanding him to leave Mutina in Cisalpine Gaul and be under the control of the Senate.[160] However, Cicero proposed that war should be declared instead.[161]

After setting this scenario of crisis, Cicero begins to persuade his audience why Mark Antony is the man to be blamed, and mainly, why he is unqualified to rule, and thus, must be discharged from power. For that, Cicero turns to Mark Antony's masculinity, which he constructs and attacks by using an emotive language embedded with exaggerations and

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[157] Ramsey, 'Introduction', xxv.

[158] Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.8.

[159] Ibidem, 3.14.

[160] Ibidem, 5.1-5.

[161] Ibidem, 5.31-34. Cicero reenforces his proposal on the Six Philippic (6.2).

comparisons. Cicero sought to persuade the senators and the people of Rome that Mark Antony was not going to obey their order. Thus, in a meeting of the people in the Forum, Cicero presented the Sixth Philippic.[162] Cicero needed to convince them that Mark Antony would not obey because of his character, which the author presents as the following:

"And yet, Men of Rome, that is not an embassy but rather a declaration of war if he does not obey: (…) For they are sent to order him not to attack a consult-elect, not to besiege Mutina, not to lay waste the province, not to levy troops, and to submit to the control of the senate and people of Rome. Doubtless, he will find it an easy matter to obey this order to submit to your control and that of the senators - a man who was never in control of himself! What did he ever do by his own free will? Always he has been dragged in the wake of lust, frivolity, madness, drunkenness; always two quite different types of men have had him in their grip: pimps and robbers. Such pleasure does he take in private debauchery and public murdered that he preferred to obey a thoroughly rapacious female rather than the senate and people of Rome. And so I shall do before you what I have just done in the Senate: I testify, I warn, I predict in advance that Marcus Antonius will not carry out a single item in the envoys commission: he will ravage the country, he will besiege Mutina, he will levy troops where he can". [163]

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[162] Ibidem, 6.1, 3.

[163] Ibidem, 6.3.4-5.

As explained in chapter one, *virtus* was a concept (or an ideal) that incorporated all the righteous masculine traits, like *dignitas* and *auctoritas*. According to May, for a man to acquire *dignitas* and *auctoritas*, he had to prove by his own actions that his *ethos* deserved to be respected.[164] *Dignitas* reflected a man's social position and his breeding while *auctoritas* revealed an individual's personality attributes like wisdom and sense of responsibility.[165] Thus, rhetorical attacks on Mark Antony's *virtus* would challenge his public ability to govern both Rome and the military.[166] Cicero's Mark Antony has no interest in his obligations towards the state. What he produces with his autonomy is explained by Cicero with words like lust (*libido*), frivolity (*levitas*), drunkenness (*vinolentia*) and madness (*furor*). Mark Antony had a poor *autocritas* or even lacked it. Since Mark Antony has no capacity for self-control, Cicero claimed, how could the Senate expect that he will put himself in the control of others (the Senate and the people of Rome)?

One of his last insults to Mark Antony in this passage was that he "preferred to obey a thoroughly rapacious female rather than the Senate and the people of Rome". Cicero is referring to Fulvia, Mark Antony's wife, whom he detested it. We will examine Fulvia's *persona* later. For now, what is vital to observe is that Cicero employs female references to attack Mark Antony.[167] In the above passage, he is his wife's vassal; she controls him. Thus, Cicero's Mark Antony has no authority over his *domus*, Fulvia does.[168] The gravest

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[164] May, *Trials of Character: the Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos,* 7.

[165] Ibidem, 7.

[166] Nancy Myers, 'Cicero's Trumpet: Roman Women and the Second Philippic', *Taylor & Francis* 22:4 (2003), 337-352, there, 341.

[167] Ibidem, 337.

[168] Ibidem, 344.

humiliation for a man was to be submissive to a woman.[169] Cicero's Fulvia, a "rapacious female", exists to highlight Mark Antony's lack of *virtus*.

Also tied to Mark Antony is the noun *scortum* (whore) used to defame him as a lustful man.[170] Although a neutral noun, Cicero employs it to denounce that in his youth, Mark Antony was regularly chasing after Curio, his male lover.[171] Chasing after a man for love or lust was considered a 'woman thing'. This behaviour, considered to be immoral, signified that Mark Antony was effeminate. Although homosexual relationships were no cause for anxiety in the Late Republic playing the passive role was considered 'submissive', thus, female.[172] Cicero writes that "no slave boy bought to satisfy lust was ever so completely in his master's power as you were in Curio's".[173] The author reduced Mark Antony and Curio's relationship to a slave-master one where Mark Antony was the slave (passive).[174] Another female reference is a comparison between Mark Antony and Helen of Troy. To Cicero, Mark Antony was to the Republic what Helen was to the Trojans "the cause of war, the cause of ruinous destructions".[175] This association with Helen is immensely provocative, not only because Mark Antony is again being compared to a woman, but because Helen was the *causa belli* of

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[169] Ibidem.

[170] Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.44-45. The second Philippic is the longest of the entire *corpus* and it is the one that contains most attacks on Mark Antony.

[171] Anthony Corbeill, *Sexing the World: Grammatical Gender and Biological Sex in Ancient Rome* (Princeton 2015) 97.

[172] Amy Richlin, 'Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the Cinaedus and the Roman Law Against Love Between Men, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3:4 (1993), 523-573, there, 524- 526. For more on Roman Homosexuality, see, for instance: Craig Arthur Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford 1999); Thomas K. Hubbard, *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (Berkeley 2003).

[173] Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.47.

[174] Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, 65.

[175] Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.55.

the Trojan war.[176] Mark Antony just as Helen was responsible for an enormous crisis. Thus, this identification with Helen also emphasizes the seriousness of the crisis that Cicero wants to highlight.

After creating the image of a wicked Mark Antony, Cicero introduces another comparison. However, this time between two poles of masculinity. In order to obtain senatorial authorisation to Octavian (so that he could protect Cisalpine Gaul from Mark Antony), Cicero has to 'sell' an outstanding Octavian. He represented Octavian as the following:

> "Gaius Caesar, showed incredible and superhuman spirit and energy: he raised a very strong army of veteran soldiers who had never known defeat and lavished his patrimony - no, I have not used the appropriate word; he did not lavish it, he invested it in the salvation of the Republic. We cannot repay all we owe him, but all the gratitude of which our souls are capable in his due".[177]

Octavian, presented in the above passage as Gaius Caesar, is a character embellished with deliberate exaggerations to create an antithesis of Mark Antony. Exaggerations such as "superhuman spirit", "lavished his patrimony", "invested in the salvation of the Republic" and "we cannot repay all we owe him" is language being used strategically by Cicero to create a

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[176] For another ancient Roman source blaming Helen of Troy as the cause of the Trojan War, see, for instance: Vergil, *Aeneid*, Book 2. For modern scholarship on this source, see: Meredith Prince, 'Helen of Rome? Helen in Vergil's Aeneid', *Project Muse* 41:2 (2014) 187-214; J.B. Garstang, 'The Crime of Helen and the Concept of Fatum in the "Aeneid"', *The Classical Journal* 57:8 (1962) 337-345.

[177] Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.3.

hero. What makes Octavian a better man than Mark Antony is his ideal masculine behaviour. Cicero's Octavian has "agency, courage, and judgment", and because of these qualities, arguments Cicero, "the Roman people has been protected from very grave dangers, and it is protected at this present time (…)."[178] However, this heroic portrayal of Octavian is not present in Cicero's private letters, where he acknowledges Octavian as his temporary solution while he deals with Mark Antony's intimidations. To Atticus, Cicero wrote:

> Octavianus, as I have perceived, there is no little ability and spirit; and he seems likely to be as well disposed to our heroes as I could wish. But what confidence one can feel in a man of his age, name, inheritance, and upbringing may well give us pause. His stepfather, whom I have seen at Astura, thinks none at all. However, we must foster him and—if nothing else-keep him apart from Antony.[179]

The concern Cicero shows in the Letters to Atticus for Octavian's age is manifested in the Philippics in the form of amazement that someone so young could live under the standards of *mos maiorum*. In the Philippics, he asks, "yet is there anyone more pure and modest than this young man, is there a more conspicuous example of old-time morality in our younger generation?".[180] Thus, in his letter to Atticus, Cicero describes the truth of what he thinks of Octavian, which is clearly different from how he described Octavian in the Philippics.[181] This

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[178] Ibidem, 3.38.

[179] Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 15.12.2.

[180] Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.15.

[181] On other letters from Cicero to Atticus regarding Octavian, see, for instance: 16.9; 16.14.1. Also, check: Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 11.20.1, where Decimus Brutus mentions that Cicero said that Octavian must be "complemented, honoured and got rid of".

explains that Cicero and Octavian collaboration was purposely-driven. Moreover, it shows that Cicero implemented morality and immorality as literary strategies to attempt to change the political process at hand. Cicero needed to ally himself with Octavian so he could defeat Mark Antony in Mutina. However, the Philippics did not cause severe political damage to Mark Antony as Cicero wished (that would only occur with Mark Antony's defeat in Actium).[182] Nevertheless, the Philippics demonstrates how people could be disgraced or praised by having their behaviour 'built' under the influence of *mos*.

3.1.2 Plutarch's Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia

Let us now turn to the literary representation of Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia by Plutarch in his work Life of Antony. However, it is necessary to give a few words on Plutarch as an author. Plutarch came from an elite Greek family and nurtured friendships with both Greeks and Romans. Although not a Roman, Plutarch shared the same views on morality with Cicero. During Plutarch's lifetime, the Greek and Roman world was more politically united than ever before, which might explain why Plutarch is never hostile towards Romans in is works.[183] His work Parallel Lives is a series of 48 biographies, of which 46 survived, where he aims to highlight and compare the influences, good and bad, of famous Greek and Roman men.[184] On character comparison, Plutarch states that:

> "(…) actually it is not possible to learn better the similarity and the
> difference between the virtues of men and of women from any other

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[182] Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World*, 271.

[183] C.B.R. Pelling, 'Introduction' in: C.B.R. Pelling ed., *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Oxford 1988) 5.

[184] Philip A. Stadter, *Roman Lives: A Selection of Eight Roman Lives* (Oxford 1999) x.

source than by putting lives beside lives and actions beside actions (…)."[185]

This character comparison is an ancient rhetorical technique known as *syncrisis*. By contrasting two or more persons (or things), the author can emphasise a character' superiority, inferiority or equality.[186]

Fulvia's third husband was Mark Antony and she, apparently, held all the qualities of a loyal wife. She promoted his interest when he was away, endured his uncountable infidelities, and stood by his side until her death in 40 B.C.[187] Nevertheless, Plutarch's Fulvia is a dangerous character used to explain not just Antony's corrupt nature, but women's moral failings. Plutarch depicted her as follows:

> She was a woman who gave no thought to 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".[188]

As mentioned in Chapter One, a *matrona* was an elite wife, and it was also a term that embodied the virtues of an ideal woman. With this passage, Plutarch wants to evoke that Fulvia is not a good *matrona*. Although she is an aristocratic wife, thus a *matrona*, she fails to possess the gender traits that make her an ideal woman in Roman conception.[189] Fulvia does not spin the wool or keep her household. However, her worst 'crime' is her wish to exchange

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[185] Plutarch, *Mulierum Virtutes*, 243.

[186] Heather M. Gorman, *Interweaving Innocence: A Rhetorical Analysis of Luke's Passion Narrative* (Oregon 2015) 60.

[187] Hemelrijk, *Masculinity and Femininity in the Laudatio Turiae,* 192.

[188] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 10.3.

[189] Despite her upper-class rank, Fulvia had modest ancestry. However, her great-grandfather, Gaius Sempronius Tuditanus composed the *Libri Magistratum*, an important work of Roman public law.

places with her husband (to be his ruler). Plutarch probably had in mind the fact that Fulvia organized military campaigns.[190]

When Fulvia waged war against Octavian (known as the Perusine War), along with Mark Antony's brother Lucius Antonius, she did so apparently without the knowledge or consent of her husband.[191] Plutarch blames Fulvia for the war (that she started and lost) because she was "a meddlesome and headstrong woman".[192] Therefore, Plutarch's Fulvia challenges the Roman conception of femininity by being a *femina duce* (female leader), or as L'Hoir puts it, a *dux femina.* She defines *dux femina* as a rhetorical stereotype used for an (often) upper-class woman who attempts or exercises *imperium*.[193] Although Plutarch does not use the term *femina duce* (he wrote in Greek), the stereotype of it is implied in the characterisation of Fulvia mentioned above.[194]

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[190] Richard A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London 1992) 120.

[191] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 30.1. The Perusine War was a civil war fought by Fulvia and Lucius Antonius against Octavian. It is believed that the cause of war was to have Mark Antony as the sole ruler of Rome instead of sharing the power with the Second Triumvirate. After their defeat, Octavian spared Fulvia and Lucius Antonius life. For more on the Perusine War, see, for instance: Emilio Gabba, 'The Perusine War and Triumviral Italy', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 75 (1971) 139–160.

[192] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 30.2.

[193] Francesca Santoro L'Hoir, 'Tacitus and Women's Usurpation of Power', *The Classical World* 88:1 (1994), 5-25, there, 6. Santoro L'Hoir's explores in her article Tacitus'characterization of the Julio-Claudian women as usurpers of masculine power. She explains how the noun *femina* is used by Tacitus in fifteen occasions to denote male authority creating the stereotype of the *dux femina*. Besides the Julio-Claudian, other women were victims of this stereotype. Clodia, Sempronia, Tanaquil, Fulvia and Boudica are other examples.

[194] Other authors have mentioned Fulvia negatively. For her power, see, for instance: Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 48.4.1. For her portrait of 'acting like a general', see: Cassius Dio, *Roman History* and Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 30. For her cruelty, see: Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.4, 5.22, 13.18. For her dominance over Mark Antony, see, for instance: Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 10.5-6 and Cicero, *Philippics*, 6.4.

Fulvia's part in the Perusine War must have been more restricted than it is imagined, but her story teaches us that the reputation of a woman that crossed to a man's field was at risk.[195] Plutarch's Fulvia is presented in a negative light because she lacks the female virtues of sexual virtue (*pudicitia*), modesty (*modestia*) and spinning wool (*lanificium*).[196] Thus, her reputation as a good matron was damaged. Fulvia was a victim of the male Roman habit of attacking male opponents through attacks on their women. If Plutarch had used sources that were more friendly to Mark Antony (sources that are lost to us) maybe we would have encountered an exemplary Fulvia and not a usurper of masculine power.[197]

In another passage, Plutarch states that the reasons for Fulvia had waged war on Octavian was to "draw Antony away from Cleopatra".[198] To Plutarch, this war was started by a woman because of a female motive: jealousy.[199] Romans considered jealousy to be a female weakness. Thus, Fulvia possessed an expected female weakness (jealousy) and an unexpected male capacity (soldierly). Despite her apparent loyalty to Mark Antony, there is nothing that characterises her positively in Plutarch's work.

While Mark Antony was married to Fulvia (around 47-46 BC until 40BC) and later to Octavia (40BC-32BC), he had Cleopatra as his mistress (40BC until 30BC).[200] Plutarch's

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[195] Hemelrijk, *Masculinity and Femininity in the Laudatio Turiae,* 193.

[196] Ibidem.

[197] Ibidem, 192.

[198] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 30.2.

[199] Appian also blamed Fulvia's jealousy of Cleopatra for the Perusine War. See, Appian, *B.Civ*. 5.19, 59, 62.

[200] Duane W. Roller, *The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene: Royal Scholarship on Rome's African Frontier* (New York 2003) 77-78. There is no official date that marks the beginning of their intimate relationship. The date of 40BC is used here as the starting date of their affair because it is assumed that their first children were born on this year. Mark Antony and Cleopatra had three children together. The twins Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene II were, presumably, born in 40 BC. The youngest, Ptolomy Philadelphus was born in 36 BC.

Cleopatra shares similar characteristics with Fulvia. She is also portrayed as a jealous woman; she is jealous of Octavia.[201] Plutarch narrates that Octavian allowed Octavia to travel to meet with Mark Antony. She brought him clothes for his soldiers, money and gifts to her husband.[202] Plutarch than states that Cleopatra, "perceived that Octavia was coming into a contest at close quarters with her (…)".[203] As a way of preventing Mark Antony to be seduced by Octavia's actions, Cleopatra put on an act to draw Mark Antony's attention towards her. She became slender and acted melancholic when Mark Antony went away.[204] Cleopatra did not love Mark Antony, but without him "she would not survive it".[205] Plutarch's Cleopatra has a dominant and controlling nature, and Plutarch's Mark Antony is her submissive. However, it seems that Plutarch is exaggerating on the fact that Cleopatra was jealous of Octavia. In reality, Cleopatra must have been thankful for Mark Antony's and Octavia's marriage. Octavian was one of Julius Caesar's heirs, and he held more power than the other heir, Cleopatra's son Caesarion. He could disinherit him in the future. Thus, it must have been in Cleopatra's interest to have a good relationship with Octavian for what mattered to her was status as queen and her son.[206]

Another similarity with Fulvia is that Cleopatra encompasses the characteristics of a *dux femina* and Plutarch highlights the many ways she upsets gender norms. Firstly, Plutarch characterises Cleopatra as a woman of ordinary beauty, but an intellectual. Although he does not use that word himself, he states that her beauty did not strike those who saw her.

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[201] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 53.3-6.

[202] Ibidem, 53.1-2.

[203] Ibidem, 53.3.

[204] Ibidem.

[205] Ibidem, 53.5.

[206] Patricia Southern, *Mark Antony: A Life* (Gloucestershire 2010) 192.

However, her conversation "had an irresistible charm".[207] She could "turn to whatever language she pleased".[208] Thus, she was a polyglot which seems to astonish Plutarch since he states that the kings of Egypt before her "had not even made an effort to learn the native language".[209] As aforementioned in Chapter One, some elite Roman women learned other languages, mainly Greek. However, the reason for that was because upper-class Romans normally spoke Greek. Another reason could be the fact that educating girls was a way to 'show off' wealth.[210] However, Plutarch does not suggest in any way that Cleopatra's language skills were for pride or wealth exhibition, only that even Egyptian kings were not polyglots like her. Thus, it seems that Cleopatra's language skills were unique and better than male rulers.

Cleopatra could not be more distant from the idealised Roman woman. Although some Roman women had power, like Fulvia and Octavia, it was not to the same extent as Cleopatra, who was the Pharaoh of Egypt. Although in Ptolemaic Egypt, sole rule by women was considered, like in Rome, abnormal, her unwillingness to rule alone was shown when she had her brother (her co-ruler) murdered.[211]After that, she was in control of her country's trading activities and armed forces and travelled without male authorisation.[212] Furthermore, as Fulvia, she was controlling of Mark Antony who according to Plutarch, was "not even master of himself".[213] It was Cleopatra who took care of government affairs.[214]

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[207] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 27.2.

[208] Ibidem, 27.3-4.

[209] Ibidem, 27,4.

[210] Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta,* 71-72.

[211] Southern, *Mark Antony,* 175.

[212] Ibidem, 176.

[213] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 60.1.

[214] Ibidem.

Octavian took advantage of this 'exchange' of gender roles between Mark Antony and Cleopatra to become the sole ruler. Octavian opened and read it Antony's will, an illegal practise according to Roman law, to the Senate. According to Plutarch, Mark Antony expressed in his will his desire to be buried in Egypt instead of Rome, and that was insulting to Romans.[215] However, Octavian did not declare war on Antony for this treason, but on Cleopatra. Plutarch states that he did that, hoping "to take away from Mark Antony the authority which he had surrendered to a woman".[216] A war against Cleopatra would sound better to the Roman people than a war declared against another Roman. Thus, Octavian presented himself - in the same way, Cicero presented him in the Philippics - as a saviour who would remove the inadequate Roman (Mark Antony) from being controlled by a foreigner and a woman.[217]

After the Perusine war, Mark Antony and Octavian reconciled, and as a symbol of this alliance, Mark Antony married Octavia.[218] After constructing a wicked Fulvia and Cleopatra, that engaged in unwomanly activities, and after mentioning Fulvia's death, Plutarch presents Antony's new wife as the following:

> "For they hoped that Octavia, who, besides her great beauty, had intelligence and dignity, when united to Antony and beloved him, as such a woman naturally must be, would restore harmony and be their complete salvation".[219]

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[215] Ibidem, 58.4.

[216] Ibidem, 60.1.

[217] Southern, *Mark Antony,* 239.

[218] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 31.3.

[219] Ibidem, 31.2.

Plutarch praises Octavia for her appearance, intelligence and dignity. She is a *matrona*, not just because of her upper-class status, but because she embodied the feminine traits judge correct by moralist men. To Plutarch, her character should attract Mark Antony and make peace between him and her brother.

However, in 36 BC, Octavian secured a law granting him sacrosanctity that would protect him against insults, and who violated his protection would be a traitor of the Republic.[220] In 35 BC, after Mark Antony had persistently humiliated Octavia, he extended his sacrosanctity to his wife, Livia and Octavia. Octavian used this law as a tool to diminish Mark Antony's propaganda against him during the triumvirate years. Octavian knew that attacks on his women were an 'indirect attack' on himself.[221]

The reason we are mentioning Octavian's extension of sacrosanctity to Octavia is that even during Mark Antony's mistreatment to his sister, he allowed Octavia to meet with Mark Antony.[222] According to Plutarch, Octavian only allowed her to travel because if Mark Antony neglected Octavia, he could have "plausible ground for war".[223] When Octavia arrived in Athens, she received a letter from her husband ordaining her to remain there. Mark Antony was divided between Cleopatra who displayed anti-Roman feelings and Octavia the symbol of his alliance with Octavian. He chose the former confirming that his vile behaviour was true. By humiliating Octavia, he humiliated Rome and ended his alliance. To make things worse for Mark Antony, Octavia returned to Rome and, according to Plutarch, refused her brother's orders to move to her own house. She remained at her husband's house and took care of their children, and those Mark Antony had with Fulvia. Also, Octavia took care of her husband's

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[220] Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 49.15.5-6.

[221] Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, 123-126.

[222] Ibidem, 129.

[223] Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 53.1.

business and received his friends in their home. She remained loyal even after her husband had scorned her.

This was the utility of Octavia to Octavian during this crisis. By portraying her as the ultimate good matron, and having Mark Antony humiliate her in public, Romans would reject Mark Antony for, as Plutarch says, "wronging such a woman".[224] However, although Octavia was marked off in history as a 'good woman', we cannot know for sure how deeply her authentic personality (whatever it was) was manipulated to serve the political agenda of her brother. Having Octavia as an exemplary woman was in Octavian's interest. Thus, we will never know if in her real life she actually embodied the virtues of a *matrona.*

Powerful women made Roman men feel uncomfortable. Of course, their discomfort depends on which powerful women we are dealing with. There seem to have been two kinds of powerful women: those who were giving power by men and those who took power without asking. We cannot deny that Octavia was a powerful woman. As we have seen, she travelled (although with her brother's authorisation), provided supply to Mark Antony's soldiers and when asked by her brother to leave her husband's house she refused. Thus, Plutarch's Octavia presents characteristics of male behaviour. She has *patientia*, for she endured a crisis and also showed military skills by sending supplies to Mark Antony's army. Of course, when creating his characters, like Cicero, Plutarch focused on *ethos* to construct them. Thus, if the presence of male characteristics in a woman were a sign of bad *ethos*, why Plutarch did not attack Octavia for her male actions?

Octavia did what she did to safeguard her husband's well being. Her 'masculine pursuits' had a female reason. Thus, Plutarch excused them. However, how can we explain Plutarch's attacks on Fulvia? She also displayed masculine traits when she began a war against

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[224] Ibidem, 54.2.

Octavian. However, the reasons for her military actions where, as we have seen, jealousy of Cleopatra. Although jealousy was considered to be a 'woman thing' it was not perceived as a quality, but a mediocre reason for starting a war. For that reason, Fulvia's action was not excusable. Also, Plutarch's Fulvia did not ask permission to her husband to engage in warfare; Mark Antony was "surprised".[225]

3.2 Conclusion

In the Philippics and Life of Antony, we see that characters' *ethos* work as a tool to persuade the audience's opinion about them. In portraying the personality of these characters in their narratives, these authors had in mind what their audience would recognise as moral and immoral behaviour.

The Roman moral norm influenced Cicero not only in the creation of his characters, but to switch the political course of the crisis in his favour. Cicero needed Mark Antony to be seen as disgraceful to convince his audience that he had to be deposed. Attacking Mark Antony's manhood and associating his weaknesses to the crisis were Cicero's narrative 'tricks' to portray his enemy badly. For this reason that Cicero's Mark Antony possesses personality traits judged dangerous by Romans. The moral standard of the period also inspired Cicero is his depiction of Octavian as an ideal man. However, we know from his letters that Cicero was not enthusiastic about him. Cicero regarded Octavian as the 'lesser of the two evils' and supported him to remove Mark Antony from Cisalpine Gaul. Thus, the Philippics is evidence that Cicero's embellishments of Octavian function as a literary strategy that contributes to the portrayal of a depraved Mark Antony.

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[225] Ibidem, 30.1.

Plutarch's Fulvia, Cleopatra and Octavia also serve the purpose to either condemn or glorify Mark Antony and Octavian. Octavia exists to value her brother's image with her status of *matrona*, a status that, in this case, stains her husband's image because she appears to be 'too good' for him. Also, she serves as an example of femininity by being the antithesis of the other two women. On the other hand, Fulvia and Cleopatra exist to challenge Mark Antony's virility, and as examples of bad female conduct. Thus, in Life of Antony, women are instruments of an argumentative strategy used exclusively to either set examples to other women or to say something about the men related to them.[226]

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[226] Myers, 'Cicero's Trumpet', 337.

Conclusion

We have reached the final part of the thesis where we will present the main conclusion to the research question: How did Roman *mos* influence the literary representation of Mark Antony and Octavian, and the women associated with them, during the crisis of 44BC-30BC?

We began this thesis by presenting a general overview of the daily and idealised lives of Roman men and women. It became clear that an ideal woman held the characteristics embedded in the concept of *matrona*. *Matrona* was a term reserved for elite wives which incorporated virtues like loyalty, fertility and chastity. On the other hand, ideal men had to possess the characteristics embedded in the concept of *virtus*, such as martial courage and self-control. However, we observed that not every Roman could live their days under the standards of morality. An exemplary woman supposed to be a stayer-at-home wife, but we know of the existence of women in the labour market. Women worked as *ornatrix*, doctors, midwives, personal attendants, and in the family business. Likely, upper-class women did not have such jobs since they were 'reserved' to the commoners. However, representations of deceased people on epitaphs that have survived do not refer to their daily behaviour. Romans did not display in their relatives' epitaphs their wives' 'masculine pursuits'. They only did it if their 'masculine pursuits' had a female reason (like Plutarch's Octavia had). Romans also did not display on epitaphs men's poor oratorical skills and drunkenness. Misbehaviour is not part of epitaphs' description of the deceased. Thus, their personalities were idealised to safeguard the influence of their family and name, because admitting that a family member did not live a moral life could affect a family' social status.

These ideals of femininity and masculinity derived from unwritten moral principles that formulated what was moral and immoral. Morality, known to the Romans as *mos* (and in its

plural form *mores*) dictated the principles of right conduct through which the Romans built their way of life and their identity. On the other hand, immorality, a term with no Roman equivalent, is defined by the conduct perceived as unacceptable by *mos*. We observed that Romans, mainly Roman authors, tended to discuss the past as a time when all citizens lived a moral life. Generally, when Romans observed immoral behaviour in society, they 'understood' it as a token of societal decline. Thus, criticising immorality was a way to protect Roman customs. Many literary Roman works present a moral tone. We have observed that Roman writers used moral discourses for mainly two reasons. First, to set examples of behaviour to the upper-class, for they considered themselves to be responsible for passing on such standards to the plebs, whom naturally, they believed, lacked in virtue. Second, *mos* could be employed as a literary tool to decrease the influence of opponents, increase the power of allies and for self-aggrandisement.

Cicero and Plutarch were authors that made use of moral discourses to make the behaviour of Mark Antony, Octavian, Fulvia, Octavia and Cleopatra, public. The Philippics was Cicero's attempt to discharge Mark Antony from his position of power. It has become clear that his literary strategy incorporated rhetoric of crisis embedded with exaggerations and comparison. He persuades his audience that Rome is under a crisis and it that can only be solved by declaring war against Mark Antony. Also, to convince the Senate to allow Octavian, whom Cicero portrays as a hero, to march on Cisalpine Gaul to wage war against Mark Antony. When constructing the character of these two men, Cicero focused on their masculinity. Cicero formed Mark Antony's behaviour by using words like *libido*, *levitas, scortum*, *vinolentia* and *furor* that contribute to lessening his *virtus*.

The behaviour of Cicero's Mark Antony are signifiers of immorality whereas Cicero's Octavian held all the values of masculinity that were dictated by *mos*. We will never know if

Mark Antony was the immoral man described in sources, but it seems that Cicero exaggerated on his portrayal and in the portrayal of Octavian, whom we know that Cicero disliked in private. Thus, Cicero's use of morality and immorality in his portrayal of the 'Bad Mark Antony' and 'Good Octavian' was purely political.

Plutarch wrote Life of Antony, and his entire Lives to provide examples of conduct to the men of his own time. These constructions of the 'Bad Fulvia and Cleopatra' and the 'Good Octavia' were influenced by the author's own sense of morality, which as we have seen, were in line with Roman *mos*. However, Plutarch was not a contemporary of any of these characters; he had no political reason to be their friend or foe. Thus, how did Plutarch decide which character he would construct positively or negatively? As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Plutarch worked with various sources from people who experienced the period around 44BC-30BC. Thus, Plutarch's portrayal of these women implicates how Mark Antony's opponents conceived them. Owing to the fact that Plutarch's portrayal of these characters was based on these already existing images of the infamous Cleopatra and Fulvia, and chaste Octavia that Plutarch built his own representation of them. Nonetheless, presumably, he intensified or even invented some of this character's actions.

Nevertheless, these two authors constructed the personality of these characters based on the Roman moral system that established idealisms and not realities. Thus, if Octavian and Octavia were to be envisioned as an example, they had to demonstrate the highest standards of excellence expected by their social class. Whereas if the intention was to present Mark Antony, Fulvia, and Cleopatra as wicked, they should have immoral actions attached to them. Cicero and Plutarch's works functioned as moralising devices. Thus, the literary characterisation of these characters should not be taken at face value because authors are

influenced by *mos* when attempting to persuade an audience's judgment on certain people and behaviour.

Lastly, we suggest a topic for future research also in the sphere of gender studies, but in a different period of Roman history. We observed in Chapter Two that Roman authors considered the rustic Roman past, a period when Romulus, allegedly, lived, a time that provided examples of ideal masculinity and femininity. However, until when did Roman authors use this past as a point of reference for manliness and womanliness? Did Roman authors ever cease looking to this rustic Roman past for examples of behaviour? It would be interesting to examine if this past was put aside in literary narratives when Theodosius I established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman empire in 380 AD. Did Roman authors begin to seek examples of masculine and feminine behaviour in the image of Jesus Christ and Mary instead? Was the rustic past of Rome, at times symbolised by the image of Romulus, replaced by a more recent past (the one when Jesus Christ lived)? Did the Roman virtues associated with men and women change after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire?

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