INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Designing Women: Studies in the Representation of Femininity in Roman Society

by

Leslie Joan Shumka
B. A., University of Victoria, 1989
M. A., University of Victoria, 1993

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Greek and Roman Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

Professor K. R. Bradley, Supervisor (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor J. P. Oleson, Departmental Member (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor G. S. Shrimpton, Departmental Member (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor S. M. Treggiari, External Member (Department of Classics, Stanford University)

Professor A. M. Gowing, External Examiner (Department of Classics, University of Washington)

© Leslie Joan Shumka, 2000
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part,
by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.
Abstract

This dissertation aims to explore the rôle of *cultus* (body care) and *ornatus* (adornment and dress) in the lives of women in the central period of Roman history. Literary, archaeological, and documentary evidence is assembled to illuminate social attitudes toward the impeccably presented woman, and to understand women's perceptions of *cultus* and *ornatus*.

Chapter One begins with a discussion of Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus*, a work that provides considerable evidence for women's cosmetic and adornment practices. The *Paedagogus* serves two purposes: it permits a characterisation of traditional male attitudes toward feminine self-display, and it allows us to formulate questions which establish the importance of cosmetics and adornment to Roman women. This chapter also includes an overview of modern research on women's self-presentation.

Chapter Two examines literary evidence for Roman beauty culture, from which we learn much about the range of body care products, clothes, and adornments available to women. Analysis suggests that women used beauty culture to convey their notions of femininity and, perhaps most importantly, their sense of individuality. The urban-élite bias of literary evidence necessarily informs us of the beauty culture of privileged women, yet there is also strong evidence to support the belief that women of the lower orders also defined femininity in their own terms by means of *ornatus* and *cultus*.

Chapter Three focuses on a group of commemorative monuments from Italy and the Roman West. These memorials are sufficiently numerous that they allow a typology of toilette scenes to be created and discussed. Because of their artistic debt to Greek and Etruscan culture, the chapter begins with a survey of toilette scenes in earlier art sources. Discussion of the monuments then raises questions of whether women wanted to be
represented in idealistic poses, or whether such depictions were the work of men. I argue that toilette iconography presupposes that women identified with beauty culture, and spent time while alive using cosmetics and adornment to differentiate themselves.

Chapter Four examines a group of funerary inscriptions that accompany toilette iconography. These inscriptions have not previously been analysed as a unified body of evidence, nor as an important source for understanding the construction of femininity in Roman society. In current research, little attention has been paid to the status of honorands, or the extent to which ideals of femininity crossed social and economic boundaries. However, with the information gleaned from these inscriptions, further light is shed on how femininity was constructed, and how widely notions of femininity were disseminated and perpetuated within Roman society.

Chapter Five introduces comparative evidence, from the modern era, to demonstrate that *ornatus* and *cul tus* were part of women's strategy for achieving distinction and expressing self. The wealth of evidence from Roman literary, archaeological, and documentary sources affirming the importance of personal display in women's lives is invaluable, but does not in itself make explicit what women hoped to achieve by fashioning themselves and their own conceptions of womanhood. By comparing the ancient evidence with the modern, we see that beauty culture offered Roman women an opportunity to construct self and to create a sense of individuality.

In Chapter Six the conclusion is reached that a synthesis of all primary sources is essential to a deeper understanding of the central rôle of self-presentation in women's lives. Each of these sources is a fundamental piece of a larger puzzle which when integrated, rather than studied independently, demonstrate that *cul tus* and *ornatus* gave women the means and the independence to create a strong and effective presence, as differentiated individuals, in the communities to which they belonged.
Professor K. R. Bradley, Supervisor (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor J. P. Olson, Departmental Member (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor G. S. Shrimpton, Departmental Member (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)

Professor S. M. Treggiari, External Member (Department of Classics, Stanford University)

Professor A. M. Gowing, External Examiner (Department of Classics, University of Washington)
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Constructing Women: a Blend of Surface and Soul</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Interpreting Femininity: the Literary Evidence for Omatus et Cultus</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Depicting Femininity: the Iconography of Omatus</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Inscribing Femininity: the Evidence From Epigraphy</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Contrasting Femininities: Omatus, Cultus, and Historical Perspective</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six: Designing Women</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix One: Inventory of Grooming and Mundus Muliebris Reliefs</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix Two: Summary of Inscriptions</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Table 2.1: The Elder Pliny's Remedies for Skin Complaints</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Table 2.2: The Elder Pliny's Recipes for Skin-Care</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Table A.1: Geographical Distribution of Images</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Table A.2: Summary of Monument Types</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Illustrations

Abbreviations for journals are those listed in *L'Année Philologique*. The names and works of Latin and Greek authors and texts follow those used in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford 1982) and a *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford 1968). Abbreviations for works cited frequently throughout this dissertation are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Braemer</td>
<td><em>Les stèles funéraires à personnages de Burdigala, 1er-IIIᵉ siècles. Contribution à l'histoire de l'art provincial sous l'Empire romain.</em> Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felletti Maj</td>
<td><em>La tradizione italica nell'arte romana.</em> Roma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td><em>Inscriptiones Italae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moretti</td>
<td><em>Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo, nel castello cinquecentesco dell'Aquila.</em> L'Aquila.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinach</td>
<td><em>Répertoire des peintures grecques et romaines.</em> Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgili et al.</td>
<td><em>Bellezza e seduzione nelle Roma imperiale.</em> Roma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the great debt I owe to my tutor and friend, Professor Keith Bradley. Under his supervision I have learned more about Roman antiquity than I ever imagined. Although he may not think it, I am incredibly grateful for his exacting standards and attention to detail. They improved my dissertation tremendously. I must also thank the various members of my committee. Over the years I have benefited from the teaching of many members of the Department of Greek and Roman Studies, but none more than Professors John Oleson and Gordon Shrimpton. I appreciate the fact that they very graciously read drafts under severe time constraints, and that they challenged me to think more carefully about Roman women and self-presentation. Professor Susan Treggiari's expertise with inscriptions enormously improved the epigraphic chapter. No less appreciated are her many kindnesses over the last several years and during a rather muggy summer in Oxford. The University of Victoria and the Von Rudloff Travel fund were instrumental in supporting my studies, and made possible research trips to Rome and Oxford.

Several friends in the academic community facilitated the completion of this dissertation in all manner of ways. My long-suffering office-mate, Dr. Patricia Clark, routinely discussed with me the feminine display of Roman women and offered more encouragement and sage advice than she will ever know. I learned much from Dr. Michele George during rather animated discussions of social history, archaeology, and life in general. I must also thank Dr. Elizabeth Archibald for setting me on a collision course with the writings of Christine de Pizan, and for discussing aspects of the cross-cultural material with me.

Warm thanks go to the family, extended family, and dear friends who helped me through the difficult patches, and who listened patiently to chronic complaints about graduate student life. Jane Shumka read and meticulously edited the penultimate draft of
my dissertation (the errors that remain are mine); Joy Shumka offered wonderful hospitality during several trips to Toronto; and the rest of my family—particularly a gaggle of nieces and nephews—offered happy diversions from the frustrations of writing. I also wish to thank for their companionship those friends who have heard more about women and beauty culture in Roman antiquity than they ever wished to. Marion and Bob Dolphin, in their own way, nurtured a love of all things antique; Joan Casley offered her support through frequent thoughtful acts; my long-time running partner, Ronnie Lee, provided calm reassurance over innumerable cups of tea; Chris Hughes and her sense of humour helped me to keep life in perspective; and Kathleen Hiebert inspired me in ways she does not realise. My greatest debt, however, is to Patricia and Les Shumka, who have offered love and financial support beyond what any child might expect from her parents. Words cannot convey all that I owe them.
carissimis et optimis parentibus
In *Making Men, Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome*, Maud Gleason examines the way in which educated males in the second century of the Roman Empire fashioned masculine identities for themselves through the art of rhetoric. The creation or construction of individual identities is not a practice peculiar to Roman antiquity; individuals in all societies construct identities and rôles for themselves in any number of ways. What appears to be characteristic of the Roman world, however, is that the male identity was something to be actively earned and energetically sustained through constant vigilance; it was never a birthright. By way of demonstration, Gleason traces the careers of two extraordinary provincials of the second century AD, the rhetoricians Favorinus of Arelate and Marcus Antonius Polemo of Laodicea, who were not only fierce rivals but men who might be said to represent opposite ends of a spectrum of masculinity. Favorinus, scion of an eminent Gallic family, was born without testicles. Or so Philostratus reports (*VS* 489). The consequences of his physical condition, whether real or imagined by his contemporaries, prompted highly personal attacks by his chief rival Polemo, whose invective cast aspersions on Favorinus' sexual behaviour, and impelled Favorinus to construct a socially acceptable male identity. This he achieved through the careful cultivation of a distinctive rhetorical style, by scintillating demonstrations of his *paideia*, and by exploiting his high-pitched 'womanly' voice to great effect.¹

The context for *Making Men* is the second century AD, but on the whole Gleason's book emphasises the value placed on self-presentation by élite males throughout the era conventionally known as the central period of Roman history (that is, circa 200 BC to AD 200). What also becomes apparent in the course of reading *Making Men* is Roman society's abiding concern with definitions of gender and the behaviour that governs the

limits or boundaries of gender. The fashioning of female identities is well outside the scope of Gleason's book, but her work nonetheless suggests a need for a corollary study of women and feminine identity in the Roman world. If, for instance, _ars rhetorica_ was one of the means used to 'make men' of boys, by what means were girls 'made' into women? The ideology and hierarchy of gender in Roman society excluded women from the facets of public life (office-holding and oratory, for example) considered most valuable for shaping men's public personae and for acquiring the prestige that enhanced their _dignitas_. Funerary inscriptions, like the _laudatio_ for 'Turia' (_ILS_ 8393.30-34), convey the notion that self-sacrifice, devotion to others, and simplicity of self-presentation constituted the feminine ideal. Written during the late Republican period and thought to be composed by Turia's husband, the _laudatio_ speaks eloquently of Turia's selflessness, her unfailing loyalty to her husband, her kin, and the gods, the personal qualities that made her a model of Roman womanhood (modesty, obedience, industry, piety), and her 'artless elegance and simplicity of dress'.

2 Nonetheless, were these kinds of attributes sufficient for constructing the personae of women? Did women wish to be recognised as individuals? What were their aspirations? Can we ever know? It is the object of this thesis to try to answer these questions about female identity, especially through a study of women's use of cosmetics and adornment.

The lives of Roman women are poorly documented compared with those of Roman men, and we lack discourses by women equivalent to those of Polemo and Favorinus which might reveal how women conceptualised themselves and the world they inhabited.

---

2 Translation Shelton (1998) 292. _ILS_ 8393.30: *Domestica bona pudicitiae, opsequi, comitatis, faciliatis, lanificis tuis adsiduitatis, religionis sine superstitione, ornatus non conspiciendi, cultus modici cur memorem? cur dicam de tuorum caritate, familiae pietate, cum aeque materem meam ac tuos parentes colueris eandemque quietemilli quam tuis curaveris, cetera innumerabilia habueris communia cum omnibus matronis dignam famam colentibus?* Cf. the epitaph (CIL 6.37965) of Allia Potestas, which lists her personal qualities (strength, purity, frugality, innocence, loyalty) and which states that 'she was very neat at home, as out of doors' (*munda domi sat munda foras*). For text, translation, and commentary see Horsfall (1985).
Journals of individual women recounting the routines and vicissitudes of daily life might provide a more balanced perspective of female life and self-display but are non-existent. Personal correspondence affords some insight into the rhythms and changes of female life, but letters reflect only those women who were literate or who had access to individuals who could transcribe letters on their behalf. Legal documents to which women set their signatures provide another perspective on women’s lives, but tend to mirror the preoccupations of the well-to-do. If we marshal the evidence from disparate sources, however, we find that women did engage in a kind of *ars*—the art of personal display. And if these sources are any indication, this art enabled women at all levels of society to articulate status and to fashion the self independently of family and kin. Historians recognise the significance of this art in women’s lives but have not pursued its implications, frustrated perhaps by the limitations of our primary sources.

Male critiques of women’s display were not uncommon in Roman antiquity, and two early patristic writers, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, leave no doubt as to the male philosophy of feminine display. The justification for this view and the veracity of the general accusations levelled at women—that duplicity motivated their self-presentation, and that cosmetics and adornment brought financial and moral ruin—need some clarification. Where does hyperbole stop and reality begin? Criticism of women’s self-presentation persisted in Roman literary culture over the course of several centuries, along with the constant reiteration of proper standards of female deportment, suggesting that many women paid little heed to the censure of contemporary writers. Indeed, visual and written sources for female display indicate that it was both a vital and respectable activity for many women, not just those faced with compulsory idleness. What are we to make of this contradiction?

This dissertation attempts to understand the disparity between female behaviour and male opinion through analysis of a variety of literary and material evidence for the use, by women in Roman society, of cosmetics and adornment. Its main contention is that
cosmetics and adornment provided a vehicle of self-expression and individuality. Want of evidence from Roman women compels us, however, to examine the attitudes toward self-display described by female writers in other historical periods in order to gain a better sense of how Roman women may have perceived the techniques of personal display. The example of Vera Brittain shows what is involved. The British pacifist and feminist writer began her coming of age memoir by recounting her struggle to interpret Edwardian conceptions of womanhood. Intelligent, single-minded, and progressive in her view of women's rôles, Brittain chafed under prevailing standards of female education, and a curriculum which prepared girls to be 'men's decorative and contented inferiors'. She was severe upon popular attitudes which encouraged girls to dream of grown-up wardrobes, hairstyles, and fiancés at the expense of education, and which instilled the desire to acquire these badges of success before any of their peers. Brittain admitted to a certain yearning for the attire of a young lady and the limited independence it represented; with some guidance from her mother she could choose her own apparel and shed the cumbersome and confining clothes of adolescence. Her thoughts, however, turned mainly toward securing a university degree. Brittain's father eventually sent her to Oxford, but he exasperated her nonetheless by his persistent desire of seeing her transformed into 'an entirely ornamental young lady'. The Edwardian notions of female success with which Brittain wrestled—prescribed largely by men but not accepted necessarily by all women—can hardly be considered unique. They are part of a continuum of western gender ideology that has narrowly defined social rôles and ideals of womanhood from the classical period well into the twentieth century.

This dissertation is intended as a contribution to reconstructing the history of women in the classical, and specifically Roman, stage of the continuum. It begins by investigating

---

3 Brittain (1994) 32-34.
Clement of Alexandria (floruit late second century AD), an author especially interested in women and beauty culture, to establish a range of questions about the historical significance of ornatus and cultus. At the same time the chapter provides an overview of the research conducted on this topic by earlier scholars. The dissertation then proceeds to discuss evidence from various media (literature, art, and epigraphy) that allow certain inferences to be made or conclusions to be reached. Finally, the dissertation introduces comparative evidence from other societies to help interpret more fully what the primary evidence suggests about Roman women and feminine identity. In the end, the dissertation builds a case for believing that ornatus and cultus were not at all a trivial concern, but one of the few ways in a patriarchal society that women had available to them of expressing themselves as women.
Chapter One

Constructing Femininity: a Blend of Surface and Soul

And, truly, of all the good things that will happen with the full revival of cosmetics, one of the best is that surface will finally be severed from soul.

Max Beerbohm, *The Pervasion of Rouge*

Introduction

In the prologue to the *Symposium* of Methodius, Bishop of Olympus in the late third century AD, Eubulion implores her friend Gregorion to relate the details of a banquet she had recently attended. The dinner was held at the home of Arete, a woman of distinguished character, and Gregorion along with several other young women travelled on foot to her estate, on the outskirts of Olympus high in the mountains of Lycia. As they rested on a precipitous slope, there appeared a woman of exceptional beauty who did not at once approach Gregorion and her companions. The woman was tall, clothed in a robe of purest white, and walked in a most quiet and graceful manner. The luminous quality of her face, Gregorion imagined, had to be a sign of her modest and dignified character. Perhaps more striking, her face bore no evidence of make-up or any hint of artificiality.¹ In due course, the woman revealed that she was their hostess, Arete, and bade the young women to come and refresh themselves in the cool shade of her garden. There, Gregorion and her friends were introduced to other guests who were also newly arrived. They took dinner, and after the sumptuous meal each woman delivered a panegyric on chastity at the request of the hostess—the *raison d'être* of the *Symposium*.

Methodius composed this work during the late third century, but the banquet is set nearly two hundred years earlier during the era of Thecla, an alleged companion of Saint Paul and guest of Arete.² Telmesiake, Methodius' real life patron, is thought to be the

---

¹ Method. *Smp.* Prel. 5-6. The description of Arete may be a *topos*. Xenophon (*Mem.* 2.1.21) has the following description of a virtuous woman: 'And there appeared two women of great stature making towards him. The one was fair to see and of high bearing; and her limbs were adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty; sober was her figure, and her robe was white': καὶ δύο γυναῖκες προσέγαγε τὴν μὲν ἑτεραν ἐντραπῇ τε ἵδειν καὶ ἑλευθερίαν φύσει, κεκοσμημένην τὸ μὲν σῶμα καθαρότητι. τὰ δὲ ὅμιατα αἰθοῖ, τὸ δὲ σχῆμα σωφροσύνη, ἐσθήτα δὲ λευκή. Cf. Clem. *Paed.* 2.110.1.

² Musurillo (1958) 11-12 argues for a *terminus ante quem* of 309-310 AD for the majority of Methodius' works, but suggests a date somewhere between 270 and 290 AD for the *Symposium* itself.
earnest narrator of the *Symposium* and the eager listener, Eubulion, the author himself, who intended the work as a guide which would help his benefactor negotiate the intricacies of Christian philosophy and theology.\(^3\) Given the nature of this work, Gregorion's surprise at Arete's appearance, notably her lack of make-up, is intriguing. We cannot infer from Gregorion's comment that all women in Lycian society wore cosmetics any more than we would generalise about women in contemporary western society doing so. But the observations about Arete's appearance imply that women in Lycian society did use cosmetics, and that neither Methodius nor his patron would find anything remarkable in this fact. Methodius' disapproval of the practice is evident when he has Gregorion say that Arete's appearance has no artificial quality, but his censure is mild compared with that of other patristic writers who condemn its use—especially by *discipulae* of Christ.

Consider Titus Flavius Clemens, an ardent and well-educated convert to Christianity who lived in Alexandria during the late second century AD. Clement was thoroughly versed in the beauty regimens and fashion tastes of classical antiquity, particularly those of Roman Egypt, and this information forms a small but significant part of his treatise, the *Paedagogus*, in which he tutored his readers in the delicate art of self-presentation.\(^4\) More than a guide to comportment, Clement's work was a disquisition on the Christian lifestyle and salvation, as he made clear by assuming the rôle of pedagogue, and by constant reference to the greatest of all tutors, in the Christian view, Jesus himself. The pedagogue, a familiar figure of Greco-Roman antiquity, was the individual entrusted with accompanying children of privileged families to and from school or on other public outings. He had also, along with the child's parents, the greater responsibility of inculcating sound moral values in his young charges. While the 'technical instruction' of children was left principally to educators such as the ᾑδάσκαλος the *praeeceptor*, or the *magister*, the pedagogue ensured that the children of mistress or master learned how to comport themselves in public, how to interact with their elders and social inferiors, how to behave at table, and so forth.\(^5\)

---

\(^3\) Musurillo (1958) 4, bases this attribution on a citation in Epiphanius (*Haer.* 64.63), in which Methodius is called Eubulius, or good counsellor. On the purpose of the treatise see Musurillo (1958) 11.

\(^4\) All textual citations of the *Paedagogus* are to Stahlín's edition (Berlin, 1972). All English translations are from Wood (1954), unless otherwise noted.

\(^5\) On the rôle and duties of the pedagogue in Greco-Roman antiquity see the discussions of Marrou (1956) 143-144; Bonner (1977) 34-46; Bradley (1991) 49-55, with recent bibliography.
Clement's title is cleverly chosen. The pedagogue of Greek and Roman antiquity provided children with the moral training that enabled them to participate successfully in society. Clement was at pains to explain for his readers, themselves converts to Christianity, that they were like children. They were the very children referred to in the Scriptures (1.12.1, 1.54.1-3) and as such should accept Jesus as their own personal pedagogue who will help them check the passions which are antithetical to Christian living, and to their ultimate goal, salvation. As a purveyor of Christ's word, Clement was also a pedagogue, for he scrutinised a variety of situations which required certain standards of propriety. He dispensed advice on how to meet these standards, although he was in constant dialogue with Christ's teachings on a given issue, juxtaposing them with his own thoughts. In a private setting, for example, Christians had to regulate their sexual appetites. Intercourse was forbidden to all but married couples and allowed only for the procreation of children (Paed. 2.83.1); pederasty was not to be tolerated, nor were same-sex relationships (Paed. 2.86.2). At all times the Christian had to exercise self-control over the organs beneath the stomach (Paed. 2.90.1). This kind of discipline extended to how people slept, and the furnishings they chose for the bedroom. Luxurious coverlets, expensive carpets, feather mattresses, and purple bedding had to be scrupulously avoided. They were good for neither body nor soul because they made people soft (Paed. 2.77.2). The conduct of Christians at table, from the food they served to the manner in which they consumed it, sometimes spoke volumes to dinner companions about their characters and about the social circle in which they moved. The same applied to their behaviour in the baths or street and, quite naturally, to the decisions they made about their apparel, style of hair, and choice of ornament.

Clement's skillful marriage of deportment and theology is well illustrated by the metaphor he employed for spiritual growth. The greatest of all lessons said Clement,  

---

6 Christ as pedagogue and tutor: Tollinton (1914) 240, Marrou and Hari (1960) 7-9, Lilla (1971) 64. Purpose of the Paedagogus: Tollinton (1914) 242-243, Chadwick (1966) 31, Lilla (1971) 113, Frend (1984) 287. Frend (1984) 287 considers Clement's Protrepticus, Paedagogus, and Stromateis to be a trilogy. The first installment, the Protrepticus, is an exhortation to embrace Christianity; in the Paedagogus Clement counsels the newly converted on morality and salvation; and in the Stromateis he provides advice on topics of interest to Christians. Cf. Tollinton (1914) 20, Marrou and Hari (1960) 7, and Chadwick (1966) 31 who would see a link between the Protrepticus and the Paedagogus only, and who regard the Stromateis as something of an intellectual hotchpotch addressing a variety of topics in general but none in particular.

7 As Marrou (1955) 190 notes, Clement cites not only the word of Christ but also a range of other authorities, from New Testament scholars and classical writers to Homer, the poets, and Plato.
paraphrasing the Delphic maxim, was τὸ γνῶναι αὐτόν (Paed. 3.1.1). Anyone who knows himself will know God, but to know God and to become like him, warned Clement, precluded the wearing of expensive baubles and donning luxurious robes. Instead, God would be pleased when he saw Christians 'pure in the adornment of [their] minds and [their] bodies clothed with the adornment of the holy garment of self-control'. Clement's choice of imagery and expression is simple yet effective, bringing the main theme of the Paedagogus neatly into focus. Concerned principally with the salvation of souls, Clement compared the development of the spiritual self with a banal but necessary activity of everyday life, the clothing and ornamenting of the body. On another occasion (Paed. 3.39.1), Clement used the amusing analogy of footwear to define the limits of personal decoration. Just as the length of the foot determined the size of the sandal a person had to wear, so too the material needs of man had to be the extent of his possessions; anything more was only an encumbrance for the body.⁸ For the most part, he advocated a simplicity of attire and adornment which was good for the soul because it verged on the ascetic: but he acknowledged that a presentable appearance was also desirable because it was tangible evidence of a man of self-discipline (Paed. 3.53.5).⁹ Christians need not forego fine clothing and gold ornaments entirely (Paed. 3.53.1), so long as they remembered that tasteful garments were those which reflected one's age, place in society, character, and vocation (Paed. 2.38.3, 3.56.1). Moderation coupled with a keen sense of how to create the appearance of gentility seemed to be the key to personal style.¹⁰

The advice Clement provided for women on make-up and fashion in his guide to etiquette raises questions about female self-presentation, and constructions of femininity in Alexandrian society. There is much in the Paedagogus to suggest that the minimalist approach to self-presentation advocated by Clement was not the norm among the women of his community. He reflected at length in this work on the extent to which women

---

⁸ Compare here the comments of Horace (Ep. 1.10-42-43) who uses a shoe as fortune metaphor: 'When a man's fortune will not fit him, 'tis as oftentimes with a shoe--if too big for the foot, it will trip him; if too small, will chafe' (cui non conveniet sua res, ut calceus olim, si pede maior erit, subvertet, si minor, uret). Cf. Hor. Ep. 1.7.98.


¹⁰ The adornment and decoration of the body metaphor is not, of course, the only metaphor used by Clement to stress the importance of good comportment and spiritual growth, but it crops up often in the second and third books of the Paedagogus: 2.65.2, 2.100.2, 2.110, 2.113.1, 2.121.3, 3.4.1, 3.54.1, 3.64.1, 3.66.3.
pampered themselves, and how they endeavoured to improve not only their facial but also their bodily appearance. As evidence of this excess he cited (Paed 3.7.2) a segment of the *Malthacè* by Antiphanes,\(^ {11} \) in which the late classical poet had a maidservant recount the leisure activities of her mistress to a young man:

She comes, she goes, she comes back, goes again, she's here, she stays, cleans up, salves eyes and nose, pomades, combs, leaves the room, massages, then bathes, looks in the glass and gets into her clothes, scents herself, puts her jewels on, oils her chest...\(^ {12} \)

Clement provides no hint of the woman's status, so one might conclude from the apparent obsession with grooming—and her ownership of a slave—that she was of élite rank, and that her financial position enabled her to spend the day so engaged. But a passing comment by Lucian in the *Rhetorum Praceptor* (13), makes explicit what Clement does not: Malthacè is a courtesan. The description of Malthacè's toilette ritual is interesting in itself, but omission of her social status and occupation brings into question the way in which Clement employed his classical sources and the validity of his assumptions concerning cosmetic use. Many readers may have been familiar with Antiphanes' play and even recognised Clement's failure to set this passage in its proper context. How did this affect the strength of his thesis in the view of his listeners? Moreover, what of Clement's impact on the women of Alexandria, whom he implies were among his audience?\(^ {13} \) Were his comments relevant in the eyes of a woman, like the harried housewife described by Jerome, who was responsible for the administration of large households?\(^ {14} \)

\(^{11}\) Details on the life and career of Antiphanes, a comic writer of the fourth century BC, may be found in Edmonds (1959) 163-165.

\(^{12}\) Ερχεται, μετέρχεται αὐτῷ, προσέρχεται αὐτῷ, μετερχεται ἴκει, πάρεστι, ὑπετεται, προσέρχεται, σφήτα, κτελζέται, ἐμβέβηκε, τρίβεται, λούται, σκοπεῖται, στέλλεται, μυρίζεται, κοιμεῖται, ἀλείφεται: Translation: Edmonds (1959) 233. Cf. Theophil. 11, *Adesp.* 110G, cited in Edmonds (1959) 232. A quip from the young man ends the girl's recitation: 'and if a rope's handy, ties it and goes west' (ἄν δ' ἔχον τι, ἀπέχεται). Both Marrou (1970) and Stalin (1972) include the gibe of the young man in Clement's text but distinguish it as a possible corruption (3.7.2).

\(^{13}\) At the very outset of the *Paedagogus* (1.4.1) Clement makes clear that virtuous conduct is a concern of both men and women. 'They who possess life in common, grace in common, and salvation in common have also virtue in common, and therefore, education too' (...ἐνθα τοῦ κοινονικοῦ καὶ ἄγου τοῦτον βίου τοῦ ἐκ συνήθεις τὰ ἐκπαιδεύματα οὐκ ἄρρενι καὶ θηλείᾳ, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ ἀπόκειται ἐπιθυμίας διαχαζόνσις αὐτοῦ κεχωρισμένη). In *adversus Helvidium* (20), Jerome gives a sense of the industrious housewife who must supervise the household accounts and the payment of bills, consult with the servants about meals and domestic chores, attend to her children, and oversee the preparation of a meal for her husband who has, on the spur of the...
The integrity of Clement’s method is questionable at *Paed.* 3.8.1-3.8.3 too, where he summarises the beauty stratagems of women. Understandably, he felt outright revulsion at the pursuit of soft and supple skin which led women to apply crocodile excrement to their faces. Women dissatisfied with their dark complexions lightened them by means of ψιμωθὸν, a white lead powder; women with pale skin tones gave themselves a rosy complexion with πακέρως, a purple-hued dye; and light-coloured brows were darkened with ὄμβολος—soot or lamp-black. These references are interesting but not unique, for they typify anecdotes in Greek and Latin literature which mention the use of these and other substances for cosmetic purposes. More fascinating are the means devised to camouflage what women perceived as imperfections of figure. For those who were small in stature, cork might be stitched into the soles of footwear to give the illusion of greater height. Overly tall women could wear flat or thin-soled slippers and walk slightly hunched over to disguise their true height. Slim or boyish hips could be given a more voluptuous look by sewing pads into an undergarment where appropriate. A corset-like prop worn by male actors when portraying female characters could be used to create the appearance of large breasts; and when a tunic was worn over this prop the folds of the garment could fall in such a way as to conceal a thick waist or bulging tummy.

Clement openly admits (*Paed.* 3.8.1) that he has taken this material from the poet Alexis, who ridiculed the reputed artifices of women for comic effect. Despite Clement’s admission, his use of this classical source poses problems. First, to what degree do the satirical observations of a Hellenistic poet reflect the toilette practices of Alexandrian women in the second century AD, and given the genre of Alexis’ work, are

---

15 Clement’s knowledge of female toilette practices was obviously extensive. Indeed, Lane Fox (1986) 302 says that Clement, like Tertullian, had a ‘connoisseur’s eye’ for the make-up and hairstyles of fashionable females. Clement demonstrated this elsewhere in the *Paedagogus* (2.104.1, 3.5.1) when he censured the use of wigs, hair-pieces, hair-dyes, eye-shadows, rouges, powders, and depilation.

16 See for example Ischomachus’ conversation with his wife concerning cosmetic use in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* (10.1-5), or Ovid’s facetious remarks in the *Remedia Amoris* (353-355) on the array of skin creams and cosmetics which might be found in a woman’s dressing-room.

these observations simply a literary topos? Second, why does Clement, an ardent Christian, bolster his argument against cosmetic use with allusions to pagan literature? Is he merely parading a superior knowledge of these works under the pretence of demonstrating a point, or does he realise that classical references will strike a chord with his audience? That Clement saw a connection between the beauty conventions of the two eras is evident; how accurately he portrays them on other occasions in the Paedagogus is not always easy to assess. The issue of classical allusions is more problematic because of an omission on Clement’s part. The Alexis excerpt comes from a play entitled The Equivalent and is, in reality, a description of the alleged duplicity of prostitutes. Several lines preceding the description of appearance-altering make this plain, and Clement was acquainted with at least the first two.

He begins Paed. 3.8.2 with: 'Her first deeds look to her own gain and the plunder of her neighbour; all her other actions are but incidental'. The lines which continue from 'incidental' are missing:

And lay their nets broadcast; their pile once made, they take in novices to learn the trade, and as each comes re-furbish and re-plan her till she’s quite different both in look and manner.

Clement then picks up the Alexis text with: 'One woman by chance be small; she stitches cork in the soles of her shoes' (τυχάνει μικρά τις οὖσα. φελλός ἐν ταῖς βαυκίσειν). What prompted him to exclude the lines which make it plain that the beauty strategies of prostitutes are the object of Alexis’ derision? He cannot have thought his audience too delicate, for the third book of the Paedagogus is peppered with allusions to women of unsavoury character who expend too much time and effort on their toilette, or appear in public heavily made up. It is possible that the Alexis text which Clement used was defective or that it contained a lacuna. But a more satisfactory explanation is that Clement

---


20 Paed. 3.2.2, 3.5.3-4, 3.7.2, 3.11.2, 3.21.5, 3.63.2, 3.68.2-3, 3.69.2, 3.70.4.
edited his sources selectively to create a more cogent argument. There is no recognition of the fact that the women in question are in the business of selling themselves, or that the refurbishing of their appearances is an extension of this profession prompted by the tastes of their clientele. Clement has taken the characterisation of the demi-mondaine or prostitute—a *topos* of Greek and Latin literature—and applied it to women indiscriminately.

His application of this *topos* without regard for social status is well illustrated by the way in which he utilises a passage from Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (42-44). Clement prefaces the Aristophanic selection, which he does not identify, with a succinct excursus (*Paed.* 2.109.1-2) on the clothing preferences of women: 'gold embroideries, purple-dyed robes, those embroidered with figurines...as well as the saffron-hued Bacchic mantle dipped in myrrh, and the expensive multi-coloured mantle of costly skins with figures dyed in purple'. He goes on to say that even the comic poet, an oblique reference to Aristophanes, wonders: 'what sensible or outstanding thing do these women accomplish, who sit sparkling with colours, wearing their saffron dresses and so highly ornamented'.

Again Clement edits cleverly. The shrewd placement of this text allows him to imply that he too has difficulty understanding the character of women who wear such apparel; and by failing to place the opinion of Aristophanes in its proper context Clement sidesteps a key interchange between the incomparable Lysistrata and her neighbour-ally Calonice. The speech takes place early in the play at a moment when Calonice, eager to discern the mysterious plan for ending the Peloponnesian War, asks Lysistrata what could possibly be

---

21 Some philologists have noted but not pursued the social implications of this passage. Stühlin (1936, revised 1972) is the standard commentary on the *Paedagogus*. He identifies the Alexis fragment used by Clement (p. 240), and notes the absence of the first six lines but does not speculate upon the reasons behind it. Boatti (1953) 396 recognises the author of this fragment, i.e. Alexis, but does not comment. Mondésert et al. (1970) 26: ‘Clément omet les vers 3-6, 23, 27’. Fernández and Díaz (1988) 268 note the omission and point out that the conversation is between prostitutes: ‘Curiosa descripción de las prostitutas; por su parte, Ateneo tomando de Alexis, presenta dicho retrato en su libro XIII 568A’. Van den Hoek (1990) 189 mentions Clement’s tendency to cite classical sources, and the fact that he often does so inaccurately and incompletely. A more detailed discussion of Clement’s omission and the possibility of manuscript corruptions in modern day texts of the *Paedagogus* can be found in Arnott (1996) 274.


accomplished by women who 'sit trimmed and bedizened in our saffron silks, our cambric robes, and little finical shoes'. Lysistrata's response: 'Why, they're the very things I hope will save us, your saffron dresses, and your finical shoes, your paints and perfumes, and your robes of gauze'. Puzzled, Calonice asks: 'How mean you, save us?' Lysistrata replies: 'So that nevermore men in our day shall lift the hostile spear' (Lys. 42-50). The plan, of course, is for all women of Greece to make themselves as desirable as possible to their husbands, but to deny them any opportunity to fulfil these desires until the men agree to bring an end to the war. Clement thus ignores the real strength of the well-presented woman and one of the central points of the play—her powers of attraction and her capacity to influence men.

Clement's characterisations of 'painted' women leave no doubt as to his position on cosmetics and adornment: make-up is reprehensible because it encourages lascivious behaviour, and detrimental because it destroys a woman's natural bloom and makes her face more sensitive to irritations of the skin. More critically, by altering their appearances these women offend the God who created them (Paed. 3.6.3-4). Clement's guidelines on comportment are not hard and fast, however, for he admits that there are circumstances which permit women to make themselves up, and he offers two examples. The first is the story of Esther (Paed. 3.12.5), as told in the Old Testament, and Esther's efforts to save the Jewish people from the machinations of the wicked Haman. Haman wished to destroy the Jews in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, and by guile obtained permission from Ahasuerus to have all those over the age of eighteen put to death. Esther is desperate to prevent the persecution of the Jews and seeks the favour of the king. To attract his notice she adorns herself and then takes up a position in a courtyard where she knows she will be seen by him. Ahasuerus catches a glimpse of Esther, she obtains 'favour in his sight', and her loveliness ultimately convinces him to intercede for the Jews on her behalf (Esth. 5.1-2).

Since Esther's adornment is well intentioned, the selfless act of a virtuous woman, Clement cannot reproach her. Secondly, his attitude toward make-up and adornment softens in the

24 Lys. 42-50: KA. τι δ' ἄν γυναικεῖς φρόνιμον ἐργασάμενοι ή λαμπρόν, αἱ καθήμεθ' εξηνθησάμεναι, κρυκώτα φοροῦσαι καὶ κεκαλλωπισμέναι καὶ Κιμβρικ' ὀρθοστάθια καὶ περιβαρίδας; ΛΤ. ταύτ' αὐτὰ γὰρ τοί κασθ' ἀ διόκες προσδοκά, τὰ κρυκωτίδια καὶ τὰ μύρα καὶ περιβαρίδες χῇ ἱαυσα και τὰ διαφανῆ χτιάνα. KA. τίνα δὲ τρόπον ποθ'; ΛΤ. ὅστε τῶν νῦν μηδένα ἀνήρῶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλους αἱρεσθαι δόρυ ...

25 To impress upon his readers the immodest natures of these women he labels them prostitutes, wantons, or adulteresses (Paed. 2.104, 2.123., 2.125, 3.5, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.63), and even goes so far as to equate them with animals (Paed. 3.5.3, 3.6.1).
face of a troubled marriage. Clement encourages his readers (Paed 3.57.2) to be sympathetic to women whose husbands have been unfaithful and who adorn themselves 'to keep themselves attractive to their husbands'. Christian women, in his view, have a responsibility to sustain a marriage which is in difficulty. If as part of the strategy to save the relationship these women use their physical charms, this is acceptable—provided that they are motivated only to win or regain the admiration of their husbands. Clement says little about husbands with roving eyes, although he condemns adultery elsewhere in the Paedagogus, and hastens to add, after conceding the selective use of adornment, that he would prefer anxious wives to devise other means to keep their husbands' attention. They should resort to self-restraint and self-control to lead their husbands back to the marriage. Again, the implication is plain but not consciously acknowledged here by Clement: a well-turned out, beautiful woman possesses considerable power.26

The duplicity of women is not the only issue for Clement; he also has difficulty accepting what he considers the consumerism of their artifice. He claims (Paed.3.5.4) that women spend countless hours trying to improve their looks and in doing so not only neglect their domestic responsibilities, but squander their husbands' money. Clement's detailed accounts of dress and adornment suggest that women were the principal consumers of certain goods, and that the practice of making-up and ornamenting the body created something akin to an industry. No doubt many of these materials were of exceptional quality, for Clement observes rather tartly that mere words cannot convey their opulence (Paed. 2.115.2). Fine linen for clothing was brought from Palestine and Cilicia, special flax from Amorgos, and silk from the Far East (Paed. 2.115.2, 2.107.3). A partiality for purple-hued garments brought dyes from Tyre and Sidon, and the shores of the Laconian sea (Paed. 2.115.1). A taste for brightly coloured garments could not be satisfied by the violet, green, rose, and scarlet shades available locally; a special dye was imported from Sardinia (Paed. 2.108.5). Fashionable sandals were made in Alexandria, but styles from Attica and Sicyon, and others from Persia and the Tyrrenhian Sea area were much sought after. They were plated with gold or encrusted with jewels, and foolish women even had erotic messages etched into the soles of their sandals, which Clement interpreted as a sign of their prurient natures (Paed. 2.116.1-2). What is more, women frittered away their

26 Elsewhere (Paed. 3.83.4), Clement paraphrases a passage from Ecclesiastes (9.9) which advises men to be wary of the comely woman who has been the downfall of many (ἐν γὰρ κάλλις γυναικὸς πολλοί ἄνθρωπος ἐπαινοεῖτο); and at Paed. 3.11.2, Clement equates the naiveté of children with the foolishness of men who are smitten with the carefully contrived beauty of women.
husbands' estates on slaves (Paed. 3.5.4), purchased at exorbitant prices for the sole purpose of helping them with their grooming tasks. Clement's disapproval has less to do with the buying and selling of human beings and everything to do with the specific duties assigned to the slaves: one was responsible for mirrors, one for hairnets, and another for combs (Paed. 3.26.3).

Clement's advice on comportment and his stinging criticisms of personal excess are inherently interesting, and suggest a great deal about the cultural climate of Alexandria in the late second century AD. As a self-appointed arbiter of elegance for the Christian community, Clement encourages us to think more deeply about various aspects of daily life in a provincial urban centre in the Roman Empire of the second century. In keeping with his treatment of fashion and style, for example, we might examine the issue of self-presentation as it applies to women by considering his rather enigmatic statement (Paed. 3.58.3) that women who adorn themselves with gold do so because they fear being mistaken for slaves if they do not. Clement dismisses this fear as irrational because he believes the noble soul will always be recognised by virtue of its dignity, while the slave will always be recognised by virtue of his inferior character.27 There were slaves in Roman society proper who, although non-persons in the eyes of the law, achieved considerable financial success.28 With this change in economic status a corresponding change in the mode of self-presentation seems only natural; but we cannot adduce, on the basis of a single anecdote, widespread anxiety among freeborn Alexandrians over the modes in which slaves presented themselves. Visual markers of some sort were significant, for Clement says (Paed. 3.34.2) that if women were stripped of their adornments, and a master of his slaves, we would soon find that the master or mistress differed not all from his or her slaves.29

27 Paed. 3.58.3: Αἱ δὲ χρυσοφοροῦσαι τῶν γυναικῶν δεδιέναι μια δοκούσει, μη, ἣν ἀφέληται τῆς αὐτῶν τὰ χρυσά, δοῦλαι νομισθῶσιν οὐ κοσμοῦμενα. Τὸ δὲ εὐγενές τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ φώσι καλῷ κατὰ ψυχήν ἐξεταζόμενον, οὐ πρᾶσαι καὶ ὄνη τὸν δοῦλον, ἀλλὰ τῇ γνώμῃ τῇ ἀνελευθέρω διασέκρου ἡμῖν δὲ οὐ φαίεσθαι, ἐλευθέροις, ἀλλὰ εἶναι ἀμοίξεται...

28 See for example Bradley (1987) 108-110 on the slave's peculium which belonged to the master technically, but in principle was administered by the slave with the result that slaves occasionally amassed considerable assets. Gamsey (1981) 364.

29 Paed. 3.34.2: Αὔτικα γοῦν περιέλε τῶν κόσμων τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας τῶν δεσποτῶν, οὐδὲν διαφέροντας τῶν ἄργυρωντας εὐφήσεις τῶς δεσπότας, οὐκ ἐν βαδίσματι, οὐκ ἐν φθέγματι· ὅτως τοῖνυ τοῖς ἀνδρακόδοιοι ἔοικασιν.
A set of questions might be posed in connection with Clement's remarks to demonstrate the value of his evidence for a study of women and self-presentation. First, how does Clement conceptualise femininity and was adornment part of his construction? Is this construction entirely of Clement's own fashioning, exclusive to the Christian community, shared by society at large, or consistent across Italy and the Roman West? Clement, as far as we know, was neither Alexandrian by birth nor raised as a Christian. How strongly did his background and education shape his opinions when his dramatic descriptions of dissolute individuals, their distorted value systems, and their unbridled ostentation echo those of Latin writers such as Seneca, Petronius, and Juvenal, who criticised the lack of self-control exercised by their own contemporaries. Can we say that Clement's notion of femininity reflects one that was consistent across time in the Roman world, say from 200 BC through AD 200, the period conventionally known as the central period of Roman history? Did Alexandrian society truly experience a blurring of visual distinctions between slave and free during Clement's era, and if so, what were these distinctions and were they crucial to social interaction? More specifically, how did they affect women? Finally, whom is Clement addressing: a predominantly male or mixed audience, a secular or wholly Christian audience?

The Paedagogus in Context: Clement and Alexandria

Little is known about Clement's life before he took up residence in Alexandria, apart from the allusions provided by his own work and fragments gleaned from later Christian authors, principally Eusebius. Scattered throughout Eusebius' history of the early church are anecdotes about Clement's contributions to early Christian dogma, a lengthy list of his literary works, and an assortment of biographical notes. Born at Athens, Clement's early education was typical for young men from privileged backgrounds. He travelled

---

30 Chadwick (1966) 35. Cf. Marrou (1955) 184 who believes that the Paedagogus, as a social commentary, is to Alexandria of the late second and early third centuries what Petronius' Satyricon is to Italy of the first century AD.

31 Cf. P. Giess 40: a desire on the part of native Egyptians to blend with a socially acceptable crowd at Alexandria is evident from a letter of Caracalla's, dating to about AD 215. He writes that true Egyptian natives are easily detected among the linen-weavers of Alexandria by their diction, even though they have assumed the mode of dress and appearance of this group. Their boorish manners, however, will expose them for the simple rustics they are.

32 Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. 1.5.11) gives Clement's place of birth as Athens. Epiphanius, a somewhat later source, maintains that Clement was born in Alexandria (Haer. 32.6). Ferguson (1974) 13 thinks that Epiphanius' argument for Alexandria may simply be the result of Clement's residence there in later life.
extensively in Italy, Greece, and the Near East (Str. 1.11), before arriving in Alexandria in the latter part of the century where he came under the tutelage of the Christian Stoic Pantaenus. Just when Clement converted to Christianity is unclear, but it is obvious from his own comments that he embraced the faith and was not born into it (Paed. 1.1.1; 2.8.62). Clement is thought to have assumed the leadership of the catechetical school upon the departure from Alexandria of his much admired and charismatic tutor, Pantaenus. He himself remained in the city until the persecutions of Septimius Severus, in the early third century, at which time he left Egypt travelling possibly to Cappadocia, Jerusalem, and then to Antioch where he is thought to have died about AD 215. It was during his long sojourn in Alexandria, among a culturally and economically diverse population, that he composed the *Paedagogus*.

The Alexandria that Clement knew was a cosmopolitan city, one of the largest in the Empire, with a rich cultural heritage to match its status as the premier trade centre of the Mediterranean. The geographer Strabo accompanied Aelius Gallus, the Prefect of Egypt, to Alexandria in the late first century BC and provides a taste of the urban landscape at the end of the Ptolemaic period. Strabo describes a bustling port city with an exceptional harbour deep enough to accommodate immense ships, articulated by numerous quays, and graced by the famous lighthouse of Pharos. The main thoroughfares of the city were wide and able to accommodate both pedestrian and horse-drawn traffic comfortably. Temples dedicated to Egyptian deities such as Isis and Serapis, or Greek gods such as Poseidon, dotted the entire city along with innumerable gardens and monuments. Public works typical of those one might expect to find in a city of Greek ancestry—gymnasia, a great theatre, odeas, an amphitheatre and a stadium—reflect the insatiable appetite of the populace for public spectacles and entertainment. Statuary and spacious porticoes, the legacies of successive Ptolemaic rulers, enhanced many of these facilities. Even after its incorporation into the Roman Empire (30 BC), the opulence of Alexandria did not

---

33 It is clear from both Clement and Eusebius (who may be drawing on the autobiographical details Clement provides in his own work), that Clement travelled a good deal as a young man and studied with learned individuals in South Italy, Ionia, Coele-Syria, Egypt, Assyria, and Palestine. For speculation on their identities see Ferguson (1974) 14.

34 Strabo's description of Alexandria (17.791-795) is the most detailed we have from any ancient writer. He devotes considerable attention to the layout of the city, its public works, and its monuments. Consult Fraser (1972) 7-37, for a very detailed discussion of the topography of Alexandria at the end of the Ptolemaic period.
diminish; for the stability brought by the Augustan peace infused the Alexandrian economy with new life, ushering in a period of unprecedented prosperity for the landed and commercial élite, built upon expanded trade and production.\textsuperscript{35}

The intellectual life of Alexandria, and its reputation as a cultural mecca, is represented most of all by the Mouseion and Library. The palace district, or Brucheion, occupied nearly a third of the city’s area and it was here, Strabo says, among the royal domestic quarters and pleasure grounds that the Mouseion, a secular learning establishment, was situated.\textsuperscript{36} Of the subjects actually studied at the Mouseion we know little, but it was both a sensory and intellectual delight.\textsuperscript{37} There was a public walk, living quarters for resident scholars immersed in various fields of enquiry, and shady exedras where they could engage in lively debate. The Library, which housed an estimated half million works by both foreign authors and citizen luminaries,\textsuperscript{38} gives us a sense of the city’s heterogeneous character. The production of Alexandrian litterati in the three centuries or so preceding Actium belonged largely to the canon of Greek literature with which Clement was so conversant.\textsuperscript{39} Side by side with the works of Homer, Aristophanes, Aristotle, and Theophrastus, Clement could find those of Alexandrian medical practitioners, mathematicians, poets, and philosophers, such as Praxagoras, Euclid and Archimedes, Callimachus, and Eratosthenes. Some were also scholars in their own right, producing critical commentaries of classical writers in addition to being Library administrators.\textsuperscript{40}

Alongside mainstream literature, there was a second stream whose principal contributors were the Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish-Greek members of Clement’s adopted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Strabo 17.798. Trade and commerce post Actium: Rostovtzeff (1952) 1302-1303; Fraser (1972) 800; Van den Hoek (1990) 183.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Fraser (1972) 312-319. He characterises the Mouseion as the ancient equivalent of the modern university.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Strabo (14.673) provides meagre information in this respect: philosophy and the gamut of subjects which traditionally comprised ancient education (τε φιλοσοφίαν και τὴν ἄλλην πανεπιστήμιον ἔγκυκλιαν ἄκουσαν γέγονεν). Fraser (1972) 314, speculates that scientific research predominated.
\item \textsuperscript{38} On the location of the library and whether it constituted one or more repositories, see Fraser (1972) 320-335. It is difficult to know the state of the library at the time Egypt was annexed by Rome or the library’s state in Clement’s day. Stories circulated about conflagrations which destroyed the library entirely, but according to Canfora (1990) 190-193, there is little evidence to support such beliefs.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Fraser (1972) 674. Bowman (1986) 227.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Frend (1984) 34-35.
\end{itemize}
city. For example, one of the main contributions of Hellenised Jews to Alexandrian literature was the Septuagint, the compilation of moral and philosophical tales from Hebrew scriptures and translated into Greek during the mid-second century BC for members of the Jewish diaspora who no longer read Hebrew. One individual who relied most heavily on the Greek version of the Old Testament was Philo. A Hellenised Jew from a privileged Alexandrian family, writing in the first century AD, Philo attempted a synthesis of Platonic and Old Testament philosophy which influenced Clement considerably. That Clement was familiar with Philonic thought, itself an amalgam of Platonism, Stoicism, and Pythagoreanism, is evident from his own writings, in which he adopts some of Philo’s views. But it is not solely Philo to whom he is indebted. Clement’s multicultural erudition is well illustrated by his inclination to quote from classical sources, and also by modern controversies over the originality of his work. Indeed, scholars have claimed that parts of the Paedagogus, for example, are little more than excerpts from Musonius Rufus, adapted by Clement and presented as his own. Whatever the case, the eclectic mix of Jewish, Christian, Platonic, and Stoic opinion in the Paedagogus suggests that Clement was very much a product of his environment. And given the kind of environment in which Clement matured intellectually, what can we say of his audience: those individuals who read his work or listened to his lectures?

The Greek writer Celsus, who flourished during the last quarter of the second century, characterised the followers of Christ as generally dim and déclassé, and thought that Christianity appealed only to silly individuals such as women, children, and slaves (Orig. C. Cel. 3.44). He claimed that many Christians were nothing more than mere

---

41 Chadwick (1966) 56-57; Frend (1984) 286; Van den Hoek (1990) 185. The latter also mentions a number of other Jewish Hellenistic and Alexandrian Christian writers on whom Clement relied (for which see pp. 185-189).

42 Frend (1984) 369 notes that some 360 excerpts from classical texts are found in the Stromateis alone. Cf. Van den Hoek (1990) 183, following Stahlin, who indicates that more than a 1000 references drawn from 300 sources appear in Clement’s work. Hence her conjecture that Clement cannot have carried out his research without access to considerable library resources.

43 See for example Lilla (1971) 99, n. 3 for an excellent overview of this debate. He points out that some of the characteristics of the Cynic-Stoic discourse are found in Philo and in Plutarch’s Moralia, which Clement may have used along with the Ady tín of Musonius Rufus to write the Paedagogus. Cf. Marrou and Harl (1960) 83. Chadwick (1966) 60 believes that Clement’s view of sexual ethics derives from Stoic philosophers such as Musonius.
tradespeople—weavers, cobblers, and laundry-workers. Such people could and did comprise Clement's audience, this is not in dispute. The unprivileged formed the bulk of the racially mixed population of Alexandria: Greeks, Egyptians, and Greco-Egyptians, whose families had in some cases resided in the city for generations. But this is not really the world Clement evokes. The *Paedagogus* paints a picture of life among the socially élite and upwardly mobile, a world of leisure, of culture, of possessions, and of extremes which required tempering. The urban working poor, possessed of little or no disposable income for luxuries, are seldom encountered in Clement's essay on manners, although they might well have derived some benefit from his philosophy. His self-conscious allusions to classical poets and philosophers fed the desire of educated readers, those who sought a faith with an intellectual element. Repeated quotations of non-Christian texts suggest that Clement felt he might reach more easily the people to whom he ministered by speaking in terms they would comprehend. But it is obvious that Clement also felt the opinions of Aristophanes, Alexis, and others retained some relevance for his time, particularly when it came to the way in which Alexandrians presented themselves in public.

**Visual Evidence**

Throughout the *Paedagogus* Clement tries to reconcile the innate human desire for self-expression with the dictates of the Christian faith. He struggles to find a middle ground between complete rejection of the world and all its trappings on the one hand, and a kind of consumer mentality which he implies is rife within Alexandrian society on the other.

---

44 Orig. *C. Cel.* 3.44. Transl. Chadwick (1965). Celsus is thought to have written this tract during the last quarter of the second century AD. Cf. Meeks (1983) 51.

45 Fraser (1972) 796. Size of Alexandria: Bowman (1986) 205. Diodorus Siculus (17.52) placed the population in his day at approximately 300,000 freed and freeborn individuals. No mention is made of the servile population but estimates are that these residents would have brought the total population to about 500,000 in the mid first century BC. We have no comparable figures or estimates for the time of Clement.

46 Brown (1988) 24 comments that while writers of the second century wrote in theory for the many, in reality they reached the few. Van den Hoek (1990) 181, argues that Clement's writings give the impression of a learned teacher, but she believes that his works were literary compositions, derived in all probability from lectures, but they were meant to be read. Cf. Tolkien (1914) 20. Lane Fox (1986) 301, believes the membership of the Alexandrian church was probably split into two very distinct groups, the humble masses and a much smaller group of educated individuals.

Nowhere is this more evident than in his criticism of women whom he believed to be careless with their husbands' estates. Clement knew that some women worked diligently at weaving their own wardrobes, but these Clement cannot commend because, he maintains, they dye all their clothing purple with the intent of kindling lustful flames in men (*Paed* 2.114.4). Purple veils, he believed, attracted the gaze of those passing by, encouraging them to try to glimpse the face behind the veil; and to his way of thinking the only way to curb such behaviour was to 'wring the purple out of all the veils'. Clement's criticism may simply be part of a moralising tradition about the adverse effects of this colour which began, at the latest, with the Elder Cato and the controversy over the repeal of the *lex Oppia* (195 BC)—an item of sumptuary legislation—and continued into the late Republican and Imperial periods.\(^{48}\) Documentary evidence reveals that the wearing of purple clothing was fairly widespread in Roman Egypt during the first two centuries AD.\(^{49}\) But the most striking evidence for what Clement characterises as an immoral taste for this hue comes to us in the form of funerary portraits. Of particular interest are two portraits of women, thought to be from Antinoopolis and possibly Christian, whose carefully constructed appearances are the very antithesis of Clement's teachings.

These two portraits (figs. 1-2) take the form of linen burial shrouds, with likenesses rendered in tempera.\(^{50}\) In the first of the two portraits,\(^{51}\) both of which date to the end of the Severan period or possibly later, we see a well-turned out female who was no doubt a woman of means. This dark-haired, dark-eyed woman wears a simple loop coiffure. Her hair is parted in the centre of her head, formed into loops on either side and then pulled

---

\(^{48}\) Examples of this tradition: Cato, *Orig.* 7.8.10; Cic. *Ver.* II.2.72.176, 2.5.31, 5.86, 5.137, 4.26-59; Sal. Cat. 2.5, 4.6.12; Sen. *Ep.* 16.8, 76.31, 94.70, 114.21; Quint. *Inst.* 1.2.6, 11.1.31; Gel. 15.8.2.

\(^{49}\) Documentary evidence: Reinhold (1970). Sebesta (1994b) 71 notes that during the first century three new shades of purple were invented, and certainly by the second century a variety of purple dye substitutes had been devised which probably made this hue accessible to a wider range of the population than ever before.

\(^{50}\) The shrouds belong to a group of funerary portraits from Roman Egypt that number several hundred and which range in date from the early to late Imperial period. These portraits are commonly given the label 'Fayum portraits' because the majority were discovered, in the area of the same name, located to the Southeast of Lake Moeris and bounded by Dionysias in the west, Tebtunis in the south, and by the Memphite and Heracleopolite nomes in the east. In keeping with native Egyptian burial customs, likenesses of deceased individuals were typically placed over the faces of their mummified remains or, as in the case of these women, wrapped around the body. Shroud portraits became popular during the late second century AD.

\(^{51}\) Adriani (1977) No. 418; Doxiadis (1995) 119-120, Nos. 91 and 94.
loosely around the ears and up toward the back of the head where it is gathered with a pin.

The style, reminiscent of one worn by Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, would doubtless have received Clement's approbation for it meets his criteria in almost every way: it is neat, lacks pretension and coquettishness, and involves no intricate braiding (cf. Paed. 3.62.2). Her skin bears no trace of the powder, rouge, or eye-shadow which Clement disliked; rather she seems to have the rosy complexion which he regarded as a woman's natural healthy glow (cf. Paed. 3.6.3). Her adornment, however, comprises a torque richly modelled in gilt stucco, rings with inset stones on the first and third fingers of her left hand, and gold ear-bobs. She is dressed in a dalmatic of cyclamen pink, with gold-fringed clavi (the stripes that normally signified individuals of senatorial or equestrian rank) in a deep shade of purple. At her waist is an embroidered decoration which is difficult to discern owing to the poor state of the shroud. Her right hand is raised palm up toward the viewer, which may be an apotropaic gesture, or signify a blessing or prayer. In her left hand she holds a gold ankh-cross, a popular motif of Egyptian art, which in this instance might also be a combination of the Greek letters chi-rho, the monogram of Christ. The choice of apparel and ornament would surely have brought a stern rebuke from Clement, whose distaste for brightly-coloured attire has already been noted. The woman's finery disguises her real beauty, the collar-like torque gives her the appearance of a captive (cf. Paed. 2.122.1-3), and she has done violence to her body by piercing her ears (cf. Paed. 2.129.3, 3.56.3).

The second portrait is full length, and sections of it are poorly preserved, making it difficult to distinguish certain details. Yet we can still make out the form of another dark-haired and dark-eyed woman. A fragmentary inscription, located just below the abdominal area, gives her age as forty-five and bears a message of farewell (euvôkês). Her hair is coiffed in the simple manner of her counterpart, and her face bears only a hint of make-up.


53 Many of these portraits have been found in funerary contexts. There is reason to think, however, that portraits were painted and hung in the family home long before death. Once an individual died, the portrait was taken down and placed in the tomb or incorporated with the mumified remains. Comparable portraits have not been found in Alexandria, but Doxiadis (1995) 155, stresses the link between portrait painting and the Alexandrian school of painting. Cf. Walker and Bierbrier (1997) No. 117, for a poorly preserved portrait of a woman set in a frame of sycamore fig.

perhaps a little around the eyes. The dark shading beneath the left eye (the right side of the face is marred) is comparable to the shadowing practice which Clement finds objectionable (*Paed.* 3.5.1), and the line delineating the eye-lid extends beyond the corner of the eye itself, suggesting that she may be wearing a form of kohl.\(^5\) Her apparel consists of a dark purple dalmatic with a black border edged in an intricate vine motif, indicative of gold embroidery. Because this is a full length portrait, we can see that her feet are clad in closed-toe, ankle-high shoes trimmed in gold. Her adornment involves a heavy, braided gold necklace partially concealed beneath the neck of her tunic, gold earrings with pendant pearls, a delicate hairnet, and a ring on the second finger of her left hand, the style and setting of which is difficult to discern. She too grasps the *chi-rho* or *ankh* cross in her left hand as she raises her right toward the viewer. There is much here to criticise if we take Clement's advice at face value. The purple robe with its gold embroidery is functional but clearly intended to impress (cf. *Paed.* 2.109.1). The hairnet, like other feminine articles, denotes a sensualist (cf. *Paed.* 3.11.2); the pearls are a luxury with which women are obsessed (cf. *Paed.* 2.118.4); and her ring as an accessory is inappropriate, unless it is a signet ring used principally for sealing valuables in the course of domestic duties (cf. *Paed.* 3.57.1).

These portraits are thought to come from Antinoopolis, a community along the Nile nearly three hundred miles south of Alexandria, yet they symbolise much that troubled Clement about female self-presentation. Where purple was their colour of choice,\(^5\) Clement would have them wear white as a symbol of their virtue (*Paed.* 2.108.1) and also as matter of thrift. (A plain garment was never subjected to a corrosive dyeing process and so lasted longer [*Paed.* 2.111.1]). Jewellery is not in keeping with the spiritual adornment

\(^5\) Any assessment of cosmetic use by these women must take into account the artistic conventions and cultural notions of the time. The pale complexions of the women are probably indicative of a propensity to depict women with light skin and men with dark, to symbolise their different worlds (i.e. exterior and interior). Typical of Egyptian art is the accenting of the eyes with heavy lines and shading (Doxiadis (1995) 92). Thus, it is difficult to tell whether many of the women (and indeed some of the men) in the Fayum portraits are wearing eye make-up. See the remarks of Grillet (1975) who believes that these portraits demonstrate the use of lip and eye colour by women (p. 41-42), but not face make-up (p. 117-118).

\(^5\) As it was for numerous women. See the following portraits in Doxiadis (1995). From Philadelphia: no. 28 (late Antonine-early Severan), no. 29 (middle-late Antonine). From Arsinöe: no. 42 (middle-late Antonine) and no. 72 (middle-late Antonine). From unidentified Fayum sites: no. 75 (middle-late Antonine), no. 76 (late Antonine-early Severan). From Antinoopolis: no. 91 and no. 99 (both Severan). Other sites: no. 105 (middle-late Antonine). The portraits listed above are only those which date to the time of Clement. Consider also a number of others which date generally to the second century: no. 22, 25, 27, 42, 44, 59, 62-66, 72, 91-96, 103, 108.
Clement promotes: the true collars and necklaces of Christian women are humility and self-restraint (Paed. 2.129.1). Natural beauty should be sufficient for a woman, and if she is not pleasing to the eye her adornments will only accentuate her lack of physical appeal (Paed. 2.127.3). Like Malthace, the women in these two portraits have devoted time and effort to the cultivation of their appearance, but they can hardly be placed in the same social category as the demi-mondaine of Antiphanes' play. There is no obvious evidence of the deceptions—the disguising of figure flaws—which Clement implies were common to all women (admittedly difficult to detect in a portrait), but their ornaments speak to the materialism of Alexandrian society, as Clement perceived it, with demands for stylish clothing, fine textiles, exotic dyes, expensive gems, and so forth. The visual evidence, moreover, demonstrates that women actively engaged in modes of self-presentation which echoed the fashion and hairstyle trends popular at Rome; these modes did not accord with the dictates of classical authors, nor with the non-Christian and Christian authors of the first three centuries AD.57

Clement's idea of femininity emphasised taste and sartorial simplicity, yet this 'less is more' philosophy was not the norm among women in Roman Egypt in the first three centuries of Empire. Nor, as far as we can tell, does it seem to have been the rule of thumb among women in other large urban centres of Empire, most notably Carthage in the province of Africa Proconsularis. Under Roman control since 146 BC, Carthage rivalled Alexandria in terms of economic resources, population and size (Herod. 7.6.1), and from this cosmopolitan centre we have, as an analogue to Clement's work on female self-presentation, the thoughts of Tertullian, who wrote extensively on women's beauty culture. We might compare briefly his comments with those of Clement, for the two were near contemporaries.58

57 The notion of cutting a fashionable public figure seems to have been instilled in females from a relatively early age, as the portraits of a woman and her two daughters illustrate. The mother, Aline, is elegantly attired and ornamented, much like the women of Antinoopolis, while the older of the girls, both of whom wear purple tunics, has an elaborate hairstyle similar to her mother's over which she wears a gold hairnet. She is also wearing a heavy gold necklace and earrings. The youngest daughter is adorned with a simple gold lunula pendant, of the type that frequently graced the necks of women in mummy portraits. Indeed, the girls are little more than diminutive replicas of their mother. Portraits: Doxiadis (1995) Nos. 49-51. Aline and her two young daughters may have been residents of Arsinoe, a community approximately two hundred and fifty miles southeast of Alexandria. The portraits date to the Flavian-Trajanic era, but for other examples of well turned out young girls see Doxiadis (1995) Nos. 39-40 (possibly a mother and daughter); 66-68 (two girls from Hawara); Walker and Bierbrier (1997) No. 42.

58 Little is known or can be stated with any degree of certainty about the life of Tertullian. Barnes (1971) 57-59 is most comprehensive on this subject. He argues that the details contained in the accounts of ecclesiastical writers and historians are not on the whole reliable. Tertullian was born about AD 160, but
Tertullian, a Latin writer of North African origin, was the author of two books collectively titled *De Cultu Feminarum.* He, like Clement at Alexandria, was concerned for the salvation of the newly converted at Carthage, especially the women whom he regarded as daughters of Eve (*De Cultu* 1.1). The principal difference between Tertullian's approach to female beauty culture and that of Clement is that Tertullian divided beauty culture into two broad categories (*De Cultu* 1.4). *Cultus* comprised a woman's apparel and personal adornments, while *ornatus* involved attention to hair and skin and to those parts of the body that attracted the eye (*earum partium corporis quae oculos trahunt*). The former was a tool of the ambitious, the latter a tool of the meretricious (*alteri ambitionis crimen intendimus, alteri prostitutionis*), and neither was acceptable. Like Clement, Tertullian explained for women how nearly the physical body must reflect the modesty and purity of the soul, and in the course of explaining touched on many of the same points as Clement. Tertullian raises his eyebrows at feminine beauty practices which he characterises as deceitful (*De Cultu* 2.2.5, 2.9.1, 2.9.4). There are also familiar complaints about the violence of feminine adornment: God did not mean women to injure their bodies by piercing their ears for the sole purpose of displaying gems and pearls (*De Cultu* 2.10.1, 2.13.4). Indeed, for all their beauty women's ornaments are to be regarded as nothing more than fetters and chains (*De Cultu* 2.10.1). Tertullian reports that imported clothes, dyes, and adornments were desired by affluent Carthaginians (*De Cultu* 1.7.1, 2.10.1), and of course he heartily disapproves of these 'exotic' items. His concerns for women's beauty practices clearly parallel those of Clement and may be regarded as typical of the literate male's philosophy of women's self-presentation. Clement and Tertullian wrote for a specific audience, yet for all their expressions of Christian disapproval their conception of

how and when he died is unknown. He was married to a Christian woman and his work suggests that he was born into a good family and moved in well educated circles in Carthage, although these details cannot be determined precisely.

59 More properly, the second book of Tertullian's tract was probably composed during late 196 or early 197. Barnes (1971) 55 posits a date between AD 205 and 206 for the first book, while Arbesmann et al. (1959) 111 suggests that this book may have been titled *De Habitu Muliebri.*

60 Cf. Varro's etymology of *ornatus* ('toilette set'). He posits a combination of *natus* and *os* (quasi ab ore natus): 'for from this especially is taken that which is to beautify a woman, and therefore this is handled with the help of a mirror (hinc enim maxime sumitur quod eam deceat, itaque id paratur speculo).

61 Arbesmann et al. (1959) 111 notes that Tertullian uses the term 'benedictae' (*De Cultu* 2.4.1, 5.5, 9.4, 13.5) in reference to these individuals, and that this term was often applied to converts. Cf. Turcan (1971) 108.
female *cultus* and *ornatus* could be that of any secular writer working within the central period of Roman history. These authors convey the impression that women from all walks of life engaged in making-up and adorning themselves despite social ideals eschewing a contrived look for one more natural. Thus although these theologians reveal much about beauty culture in two major centres of the Empire, their comments raise one important question about female self-hood that they never fully answer: why did women persist with modes of presentation that were usually expected (by men) in the public sphere?

**Modern Scholarship**

The importance of self-presentation to women in antiquity is a subject yet to be fully explored by modern scholars, perhaps because it seems an insurmountable and fruitless task. The extant literary and documentary evidence provides little or no record of how women perceived their social rôle or whether they regarded their lives as circumscribed when they thought about it all. In the main, our evidence represents the literary output of educated men who belonged to an extremely small but privileged sector of the population, and whose chief concerns were the political, intellectual, and military events of their society, current and historical. Women held intrinsic interest for writers only when they ventured from their own worlds and impinged upon traditionally male spheres, such as politics. We have anecdotes and narratives about exceptional women who earned the respect and admiration of élite male writers, or provoked acerbic comment by virtue of their unconventional behaviour, that is, deviating from the culturally fixed rôles of women.

Funerary inscriptions describe paragons of Roman womanhood, but these are usually formulaic or idealised and represent only the sector of the population which could afford to set up a memorial to a beloved mother or sister. We fare little better with legal evidence, often stereotyping women's roles. Examples of respected women include Pliny's devoted young wife Caipurnia (Ep. 4.19.2-4), the tragic Helvidiae sisters (Ep. 4.21.1-2), and the valor of Ariia, wife of Caecina Paetus (Ep. 3.16.3-6). Conversely, we have accounts of unconventional women, such as Sallust's Sempronia and Fulvia (Cat. 23-28), Cicero's Clodia (Pro Caelio) 55-57, and Valerius Maximus on Afrania (8.3.2).

---

62 A problem first acknowledged by Finley (1965) 59.

63 Respected women: see the younger Pliny on his devoted young wife Caipurnia (Ep. 4.19.2-4), on the tragedy of the Helvidiae sisters, both of whom died in childbirth (Ep. 4.21.1-2), on the valor of Ariia, wife of Caecina Paetus (Ep. 3.16.3-6), and on the untimely death of Minicia Marcella who, though not yet thirteen, displayed all the qualities of a wise and dignified woman (Ep. 5.16.1-7). Unconventional women: see Sallust on Sempronia and Fulvia (Cat. 23-28), Cicero on Clodia (Pro Caelio) 55-57, Valerius Maximus on Afrania (8.3.2).

---

64 Epitaphs which provide descriptions tend to stress the devotion and obedience of the wife to her husband (e.g. *CIL* 1.2.1221, 3.3572, 6.1779, 8.23808, 13.1983), her deftness at spinning and weaving (e.g. *CE* 63.4, 1988.14, 492.16), her modesty and chastity, and her prudent management of the household (e.g. *CIL* 1.2.1211, 6.16090, 14.1826 10230).
for the simple reason that there is always some disparity between theory and practice, or in the case of Roman jurisprudence, between what the law actually stated in matters involving women (legacies, guardianship, and child custody) and what actually occurred. When using visual material as evidence for women's lives we need to be aware of what modern scholars have referred to as 'gaze theory'. Women in Roman art, the argument runs, are often depicted from the point of view of the men who commissioned the works, and the artists who executed them.65 Or so some scholars assume because we have little or no evidence to the contrary.

Scholars have devoted much time and energy during the last three decades or so to the study of Roman women, examining issues that directly or indirectly explain their position in the Roman family, their legal status and capacities, and their economic roles and contributions.66 Much of this work substantiates the traditional view of their socio-economic limitations, but the subject of cultus and ornatus as integral to womanhood and to public as well as private constructions of femininity has not been fully explored. Early surveys of beauty culture were sometimes general (Carcopino's Daily Life in Ancient Rome), occasionally comprehensive (Balsdon's Roman Women: Their History and Habits), and largely descriptive.67 Their chief contributions lie in the fact that the authors brought together diverse literary evidence for evidence for cultus and ornatus. Carcopino made no pretensions to writing a detailed account of women's lives, but Balsdon integrated his survey with an account of the women of Roman society. He mapped out a history from

67 In this section discussion confines itself to works published in English. There are, however, several works published in French and Italian that may also be characterised as general and descriptive. Sensi (1980-1981) explores the connection between bodily ornamentation and social status, focussing chiefly on the types of garments and hairstyles worn by under-age and adult women in public and religious contexts. Rosati (1985) is in the first instance a literary commentary on Ovid's Medicamina Faciei. The commentary includes appendices that address the views of other ancient authors, most notably Pliny the Elder, Galen, Juvenal, and Pseudo-Lucian, but does not grapple with the question of what women were actually trying to achieve by their beauty practices. Robert's (1988) study of 'modes' is primarily an examination of the emergence of modes in Republican Rome and the reason for their emergence, which he attributes to a human need to imitate. His discussion of fashions in clothing (p. 47-77) focuses almost entirely on articles of dress peculiar to men and women (that is, toga and stola); it makes little or no attempt to come to grips with women's motivations for self-presentation.
the mythological period of the she-wolf which first suckled Romulus and Remus through to the virtuous and disreputable women of the Imperial period, producing something akin to *histoire événementielle*. Sulpicia, wife of the consul Fulvius Flaccus, and Quinta Claudia were admired for their chastity; the *scortum nobile*, Hispala Faecenia, was commended for revealing the secrets of the Bacchanalia to the authorities in 186 BC; Sempronia, accomplished and spirited is alleged to have supported Catiline in his attempt to depose the government of 63 BC; and like mother, like daughter, Fulvia high-handedly involved herself in the political intrigues of her husband Marcus Antonius. Livia, Julia, Messalina, Agrippina the Younger, senatorial wives who followed their husbands into exile or death as a result of political disgrace, and the *matres castrorum*, all emerge from the pages of *Roman Women*; but their actions and behaviour inspired little speculation from Balsdon as to what they were about or why they behaved the way they did.

Given Balsdon's focus on the privileged women of Roman society, his analysis of beauty culture belies the very nature of everyday life for a great many women. Women's lives, despite the paucity of their choices, can hardly have focused solely on the pampering of hair and skin, or on the careful selection of attire according to social engagements. Certainly this would not have been possible for ordinary women—slave and freed, lower and 'middle class'—comprising the bulk of the female population. By reason of their social situation, they led lives which were less constrained but more arduous than those of their upper-class counterparts. To reconstitute the lives of these women is extremely difficult, as Balsdon noted. He was hampered in this respect by the heavy élite-urban bias of the textual evidence, but realised that the careful selection and analysis of scraps of evidence such as funerary reliefs and inscriptions could bring these women to life. His knowledge of the literary and material evidence for women's *ornatus* is evident in his descriptions of the kinds of clothing they wore, trends in hair-styles and preferences in colour, the care given to the nurturing of lovely complexions, and the diverse potions used in this pursuit. He was sensitive to the moral prejudice of satirists like Martial and Juvenal.

---

68 Despite Balsdon's familiarity with the textual and material culture of Roman antiquity, which he employed neatly in the second half of his book, the ordinary women of Rome seldom came into view, apart from glimpses of women of so-called 'objectionable' character: prostitutes, courtesans, concubines, slave and freed women. Balsdon tended to obscure the daily reality for the women of Roman society at large, because he was preoccupied more with the marital and sexual status of women and less with the social and economic hardships they encountered.

69 Balsdon (1962) 16-17.
and moralists like Seneca and Pliny the Elder, recognising that their work cannot be taken at face value. Yet Balsdon seldom tried to interpret their comments, revealing instead the limitations of his own antiquarian approach to women's history with such remarks as: 'the arranging of her hair naturally occupied a large part of a woman's time and thought'; 'the towering splendour [of the Flavian hairstyle] was to be viewed from one direction only, the front, and women must have manoeuvred at social gatherings, to keep out of view the ridiculous anti-climax which the backs of their head constituted'; and 'in pagan Rome only the Vestal Virgin was forced to suppress a sigh, knowing that such vanity was not for her'.

Thirteen years elapsed between the publication of Balsdon's *Roman Women* and Sarah Pomeroy's pioneering book, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, which appeared in 1975. The intervening years were fruitful, for they had a profound effect on the writing of women's history. Where Balsdon's approach was antiquarian, Pomeroy's was feminist. Balsdon endeavoured to examine the habits of women, but like his predecessors in Roman society he tended to write about the women who conformed or deviated from narrowly defined rôles; or he generalised about women of the lower classes. Pomeroy's book, conversely, was very much the product of the feminist and civil rights movements of the 1960s and early 1970s. The feminist movement aimed to make contemporary western society more conscious of the problems faced by modern women, vis-à-vis issues such as pay and employment equity, a woman's right to physical autonomy, and social attitudes that were deemed injurious to women. The civil rights movement, similarly, forced contemporary western society to reconsider its treatment of people of colour, not simply on the subject of segregation, but on many of the same issues raised by femininists: equality in the eyes of the law, discriminatory employment practices, and social attitudes toward marginalised groups which created harmful stereotypes. And the causes taken up by both these movements encouraged ancient historians to re-evaluate approaches to their own discipline, with the result that they began asking different questions about Greek and Roman society. For Pomeroy, this meant trying to determine what ancient women were doing while their male counterparts were actively engaged in politics and warfare. She saw

---

70 Balsdon (1962) 253, 256, and 261. And as far as the beauty culture of the lower classes was concerned, Balsdon could only observe the following (p. 224): 'Prostitutes (scorta, meretrices, lupae) were to be encountered in Rome and in all Italian cities and were no more difficult to recognise in Roman antiquity than in the modern world. Many of them were foreigners, women from Syria and Egypt. Their faces were heavily made up, they wore no bands in their hair and their clothes...were usually in outrageously bright colours'.

this as a much needed area of study because both ancient and modern histories have tended
toward the political, military and intellectual, obscuring 'the record of those people who
were excluded by sex or class from participation in the political and intellectual life of their
societies'.

Like Balsdon, Pomeroy sets the stage for her study of Roman women with an
examination of the evolving rôles of Greek and Egyptian women in the Hellenistic period.
Here, women are seen to be doing everything but spending countless hours at their
dressing-tables or awaiting the arrival of bridegrooms. She too is at pains to recount the
accomplishments of élite women, such as the Macedonian queens Olympias and Arsinoë,
but she recognises the need for explaining the slowly evolving 'competence' of women in
many areas of daily life. Financial responsibilities for women were on the rise: documentary evidence from Delphi shows an increasing number of women manumitting
slaves, and contracts from Delos indicate that women were, albeit with the help of male
kin, borrowing money and taking on contractual obligations of all kinds. At the same time
we have evidence that greater numbers of women were gaining access to education, both
intellectual and physical. Turning to ancient Rome, Pomeroy demonstrates how the
expansion of the middle and late Republic dramatically affected the lives of women in
Roman society. Periods of prolonged warfare sometimes forced husbands to be absent for
extended periods of time leaving women to assume many responsibilities previously
shouldered by men, such as the management of family business or estates. Or women
found themselves bereft of husbands and other male relatives, who were casualties or
prisoners of war, placing them in leadership rôles. The loss of husbands and fathers
through war enriched many women who, along with other family members, inherited a
portion of the deceased's estate. After Cannae (216 BC) especially, rich and well-
connected women often found themselves without a male relative to whom they were
accountable (Liv. 22.56.4-6). But by 214 BC, on Livy's evidence (24.18.13-14, 34.5.10,
34.6.14), the state had taken steps to prevent widows, single women, and wards from
becoming wealthy in this fashion, by legally confiscating all funds of such individuals and
depositing them in the state treasury. Opportunities for women to participate directly in
Roman society did not improve enormously as the Republic turned to Empire. As before,
women continued to fulfill their rôles as wives and mothers, and to carry out their religious

71 Pomeroy (1975) ix.

72 Pomeroy (1975) 122-124; 130-131; 136-137.
duties. A greater number of women now possessed immense wealth in their own right, and were able to dispose of it more or less as they wished, despite the existence of guardianship (tutela) but within the rigid hierarchy of Roman society, the position and life courses of women remained essentially the same.

Although Pomeroy describes the lives of women in Roman antiquity with a vigour and thoroughness not found in Roman Women, ornatus is one aspect of their lives which she treats summarily. Adornment and dress are discussed in the same breath as sumptuary legislation, a feature of the Republican era which she sees as reflective of the increasing emancipation of women. Apart from the subject of sumptuary legislation in Republican Rome and its intended effect on women, Pomeroy does not investigate the use of cosmetics or the rôle of ornatus in female self-presentation. She is aware of one result of displays of wealth among women of the upper classes, but does not pursue the issue at length. Given the scope of Pomeroy's study (a general survey of women in Greco-Roman antiquity covering nearly 1500 years) it would have been impossible for her to address every aspect of women's lives in depth. Nevertheless, it seems odd that the subject of female self-presentation has been taken up only sporadically by later scholars, especially in view of Pomeroy's shrewd observation that the affluence affected by an élite Roman woman 'redounded to her own reputation among other women as well as men'.

A typical discussion of ornatus and self-presentation in post-Pomeroy work (if it appears at all), is found in the multi-authored Women in the Classical World. The professed aim of this collaborative effort is the compilation of written and visual evidence for the lives of ancient women which is then set in its proper social and historical context. The end product is a source-book that gives equal weight to both textual and art historical evidence, and which the authors recommend be read alongside a social history of women, such as Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves. Like its predecessors, Women in the

73 Pomeroy (1975) 181.

74 Pomeroy is concerned mainly with how to interpret the conditions of the lex Oppia, passed in 215 BC. She contends that the law was designed to maintain decorum in an atmosphere of near hysteria. It was not an attempt to curtail the extravagance of women. Rome had suffered one of its most devastating military defeats ever at Cannae and the adversities of the Hannibalic war generally had raised serious doubts about the pax deorum.

75 Pomeroy (1975) 181-182.

Classical World treats the issue of sumptuary legislation, particularly the Oppian and Voconian laws, and to a lesser extent the comments directed toward women by the protagonists of the famous debate over the abrogation of the Oppian law (195 BC)—M. Porcius Cato and L. Valerius. Attention is thus given to the famous speech by L. Valerius, who pleads for repeal on the grounds that women cannot participate in political or military life and so should be permitted certain freedoms when it comes to adorning themselves: 'Cosmetics and adornment are women's decorations. They delight and boast of them and this is what our ancestors called women's estate' (Liv. 34.7.8). The arguments of Valerius are followed closely in the source-book by an excerpt from Plautus' Aulularia (498-550) in which a young bachelor disapprovingly describes the contents of a wealthy woman's dowry—almost entirely clothing and baubles. More passages follow from ancient authors in which the economic capacities of affluent Roman women, and the anxiety of some Roman males at the growing power of women is made plain. Despite the available evidence, however, the authors have little to say about the high value placed on ornatus by women, or the fact that these women, especially older wives, were used by their husbands or male relatives as 'indexes of affluence'.

The integration of the material remains in this source-book for women's lives is an interesting departure from the manner in which many historians traditionally utilise archaeological evidence, that is largely for illustrative purposes. In this instance, however, the analysis of remains for dress and make-up is rather superficial. The authors make special note of toilette articles which have been found at Pompeii, the well known Neumagen relief depicting a woman surrounded by a small retinue of hand-maids who help her with her toilette (Fig. 13.12), and an example of a Phrygian door-stone (Fig. 13.7) a type of funerary marker showing the objects specific to both a man's and a woman's world. Typically, the latter include a mirror, a comb, slippers, a ball of wool and a spindle, and occasionally other accoutrements. Analysis of this evidence is limited to statements such as '[women did decorate themselves]'...both sculpture and paintings reveal norms for women's appearance, and cosmetic jars and jewellery, earrings, pins, and golden hairnets provide specific evidence'. With respect to a well-known wall-painting from Pompeii (Fig. 12.9) meant to represent a well-turned out and ostensibly literate young

---

77 Fantham (1994) 262-264.
78 Balsdon (1962), Finley (1965), Pomeroy (1975) for example, all used engaging images of women in their work, but of the three only Pomeroy attempts to use visual art as an indicator of cultural change.
couple, the authors simply remark that 'such an image locates a woman in the world that combines very old traditions—marriage and female beauty as natural and necessary—with the notion of female competence'.\textsuperscript{79} Cultus and ornatus are not examined to any extent, nor are their contributions to female modes of presenting the self and Roman constructions of femininity ever mentioned.

An important legacy of feminist scholarship is that it has brought us to the realisation that gender is a social construct, that the idea of a man or of a woman is not defined by biology alone, but also by society and culture.\textsuperscript{80} Once scholars came to this realisation they were impelled to examine gender issues further. Sex and gender studies have influenced the direction of contemporary research considerably, particularly on issues of the self. Scholars have moved beyond mere questions of masculinity and femininity, and have concentrated on self-fashioning and self-presentation.\textsuperscript{81} The most recent example of the latter is the study with which this work began, \textit{Making Men}. Long before Gleason, however, Natalie Kampen used art historical evidence to shed light upon the search for personal identity among women of non-élite status, the product of which was \textit{Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia}. Specifically, Kampen examines reliefs from the ancient port town of Ostia depicting women engaged in a variety of occupations. As an art historian, Kampen is interested chiefly in establishing a relationship between the style and execution of the Ostian reliefs and those in the native Italic and provincial traditions; but she is also intrigued with what she defines as the female 'work imagery' of the Ostian reliefs, and with what this imagery may communicate about the individual they commemorate. Kampen freely admits that the iconography of working women has been the subject of analysis by many scholars, but she feels there is a need to grapple with one issue in particular, the question of whether the Ostian reliefs document 'the public rôles and personal status' of the deceased.\textsuperscript{82}

Kampen creates a typology of the reliefs which depict women engaged in a variety of occupations. There is some stylistic variation among the representations, but they fall

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} Fantham (1994) 341.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Burke (1993) 50-51.
\item \textsuperscript{81} The study of which was first initiated by Goffman (1958) and then expanded in Greenblatt (1980), a highly regarded study of self-fashioning as it applied to certain Renaissance males.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Kampen (1981) 15.
\end{itemize}
essentially into one of six categories: nutrix or child-care worker, food service worker, poultry vendor, vegetable vendor, shoemaker, and midwife or obstetrix. She then divides the images into two methods of presentation, the subordinate and the literal work image. The former presents work as one small, and thus subordinate, aspect of the life of the deceased. Often it is a single part of a greater whole incorporating secular, religious, and mythological imagery (see for example the various biographical sarcophagi in her catalogue). This mode of presentation on funerary monuments, in Kampen's opinion, is practiced largely by the élite or upwardly mobile of society. The second manner of presentation differs markedly, in that the worker is shown anecdotally. In other words, we see the worker engaged in her daily business as vegetable vendor selling her produce, or as nutrix hovering over her small charge. The imagery of the funerary monuments clearly reveals something about the deceased and about the centrality of work in the lives of lower and upper class women. To Kampen's mind it was essential for élite women and those in prosperous families to demonstrate the origins of their prosperity—but among the images which can be attributed to these social strata one seldom finds on funerary monuments a portrait or small vignette of the deceased presiding over the running of the business nor do we see her engaged in the supervision of her household. With the literal work images, however, the role and importance of labour in the creation of identity is evident. Among the lower classes work was a necessity, it was valued, and it became perforce a means of communicating to society the identity of the deceased. Although Kampen emphasises here the way in which work helped create a social identity, her study suggests that Roman women from all walks of life were conscious of self-presentation, and that in death it was important that some statement be made about who and what they were.

This desire for social identity, and its close association with self-presentation is a theme taken up by Sandra Joshel in *Work, Identity and Legal Status*. Joshel's objective is to survey the extant occupational inscriptions from the Roman world, in order to understand how certain individuals conceived of themselves. She is not concerned with individuals who held public office, such as apparitores, senatorial or equestrian officials; nor does she include the various slave and freed individuals who were employed in the Imperial

---

83 Kampen (1981) 33-86.
household. Her evidence is a control group of nearly fifteen hundred occupational funerary inscriptions (1262 for males and 208 for females), from the late first century BC to the late second century AD. For the most part, the individuals commemorated in these epitaphs were either self-employed or worked in the marketplace.\(^86\) Joshel acknowledges that we have no reliable way of telling whether the individuals commemorated in the epitaphs reflect even remotely the actual work force in Rome under the High Empire, because her evidence is limited and does not constitute a representative body of evidence for the nearly one million inhabitants of the city during this period. She feels, nevertheless, that those individuals who recorded their occupations in their epitaphs display 'a certain self-consciousness about the rôle of work in their existence'.\(^87\) Joshel interprets the occupational statements as a subtle counter to the bias of social attitudes towards work and those who performed it—principally slave, freed, and freeborn individuals without the financial means to enjoy a leisured existence. Slaves in the *familia urbana*, for example, who mention job titles in their epitaphs, make a clear statement about their rôle within the household and the importance of their labour despite their servile status: the master's leisured existence was not possible without their labour. As she puts it: 'job title asserts the slave's physicality and activity against a master's passivity and dependence and quietly resists the depersonalization defined by the loss of physical integrity'.\(^88\) For the freed individual job title meant something slightly different. Epitaphs and monuments themselves made statements about freed individuals, and about how they achieved prosperity through labour.

Like the working women of Ostia, the workers and labourers commemorated in Joshel's study found a way to express who they were, and in the process articulated 'some sort of dignity of place' for themselves.\(^89\) And for these liminal individuals, the construction of an identity through job title may have been the only means of establishing an identity distinct from their legal and social one. Women of all backgrounds, in a sense, were in a comparable situation. Participation in society was limited and their identities were based in the main upon the men to whom they were related. This leads us back to the

\(^86\) Joshel (1992) 16.

\(^87\) Joshel (1992) 17.

\(^88\) Joshel (1992) 165.

\(^89\) Joshel (1992) 169.
question of *ornatus* and self-presentation. Was a woman’s cultivation of a personal style, through make-up and adornment choices, a form of self-presentation designed to meet an established notion of femininity, or was it meant to counteract some sort of social prejudice?

Joshel’s work is based on epigraphical evidence it is very much driven by cross-cultural, feminist, and anthropological studies, all of which have helped to shape her view of marginalised individuals in Roman society. This inter-disciplinary approach, which attempts to illuminate the world of the silent members of Roman society, is only one example of the way in which the scholarship of the last two decades has been influenced by the liberalism which grew out of the 1960s. The development of contraceptives in the late 1950s and early 1960s also contributed to the rise of gender studies in that it gave western society pause to reconsider its definitions of sexuality. The liberal spirit which pervaded the research of succeeding generations has made it possible for scholars to deal more frankly with issues concerning the body. As an illustration of the progression towards body history, we might think about the difference between Balsdon’s and Pomeroy’s treatments of contraception in Roman antiquity. Balsdon reduces the subject to the single claim that we know very little about contraceptive methods in ancient Rome, where Pomeroy devotes several pages to discussion of contraceptives, their efficacy, and alternatives to unwanted pregnancies.90

For an indication of the direction which body histories have taken in recent years we might consider Aline Rousselle’s *Pomeia*, in which the long-exalted human body of Greco-Roman art is examined in the context of late antiquity, where it proved an insurmountable impediment to ‘the accomplishment of God’s will’ for many Christian individuals. Rousselle concerns herself chiefly with what she calls ordinary behaviour and conceptions of the body, and how this behaviour shaped intellectual notions of the body; in other words, she takes as her principal focus the ‘social background to emotional or sexual relations’.91 Rousselle never really considers modes of presenting the self in her study, particularly in the form of cosmetics and adornment, but her discussion of women’s productive and reproductive systems suggests possible ways of looking at the topic of self-presentation, personal identity, and beauty culture. She surveys the medical literature from antiquity: the works of second century physicians Soranus, Rufus and Galen, and that of

---


the fourth century practitioner, Oribasius. Rousselle deduces from it that gynaecological theories of the second century AD developed in such a way as to benefit men. Information on women's productive and reproductive systems as found in the Hippocratic Collection was derived in great part from consultations with Greek women on how their bodies reacted to such things as menstruation, pregnancy and menopause. Greek women examined themselves, or each other as required, sharing information on remedies for various women's ailments, for contraception, and for abortion. Roman women, in contrast, had no need of such information-sharing, because Soranus and Rufus had the Hippocratic writings at their fingertips, which they could consult when making diagnoses. Thus women had less control over their bodies than their Greek counterparts, because the flow of information was controlled chiefly by men.92

Rousselle also considers gynaecological information against the background of the Augustan marriage legislation, which placed enormous pressures upon men and women of child-bearing years to marry and procreate or place inheritance at risk. For her, the stipulations of the Julian and Poppaean-Papian laws and the recommendations of physicians like Soranus point to complete control of women's bodies by fathers, husbands, and society at large. Rousselle believes that Roman women resented the external controls placed upon their productive and reproductive systems and that their response can be seen by the way in which they refused to accept the effects of numerous pregnancies on their bodies. Roman women replied to the control of their bodies, in the first instance, by doing their duty by their fathers and husbands, i.e., by consenting to marriage—very often at a tender age, and then by bearing children. Once their social and familial obligations were fulfilled, Roman women attempted to take responsibility for and assume control of their own bodies. To Rousselle's mind, this resistance took the form of refusing to breast-feed their infants and taking medicines to dry up their breast milk because they had no wish to ruin the shapeliness of their breasts through the feeding of children. They refused to have more children, as the law required, and so used contraceptive measures and took abortifacients to end unwanted pregnancies. But the resistance of Roman women can be seen most clearly, in Rousselle's view, in their preoccupation with the maintenance of trim

---

92 Rousselle (1988) 40. The intended audience of Soranus' gynaecological text, in Rousselle's view, can be deduced from section titles: 'Up to What Time Females Should Be Kept Virgins', 'How to Recognise Those Capable of Conception', and 'What are the Signs of Approaching Menstruation'. These sections were designed essentially to provide men with guidelines for choosing a wife, and for teaching them how to recognise the time when their daughters might be physically suited to marriage. Cf. Rousselle (1988) 32.
figures and their aversion to putting on excess weight (a primary result of pregnancy). While there is little evidence to substantiate Rousselle's argument that women tried in a sense to reclaim their bodies by refusing to nurse their children and so forth, her work suggests another way perhaps of looking at make-up use and adornment among Roman women. Not only could they be an expression of self-hood, but also an expression of control over a body which was otherwise controlled by society. Rousselle, however, never regards making-up or the choices made about apparel and ornamentation as a form of behaviour which might reveal something about Roman attitudes toward the female body, or constructions of femininity, or notions of sexuality, despite her familiarity with early Christian theologians such as Tertullian and Cyprian, who provided apparel guidelines for the women of their churches.

This inclination toward using the body as a sort of social sign-board is an idea proposed by Peter Brown in *The Body and Society, Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. His focus is the life-long commitment to celibacy made by Christian men and women of the first through fifth centuries AD, a practice which he sees as reflective of the way in which the ancients conceived of the body. Throughout much of antiquity, Greek and Roman writers struggled with the issue of how to reconcile or to integrate the desires of the body with the calm, deliberative, rational mind. How did one strike a balance between severity and tolerance, or reach a state of what Brown calls 'benevolent dualism', the state in which the mind accepts the weakness of the flesh yet is still able to minister to its needs. Like Rousselle, Brown never asks what prompted men and women to beautify or to alter their appearances; instead he concerns himself with the change over time in attitudes toward the body, and how it came to reflect the new social order created in part by the advent of Christianity. What concerns him most is not the actual numbers of Christian women, and men for that matter, who embraced the notion of sexual abstinence within their marriage, often after rearing children, or the way that they encouraged their children to remain virgins. Rather, he wishes to discern the driving force behind vows of celibacy—what prompted individuals to pursue the course they did. Brown is also interested in the prevailing conditions of the second century which spawned


the great corpus of literature—both medical and philosophical which concentrated on control of the body—of which Clement of Alexandria was a part.95

While the studies by Brown and Rousselle emphasise the female body as a reflection of changing social mores in Roman antiquity, they give no attention to the use of make-up and adornment practices despite the available evidence. Material remains in the form of mummy portraits showing richly attired women suggest that the physical aspect of self-presentation, that is cosmetic practices and adornment, was very much a part of the ethos which governed society during the Roman Empire. From painstaking surveys of textual sources, Balsdon and others have provided a good deal of information about specific beauty regimens and forms of dress and jewellery which enjoyed great favour among Roman women. Yet discussion of women and beauty culture is usually consigned to general surveys of women in Roman antiquity.96 And studies of women and self-hood, like those of Kampen and Joshel, have only just scratched the surface of this topic. So there is need of a marriage or synthesis of the two approaches if we are to attempt an understanding of what prompted women to take so great an interest in their appearances.

As a subject of legitimate enquiry, Roman beauty culture has held little interest for scholars until recently.97 Green's 1979 article compiles detailed evidence for women's self-presentation through an investigation of the beauty advice volunteered by Ovid in the mock-didactic Medicamina Faciei Femineae;98 but his aim is to ascertain whether Ovid's prescriptions were simply a lyrical retelling of old wives' tales or whether they offered his readers tangible results. Green contrasts the seemingly frivolous recipes of Ovid with the pharmacological advice of the Elder Pliny, whose erudite observations and intellectual tone


96 There are exceptions to this rule. See for example the following books and journal articles which consist, in whole and in part, of discussion of Ovid's Medicamina Faciei, and his beauty and wardrobe advice in the Ars Amatoria. Sensi (1980-1981); Watson (1982); Rosati (1985); Kinder (1987); Robert (1988); Leary (1990); Nikolaidis (1994).

97 The fact that little attention has been given to this subject is also surprising given the available evidence on women and modes of self-presentation, but especially so when it is realised that throughout Greco-Roman antiquity female grooming habits acted as a lightning rod for criticism of female behaviour generally: Alexis. Fr. 103 PCG.G; IG 5.11390; Lysias. Erat. 14-15; Xenoph. Oec. 10.2-10.8; Achilles Tatius, Leucippe and Clitophon 38.2.

98 Devoted to determining the efficacy of Ovid's skin care regimen, Green (1979) 383 enlists the help of Madame Halina Pradzynski a European skin-care specialist of an up-market Austin spa, and her chemist husband.
present a decidedly different picture of Roman concerns in the area of body care. Skin-care regimens were taken very seriously and some of Ovid's recipes, which Green corroborates with information from Pliny, proved fairly beneficial. Green, however, is less concerned with what this evidence says about social attitudes, wishing to know instead if modern readers have misinterpreted the seriousness with which Ovid dispensed his beauty advice, and by analogy the advice in his *Ars Amatoria.*

Wyke's 1994 article exploring the rhetoric of making-up is the first serious attempt to interpret Roman attitudes in relation to women's adornment practices. The texts she examines are not confined to a single genre but range widely from philosophical to satirical to historical: the works of Plato and Seneca, the physician Galen, Plautus, Ovid, Martial, Juvenal, and Livy, whose version of the debate over the repeal of the Oppian legislation is the chestnut of adornment discourse. Each text, in its own way, used the bodies of women to define femininity as well as social and sexual identity, as Wyke's reconstruction of the archetypal painted and perfumed woman illustrates. Generally, Wyke maintains, women were regarded as false creatures, mere reflections which they themselves constructed with the aid of the mirror. Their dissimulation reinforced social notions of females as the inferiors to males; an image of 'otherness' consistent with the Roman sexual and gender hierarchies.

Rhetorical discourses, while illuminating, do not tell the complete story of women's behaviour with respect to cosmetics and adornment. Adornment rhetoric certainly drew on historical reality, as male authors disclose through their satirical accounts of female *ornatus* or body care regimes. The construction of femininity which emerges here, although valid, is an entirely male-centred one. Ignoring the experience of real women, it makes no allowance for the presentation strategies of women in disparate social groups: the prostitute whose professional success could depend on her physical appeal, and the woman of élite background whose body publicised her wealth and connections.

---


100 Wyke (1994) 146-148.

101 See Richlin (1984) 67 who points out that pejorative stereotypes in Roman satire say more about their authors than the authors' subjects.

102 There are only three instances, as Richlin (1995) 194 has noted, which make distinctions between prostitutes and respectable women: Sen. *Con. 1.2.7, 2.7.3-4; Juv. 6.131.* Compare Richlin (1984) 68 on the lack of class distinctions in satire.
adornment defined a male ideal of female morality, but they do not explain what women tried to accomplish by making up and adorning their bodies.103

Richlin's 1995 article provides a glimpse of 'real' female behaviour by utilising many of the same texts as Wyke and a number of others besides. Her investigation covers much of the same ground, but Richlin follows Green in giving greater consideration to the beauty treatments and make-up recipes contained in Pliny's *Natural History*. At the root of the beauty practices of flesh and blood women—not the stereotypes of literary creation—was the belief that the female body was in need of 'transformation' or 'repair'. Repair was linked with recognition of the female body as repugnant; doubly so when beauty products of a vile nature were applied to it. There was a need for concealing what was repellent.104 Richlin illustrates this revulsion for the female body, generalised further to the made-up body, by pointing among other things to Ovid's description of the cosmetic jars (*pyxides*) which littered a woman's dressing table (*Ars* 209-234). They were full of *faex* or scum, 'in fact runny scum; *oesypa* (grease from wool); deer-marrow paste; as well as ash, saffron, and chalk powder'.105 Ovid cautioned women to hide these jars from lovers because they contained revolting products which the women applied to their faces.106 But Richlin's views raise some questions. If Ovid's comments are to be taken as a reflection of wider social opinion, why do representations of these containers appear on funerary monuments for women? The funerary altar (*cippus*) of Poppaedia Secunda, a particularly fine example of a woman's monument, is unusual in the number of items depicted but not in the kind: a mirror, a comb, a parasol, a pair of slippers, two unguent jars and an open cosmetic box.107 Side by side, the honorific iconography and the stereotypes disseminated by rhetoric and satire seem to be at odds with one another.108

---

103 Wyke (1994) 148 also touches on this problem when she characterises the relationship between texts and real Roman women as 'relatively arbitrary'.


106 This theme of dissimulation recurs in the *Remedia Amoris* (351-356) when Ovid advises young men who wish to fall out of love to visit their girlfriends early in the day; at this time they will find their girlfriends in the midst of applying foul concoctions to their faces. One look and love will quickly fade.

107 For descriptions of the *cippus* of Poppaedia Secunda see Appendix 1, nos. 10 and 89.

108 This discrepancy between social ideal and 'real' behaviour is not unique to women and issues of self-presentation. Consider the female virtues ennumerated in commemorative inscriptions. It is difficult to
Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined some evidence on women's use of cosmetics provided by Clement of Alexandria, and surveyed how modern scholars have dealt with this particular topic of women's history. The *Paedagogus* was an invaluable resource for early Christians, encouraging spiritual growth and setting out precisely how the newly converted were to conduct themselves in diverse social situations. Ideally, their behaviour at home and in street would speak to their faith. But where Clement seems to be setting guidelines of propriety, he in fact wrestles with an issue of greater import for Christians: how to reconcile the human desire for self-expression with the regimentation that was an intrinsic part of Christian faith. Symptoms of this desire abound in Clement's descriptions of beauty culture, where he is troubled by the ethics of making-up, chiefly the deception it involved, and the expense and time devoted to maintaining a stylish appearance. Clement was not alone. The various facets of self-presentation that attracted his critical eye offended the sensibilities of moralists in secular society, who believed that women ought to possess an intellectual and emotional depth that was unmatched by physical attractiveness. Indeed, tension between self-expression and regimentation occurred whenever women did not abide by the construction of femininity set down by Roman gender ideology. Textual evidence of this tension is found throughout and beyond the four hundred years traditionally taken as the central period of Roman history, and the reaction of the social critic to this tension is almost predictable. For modern scholars the task is to reconcile the evidence of moralists, as represented by Clement, with the remarks of other writers who convey the sense that cosmetics were widely worn despite the fact that there was no place for them in normative constructions of femininity. As my survey of modern scholarship has shown, this is a task that has not yet been fully dealt with. As a method of enquiry we can, in the next chapter, engage a set of questions elicited by Clement's prescriptions for women's sartorial success: i) how typical is prescriptive literature in a given historical period? and ii) what do we know about actual female behaviour in light of conduct literature and how should we interpret it? The objective in succeeding chapters is to build on such questions, and on Clement's representation of femininity, by studying both literary and visual texts for women's beauty culture at greater length, in an effort to establish what the 'display' aspect of cosmetics and adornment afforded Roman women.
Chapter Two

Interpreting Femininity: the Literary Evidence for Cultus et Omatus

...almost every girl left school with only two ambitions—to return at the first possible moment to impress her school-fellows with the glory of a grown-up toilette, and to get engaged before everybody else.

Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth

Introduction

Epictetus, an imperial freedman writing under the High Empire, says (Ench. 40) that men judged Roman girls to be women once they attained the age of fourteen. Realising that they were destined to be the ‘bed-fellows of men’, girls began to beautify themselves and to hope for finding a husband. To judge from these observations, as Roman girls emerged from adolescence they had a clear sense that the path to sexual and social success lay in their appearance. For many Roman women this emphasis on appearance began in fact in early childhood with the ministrations of the midwife. Soranus, the Greek physician who dispensed medical advice to parents and child-minders during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, provided detailed instructions on the proper method for swaddling (Gyn. 2.15) and massaging (Gyn. 2.30) newborns. In Soranus’ view, massage enabled the midwife to induce, if not actively mould, the malleable body of the newborn into a state that met a culturally defined aesthetic, while swaddling fostered specific gender traits.¹ When binding the chests of male neonates, midwives were to ensure that the bands applied a firm, even pressure. When binding the chests of females, they were to wrap the bands more firmly still but to leave those around the loins slack, a practice that produced, it was thought, the desired female form (Gyn. 2.15.3).² Physiological differences between the sexes were stressed by other means once swaddling bands were removed and children began to develop. Short tunics and closely cropped hair were worn by toddlers and small children, blurring gender distinctions somewhat, but toys emphasised the special attributes

¹ Belief in massage extended to shaping the child’s head so that it was neither too elongated nor pointed (Gyn. 2.33.5); redefining a flat nose unless it was aquiline in which case only an overly prominent tip needed correction (Gyn. 2.34.3); massaging the sides and undersides of the infant’s buttocks to create the hollows which provided a well rounded shape (Gyn. 2.33.3).

² Gyn 2.15.3: ...εὐκρατέστερον γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ γυναικῶν τὸ ὀστᾶ τὸ σχῆμα. A form frequently seen in erotic paintings from Pompeii: Clarke (1998) pl. 6–7, fig. 49, 59 (exaggerated), 63, 76 (Venus), 78, and Grant (1975) pp. 52, 146, 152, 154–156, 160, 164. Compare also Soranus’ belief (1.35) that women capable of conceiving could be identified by their fleshy loins and flanks.
of each sex and said something about gender rôles. Dolls possessed the physical features of adult females—moulded breasts, delineated pudenda, narrow waists, wide hips—as well as coiffures reflecting the fashions of various eras. Earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and clothing were available for dressing dolls. In marked contrast, action figures such as gladiators and soldiers were given non-removable uniforms, shields, and sometimes swords.

The expectations inherent in Roman child-rearing practices are significant. Soranus' prescriptions demonstrate genuine concern for the healthy physiological development of children and reflect cultural ideals of the male and female form—standards which were reinforced during playtime. Play with dolls may have engendered different patterns of behaviour in girls from those in boys, but among them certainly was identification with the body and cultivation of the practices of adult females, whose beauty routines (bathing, hair-dressing, adorning, and dressing) were re-enacted daily and especially on festive occasions such as weddings—the rite de passage of Roman girls. Instruction in personal hygiene and attire formed part of a boy's general training, but to the Roman way of thinking, grooming and adornment were firmly linked with femininity. Thus, when Crepereia Tryphaena, a girl from an affluent freedman family (or possibly descended from a freedman) died, in addition to the elegant ivory doll placed among her burial goods was a

---


4 For this celebration elaborate arrangements of the hair and the assumption of special dress were part of the day's festivities. The bride's toilette: Carcopino (1941) 95–96; Balsdon (1962) 181–182. Cf. Treggiari (1991) 163 who notes that men too were expected to turn up neatly groomed. The strong association between femininity and self-presentation was reinforced in religious contexts too where girls, once they had become women, bathed and adorned female cult statues or participated in adornment rituals related to the cult. Bathing, dressing, and adorning of cult statues: Ov. Fasti. 4.133–160 (Venus); Apul. Met. 11.8 (Isis); Aug. Civ. Dei. 6.10 (Juno and Minerva). We might compare here, too, the observations of Rousseau (1979) 367 of girls at play: 'Observe a little girl spending the day around her doll, constantly changing its clothes, dressing and undressing it hundreds and hundreds of times, continuously seeking new combinations of ornaments—well or ill-matched, it makes no difference ...her taste is not yet formed, but already the inclination reveals itself.'

5 Elementary school texts, designed in the first instance to hone the grammar skills of young boys, give us a sense of the boys' daily routine, part of which included washing and dressing before breakfast, on which see Dionisotti (1982) 97–98, and Shelton (1998) 145–146.
small box constructed of bone and ivory containing two child-size combs, a little silver mirror, and a tiny spindle.\textsuperscript{6}

Make-up had no place in the construction of femininity, as pejorative characterisations of women's toilette practices well demonstrate. These very statements, however, confirm the existence of a thriving beauty culture in which make-up, dress, and adornment served as techniques of femininity—as a means of crafting the female self. This chapter aims to explore the diverse products used in \textit{cultus} (skin and hair care), and evidence for their manufacture, as a way of assessing the use of cosmetics at different social levels. Attention is also given to \textit{ornatus} (dress and adornment) as an integral element in constructing femininity. When viewed within the context of Roman society, it becomes evident that female self-presentation involved a technology, or \textit{techne}, that women turned to their own purposes. Textual sources usually stress the artifice and deception of cosmetics, warning men to give the made-up woman a wide berth,\textsuperscript{7} and rarely acknowledge that feminine display could be and was used for reasons other than trolling for men. \textit{Ornatus} and \textit{cultus}, it will emerge, became a sort of women's language which was used within their own gender and social groups to speak about self, rank, and achievement.

\textit{Contextual Background: Female Comportment}

On the whole, descriptions of hair, jewellery, and clothing fashions in the textual record are anecdotal rather than comprehensive, but we know much about make-up and therapeutic skin products thanks to the writings of Ovid and Pliny the Elder. More difficult to ascertain is the existence of a uniquely Roman beauty culture and the historical point at which this culture began to flourish. The conventions found in Plautus, writing at the turn of the third century BC, are the earliest evidence of female \textit{ornatus} in Latin literature and there is no mistaking the way male society generally perceived women's habits at that time. Plautus parodies the conventions of the era by staging a scene of the \textit{Mostellaria} in the dressing-room of a \textit{meretrix}, throughout which a young courtesan and her much older maid quibble (\textit{Mos.} 258-278) about the propriety of rouge (\textit{cerussa}), perfume (\textit{unguentum}), and various kinds of cosmetics (\textit{aliae ojfuciae}). In the \textit{Truculentus}, the cantankerous slave of

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{6}] Virgili et al. (1990) nos. 220.9–220.14.
  \item[\textsuperscript{7}] Wyke (1994) provides an excellent discussion of male fears of the adorned woman. Make-up and adornment as deception: Prop. 2.18.23–30; Hor. \textit{Epod.} 12.10–11; Sen. \textit{De Consol.} 16; Mart. 6.12, 8.33.17–22, 12.23.
\end{itemize}
the same name bandies words with Astaphium, the maid of a courtesan much admired by
his master. Truculentus chastises the girl (Truc. 289-294) for scenting her hair, applying
chalk (creta) to lighten her skin, and staining her cheeks (buccas tam belle purpurissatas) in
a manner which he reluctantly admits is becoming. And the dialogue in both scenes
compares with the remarks of the slave Syrus, the lead character in Terence's Heauton
Timoroumenos, who commends (Hau. 287-290) women who dress for themselves: they
take a minimalist approach to self-presentation, eschewing rouge and elaborate hairstyles
for clean faces and loose-flowing tresses.8

The problem with citing Plautus and Terence as evidence of beauty culture in the middle
Republic is one of accuracy: how precisely do their comic dialogues convey Roman ideas
of femininity? The female habits summarised and their predominantly negative reception
may have been imported from Greece through the comedies the playwrights used as
models.9 Satirical portraits of the female toilette were a staple of the Greek comedian's
repertoire, whose housewives, hetairai, and sexually voracious older women enhanced
their complexions (έντετευμένην) and rouged their cheeks (έρυθρότερον).10 Yet it is
difficult to imagine that Roman women had no cosmetic techniques of their own devising
prior to the arrival of Hellenistic culture in Italy.11

Literary sources for the period preceding Plautus—Livius Andronicus, Naevius,
Fabius Pictor, Ennius, and Pacuvius—are silent on the subject of women's cultus. Livy's
sweeping narrative of Roman history includes a description of a debate leading to the repeal

---

8 Ashmore (1908) 121 notes a problem with the text at Hau. 289. He gives the text as, tum ornatam ita
uti quae ornantur sibi, nulla mala re interpolatam muliebri. This reading does not diminish the strength of
Syrus' argument.

9 On the debt of Roman to Greek comedy see the fundamental studies of Fraenkel (1922) and Jachmann
(1931). Cf. Segal (1968) 2-7 and Williams (1968) 285-290. Terence is generally thought to remain truer
to the Greek models in terms of staging and meter, on which see Williams (1968) 285-290 and Goldberg

10 Ar. Eccl. 732, 878, 904, 928, 1072; Lys. 44, 48, 149; Nu. 245; Plut. 1064. Fragmentary evidence:
Eub. CAF II, p. 198, no. 98; Antiph. CAF II, p. 71, no. 148, Alex. CAF II, p. 329, no. 98, Men. CAF
III, p. 166, no. 546.

11 Claimed by Dayagi-Mendels (1989) 44, probably following Forbes (1965) 40-43 who implies that this
was so. Also implied by Griffin (1976) 92-93, following Marquardt (1886) 603, with respect to clothing
and hair fashions in the late Republic.
of the *lex Oppia* in 195 BC,\(^\text{12}\) and this debate provides some sense of how Romans visualised femininity. Two tribunes proposed the abolition of the twenty-year-old law which limited women's possession of purple clothing and gold, and prohibited them from riding in carriages within the city. Arguing for repeal, L. Valerius contended (34.7.9) that since women could not participate in civic life and thus had no opportunity to acquire the normal *ornamenta* of public office, their accomplishments ought to be acknowledged in some other fashion. His solution was to compensate women by letting them display their own *feminarum insignia*: elegant appearances, adornment, and apparel (*munditiae et ornatus et cultus*). As Valerius cleverly pointed out, previous generations of Romans (*maiores nostri*) had recognised the inequity of the women's situation and made these same concessions. There is no way of assessing the accuracy of Livy's account, and no means of gauging the degree to which the morality of Augustan society, when the account was written, obtrudes in his version of the second-century deliberations. But Livy's 'second century' conception of womanhood is consistent with other characterisations of femininity found in literature of the second and first centuries BC.

Valerius' remarks compare, for example, with Terence's characterisation of female *ornatus* in the *Heauton Timoroumenos*, and especially with an anecdote of Terence's contemporary, the Greek historian Polybius. Polybius came from a prominent Achaean family and in the aftermath of Pydna (168 BC) was summoned to Rome and detained as a political hostage for over fifteen years. Despite his internment Polybius moved freely within society and this privilege enabled him to observe elite Romans at first hand. His friendship with Scipio Aemilianus brought Polybius within the orbit of an eminent Roman family and allowed him to describe how Aemilia, wife of Scipio Africanus Maior, travelled the streets of Rome on her way to religious gatherings for women. She rode in an elegant carriage, dressed sumptuously, and was accompanied by a splendid train of servants bearing precious utensils for the ceremony.\(^\text{13}\) Polybius gives no account of Aemilia's

\(^{12}\) Although we have numerous fragments of speeches by Cato, not one of these pertains to the repeal of the *lex Oppia*. For arguments on the authenticity of Cato's speech and Livy's sources consult Briscoe (1981) 1–3 and 39–43.

\(^{13}\) *Plb.* 31.26.2–9: συνεβαίνε ἐν τῇ Ἀιμίλιᾳ, τοῦτο γὰρ ἦν ὀνόμα τῇ προεισημένῃ γυναικί, μεγαλομερῆ τὴν περίστασιν ἐξείν ἐν ταῖς γυναικείαις ἔξοδοις ἄτε συνημακυῖαν τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῇ τύχῃ Σκιπίωνος: χαιρὶς γὰρ τοῦ περί τὸ σάμα καὶ τὴν ἀκόην κόσμου καὶ τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ ποτηρία καὶ τὰ καλά καὶ πρῶ τὴν θυσίαν, ποτὲ μὲν ἀργυρᾶ, ποτὲ δὲ χρυσᾶ, πάντα συνενεκαλουθεῖ κατὰ τὰς ἐκφαναίς ἔξοδοις αὐτῆς, τὸ τοῦ τῶν καλίσκων καὶ τὸ τῶν οἰκετῶν τῶν παραπομένων πλῆθος ἀκολουθοῦν ἦν τούτως. That Aemilia was making her way to religious gatherings is suggested by the τὰ κανά or baskets which were used in sacrificial rites, on which see Walbank (1979) 503.
appearance beyond the opulence of her apparel and appurtenances, which is not to say that her face was free of make-up. He is concerned, in the first instance, to convey something of the reputation and affluence of Aemilianus and his family, which he accomplishes by focusing on the *ornatus* of Aemilia, whose richly clad body reflected the social and economic prosperity of the Scipionic family.\(^\text{14}\)

The idea that *ornatus* and *cultus* were integral to femininity is frequently expressed in the work of prose-writers and poets of the late Republic and early Empire and is often linked with conflicting notions of femininity: the woman of good character exercises restraint in self-presentation while the morally bankrupt woman is immoderate. Lucretius concludes the fourth book of the *De Rerum Natura* with a description of a *muliercula* (1278-1282) who recommends herself to men in spite of her ill-favoured looks. Her neatness, cleanliness, and demure ways appeal in a manner unlike that of the woman who perfumes herself excessively, repelling her lover and causing her maidservants to snicker behind her back (1174-1176).\(^\text{15}\) Cicero wrote an essay on the decline of oratory for M. Junius Brutus in which he equated the elegance of an unaffected writing style with an unembellished woman; once she discarded her pearls, make-up, and curling tongs, only *elegantia* and *munditia* remained (*Orat.* 78-79).\(^\text{16}\) The creative arrangement of Pholoe's tresses together with her tinted face disappointed Tibullus because true charm, as he firmly but gently pointed out (1.8.15-16), derived from other sources. Propertius was more indignant, calling make-up *turpis*, and sharply warning (2.18.d.25) women not to tamper with nature: *ut natura dedit, sic omnis recta figura est.*

*Cultus* and *ornatus* loomed large in the minds of these writers, a preoccupation encouraged to some extent by the spread of Greek culture during the middle and late Republic.\(^\text{17}\) Luxury garments, ornaments, and perfumes were imported from the eastern

---

\(^\text{14}\) The import of adornment for women of rank is suggested by two other episodes from Republican history as told by Diodorus Siculus and Livy. Following the sack of Rome in 387 BC, relates Diodorus (14.116.9), the *matronae* surrendered their gold ornaments as part of the war effort and in return for their personal sacrifice received the privilege of riding through the city in chariots. Livy (26.36.5) claims that in the year 210 BC senators voluntarily replenished the treasury by donating gold, silver, and bronze coin, retaining only what was deemed necessary for their families: a ring each for husband, wife, and child, *bullae* for sons, and an ounce of gold for wives and daughters.

\(^\text{15}\) Cf. Richlin (1995) 190 who agrees with Brown (1987) 296 that the *muliercula* is not perfuming her body but fumigating her vagina.

\(^\text{16}\) Cosmetic terminology and literary style: Wiseman (1979) 3–8; Wyke (1994) 145.

\(^\text{17}\) See Griffin (1976), Wyke (1994), and Dench (1998).
Mediterranean in vast quantities, for displays of conspicuous consumption, and are witness to the vigour of Hellenisation. Greek culture left its stamp upon the language of ornatus and cultus too, as the hair-dressing and make-up terms transliterated by Latin poets indicate: corymbion, galericulum, galerus (all used in reference to wigs), calliblepharon (eye and eyebrow make-up), psilothrum (depilatory).18 It has been said that Romans arrogated this vocabulary from the skilled slaves of Greek language and culture who were brought to Rome and set to work serving the personal needs of wealthy owners,19 a logical assumption in light of Roman enthusiasm for the refinements of its eastern neighbours. We should acknowledge, however, that there may have been some borrowing of 'adornment terms' between Romans and Etruscans, although philological parallels between Latin and Etruscan words for toiletries are harder to come by. The Latin phrase mundus muliebris, a blanket term for women's accoutrements, is sometimes connected with an Etruscan mythological figure, Munthuch, who may be a 'personification of Adornment'. Munthuch is identified as the hair-dresser figure who attends to the toilette of Malavisch (Helen).20 In any case, Romans had their own vocabulary of grooming during the mid first century BC and probably well before. In his treatise on grammar and syntax, published circa 43 BC, Varro supplied etymologies for calamistrum, discerniculum, speculum, and pecten (Var. L. 5.129). Calamistra (curling tongs) were known and used in Plautus' day (Cur. 577), and the earliest occurrence in Latin sources of discerniculum, an instrument used to part women's hair over the forehead, can be traced to a lost comedy of Lucilius.21 Varro placed (L. 5.129) all these items under the general heading of mundus

---

18 Hairdressing terms: Griffin (1976) 93. Griffin (1976) 92–93 speculates that these terms were in use by the late Republic. I can find no examples of their application in the work of any of the Augustan poets, although they were definitely in use by the time of the Elder Pliny. Ovid (Met 3.665, Fast. 1.393), Propertius (2.306.39, 3.17.29, 4.6.3, 4.7.79) and Tibullus (1.7.45) use the word corymbion, but only where corymbion signifies ivy-berry clusters; although these are sometimes worn about the head in the manner of a wreath.

19 Griffin (1976) 105 provides an appendix containing the names and occupations of Greek domestics in the imperial household. Among the offerings found in CIL 6: Hygia the obstetrix (4458), the ornatrix Dionysia (8880), Chloe the puerorum ornatrix (33099), and Galene the unctrix (4045). Cf. Treggiari (1976) where slave-women of Greek language and culture are well represented in her lists of servants and responsibilities in great households. On the Roman slave supply: Bradley (1994) 31–56; Scheidel (1997); Harris (1999).


21 Lucil. Frag. 1095: euplocamo digitis discerniculumque capillo. Lucilius was born near Campania about 180 BC and died in Naples in 102/101 BC. It is worth pointing out, too, that in fourth-century BC Etruscan representations of women engaged in their toilette, women or their hairdressers sometimes hold
muliebris, or women's equipment, on the theory that they helped to beautify women, thus reiterating the ideological link in Roman thought between femininity and appearance.

On balance, literary sources provide ample evidence for a conception of womanhood in which the consummate female was impeccably groomed and presented. Attempts to trace the origin and development of this model are hampered by the insoluble problem of primary sources for the early and middle Republic. The bulk of our evidence for ideals of female dress and adornment is confined to the late Republican and Imperial periods, thus compelling us to draw tentative conclusions for earlier periods. These efforts are also hampered by the fact that conceptions of womanhood in classical antiquity generally excluded women from active participation in the citizen community, relegated them mainly to the domestic sphere, and attached considerable value to the female who was pleasing to the eye and morally proper. Although these features of womanhood were cross cultural, precepts of comportment could and did diverge—a fact that was not lost upon Cornelius Nepos. Eager for his readers to understand something of the nuances of Greek and Roman culture, Nepos cited a few examples in the Praefatio (6) to his Lives, of codes of female conduct. Roman women accompanied their husbands to convivia, enjoyed the run of the house, and appeared in public as they pleased. Greek women were more constrained, attending dinner-parties only with relatives and confining themselves to the women's apartments (gynaeconitis) when non-kin males were in the house. So while Hellenisation may have introduced Roman women to new cosmetic therapies, or prompted the adoption of skin and hair care methods thought more effective, there is every reason to think that Roman women possessed a beauty culture of their own before expansion brought Greek culture to their doorsteps.

long narrow objects which may be the Etruscan equivalent of the discerniculum, if not the perfume stick used for anointing the hair. For illustrations see: Daremberg and Saglio (1926-1929) 63-64; figs. 101-102, 105; Beazley (1947) pl. 19.2; Thomson de Grummond (1982) fig. 111; Bonfante (1986) fig. 1.14. Such implements are seldom seen in Greek hair-dressing scenes.

22 The following is a select sample of predominating attitudes. Appreciation of pleasing appearance: Var. R. 2.10.6-8, Catul. 43.3; Col. 12.1.1; Sen. Dial. 6.10.1, Ep. 33.5; Tac. Ann. 4.3, 15.59.8; Plut. De Pulchr. 1 (cf. Clem. Paed. 3.64). Specific attributes: Ter. Eu. 311-318, Ov. Ars. 1.621, 3.279-280, Rem. 339; Ps. Luc. Am. 26. Presentation: Cic. Orat. 79; Lucr. 4.1278-1282; Phaed. 17; Sen. Suas 2.7.3; Plu. Mor. 145E-F, Mor, 693B; Tert. De Cultu passim; Cyprian. De Habit. passim; Macrobr. Sat. 2.5.5.

23 This melding of beauty customs compares well with the experience of West African slavewomen in nineteenth century America. They continued their own hair-styling traditions such as plaiting hair into corn-rows and wearing head-wraps, and incorporated European and Native American practices such as colouring the cheeks with crushed berries (Peiss [1998] 13).
Contextual Background: Male Comportment

The view that Roman gender ideology supposed *cultus* and *ornatus* to be techniques of femininity can be approached from another angle, and that is by considering the literary sources that criticise men for behaving in unmanly ways: those who pressed or were perceived to press the limits of masculinity. Gender ideology dictated that men engage in *cultur* only in a limited way and in *ornatus* not at all, because fashionable wardrobes, finery, and carefully arranged hair were a woman's concern. Impeccable presentation was not out of the question for men. Regard for the complexion and general appearance was crucial for public figures, as Roman orators well knew (Cic. *Off.* 130-133). But masculine grace was meant to derive from a body made vigorous by frequent exercise (Ov. *Ars.* 1.513; Quint. *Inst.* 8. pr. 19, 8.3.6).

Men who aspired to an elegant look needed to adopt a casual pose—*forma viros neglecta decet* (Ov. *Ars* 1.509). Apparel and footwear had to be clean and to fit properly; hair and beard had to be trimmed by a professional hand; nails and nose hair were to be neatly clipped; and breath and body odour were not to offend through lack of attention. Everything else should be left to coquettes and men of doubtful sex. Tertullian would have agreed with such sound advice, since in his view the toilette practices of extravagant males constituted shaping and trimming the beard too precisely, styling and tinting the hair, and covering the first signs of grey—in addition to using women's make-up to hide down on the body and pumice to depilate. Tertullian was concerned less with the issue of masculinity and more with propriety, believing the Christian male's appearance should be testimony to his religious conviction and to the modesty that God demanded of the faithful. Nevertheless, his conception of the ideal male's self-presentation very much resembled the notions of masculinity proposed by pagan writers.

---

24 Gleason's study (1995) of male self-presentation during the Second Sophistic amply demonstrates social attitudes toward 'questionable' males. But see too the evidence assembled by Tracy (1976), and more recently the comments of Richlin (1995) 203–204.

25 Ov. *Ars.* 1.514–522: *Sit bene conveniens et sine labe toga:* lingula ne rigeat, careant rubigine dentes; nec vagus in laxa pes tibi pelle natet; nec male deformet rigidos tonsura capillos; sit coma, sit trita barba resecta manu. Et nihil eminat, et sint sine sordibus ungues; linque cava nullus stet tibi nare pilus. Nec male odorati sit tristis anhelitus oris; inec laedat naris virque paterque gregis. Compare also Ovid's comments at *Ars.* 1.723–729 and *Rem.* 679.

26 Tert. *De Cultu* 2.8.2: *...barbam acrius caedere, intervellerre, circumradere, capillum disponere etiam colorare, caniitem primam quamque subducere, totius corporis lanuginem pigmento quoque muliebri distingere, cetera pulvers inusdam aipadine levigare* ...
The man who flirted with social disaster by transgressing the bounds of his gender, whether pathic or simply foppish, was a prime target for satirists and moralists. *Cinaedi*, men who behaved like women sexually and allowed themselves to be penetrated by other males, were most vulnerable. Petronius' character Encolpius was accosted by such a man at his lodgings, and in an evocative portrayal of the *cinaedus* (23) we gain a sense of the effeminate male's appearance and how this was received: 'great drops of paint hung like gum on his forehead and came trickling down the wrinkles of his cheeks like rain on a naked wall'. 27 In his second satire, Juvenal conjured up a fanciful picture of *cinaedi* at home, attired in blue checks, hair in gilded snoods, busily making-up their eyes (2.93-97; 6.019-22). Elsewhere the *bellus homo* was depicted as overly concerned with his hair—curling it, arranging it prettily, and sleeking it with perfumed oil (Mart. 3.63; Suet. *Nero* 51). He was also preoccupied with keeping his body smooth; this, despite the fact that 'normal' males were known to use depilatories too. Pliny the Elder objected to the widespread use of *psilothra* among the men of his day because he regarded depilatories as women's things. 28

Males who demonstrated too much devotion to their looks could expect to be reproached by their peers. Cicero's highly coloured description (*Har.* 44) of Clodius' transvestite antics—his saffron robe, *strophium*, purple hose, and feminine shoes—was designed to illustrate Clodius' immorality by casting aspersions on his manhood, an attack typifying the treatment of men who did not comply with the standards of male behaviour. The younger Pliny disapprovingly referred (*Ep.* 2.11.23) to Hostilius Firminus as a man who was always *comptus et pumicatus*. Aulus Gellius reports (*Gel.* 6.12.5) that Scipio Aemilianus took P. Sulpicius Gallus to task for his choice of attire and body care, declaring that his mode of presentation was tantamount to that of the *cinaedus* who adorned himself before a mirror, smelled of perfume, trimmed his eyebrows, and smoothed his body. 29

---

27 Petr. 23: *Profluebant per frontem sudantis acaciae rivi, et inter rugas detectum malarum erat creta, ut putares detectum parietem laborare.* Compare Horace (*Epod.* 12.10-11), Martial (2.41.11-12), and Pseudo-Lucian (*Am.* 39) and their scurrilous descriptions of women with streaky faces.

28 Among the personal effects of Commodus which were sold at auction by Pertinax after his death, in an effort to raise money for donatives, were Samnite pots used for heating the resin that was used for keeping men's bodies smooth (SHA. *Pert.* 8.5-6; cf. CD 74.5.4-5). Clement implies that depilation was fairly common among men and women, for he laments (*Paed.* 3.15.4) the fact that the towns are full of 'pitch-plasterers', smoothing the bodies of effeminate males.

29 Gel. 6.12.5: *Nam qui cotidie unguentarius adversum speculum ornitur, cuius supercilia radantur, qui barba vulsa feminibusque subvulcis ambulet.*
Suetonius claims that Augustus used hot nutshells to smooth his legs (Aug. 68), and that (Otho 12.1) that Otho used facial masks and celebrated the rites of Isis clad in a linen gown. Herodian remarks (4.7.3) on Caracalla’s penchant for wearing a blonde wig. Dio provides an interesting description of the powdered and rouged Elagabalus (80.14.4). And Athenaeus’ symposiasts are entertained by stories of corrupt easterners—Sardanapalus (12.528e-f; cf. DS 2.23; Plut. Mor. 336C) and Demetrius of Phalerum (12.542d)—who adopted feminine habit, make-up, and mannerisms. All were examples of men who behaved badly precisely because they behaved like women, and who, in the end, forfeited their place in respectable society.

Ornatus: Dress and Adornment

If a woman felt uneasy about the appropriateness of her dress she need not have worried; more than one Roman male was ready to advise her. As we have seen, Tertullian had the newly converted Christian women of Carthage in mind when he composed his De Cultu Feminarum, a tract which dealt exclusively with suitable modes of presentation for good Christian women. Like other patristic writers, most notably Clement but also Cyprian, Tertullian had much to say about women’s fashion and body care, yet he never composed an equivalent tract for men, suggesting that he viewed ornatus as largely a woman’s affair. Christian theologians were not the only writers to conceive of ornatus in this way. There was a significant disparity in Ovid’s fashion advice to the sexes. A woman’s polish demanded energy, time, and money. Attention had to be paid to clothing shades accentuating eye and hair colour, and to fabric textures and accessories that minimised or concealed deficiencies of figure (Ars. 3.189-192, 267-270, 273-274). With men Ovid was succinct: ensure your toga is immaculate and well cut, that your shoes fit, that your shoe-strap is snug, and your shoe-buckles are free from rust (Ars 1.514-516). Insouciant elegance was the look to strive for and males who contravened the guidelines were pilloried ruthlessly by their own sex. Martial ridiculed (2.43, 2.46) the man with the brightly-coloured wardrobe, and was adamant (1.96) that no self-respecting male

---

30 The extent of Tertullian’s advice to men is found at De Cultu 2.8. In the Paedagogus, Clement addresses male and female cultus and ornatus, but his advice to women far outstrips his advice to men. Cyprian (De Habitu Virginum) has nothing to say on the subject. Later theologians—Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Zeno of Verona—concentrate on female cultus and ornatus as an index of morality.

31 Other cases in which writers equate effeminacy with bright apparel: Pers. 1.32, Stat. Sil. 2.1.132–134, Juv. 2.97, 3.81; Clem. Paed. 3.15.1–2.
would condescend to wear violet or scarlet in public. These colours were reserved for
women.

The intimate relationship between dress and femininity found expression in Roman
law, in legal definitions of vestimenta virilia and vestimenta muliebria—the clothing worn
by male and female heads of households, as well as their children and staff (Dig.
34.2.23.2). Vestimenta muliebria were defined in part by what they were not. Masurius
Sabinus (floruit first half of the first century AD), as cited by Ulpian, the Severan jurist,
described women's clothes as those garments a man could not properly wear without
impugning his masculinity: robes, wraps, undergarments, head coverings, belts, turbans,
coverlets, and mantles. 32 Turbans were in fact permissible for men (Dig. 34.2.23.2), but
only on condition that they were used for sensible rather than ornamental purposes (quaes
magis capitis tegendi quam ornandi causa sunt comparata). Sabinus emphasises the dual
nature of women's apparel—utilitarian and aesthetic—when he says that turbans and head­
dresses constitute jewellery and not clothing when women wear them venustatis et ornatus
causa (Dig. 34.2.26). 33 The contrasting functions of male and female apparel reflect a
gender ideology in which cultus is something men practice out of practicality but women
perform for more trivial reasons. 34 Put simply by Clement, society granted women a more
sizeable wardrobe in deference to their weaker natures (Paed. 2.107).

The extent of a woman's apparel provided great comic material. Plautus listed in mock
horror the variety of tradespeople required to equip a woman, 35 and Terence complained
about the dozen or so ancillae needed to maintain wardrobe and mistress alike (Ter. Hau.
452). Plautus' list of merchants is long, indicating perhaps a fashion trade of considerable
proportions in the early second century BC. In reality, types of garments evolved little
during the central period of Roman history. Specific articles denoted rank or status within

---

32 Paul's reasoning follows a similar line (Sent. 3.6.80, Dig. 34.2.33): Veste virili legata, ea tantummodo
debetur, quae ad usum virilem salvo pudore virilitatis attinet. Pomponius is more explicit (Dig.
34.2.25.9), including in bequests of muliebria the clothing of infants, girls, and teenagers, because all those
of the female sex are classified as women.

33 Compare the evidence of Columella, whose well organised storeroom (12.3.1) contained women's
apparel for festival days, but men's apparel for war and solemn occasions (item dierum solemnium
ornatum).

34 On gender differences with respect to clothing see Gardner (1995) 381–382.

35 Aul. 508–522: fuller, tailor, goldsmith, woollen worker; dealers in flounces, lingerie, veils, dyes, and
balsam-scented footwear; slipper and sandal-makers, belt-maker, sash-maker, weaver, lace-maker, saffron-
dyer.
the community and there was little reason to tamper with well established customs by which the privileged strata were clearly delineated.\textsuperscript{36} The Roman inclination for strict hierarchies naturally resulted in distinctive female attire too. Although freeborn girls were recognised by the tunic and \textit{toga praetexta} worn in the manner of boys, the freeborn married woman and the \textit{liberta} married to a Roman citizen were identified by the floor-length sleeveless \textit{stolae} they wore over their tunics (Fest. 112.26). They also veiled their heads with a \textit{palla} whenever they left the house. \textit{Ingenuae} and \textit{matronae}, moreover, wore white woolen bands in their hair, similar to the \textit{vittae} used in religious contexts to demarcate ritually pure objects.\textsuperscript{37}

\textit{Haute couture} in Roman society was governed by the interplay of rich fabrics and vibrant colours. Garments were made from wool, linen, silk, and bombazine, a twill fabric sometimes comprising a silk-cotton mix (\textit{Dig.} 34.2.23.1), with the quality of the textile varying according to one's ability to pay. Fine wool came from Apulia and the Po Valley, flax linen from many regions of Italy. Domestic textiles competed with similar products from Spain and Gaul but were certainly no match for the luxury linens and damasks imported from Egypt. Silk came from the Greek and far East, but its price was handsome and merchants generally sold it in the form of thread, so it is hard to imagine any but the most wealthy women assuming the diaphanous \textit{vestes Coae} mentioned by moralistic writers.\textsuperscript{38} Fabric textures were varied by tight weaves, loose weaves, the addition of gold embroidery, or brushing which created a downy nap (\textit{Pl. Epid.} 230-233); and specialists created opulent fabrics that were worked in intricate patterns, prints, and figures (\textit{Plin. Nat.} 8. 196).

Women of rank were expected to have a wardrobe suited to their position within the community—and more properly their husbands. When Quintilianus could not equip his daughter with the appurtenances and clothes reflecting the rank of his future son-in-law, his

\textsuperscript{36} Members of the senatorial and equestrian classes wore purple bands (\textit{latus clavus} and \textit{angustus clavus}) on their tunics. Candidates for public office donned the snowy-white \textit{toga candida}, and magistrates and religious leaders assumed the purple-bordered \textit{toga praetexta}. These bands are especially conspicuous in painted portraits from Roman Egypt. Doxiadis (1995): 16, 26, 30, 35, 38, 56, 61, 74, 88, 2, 7, 19, 38, 40, 45 (males); 27, 29, 36, 40, 42, 44, 48, 51-54, 59, 63, 72-73 (females). Many of these same portraits appear in Walker and Bierbrier (1997). For additional examples see Parlasca (1969), (1977), (1980) \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{37} Gardner (1986) 251-252 argues against the notion that the \textit{toga} distinguished adulterous women, but see the claims of Sebesta (1994a) 48 and more recently McGinn (1998) 156-171.

\textsuperscript{38} Silk garments: \textit{Prop.} 1.22; \textit{Hor. S.} 1.2.101; \textit{Tib.} 2.3.53, 4.29; \textit{Ov. Ars.} 2.298; \textit{Sen. ad Hel.} 16; \textit{Clem. Paed.} 2.107.2-5; CD 43.24.2. Silk thread: Sebesta (1994b) 71.
friend Pliny generously contributed to her dowry (Ep. 6.32). Quintilianus' daughter and the modestly well-to-do could purchase luxury fabrics from any of the purveyors of fine garments and purple-dye who occupied the Vicus Tuscus. For women of humble background, many of whom could barely eke out an existence, fashion inevitably came second to life's necessities. How these women obtained their apparel is unclear. Clothiers (vestiarii) in the market-place sold garments of different qualities, or a woman might patronise the rag-men (centonarii) who mended old clothes and pieced together new ones from odd bits of fabric. Alternatively, there were vendors near the Tiber quays who sold a serviceable Apulian wool suited to slave clothing (Mart. 9.22.9; 14.127, 129) and a twill fabric for labourers which was imported from Gaul (Mart. 14.143). Skill in spinning was a much admired attribute of ideal women, although alleged to be in decline in affluent households by Columella's day (Col. 12. praef. 9-10). Home-spuns could serve the woman whose circumstances did not allow for ready-mades, and who may in any case have been doing piece-work at home to bring extra money to the household. This was the situation of an unfaithful housewife in Apuleius' Metamorphoses (9.5) who chided her husband for his idleness. She claims to have spun wool night and day so that they could afford a little lamp oil.

At a time when basic clothing fashions changed little, the use of colour became integral to style. Porphyrio (floruit early third century AD), equated bright clothing with prostitutes and vulgares mulieres, and thought that Roman matronae could be recognised by their

---

39 Dress and adornment as part of a woman's identity: Pl. Men. 120–122; Plb. 31.26.6 and DS 31.27.4; Liv. 34.3.9, Val. Max. 2.1.5; Tac. Ann. 16.30–31; Plu. Mor. 12; Dig. 34.2.13 and 34.2.30. See Treggiari (1991) 341–342. On the identity of Quintilianus see Sherwin-White (1966) 398.

40 Juvenal's evocative description of a poor man (3.147–151) might also be taken as highly representative of the shabbiness of a poor woman's clothes: 'And what of this, poor man gives food and occasion for jest if his cloak be torn and dirty; if his toga be a little soiled; if one of his shoes gapes where the leather is split, or if some fresh stitches of coarse thread reveal where not one, but many a rent has been patched'. 

41 Sebesta (1994b) 69–70. Centonarii: these individuals were sufficiently numerous in Rome by the Augustan period to form a guild of their own (CIL 6.7861–7862), and are attested elsewhere in Italy (CIL 1.1457) and throughout the Latin West. Home-spuns: Dig. 34.2.18.2; Frank 5.201–203; Treggiari (1979a) 69; Kampen (1981) 121.
white garments. But from the middle Republic at least there was considerable diversity of colour in a woman's wardrobe, provided that she had the ability to pay for it. Plautus made Epidicus scoff at the weaves and vibrant hues of female dress: azure blue, marigold yellow, saffron, sea-green, golden brown, and brownish yellow. Ovid recognised (Ars. 3. 187-188) that different hues flattered different women and so advised them (Ars. 3.170-173) to be mindful of the shades most complementary to their complexions. Blue, yellow, green, brown, gray, and rose, and all the colours of spring-flowers were theirs for the asking (Ars. 3.185-187; cf. Plin. HN. 21.45, Clem. Paed. 2.108.4). Clement disapproved (Paed. 2.108.4) of such preferences and deemed the colour choices of the affluent set in Alexandria—violet, green, rose, scarlet, saffron, and purple—as suitable only for pagan mystery rites.

Pliny reports (Nat. 21.45-46) that three colours and their kindred shades conferred dignity upon a wearer: red, amethyst, and murex purple (rubens, amethystinum, conchylium). Initially yellow (luteum) carried connotations of respect, but since it had been granted to women for their wedding veils it was not included among the most important colours (principales). The principales were worn by both sexes (communes maribus ac feminis) and it was this joint use (societas) that bestowed respect. Implicit in Pliny's remarks is a gendered notion about the use of colour which parallels the clothing distinctions of the jurists; that is, men's use of colour is largely practical whereas women's use of colour is frivolous. Pliny acknowledged (Nat. 22.3) that men and women had equally perverse motives for wearing purple: the matrona for beguiling her lover, the corruptor for seducing married women. The corruptor behaved in the same manner as the effeminate man in gaudy dress and both were detested by Roman writers. The behaviour

---

42 Porph. on Hor. 1.2.35: *Utique possint et vulgares mulieres etiam meretrices candidae esse, sed ad vestem aloam, qua matronae maxime utuntur, puto relatum esse.* Seneca concurs (Nat. 7.31.2). No self-respecting matrona would wear the bright colours associated with prostitutes.

43 Pl. Epid. 230–233: *tunicam rallam, tunicam spissam, linteolum caesicium...calutulam aut crocotulam...cumatile aut plumatil...carinum aut cerinum...* Cf. Pl. Aul. 510 and 514, where he mentions the flammarii and molocinarii, the dyers of flame and lilac-coloured cloth.

44 The garments worn by sitters in the Fayum portraits are suggestive of the range of colours and colour harmonies achieved by dyers (Doxiadis [1995]) and Walker and Bierbrier ([1997] passim). They also correspond closely to the 'luxury' shades described by Pliny the Elder (Nat. 21.45–46). More detailed treatment of Roman dyes and their sources may be found in Forbes (1965) 100–127, and Sebesta (1994b) 68–69.
of the *matrona*, however, underwrites general suppositions about female *cultus*. It was conducted with meretricious intent.⁴⁵

In thinking about colour as a device enabling men and women to create a polished look, some thought must be given to the availability of dyed fabrics among the general population. The geographic expansion of Rome's empire during the last two centuries of the Republic brought Rome into contact with new dye sources and dyeing techniques, but it is difficult to tell whether this technology made dyed goods more affordable for the *vulgus ignobile*. Kermes, a vibrant red dye with connotations of status described by Pliny (*Nat. 9.141, 16.32*), derived from a source which demanded careful harvesting; it was produced in Galatia, Lusitania, Africa, and the Greek East by female insects feeding on holm-oaks.⁴⁶ It must surely have been beyond the financial means of most Romans, although Sardinia produced an inferior grade of this dye which could not have fetched as high a price as grades from other provinces.⁴⁷ Dealers did obtain dyes from competitive sources: Transalpine Gaul duplicated Tyrian purple and other colours from organic products (Plin. *Nat. 22.3*), and the North Africans according to Cyprian (*De Habitu 14*) used herb juices. Although the harvesting techniques of some dyes such as kermes commanded high market prices, the evidence suggests that dyes could also be had more cheaply and that individuals who stood outside the most affluent social groups may have been able to buy dyes or vividly coloured textiles at a reasonable price.⁴⁸ Thus, given the range of colours available for clothes, women had a choice in what they put on their bodies, and in making that choice, they expressed their individuality.

In the male view, the absurdity of female apparel was exceeded only by the great extravagance of adornment: it was difficult to know where the woman began and the

---


⁴⁷ Sebesta (1994b) 67 indicates that two other status dyes, *puniceus* (scarlet) and *ferrugineus* (the colour of the purple hyacinth), derived from shellfish caught on the shores of Tyre and Phoenicia and these may have been cheaper alternatives.

⁴⁸ Reinhold (1971) 283 argues, for example, that the use of purple, widely regarded as an 'elite' colour, was prevalent even among the lower classes although they had to content themselves with inferior quality products. Cf. the evidence of African–American slaves, many of whom recalled in interviews conducted in the 1930s that their female kin developed dyes from organic sources. Frank Gill listed these sources as red oak bark, walnut bark, laurel leaves, and even clay (*Rawick 6: 149*).
jewellery left off (Plin. Nat. 33.40; Clem. Paed. 2.122.2). When the banker Lycos (Pl. Cur. 433) purchased a young girl in the market in Epidaurus, he bought her with her aurum et vestem as if the girl, her ornaments, and clothes were one, a manner of purchase which compares with gendered ideas of gold and jewellery found in legal texts. Jurists defined a woman's ornamenta as the items she used for decorating herself: earrings, bracelets, small bangles, rings (but not signet rings), and all the things acquired for no other reason than adornment—nisi corporis ornandi causa (Dig. 34.2.25.10; Paul. Sent. 3.6.84). To these were appended headdresses, turbans, half-turbans, the pearl hairpins which women normally possess, and saffron coloured hair-nets. Men do not enhance their appearances and no mention is made of masculine ornamenta; yet vulgar Trimalchio, ostentatiously displaying his bracelets and rings (Petr. 32) was not unusual among Roman males (Plin. Nat. 33.39).\(^49\) Thus, although the jurists are not explicit, the underlying assumption seems to be that adornment is a woman's practice, a habit no doubt attributable to their feeble natures, and thus a natural aspect of their femininity.

With few exceptions, male writers disapprove heartily of female ornament, and it goes without saying that women's taste for adornment brought financial ruin to husbands and lovers alike. In an assessment of the absurdity of luxury, Pliny the Elder (Nat. 13.20) remarked that perfume was the most foolish for it lasted only a short time whereas jewellery could prove useful, for it might easily pass to one's heir. Most writers, however, ignored the practical uses of jewellery. We hear nothing of women like Eunoia and Isidora, named in papyri from Roman Egypt, who used their adornments in times of financial need as surety for ready cash (P. Oxy. 1.114; P. Coll. Youtie 2.96). Eunoia had pawned a number of items, among which were armlets and a necklace, and had requested the assistance of a friend in redeeming her property. Isidora, a seller of trinkets, pawned a pair of gold earrings for 24 drachmae. Male writers focus squarely on exorbitant costs and female foolishness. The great fortunes hanging from women's earlobes caused physical damage and in extreme cases the ornament could be fatal. A distraught lover mourned a girlfriend who perished as the result of a scratch from her serpent bracelet (CIL 6.5302), probably from septicaemia. If women could not think of the dangers to their own health,

\(^49\) The range and variation in Roman jewellery is far too extensive to be discussed here. Collections of ancient jewellery testify to Roman tastes in gold, silver, and gem-stones, for which see Higgins (1961) and Marshall (1969), together with Henig (1981). Tastes in ornament can also be detected in mummy portraits from Roman Egypt (Doxiadis [1995] passim) and Palmyrene funerary sculpture (Stout [1994] fig. 5.3 is particularly fine example). For women's jewellery specifically see the examples in Walker and Bierbrier (1997) nos. 183–220.
Tertullian reminded them theatrically of the poor souls labouring in the gold and silver mines on their behalf (*De Cultu* 1.5.1).

Like clothing, adornment was integral to upper class identity—not only as signs of conspicuous expenditure but as marks of status. The size of personal collections is hard to estimate because accounts of female adornment are often exaggerated by writers using the the real and imagined opulence of *ornatus* as metaphors for social ills. The sheer cost of precious metals and gemstones would imply that jewellery was an indulgence of the monied classes, an assumption borne out by texts censuring the vulgarity of women like Lollia Paulina, who appeared at an engagement party wearing jewels valued at forty million sesterces (Plin. *Nat.* 9.117). Lollia may have been unusual even by the standards of her own class, but élite women certainly had the economic capacity to acquire expensive pieces.

How typical, on the other hand, was the slave-girl whom Lycos purchased with her trinkets and clothes? And to what extent did women of the lower classes possess a few baubles of their own? By the terms of her dotal contract, a young woman of Tebtunis brought to her marriage a robe worth sixty *drachmae*, a pair of gold earrings, a gold choker, silver bracelets, and a variety of other items, one being the sum of two hundred silver *drachmae* (*P.Mich.* 2.121 recto 4.i). This dowry is not considered sizeable and analysis of other dotal contracts from this moderately large village in Roman Egypt, which cannot necessarily be taken as representative of the Empire as a whole, points to women of modest income possessing at least a few bits and pieces of jewellery. What the contracts

---


51 Roman males on official government business originally wore a gold ring. By the Julio–Claudian era these rings were increasingly made from iron, and wearing them was the privilege of freeborn males who boasted fortunes of at least 400,000 sesterces (*Plin. Nat.* 33.32). Freeborn boys wore the *bulla*, freeborn girls the *lunula*, and betrothed women wore iron rings without stones (*Plin. Nat.* 33.12; *Tert. Apol.* 6.4). Individuals of distinguished lineage, according to Plutarch (*QR* 282A), wore *lunulae* on their shoes.

52 Hopkins (1980) 342. His examination of the dotal contracts from Tebtunis, dating to AD 42–46, reveals a range in dowry size between 18 and 1600 *drachmae*. He conjectures from this a village economy that was 'steeply stratified and internally differentiated'. We might also note the employment contract of three castanet dancers (*P.Com.* 9). In addition to wages and board, their employer agreed to safeguard any garments and ornaments they brought with them for their six-day stint.
do not tell us how accessible these items were to women while they were married. The
authorities in Euhemeria, for example, received a petition for the return of valuables stolen
by a building contractor (P.Ryl. 125). The plaintiff had hidden them in the walls of his
home for safe-keeping and forgotten about them—for nearly forty years. When his house
was under renovation, the builder allegedly found and expropriated a box containing a pair
of gold earrings, a lunula, a pair of silver bracelets, a necklace with silver ornaments, and a
sum of money. If a woman did not have access to gold, silver, and gems, because of her
financial situation or because she did not have regular access to the pieces in her dowry,
costume jewellery was an alternative. Lead was used for imitation jewellery; cheap rings of
iron and bronze were gilded (Plin. *Nat.* 33.6, 33.23); and counterfeit gems of superb
quality were circulated, much to Pliny’s annoyance (*Nat.* 37.197-200), by individuals who
boldly wrote instruction manuals on how to produce good quality fakes.\(^5\)

Cultus: *Skin-Care, Make-up, and Hair-Care*

Devotion to self-presentation fostered a beauty culture in which there were two avenues
to success: cosmetic therapy and make-up. How frequently women subscribed to either of
these approaches is difficult to assess, as is the extent of male participation. Therapeutics
were the most socially acceptable, for they entailed proper care of skin and hair that
produced physical appeal without illusion—a result any moralist could not fail to
appreciate. Make-up was roundly condemned as the stratagem of undesirable women.
Ovid and Pliny the Elder were exceptional in their approval.\(^5\) Ovid tutored women in skin
care, gave away make-up tricks, and did not scruple to explain the ways in which women
could disguise reputed figure flaws (*Ars.* 3.267-274).\(^5\) Pliny saw women’s interest in

---

\(^5\) Lead jewellery: Higgins (1961) 42. On three occasions Martial refers (4.61, 9.59, 10.87) to a sardonyx
as *verus*—genuine—implying that false ones were in circulation. See also Pliny’s explanation (*Nat.* 35.49)
that *anularis*, a white pigment made from a mixture of white earth and glass stones and used by painters,
was so named because of its similarity to the rings of the lower classes (*e* *volgis anulis*). Tertullian (*Ad
Mart.* 4.9) claims glass beads were used as imitation pearls.

\(^5\) Two stereotypes of the undesirable woman are the libertine and the ageing woman. Libertine: Pl. *Mos.*
249-269, *Poen.* 217-248, *Truc.* 288-302; Sen. *Con.* 1.2, 2.7.3-4; Juv. 6.151 (on Messalina’s behaviour);
Plu. *Coniug.* 142a; Terr. *De Cultu* 2.5.2, 2.5.5., 2.12.2; Prudent. *Hamartig.* 258-276. The repellent
ageing woman: Hor. *Carm.* 2.14.3; Prop. 3.25.11, 4.5.59; Tib. 1.8.41, 2.2.20; Juv. 6.142-145; Mart.
3.72, 3.76, 8.33.17, 9.37; AP 11.408.

\(^5\) Reactions to women’s beauty conventions could well be mixed. The evidence from Roman society is
not explicit, but from Greek society we have the example of Euphiletus, the murderer of Eratosthenes. He
was mildly surprised to find his adulterous wife with a powdered face (*Lys.* 1.14), but only because she was
meant to be in mourning for a recently deceased brother. In any case, he did not feel compelled to question
make-up and skin care as something of a \textit{fait accompli}. He disapproved yet furnished his readers with sensible recipes enabling them to create products at home, in some cases from the plants in their kitchen-gardens (\textit{Nat.} 20.2). Pliny's incentive for communicating these recipes was the same as his reason for explaining alternate methods of dyeing fabric (\textit{Nat.} 22.4). By means of kitchen remedies Romans could curb luxury and eliminate the need for expensive creams and lotions. His remarks suggest that information on skin-care and make-up had a sizeable audience within Roman society. And when examined more closely, Pliny's evidence reveals that women were not alone in managing their complexions.

Galen argued that therapy (skin and hair care) and make-up constituted separate practices (12.434). Therapy (\textit{κοπρωτική ῥήτωρ}) was beneficial, virtually a branch of hygiene, and aimed to promote healthy skin. Thus it was within the realm of legitimate medical practice. Make-up (\textit{κομμοτική ῥήτωρ}) was deleterious and stood outside the sphere of serious medicine, for the toxic substances employed to heighten the complexion and colour the hair subverted general health (12.434).56 The generic terms \textit{medicamina} and \textit{medicamentum} often hamper efforts to differentiate between the two streams in our textual sources. They denote the moisturizers and exfoliants used in skin care, but are used equally of preparations which alter skin-tone, mask imperfections, add colour to the eyelids and hair. \textit{Medicamentum} signifies any type of curative, as well as substances which the Romans called \textit{venenum} (poison) and the Greeks \textit{φόρμακα} (\textit{Dig.} 10.2.4.1; 50.16.236.pr. 4).57 This kind of confusion is well represented in Latin sources in Pliny's \textit{Natural History}, which provides an exceptional picture of ancient cosmetic technology. He gives the contents of Book 20 as, \textit{medicinae ex his quae in hortis seruntur}, 'medicines which can be obtained from garden-plants' (\textit{Nat.} 1.20), and side by side with remedies for irritations such as acne, scurf, and chilblains, are recipes for youthful looking skin, tooth powders.

---


57 \textit{Medicamina}: \textit{Ov. Med.} 67 and 77, \textit{Ars.} 3.205; Petr. 126.2; Luc. 3.238; Mart. 3.3.1; Juv. 6.472; Plin. \textit{Nat.} 9.133. \textit{Medicamentum}: \textit{Fro. Aur.} 1.p.8; Fest. p. 364\textit{M}; Sen. \textit{Dial.} 7.7.3; Tert. \textit{De Cultu} 2.13.7. Pliny alone of the Latin authors occasionally uses (\textit{Nat.} 1.34, 20.12, 27.111) the word \textit{smegma} in reference to facial creams for women, a term used widely by Greek writers in connection with cleansing and purifying. On Greek usage, see for instance the \textit{σεμιγαματα ξορίκα} prescribed by the pharmacist Dioscorides (5.126) and Aetius (\textit{latrik.} 8.6.31) for a \textit{σεμιγαμα} of Cleopatra's devising.
deodorants, and make-up, culled from the pharmacists, agriculturalists, and physicians Pliny consulted.\textsuperscript{58}

Cosmetic therapy, unlike \textit{cultus}, was not as deeply imbued with gender notions except when poets and moralists consciously asserted a connection between the outré and women's beauty rituals. The aim of therapy was to treat skin ailments, problems with the hair such as baldness and dandruff, and enhance the complexion. \textit{Alcyoneum}, \textit{oesypum}, and \textit{nitrum} were three products frequently used in treatment. \textit{Alcyoneum} was a balm said to be obtained from the sea as foam, mud from the ocean floor, the flotsam on beaches, or birds' nests. When mixed with Attic honey it adhered to the body easily. \textit{Oesypum}, or lanolin, the greasy residue that accumulated in unwashed wool, formed a base for medicinal and cosmetic emollients, and worked especially well when mixed with Corsican honey. \textit{Nitrum}, bicarbonate of soda, and \textit{aphronitrum}, foam of soda, acted as erodents and were effective in cleansing and exfoliating the skin, thus keeping it smooth. The general efficacy of these sodas was well known and the history of their usage can be traced at least to the sixteenth century BC, to a papyrus containing recipes for transforming the skin and beautifying the face.\textsuperscript{59}

Various earths (\textit{terrae}) can be added to the list of ingredients for cosmetic therapies, although writers are often vague as to their application and effect. Clays and chalks from different areas of the Mediterranean were washed, dried in the sun, and divided into lozenges for domestic use and export. Dioscorides, and Pliny following him, attributed medicinal properties to Samian and Eretrian earth. Chian earth possessed these same qualities and kept the face and body generally wrinkle-free and clear; if one wished it could be added to the bath instead of \textit{nitrum}. Pliny is gender specific about the use of Chian earth, indicating that women found it very useful for the skin (\textit{usus ad mulierum maxime cutem}), perhaps as a beauty mask. The milky white earth of Selinus was a constituent of skin preparations after the manner of Chian earth, but was also excellent for touching up

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{58} One of these authorities may have been the Empiricist physician Herakleides of Tarentum (\textit{floruit} 85–65 BC), the earliest example we have of writers from the Roman period who wrote a treatise on cosmetics. Galen cites Herakleides extensively. Pliny mentions (\textit{Nat.} 1.20) a 'Heracleides' among his list of sources but it is not clear whether this Herakleides and Herakleides of Tarentum are one and the same. Cf. Richlin (1997).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Alcyoneum}: Cels. 5.23.19D; Dsc. 5.118W; Plin. \textit{Nat.} 32.8. A detailed explanation of halcyon sources is found in Green (1979) 386, n. 49. \textit{Oesypum}: Ov. \textit{Med.} 78, Ars. 3.213, Rem. 354; Dsc. 2.74W; Plin. \textit{Nat.} 12.74; 29.115, 30.28. \textit{Nitrum} and \textit{aphronitrum}: Cacl. \textit{Fam.} 8.14.4; Ov. \textit{Med.} 73; Cel. 5.18.2, 5.18.7B 5.19.4; Dsc. 5.113W; Plin. \textit{Nat.} 20.66, 22.125, 31.105; Mart. 14.58.2. The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus: Breasted (1930) 490–491; Forbes (1965) 16.}
whitewash on plaster walls (*Nat. 35.194*). The multi-purpose vine earth, *ampelitis*, was a key ingredient in emollients, eye make-up, and hair dyes. Among the white earths was one identified as Cimolian (a shade of which also inclined to a purplish blue) that found its way into pharmaceuticals; it was associated less with beauty concerns and more with skin irritations like psoriasis.60

Among laymen Pliny provides the most comprehensive information on dermatological care, and his advice illustrates the range of skin conditions Romans treated. Pliny advises on serious irritations such as scabies, mange, and psoriasis, but addresses also imperfections such as tattoo-marks (*stigmata*),61 scars (*cicatrices*), acne (*papulae*), spots (*maculae, vitia*), and freckles (*lentigines*).62 Treatments were prepared from organic substances readily available in markets, vegetable gardens, and rural settings. Wild turnip mixed with equal parts of ground vetches, barley, wheat, and lupines helped to smooth the skin on the face (20.10); coriander cured freckles when mixed with a little vinegar (20.71); and an ointment of dried root of creeping mint restored scars to their natural colour (20.55) as did radishes (20.27). Formulas for improving the complexion focused on smoothing the skin (*extendere, levare*) through exfoliants and the application of emollients, ridding the skin of wrinkles (*erugare*), imparting brilliance or enhancing skin colour (*nitor, color melior*), and making the skin whiter (*candor*). Onions as part of a normal diet promoted a healthy complexion (20.42), garlic made the body’s colour more rosy (20.56), gourd roots dried and ground into a meal were used as an exfoliant (20.10), grains of caccalia mixed

---


with melted wax took away wrinkles (26.163), and small snails dried (calcined?), crushed into a powder then mixed with bean meal imparted whiteness to the skin (30.127).  

Certain medicaments, or at least those portrayed as repellent, were the tricks of disreputable women. Juvenal is scathing (6.462-465) in his account of an adulterous woman. She bids her husband goodnight with a face smeared with a repulsive beauty mask resembling bread dough, yet greets her lover with a face freshly scrubbed. Juvenal derides this woman for using a facial pack, and yet the only other references in Latin literature to the use of such masks involve a male. Suetonius (Otho 12.1) and Juvenal (2.107) paint an unflattering picture of Otho, alleging that this narcissistic—and by extension inept—leader used a similar compound on his face. References to such masks are few and far between in textual sources, although Pliny's numerous formulae for healthy skin include facial packs which call for dried lupines or gourds ground into a flour or meal (Nat. 20.12; 22.155). He recommends them as a treatment for acne but does not attribute their use to women specifically.

Another therapy which excited opinion came from Nero's handsome but ill-fated wife Poppaea who trusted in fomentation with asses' milk. Naturally this required that a significant number of she-asses be milked daily for the purpose, and Dio (62.28.1) sets the number at five hundred. Poppaea's beauty regimen launched a trend, according to Pliny (Nat. 28.183), which saw some women bathing their cheeks in asses' milk seven times daily—'keeping carefully to that number'. Horace and Clement profess horror at the application of crocodile dung (crocodilea) but drekapotheke, the term modern anthropologists assign to excrement therapy, was a common practice among healers in Mediterranean and Far Eastern cultures. Galen's De Simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus, contains a chapter (xi.12.307-308) entitled 'Concerning the dung of dappled land crocodiles', in which he claims that their dung brought radiance and smoothness to the skin. Pliny reports (Nat. 28.184) that bull dung brought a rosy glow to the cheeks, and calf dung pounded with oil and gum removed discolorations of the skin (Nat. 28.185), suggesting that where crocodilea was not available other types of dung were substituted.

---


Freckles, scars, and spots, are the most prevalent of the cosmetic ailments Pliny discusses, and his evidence suggests there was a feeling among men as well as women that the appearance required constant attention and care.\textsuperscript{65} Pliny does defend his decision to record a skin whitener and wrinkle-remover, made by boiling the pastern bone of a white bull-calf for forty days and nights until it formed a jelly (\textit{Nat.} 28.184), with the disclaimer that women desire such things (\textit{frivolum videatur, non tam omitterdum propter desideria mulierum}). Yet only eleven of the one hundred and four recipes that Pliny prescribes for skin complaints are addressed specifically to women or judged to be more efficacious for women's skin.\textsuperscript{66} Equally, of the thirty-four recipes designed to enhance the complexion or improve its appearance, only eleven apply strictly to women. These target preservation of the skin, how to rid the body of stretch marks and wrinkles resulting from pregnancy (cf. Mart. 3.42), how to achieve wrinkle-free skin of the face, and brilliance of complexion. The other twenty-two are gender neutral and on the strength of this evidence it seems reasonable to postulate that Romans of both sexes invested time and effort in complexion management.\textsuperscript{67} Pliny's failure to identify skin-care recipes for men could reflect a general understanding among his readers that certain recipes were more effective in treating women's skin, a belief that squares with ancient medical opinion on the contrary natures of the male and female body, and consequent forms of treatment. His silence might also reflect society's quiet acceptance of male \textit{cultus} and skin-care practices when conducted for sensible reasons, and when they conformed to normative constructions of masculinity.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{65} Contra Richlin (1995) 198, who states that 'the majority of Pliny's recipes have to do with women's skin'. Richlin's criteria for identifying these recipes is not entirely clear.

\textsuperscript{66} See Table 2.1 and 2.2 below for a complete breakdown.

\textsuperscript{67} The remarks of Celsus on complexion management cannot be ignored here. He states (6.5.1) that it is women who are preoccupied with spots on the face: pimples, freckles and moles. (\textit{Paene ineptiae sunt curare varos et lenticulas et ephelidas, sed eripi tamen feminis cura cultus sui non potest.}) Celsus goes on to prescribe treatments for blemishes, although he claims—in direct contrast to the evidence from Pliny—that most people simply disregard freckles (\textit{ephelis vero a plerisque ignoratur}). In contrast, Horace implies (\textit{S.} 1.6.66–67) that men as well as women might find spots on the face unattractive (\textit{velut si egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore naevos}).

While cosmetic therapy was in the main organically based, make-up derived from both organic and chemical sources. The first was a foundation of white powder, usually lead carbonate called *cerussa* (Greek ψυχωται).\(^6^9\) *Cerussa* was obtained in tablet form and in addition to its medicinal properties gave women a fair complexion (both by bleaching and disguising their own skin colour). Pliny knew that it was lethal (*Nat. 34.175*).\(^7^0\) *Creta*, a powdered white clay or chalk was an alternative to *cerussa* which toned down ruddiness or minimised the cast of a tanned face. Writers employ *fucus* (φυκός) to signify rouge, but *fucus* can also mean a colour process in the sense of painting. *Minium* or cinnabar was a probable source of rouge and could be used alone or with base powder (*Plin. Nat.* 33.119, 33.124); it too was lethal and individuals working with *minium* wore masks over nose and mouth to prevent the inhalation of the dust (*Plin. Nat.* 35.122). If white lead and chalk did not sufficiently disguise blemishes or other imperfections of the skin, one could resort to the application of *splenia* or *alutae*, small patches which covered the offending mark.\(^7^1\)

The literary evidence describing eye make-up is often vague, making it difficult to determine the style in which Roman women decorated their eyes. Near Eastern women applied a colour wash of black galena to their lids and green malachite underneath the eyes, a practice said to have its origins in health concerns. Egyptian paintings depict the manner of application too: a sweep of colour across the lid in a precise line that extended well beyond the corner of the eye.\(^7^2\) Tertullian's comment (*De Cultu* 1.2.1) on the eye make-up

\(^6^9\) Green (1979) 385, n. 33, following Shear (1937) 314–317 and Forbes (1965) 235–236, identifies *cerussa* as lead acetate — 'sugar of lead' — and not lead carbonate.

\(^7^0\) Its main centres of production were Rhodes, Corinth, and Sparta (*Dsc. 5.88W*). Its medicinal properties: *Dsc. 5.88W, Aet. 6 passim, Cel. 5.19, 5.27, 5.22.7, 6.6.12.* To my knowledge there is no extant account of lead poisoning from make-up in the ancient texts. *Schenk* (1879) 514 lists the symptoms of a thirty-year old female patient suffering from poisoning related to the use of the lead–based beauty product, 'Laird's Bloom of Youth': miscarriage, paralysis, slurred speech, constipation, cramps, lead-line along the gums. The young woman, who had been using Laird's almost daily for six years, eventually died.


\(^7^2\) Eye-shadow as a preventative: *Forbes* (1965) 19, *Dayagi-Mendels* (1989) 36. *Walter et al* (1999) 484 say that galena and malachite are among the ingredients mentioned in Egyptian papyri containing recipes for inflammation of the eye lids, iris and cornea. Cylindrical containers, or kohl tubes, with residues of both ores, have been found in burials dating to 1400 BC, some of which have inscribed on them prescriptions for eye problems. Ores were ground on ornate stone palettes. Palettes are not common in the Roman world.
of North African women suggests they applied shadow or liner in this same fashion 'nigrum pulverem quo exordia oculorum producuntur', and it may be that this practice was common in Italy and the Roman West. Galena, used as a colour wash in Egyptian culture well into the Coptic period, is not cited in connection with Roman make-up; Vitruvius (7.14.2) says that malachite was very expensive in his day and thus sheer cost may have prohibited its use as an eye-shadow. Antimony, a silvery-white pigment, was used to line the eyes and created what Dioscorides (5.84) and Pliny (Nat. 33.102) describe as a wide-eyed look: πλατυώφθολμος.\(^73\) Orpiment (golden yellow pigment) and realgar (red ochre) had served as eye-shadows in Accadian culture; although known to the Romans, they were used chiefly in pharmacological preparations. The appeal of reddish-gold eye-shadow may be comparable to the use of saffron colour washes on the lids of Roman women (Ov. Ars. 3.204; Cypr. De Habitu 15).\(^74\)

**Calliblepharum** is the term most commonly used in connection with decorating the eyes and brows, and is simply a transliteration of the Greek word for eye and brow make-up. In Roman antiquity *calliblepharum* denoted conditioning ointments for brows and lashes, the process by which they were coloured, and in some instances the actual practice of lining the eyes. Burnt rose petals (Plin. *Nat*. 21.123), a concoction of date kernel ashes and nard (Plin. *Nat*. 23.97), or vine earth mixed with other drugs made fine lotions for the brows (Plin. *Nat*. 35.194). An unusual method of colouring the brows called for the application of crushed flies (Plin. *Nat*. 30.134)—a labour intensive venture suited to few but the likes of Domitian.\(^75\)

The last feature of *cultus* that remains to be discussed is hair-care, specifically, dyes and depilatories. Latin invective characterises dyed hair as a peccadillo of Roman women.

---


74 Near Eastern practices: Forbes (1965) 17–18; Manniche (1999) 135–137. Pliny *Nat*. 34.177: realgar staunches bleeding and was used as a remedy for asthma and cough; orpiment was used for ingrown nails. Cf. Dioscorides (5.121–122) for both orpiment (arsenikon) and realgar (sandarake).

despite the fact that men were known to try to disguise the signs of age.\footnote{Men disguising grey: Joseph. Ant. 16.233; Clem. Paed. 3.163; Tert. De Cultu 2.8.2; Aus. Ep. 38. Ovid reminds men that they will have to contend with grey hair and wrinkles but the best way to combat old age is to develop a good moral character (Ars. 2.117-118, 2.121-124, 2.143-144).} Adventurous women resorted to colouring their own hair with a variety of substances, some of which were caustic and caused extensive damage when applied too often. A common lament of the poets is that lovers' tresses have been ruined by bleaching and dyeing. Individual circumstances permitting, women could purchase wigs (\textit{corymbia, galeri, galericula}) made from human hair to obtain a new look without resorting to harsh solutions. Admiration for the reddish blonde hair of northern peoples was universal and efforts were made to simulate their colouring by rinsing the hair with juice from young walnuts (Plin. Nat. 15.87). The emulsion which resulted from boiling a certain species of bramble turned hair the shade of flax (Plin. Nat. 24.164), while \textit{sapo}, a Gallic lye bleach made from suet and ash, produced similar results (Mart. 8.33.20; Plin. Nat. 28.191). Light coloured hair was so popular with North African women that Tertullian chastised them (De Cultu 2.6.1) for regretting 'they were not born in Germany or in Gaul'. \textit{Ladanum} was a multi-purpose gum resin imported from Arabia; it was thought especially good as a preservative for dark hair, as having the ability to slow hair loss (Plin. Nat. 26.47), and prevent dandruff (Cels. 6.2.2). Products for hair blacking included elder berries (Nat. 16.180), boiled leek skins (Plin. Nat. 20.49), all kinds of gall-nut (Plin. Nat. 24.10), and cypress leaves mixed with vinegar (Plin. Nat. 24.15).\footnote{An idea of the range of women's hairstyles may be obtained from Furnéé van Zwet (1956), Virgili (1989), Virgili et al. (1990). Wigs: Ov. Ars. 3.165; Petr. 110.1, Suet. Nero. 26.1; Tert. De Cultu 2.7.2. Wigs from Germany: Ovid Am.1.14.4; Mart. 5.68, 14.26. Hair dye: Serv. Aen. 4.698 quoting Cato; Tib. 1.8.41-46; Prop. 2.18B 23-28; Ov. Ars 3.163-164; Val. Max. 2.1.5; Plin. Nat. 15.87, 16.180, 20.49 (covering grey), 20.221, 22.62, 24.10, 24.15, 24.94, 24.110, 24.122, 26.160, 27.52, 28.191, 30.134, 32.67; Mart. 3.43, 4.36, 8.33.20, 14.26-27; Tert. De Cultu 2.6.1; Cypr. De Habitu 14, 16-17. Green (1979) p. 391, n. 86 is especially good on the nature of bleaching and dyeing processes in Roman antiquity.} Depilatories (\textit{yivwqra}) were in great demand among both sexes, with drops of vine, 'tears' of ivy, and rubbing with pumice helping to remove unwanted hair.\footnote{Depilatories: Var. R. 1.2.26; Ov. Ars 3.19; Plin. Nat. 21.118, 22.34, 23.3, 23.117, 24.79 (it is unclear from Pliny's description what \textit{lacrimae hederae} constitute) 26.164, 28.255, 30.41, 30.132, 30.133, 32.135, 32.136, 34.178, 35.37, 35.189, 36.155; Mart. 3.74.1. The use of pumice was a time-honoured method dating back to Mesopotamian society (Forbes [1965] 20). Disapproval of men using depilatories: Ov. Ars 1.506; Plin. Nat. 14.123, 26.164; Mart. 9.27; Suet. Aug. 68; Clem. Paed. 3.19.1-3; Tert. De Cultu 2.8.}
Availability of Cosmetic Therapy and Make-Up

Participation in *ornatus* was governed very much by financial resources and leisure time, but the demands of *cultus* were rather different. It is true that poor Romans subsisting on diets of wheat porridge and beans, were hardly likely to use their meager provisions for complexion therapy even when malnourishment and squalid living conditions brought them more than their share of skin ailments. But where circumstances diminished the ability of the poor to undertake little more than hygienic care (and even this may have been a struggle), Pliny's recipes illustrate that cosmetic therapy was attainable for individuals at many levels of society. His formulae did not embrace exotic ingredients requiring purchase from speciality shops; they were household items easily obtained from markets and vegetable gardens. Pliny himself characterised the vegetable garden as the poor man's farm (*Nat. 19.52*).

Gardens were central to the lives of Romans. They were essential to city life (*Cato. Agr. 8.2; Var. R. 1.16.3*) and located within easy distance of urban communities, supplying vegetables for the table and flowers for the garlands used in religious worship. Produce gardens were fixtures in rural environments with poor country folk symbolised by Baucis and Philemon (*Ov. Met. 8.646; cf. Juv. 14.165*) maintaining small well-watered plots. The detailed garden plans of Columella (*10 passim*) and Pliny (*Nat. 19.49-189*), brimming with vegetables, herbs, and flowers, create a vivid picture of the ideal garden. These plans were not wholly suited to urban settings, but many city residents utilised space as best they could by sowing both functional and ornamental plants. Vegetable and flower gardens of diverse size (the two were combined in antiquity) were contiguous with residential and commercial structures in Campanian towns. Adjacent to the Porta di Nocera at Pompeii, the remains of a shop-house demonstrate the green space potential for a humble member of Pompeian society. Here, a shopkeeper and his family made the most of a small plot by 'intensive planting' of vines, vegetables, fruit and nut trees.

---

79 On the living conditions of the poor generally see Scobie (1986).

80 On market gardens in Latium, for example, see Frank 5.129 and Purcell (1987) 188–189.

81 Jashemski (1979) 193, and (1993) no. 119. Other kitchen or vegetable gardens in Pompeii and surrounding areas: see Jashemski (1993) nos. 28 (Officina Coriariorum of M. Vesontius Primus), 41 (House of the Ephebe), 65 (House of Menander), 99 (House of Trebius Valens), 106 (House of the Ship Europa), 145 (House of Julia Felix), 159 (House of Castor and Pollux), 225 (Casa del Granduca Michele di Russia), 234 (House of Pansa), 277 (House of the Faun), 452 (cauponae), 463 (House of M. Epidus Rufus), 519 (House of Obellius Firmus), 553 (Casa con Giardino), 581 (villa rustica), 590 (villa rustica in the vicinity of Boscoreale), 624–625 (villa in the vicinity of Stabiae). Cf. Pliny's comment (*Nat. 19.52*) that it was from such *horti* that the ordinary folk obtained their groceries (*ex horto plebei macellum*). It is not
What was a woman's relationship to this garden culture? Women possessed considerable knowledge of herbal therapy and they themselves were directly linked in Roman medical thought to cures for specific ailments. Remedies for reproductive and uterine complaints, fever, numbness, and sunburn, and recipes for depilatories, owe something to women's health concerns and those of their families. Therapy was also informed by women's experience in the kitchen where they were responsible for preserving the produce from garden and orchard. A glimpse of their expertise can be gained from Columella's list of the duties of the vilica, the estate manager's wife. The list of items she must put up (Col. 12.7) is exhaustive and includes capers, rue, fennel, bryony, leeks, and pennyroyal. All were used for care of skin and hair, with potent healing qualities (medicatissimi) attributed to rue especially (Plin. Nat. 28.78). Columella explains how to make squill vinegar (12.33), a solution which neutralised bad breath, braced the gums, strengthened the teeth, and enhanced the complexion (cf. Plin. Nat. 23.59). He sets out the proper method for distilling liniment oil (12.54), making quick digestives, and a pesto containing ingredients that were also constituents of therapeutics (12.59). In book 10, he gives a comprehensive list of plants to be sown in the garden, including more items utilised in cosmetic therapy: mandrake, cummin, beet, roses, sorrel, orach, cucumber, gourds, and lupines. Cosmetic restoratives, moreover, often called for herbs and vegetables to be adulterated with salt or macerated with oil—key ingredients in pickling and preserving.

entirely clear whether Pliny means these gardens were still the norm in his day. His complaint in succeeding passages, that fruits and vegetables have acquired a 'status' among dissolute Romans suggests that he may be speaking of the idealised past. White (1970) 49 and Jashemski (1979) 339 both believe that the harvests from these modest spaces could be relatively high.

82 For female herbalists in Plin, see Elephantis (Nat 28.81), Lais (Nat. 28.81–82), Olympias (Nat. 20.226), the obstetrix Salpe (Nat. 28.38, 28.66, 28.82, 28.262, 32.135, 32.140), and the obstetrix Sotira (Nat. 28.83). Cf. Galen, who gives the names and recipes of two female pharmacists, Origineia (De comp. medicament. secund. x.13.58, 85, 144) and Antiochis Tloia (x.13.250); two dermatologists, Xanite (x.13.310) and Samithra (x.13.311), and one Elephantis (De simpl. medicament. temp. xi.12.416) who is the author of a work on cosmetics. For detailed treatment of the powers imputed to the female body, especially fluids, in folk medicine and lore see Richlin (1997), especially 206–216.

83 Cf. Plin. Nat. 20.66 (lettuce); 20.142 (root of rue); 20.157 (root of pennyroyal); 20.125 (rocket); 20.165 (caper root); 20.183 (coriander); 23.23 (bryony); 23.59 (squill vinegar).

84 Cf. Plin. Nat. 25.175 (mandrake); 20.4 (wild cucumber); 20.11 (gourds); 20.71 (white beet); 20.83 (wild orach) 20.162 (cummin); 20.232 (sorrel); 22.155–156, 32.87 (lupines); 21.123 (roses). We might compare the close relationship of food preparation, healing remedies, and beauty recipes in Roman society with the kitchen 'physick' of seventeenth century England. Popular 'how-to' books frequently contained information meant to help the modern housewife: author unknown, A propre new booke of cokery (1545); J. Partridge, The Treasure of Commodious Conceits, and Hidden Secrets and May Be Called the Huswifes Closet, of
Women put up the produce from gardens, tended the gardens (Col. 12.3.6; Plin. Nat. 19.57), and thus were conversant with the aromas and properties of different botanicals. Those who did not superintend a garden, peddle its produce in market or street, or work in a kitchen might still be acquainted with the garden's healing powers. Consider Fundania, the well-educated wife of the polymath M. Terentius Varro. When Varro was in his eightieth year, he wrote an agricultural manual for Fundania, feeling that she ought to have some knowledge of the business of a farm she had so recently purchased. If we take Varro at his word (R. 1.23), Fundania was expected to be familiar with all the crops and produce grown on her estate, a responsibility that must have necessitated periodic consultation with her *vilicus* and *vilica*. Balms and distilled waters were staples of ancient health care, serving a variety of ills, and were formulated in house unless circumstances permitted their purchase from the market-place. Fundania may have supervised very generally the preparation of these home remedies, or learned of them through knowledgeable staff, as Columella later relied on the lore and experience of the country folk he (or his sources) conferred with in the course of research.

---

85 A woman's involvement in garden and field could be considerable. Cato (Agr. 143.2) says that the *matrona* is responsible for growing and placing flowers on the family altars. Columella recommends (12.3.6) that the *vilica* busy herself with wool-working when frost or rain keeps her from field-work. Elsewhere he advises that a woman's access to cucumber and gourd patches be restricted because she has the ability to inhibit the growth of green-stuff; indeed, a menstruating woman could kill tender shoots simply by looking at them (11.3.50-51; cf. Plin. Nat. 19.176).

86 Female fruit and vegetable vendors: Treggiari (1979a) and Kampen (1982) with references.

87 In the tragi-comedy *Elvira, or, The Worst Not Always True*, penned by the Earl of Bristol in 1667, a maidservant is instructed to carry out the distilling tasks of her employer. The mistress asks her to 'gather store of fresh orange flowers, and then carefully to shift the oils in the perfuming room ...; to do it well will take you up some hours; but 'tis a work I oft perform myself' (Best [1986] xli-xli). The expectations for Fundania might well have been comparable to the self-professed expertise of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, the domineering land-owner in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. She made it her business to dispense advice to her tenants on all household and horticultural matters—whether they wished it or not.

88 Columella shows (11.3.61) that he considered the knowledge of agricultural labourers together with his own personal experience, qualifying instructions for preserving root vegetables and fruit with the phrase, *ut rustici dicunt*, 'as the country folk say'. He uses variations on this phrase throughout his work. *Rustici appellant*: 2.4.5, 2.9.10, 2.9.14, 4.24.10, 5.4.1, 6.13.2, 8.5.4, 12.19.3. *Rustici vocant*: 2.4.8, 2.10.33, 3.10.5, 3.13.11, 3.17.2, 3.18.4, 4.12.2, 4.24.4, 4.32.4, 5.1.5 (*provinciae Baeticae rustici*), 6.37.10, 6.38.3, 8.8.7, 9.4.2, 11.2.60, 11.2.71, 11.3.43, 12.10.1. Cf. Richlin (1997) 204.
Perhaps Fundania maintained a *commentarium* or notebook of health and beauty aids after the fashion of Cato the Elder (*Nat.* 29.15). Elite women could be conversant with the preparation of therapeutic ointments quite apart from any wisdom acquired from skilled slaves or freedmen and women. Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy XII, reputed beauty, and author of a cosmetics guide written circa 50 BC, was after all quoted by medical authorities. Illiteracy was high among Roman women and this condition militates against the existence of recipe-books among a significant portion of the female population (although it does not preclude a husband or slave maintaining a notebook on a woman's behalf). An oral tradition of cosmetic technology was probably the norm for most women (as it was for gynaecological treatments), one combining medicinal and aesthetic therapies that they acquired from female kin, or through the free exchange of information with friends. Individual circumstances naturally dictated the formulation of products at home. Lupine facial masks, soda scrubs, or rose oil moisturizers could be realised in the kitchen with produce harvested from gardens, purchased in markets, or gathered from the wildflowers and plants of the countryside. Modish treatments such as bathing with asses' milk or fomenting with *crocodilea* must have been the luxury of the well-to-do, undeniably a mark of status. *Drekapotheke* was widely practiced in the ancient world, but the fact certainly that crocodiles were not native to Italy or the Roman West meant their

89 Two of her skin ointments, one containing cerussa, the other Cimolian earth, were thought sufficiently reliable to be repeated by physicians of the Late Antique period: Aetius of Amida in his *Iatrika* and Paul of Aegina in his *Epioma Medica*. The latter reproduced Cleopatra's formula for curly hair. Cleopatra and medical writers: Gal. *De comp. medicament. secund.* x.12.403, 432, 446, 492; Aet. *lat.* 6.56.27-34, 8.6.31-34; Paul. *Epit.* 3.2.1, 5.19.1 (antidotes for asp bites). Paul and Aetius borrowed freely from Galen and Oribasius, but the recipes recorded by the latter are not, to my knowledge, extant in the works of the former. At least there are no direct attributions. The possible exception may be the formulation for curly hair quoted by Paul. Galen (*De comp. medicament. secund.* x.12.445-446) discusses the issue of curly hair but his recommendations seem to be those of the Syrian doctor, Archigenes of Apamea. Forbes (1965) 44 says Cleopatra's treatise was quoted by Nicolas Myrepsos, doctor to the thirteenth century emperor Johannes Dukas Vatatzes.

90 Hanson (1990) 310. For homespun beauty traditions in the modern historical period, see *The Elixirs of Nostradamus*, first published in 1552 by the astrologer, which contains recipes for pomades, tooth powders, soap, hair dye, skin clarifiers and lighteners, along with jams, jellies, and marzipan (Boeser [1996]); see also Peiss (1998) 12-16, 172-173.

91 Jashemski (1979) 332. Quite apart from the markets every community relied upon for a steady supply of fruit, nuts, and produce, many of the weeds and flowers used in skin-care (sorrels, mint, buttercups, clover, geraniums, mallows, hypericum, carrot, chrysanthemums, brambles, and poppies) grew wild in the countryside of Campania and the same must have been true of other areas in Italy and the Latin West.
dung had to be imported from elsewhere. Nevertheless, women could be expected to be very independent in the household management area, and it is plausible to assume that they could exercise independence over how they appeared and how they took care of their bodies. There was, again, a great range of therapeutic and cosmetic choices available to them and in the choices they made women expressed their individuality and femininity.

Tertullian declared (*De Cultu* 2.1.3) that make-up was used universally by women in secular society. Although he overstates his case, it is evident that any woman with the necessary income could procure organic and chemical make-up products in markets. Exactly where these items were sold is not entirely clear, but a comment from the Severan lawyer Marcian provides a clue. A *senatus consultum* established that *pigmentarii* were liable for prosecution, under the Cornelian law concerning murderers and poisoners, for careless distribution of toxic substances, expressly hemlock, salamander, monkshood, pinegrubs, or a venomous beetle, mandragora, or Spanish fly. Of the poisonous material Marcian lists, only mandrake and hemlock were used in cosmetic therapy, at least according to the evidence from Pliny. Mandrake helped with the removal of scars, chiefly the *stigmata* found upon runaway slaves (Plin. *Nat.* 25.175), while hemlock seed was used as a sort of post-depilation treatment and said to inhibit hair re-growth (Plin. *Nat.* 30.132). Interestingly, this regimen was specified for the armpits of young boys who were perhaps destined for sexual purposes.

---

92 We know nothing of harvesting methods for *crocodilia*, nor how women outside Egypt obtained it.

93 Cf. Methodius (*Smp.* Prel. 5–6), Bishop of Olympus in the late third century AD, who has a female symposiast express surprise that another guest's face bore no evidence of make-up nor any hint of artificiality (cf. *X. Mem.* 2.1.21).

94 It should perhaps be noted that pedlars may also have visited women in their homes. This much at least is suggested by Ovid (*Ars* 1.422; *Rem.* 306) and Horace (*Od.* 3.6.30), and Seneca (Haase, *Frg.* 52=Jer. *Adversus lolinianum* 1.47) all of whom mention pedlars visiting women, although they do not specify what (beyond sexual favours), these men may be selling.

95 *Pigmentarii* were vendors of unguents and paints, an odd combination to modern minds perhaps, but some of the pigments used by Roman painters were also as curatives, as Pliny points out (*Nat.* 35.32, 35.34, 35.37–38) in his discussion of Greco–Roman painting. *Pigmentarii* are few and far between in textual evidence: Cic. *Fam.* 15.17.2, *Larg.* 22.7, *Vitr.* 7.11 (he mentions a Puteolan banker named Vestorius, an acquaintance of Cicero's [*Att.* 14.9.1, 14.12.3] who manufactured pigments as a side-line), *CIL* 6.9673, 9795. *Dig.* 48.8.3.3: *Alio senatus consulto effectum est, ut pigmentarii, si cui temere cicutm, salmandram, aconitum, pituocampus, aut bubrostim, mandragoram et id, quod lustramenti causa dederit cantharidas, poena teneantur huius legis.*

96 Elsewhere Pliny says (*Nat.* 32.135) that depilation with blood, gall, and liver of tunafish was used by the *obstetrix* Salpe to prepare slave-boys for market.
Women in search of make-up and artists in need of supplies patronised the same establishment. Pliny's overview of Greco-Roman painting furnishes us with much information about the spectrum of colours available from vendors and the sources from which these colours derived. It is thus an invaluable resource. Cerussa was one of four white pigments used by painters, a second was melinum. Imported from the island of Melos, melinum is not associated with face make-up in the literary sources but did serve as a therapeutic in the manner of Eretrian earth and acted as a depilatory (Plin. Nat. 35.37). A very inexpensive white, anularis vilissimus, enabled artists to bring a luminous quality to the faces of women they painted. Anularis was a blend of creta (a face powder) and vitreous stone (Plin. Nat. 35.48). Cinnabar or minium gave high colour to an otherwise pallid complexion (Plin. Nat. 35.33) and made Latin inscriptions easier to read (Plin. Nat 33.122). Constantly thinking of ways to be frugal, Pliny explains that cerussa adulterated with red ochre and burned resulted in sandyx or vermillion, a cheap replacement (half the cost) for the pigment sandarach (Plin. Nat. 35.40). It could easily have substituted for rouge where women did not have access to organic sources such as alkanet root.97

The woman who visited a pigmentarius for make-up items would find available a range of imported and domestic paints. Pigments of fine quality came from Egypt and the Greek East, although efforts were made to find less expensive alternatives.98 Lead ore was a principal export of Spain (Dio. 5.36.3; Strab. 3.2.10), Rhodes traded a high grade cerussa (Plin. Nat. 34.175; Dsc. 5.88W), and neither commodity was exorbitantly priced.99 The sandarach that Pliny describes as a low-cost alternative to minium cost five asses per pound, slightly more than a drink of Falernian wine at one establishment (CIL 4.1679)—if we trust the graffiti scrawled on the wall of the bar. A woman's expertise in the kitchen, however, meant that a desire for make-up could be satisfied without serious expenditure at the paint-dealer's establishment. Rouge could have been concocted by the same process painters developed for manufacturing artificial colours with chalk. Vitruvius describes

97 For material evidence of the pigments used by painters see the 'paint saucers' discovered by Petrie in the burial of a painter from Hawara (Walker and Bierbriar [1997] No. 278). The orange-red colour has been identified as minium or lead oxide. See also Barbet et al. (1997) for more general discussion of the use of such materials for paints as well as make-up.

98 Pigments from the Greek East: Strab. 12.3.40, Plin. Nat. 34.177, Vitr. 7.7, Dsc. 5.150W (realgar); Dsc. 5.104W, Vitr. 7.7 (orpiment). Pliny says (Nat. 35.39) that realgar and sandarach are not imported by the Romans from the Red Sea area, and goes on to explain that they have developed a method making their own sandarach (a flame colour).

99 Lead as an inexpensive commodity: Frank 5.205, n. 50; Higgins (1961) 42.
(7.14.1) a relatively simple formula that called for nothing more than boiling flower blooms, squeezing the emulsion through a cloth, and then mixing with chalk in a mortar. Make-up for eyes and brows was even easier to devise, and a woman need not leave the house; ash from a fire (favilla) or soot from a lamp (fuligo or ἀεβόλη) worked equally well and no one need be the wiser. Although it is tempting to dismiss Tertullian's claim as little more than exaggeration, the textual evidence strongly suggests that beauty culture was affordable for many women in a way that ornatus was not.

Conclusions

The broad picture of cultus and ornatus that emerges from our literary sources is one in which women are the principal players, devoting countless hours to their appearances, spending countless hours before their mirrors, and expending enormous sums of money on modes of presentation as they impoverish the males to whom they are related. Yet women were expected to manage the physical self conscientiously in order to attain the ideal of femininity set down by Roman gender ideology. Antestilis and Adelphasium, two sisters obtained by a leno in the Poenulus, knew they would fail to captivate once they failed to cultivate a refined appearance (Pl. Poen. 217—247), and this knowledge apparently kept them 'prinking' from dawn to dusk. Cyprian, writing nearly four hundred years after Plautus, urged young Christian women in the De Habitu Virginum to shun make-up, ornament, and tawdry apparel for the pious style of plain hair and dress. These authors approached cosmetics and dress from radically different points of view, but for the meretrix and the Christian virgin the motivation for self-presentation was the same. Each woman had to abide by the dictates of her social milieu in order to achieve success.

In reality, the relationship between ideals of comportment and individual compliance must have been fraught with tension. Throughout the four centuries conventionally known as the central period of Roman history, women's make-up products and apparel went largely unchanged, as did the unrelenting scrutiny of the means by which women interpreted femininity. As men wrote resolutely about the pernicious side of beauty culture, 'the adorned body's dangers', so women apparently adhered to their rituals. Censure

--72--

100 Favilla: Ov. Ars 3.203; Petr. 126.15; Pliny Nat. 26.118, 24.128. Fuligo: Dsc. 5.161-162W; Plin. Nat. 28.163; Juv. 2.93; Gal. De comp. medicament. secund. x.13.260; Clem. Paed. 3.7.3; Tert. De Cultu 2.5.2. The way in which artists of the Fayum portraits have rendered the eyes of women strongly suggests that eye-shadow was relatively common among the women of Roman Egypt (Doxiadis [1995] passim; Walker and Bierbriar [1997] passim. Cf. Grillet [1975] 117-118).

101 Wyke (1994) 146.
dismissed non-conformists (of both genders), sustained social values, and soothed the apprehensive writer.\footnote{Richlin (1984) 67; Joshel (1997).} So stories circulated about the toilette habits of Lolliia Paulina, Messalina, and Poppaea, vilifying them, upholding ideals of femininity, and bringing would-be offenders into line with the precepts of gender ideology. Yet the literary evidence, by its very existence, illustrates that trenchant criticism could not stem participation in beauty culture during the first two centuries of Empire; and we might fairly suppose the same to be true for the last two centuries of the Republic even though our sources for this period are less than comprehensive. Indeed, the evidence of women's behaviour is strong evidence of women pursing their own goals through ornatus and cultus, with the great variety of fashion and cosmetic choices available to them.

In an effort to see beyond the female stereotypes of literature and come to grips with the influence of public censure on private behaviour, we might consider two speeches of Cicero's which demonstrate how men's looks, carefully tended or not, offered the shrewd public speaker with much grist for the declamatory mill. Cicero came before the senate in 55 BC, in response L. Calpurnius Piso's attempt to excuse his behaviour while governor of Macedonia (57-55 BC). Cicero played up (\textit{Piso} 1) certain aspects of Piso's physical appearance, hoping to create niggling doubts about his character in the minds of the audience: his servile complexion, hirsute cheeks and decaying teeth (\textit{color iste servilis ...pilosae genae ...dentes putridi}).\footnote{This same idea is expressed in a non-philosophical setting, specifically Plautus \textit{Aul.} 717 where Euclio says, 'I'll trust you, I will. Yes, you're a worthy gentleman; I can tell it from your face' (\textit{tibi credere certum est, nam esse bonum ex voltu cognosco}). Cf. Corbeill (1996) 31, n. 35.} With Aulus Gabinius, Piso's consular colleague of 58, Cicero modified his approach. Gabinius (\textit{Red. Pop.} 13) wore his hair neatly braided and well-oiled, and perhaps worst of all a burn-mark from a curling iron was visible upon his brow (15). Piso's looks were coarse and vulgar, those of Gabinius womanly, and both appearances smacked of unsavoury character because a man's true nature, as Cicero later wrote (\textit{Leg.} 1.27), could be discerned from his countenance.\footnote{For Cicero's treatment of Piso generally see Corbeill (1996) 169–173.} Cicero spoke against Piso and Gabinius on at least two occasions (\textit{In Pisonem} and \textit{Post reditum in Senatu}) and had mocked their mannerisms previously during his defense of Publius Sestius in 56. How effective was such innuendo? The damage to Piso's reputation at least was negligible. His
political career continued unabated and culminated in election to the censorship in 51 BC—the one Republican office, ironically, most concerned with public morality.\footnote{For Cicero's assaults on other male appearances, most notably Fannius and Vatinius, see Corbeill (1996) 43–56.}

A man's appearance could be subjected to public ridicule and held to a physical standard exemplifying moral character and masculinity. The outcome of Piso's case may have been unprecedented but the implication is clear. Failure to meet a social ideal was not always detrimental to one's social reputation. The same must have been true for women who thus continued in the face of moral prejudice to re-write and interpret ideals of femininity on their own terms, using the techniques of *cultus* and *ornatus*. Macrobius, a late source from well beyond the central period of Roman history, gives us one of the very few examples of how women defined femininity. He tells an amusing story about Julia, the vivacious and (sexually) energetic daughter of Augustus (*Sat. 2.5.5*), who angered her father by arriving at a *convivium* immodestly dressed. The following day she came to him more suitably attired and received his approbation. Never at a loss for words, Julia explained her choices of apparel: the previous evening she had dressed with her husband in mind, now she had dressed for her father.\footnote{Macrobr. *Sat. 2.5.5*: ...quantum hic, ait, in filia Augusti probabilior est cultus? Non defuit patrocinio suo Julia his verbis: *hodie enim me patris oculis ornavi, heri viri.* For more detailed analysis of Julia as portrayed by Macrobius, see Richlin (1992) 72–82.}

In the hands of women *ornatus* and *cultus* were systems of self-expression and more. Roman females in all segments of the population could use beauty culture to convey their notions of femininity, status, achievement, and perhaps most importantly, their sense of individuality. The strong urban-élite bias of the literary evidence necessarily informs us of the beauty culture of privileged women in Rome, Alexandria, and Carthage, and their impeccably clad and decorated bodies. These women may have popularised certain modes of dress, make-up, or cosmetic therapy, but we cannot be certain because the literary texts do not afford a thorough assessment of beauty culture at all levels of society (including the many rural communities outside the main centres of empire). The cosmetic and fashion habits of women in the lower orders are elusive, but meagre evidence should not be taken as lack of interest. On the contrary, we might assume from Pliny the Elder a high degree of interest in *cultus*, governed of course by individual interest, but made possible by the relative ease with which therapy could be undertaken. Clothing and jewellery items were
more difficult for the financially burdened woman to obtain than ingredients for skin care, hair colour, and make-up, but possibilities existed for them nonetheless.

Participation in cultus certainly was not limited to the simple purchase or manufacture of cosmetic products; it extended to the purchase of elegant containers for storing creams and powders, utensils for grooming, and to the number of skilled servants engaged to assist with beauty rituals. To give his audience an idea of the vast array (and absurdity) of women's toiletries, Clement turned (Paed. 2.124.1-2) to classical literature and borrowed from Aristophanes' Thesmophoriazousai. He enumerated the banal and necessary articles of female life: snoods, hair-bands, a breast-band, a fine shawl, a chiton, hairnets, earrings, pendants, anklets, and rings. Also listed are items which Clement would likely have considered more exotic: rouge, eye-liner or kohl, carnelians, and leather phalli—articles that appeared on the dressing tables, or in the private apartments of women in Italy and the Roman West. Clement's disapproval of extravagance also extended to the large numbers of slaves dedicated to the self-presentation of their mistress: one was responsible for mirrors, one for hairnets, and another for combs (Paed. 3.26.3).

Toiletries and clothing items akin to those in the Aristophanes fragment were among the possessions of Roman women, especially those with the financial means. Ovid pokes fun (Rem. 354; cf. Luc. Amor. 39) at the array of mysterious containers cluttering a woman's dressing table, and satirists derived great comic mileage from the notion that eyebrows and other facial features were 'kept' in a box (Petr. 110; Mart. 9.37). It is not surprising to find that the Severan jurist Paul established (Sent. 3.6.83) for testamentary purposes exactly what constituted the mundus muliebris, a blanket term for those articles which enabled a woman to present an impeccable appearance in society: mirrors, containers for oils, basins for water, and unguent vessels. His definition suggests that these toiletries

107 Ξυρόν, κάτοπτρον, ψαλίδα, κηρωτήν, λίπρον, προκόμην, ύληβόβους, μίτρα, ἄναδήματα, ἔρχουσαν, ὄλεθρον τῶν βαθῶν, ψιμυθόν, μύρον, κίστην, στρώτι' ὀπισθοσφεδόνθην, κάλυμμα, φύκος, περιδέρα', ὑπογράμματα, τρυφεράλασσιν, ἐλλέβορον, κεκρύφαλον, ζώμ' ἀμέρχον, τρύφημα, παραφές, ξυστίδα, χιτώνα, βαραθρόν, ἔγκυκλον, κομίστηρον. τὰ μέγιστα δ' οὐκ εἰρήκα τούτον. εἶτα τί διόπας, διάλυθον, πλάστρα, μολόχην, βότρυς, χυλώνα, περόνας, ἀμφιδέας, ὄμων, κέδας, σφραγίδας, ἀλόσεις, δακτυλίους, κατασκλαμματα, κομφόλας, ἀποκινίσεως, ὀλίβους, σάρδα, υποδερίδας, ἐλεκτῆρας, άλλα πόλλα δ' τί. This passage does not actually appear in modern editions of the Thesmophoriazousai. For text, translation, and commentary of this fragment see Edmonds (1958) 662–665.

108 Sent. 3.6.83: Mundo muliebri legato, ea cedunt, per quae mundior mulier lautiorque efficitur, velut speculum conchae situti, item pyxides unguenta et vasa, in quibus ea sunt: item sella balnearis et cetera huiusmodi. Paul's definition is the first extant interpretation, but evidence from the Digest demonstrates that jurists of the Republican and early Imperial periods (Q. Mucius Scaevola, P. Alfenus Varus, M. Antistius Labeo, and Masurius Sabinus), were constantly dealing with definitions of women's
were fairly ordinary and were by the time of Clement considered the province of women, despite the fact that some of the items were probably used by men for simple grooming tasks. The notion that these items comprised the insignia of women, and women alone, found its way into Roman art, forming part of the iconography of female funerary monuments. It is the goal of the following chapter to examine the extent to which *ornatus* became a symbol of femininity and emblematic of women's lives in the Roman world.

accoutrements. Gardner (1995) 380, notes that the Latin word *muliebris* is used in legal sources 'only in connection with certain material objects, i.e., those adornments, jewellery and clothing conventionally regarded as exclusively or primarily for women's use'. For material evidence of cosmetic containers, some of which may have been relatively inexpensive, see Kleiner et al (1996) nos. 118–119.

Table 2.1: The Elder Pliny's Remedies for Skin Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eruptions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freckles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scars</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spots</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stigmata</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunburn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>93</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: The Elder Pliny's Recipes for Skin-Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clarity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preserving</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smoothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whitening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

Depicting Femininity: the Iconography of Ornatus

...her cheeke well died is the idoll she doth so much adore. Too much love of beautie, hath wrought her to love painting: and her love of painting hath transformed her into a picture.

Thomas Tuke, *The Picture of a Picture or The Character of a Painted Woman*

Introduction

Evidence for women's involvement in *ornatus* and *cultus* appears not only in literature but also in art. One of the best known examples of a Roman woman engaged in *cultus* appears on the *Elternpaarpfeiler*, a Treviran funerary pillar for a married couple, where a tax-collection scene involving a man and a tableau of a woman having her hair arranged form part of the decorative programme (fig. 3). Scholars have characterised funerary reliefs of this kind as visual texts which affluent Romans employed in mortuary contexts as affirmations of their prosperity and social standing. A husband's hard work and business acumen enriched his family. Specifically, his industry furnished his wife with the leisure to conduct her grooming, a personal staff to assist her, and elegant toiletries. There are various types of representations that show an intimate connection between women and *ornatus* and *cultus*. Another more prevalent image, found on tombstones and in sepulchres for women, comprises those items that Roman jurists classified as the *mundus muliebris*—the toiletries many women used on a daily basis.

In this chapter I examine a body of funerary monuments portraying these kinds of representations and ask what relevance they have for the study of women and self-expression. These memorials come from Italy and the Roman West, and are sufficiently numerous that they allow a typology of adornment scenes to be created and discussed. Because this evidence has roots in earlier Greco-Roman and Etruscan art, the chapter begins with an overview of *ornatus* and *cultus* scenes in earlier art sources. Discussion of the monuments will then raise questions of whether women wanted to be represented in idealistic poses, or whether such representations were simply the work of men. Two arguments will be made. First, that these artistic scenes conform to ideas of womanhood as established by dominant male tradition, and second that these traditional ideas

---

1 An inventory of these monuments may be found in Appendix 1.
nonetheless allowed certain categories of women, especially those from the lower classes, to assert themselves as individuals.

**Depicting Femininity: Greek Art**

Depictions of women at their toilette or with objects denoting a facet of womanhood were not peculiar to Roman culture. Long-held cultural beliefs that ideal women possessed certain desirable qualities, among which was physical appeal, found expression in the visual arts of the Mediterranean basin at least as early as the Old Kingdom period in Egypt (2423-2065 BC), where women are shown grooming themselves with the help of servants. A typical example is a sunk-relief fragment from the tomb of Queen Nerferu with Nerferu having her tresses attended to by the royal coiffeuse, Henut. The queen is distinguished by the ornate collar around her neck, while graceful arms and a portion of the face are all that remain of the servant standing behind the queen, reaching up to tidy her mistress' hair. Variations on this theme are found much later in Greek and Roman art, raising the question of whether the image was transmitted from one culture to another, or whether it developed independently in each. As an artistic motif, the ritual of *ornatus*—making-up and hair-dressing—was probably not unique to Egyptian, Greek, or Roman society, although one tradition may have influenced another in terms of the manner in which the image was rendered.

The genesis of the grooming scene in Greek art cannot be discerned precisely, but schematic images existed at least from the sixth century BC, evolving into more complex representations by the Classical period. Two examples from the intaglios of gems—one from the early Archaic period, the other from the second half of the fifth century BC—imply such a development. The earlier of the two, a linear engraving of a woman kneeling awkwardly at a basin as she washes her hair, contrasts sharply with the more complex image created by Dexamenos of Chios. Dressed in a flowing chiton, a woman sits upon a

---

2 See Riefstahl (1956) pl. 9, for the Nerferu relief (with bibliography). On the companion to this relief, which depicts a hairdresser braiding a lock of hair, see Fazzini (1989) No. 17, and Riefstahl (1956) pl. 7. Toilette scenes in Egyptian art: Stevenson-Smith (1981) fig. 155, Lange and Hirmer (1957) no. 83, and Riefstahl (1956) pl. 13, for a sunk-relief of Queen Kawit having the curls of her wig arranged by a maidservant; Lange and Hirmer (1957) no. 150; and Groenewegen-Frankfort and Ashmole (1971) pl. 2, for a wall-painting of two serving girls assisting a woman with her toilette.

3 Riefstahl (1956) 17 claims that hairdressing scenes, most of which appear in Middle Kingdom art, are not strictly reflections of daily life. She believes that these scenes together with the mirrors that frequently comprise tomb finds in the sixth through twelfth dynasties have ritual significance connected with the cult of Hathor.
low stool attended by a maid holding a chaplet and mirror. Engravings of women stooping as they pull on chitons, as they examine themselves in mirrors, as they wash their hair, and prepare for the bath, were worked on gemstones meant for pendants and set into rings. The identity, status, and actions of these females are not entirely clear, but they may represent Aphrodite emerging from the bath or dressing her hair after birth from the sea. The goddess’ affinity with feminine beauty is a natural one. Comely and irresistible to divine and mortal males, she presented the Greek world with the quintessential model of an attractive female. So much so, that representations of Aphrodite and handsome mortal women absorbed in their grooming rituals came to form part of the iconographical répertoire of Greek painters and sculptors.4

The well-presented woman is a persistent and pervasive figure in the daily life imagery of Greek vases of the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Red-figure artists of the late Archaic period show an interest in the personal hygiene of both sexes, but have a particular fondness for scenes of women attiring themselves or preparing for a sponge bath. These representations usually appear among scenes of quiet domesticity: women spinning and weaving, or mothers playing with their children. Toilette articles establish private and familial environments, as on a lekythos by the Nikon Painter, active during the early Classical period. A mirror and ewer fill the background between a woman holding a sash (or the taenia used to decorate funerary monuments) and a young servant holding a small casket. Suspended from hooks on the wall, these items convey a sense of interior space where activities such as the bridal toilette were conducted—perhaps the women’s quarters of the Greek home. The bathing of the bride is a common motif on vases handled largely, although not exclusively, by women: the lebetes gamikoi and loutrophoroi sometimes given as wedding gifts, the hydriai used for water collection, and pyxides, the small jars used to store unguents. Grooming scenes even appear on funerary vases (lekythoi). Since women presided over the care and mourning of the deceased, the presence of this motif is

not surprising, nor is the fact that this iconography extended to another medium of sepulchral art.5

Commemorative monuments assume a variety of forms (osteothiki, urns, stelai, altars, sarcophagi) and their decorative programmes incorporated a variety of carved reliefs that reveal sculptural and technological developments; they also act as sources of information about interpersonal relationships and social hierarchies. An exceptional example of a Classical tombstone (stele) is the monument dedicated to the memory of Hegeso. On this naiskos-style marker the deceased sits upon a klismos set within an architectural frame indicative of a small shrine. She faces but seems oblivious to the young maid standing before her. Hegeso's hair is elegantly waved and her chiton envelops her body in the sensual manner of the Parthenon sculptures. Except for the fillet in her hair, she is unadorned and seems to contemplate the necklace she has withdrawn from a casket held by her maid. The necklace is now missing. Traces of paint on this stele and others like it suggest that details of this sort were rendered in paint. One interpretation of this gesture is that it symbolises a leave-taking; Hegeso takes one last look upon her jewellery before final release from the temporal world. Women selecting a piece of jewellery from a trinket-box or holding mirrors are a recurring theme on Attic stelai, and examples from the eastern Aegean are witness to the popularity of this image along the coast of Asia Minor. The uniform composition of the markers suggests they were brought from quarry to workshop in a crude state and then personalised after prospective buyers had an opportunity to make a selection from a pattern book, or peruse the workshop's inventory.6

5 Boardman (1991) 217. In illustration nos. 4, 109, 224, 382, all vases of the late Archaic period, women are shown swimming, bathing, and dressing. See also Robertson (1992) figs. 36, 232, and Keuls (1983) fig. 14.15. Of special interest is the comment by Robertson (1992) 224, that of the 22 small hydriai ascribed to the Washing Painter, who worked during the High Classical period, only one does not take the personal hygiene of women as its principal subject. A more extensive treatment of women and bathing may be found in Ginouvès (1962). For the problems encountered when trying to determine the status of women in bathing scenes, i.e. freeborn, slave, or demi-mondaine, see the sensible discussions of Robertson and Beard (1991), Bérard (1989), and Williams (1983). Nikon painter: Boardman (1991) illustration no. 365. Setting: Boardman (1989) illustration no. 70 provides another example of this convention on a lekythos executed in the manner of the Pistoxenos Painter; here a mirror seemingly hangs on a wall behind a woman cradling a child in her arms. See also illustration no. 261, a lekythos by the Achilles Painter. On the difficulties of distinguishing between mirror and distaff, another implement commonly found in scenes of domesticity, see the interesting discussion in Keuls (1983) 216-221, with figs.

6 For the Hegeso relief see Richter (1950) fig. 429, Friis Johansen (1951) fig. 5, Lullies and Hirmer (1960) fig. 187, Stewart (1990) fig. 477. For discussion of gesture in such reliefs see Braemer (1959) 121. Other reliefs casket reliefs which may be compared with the tombstone for Hegeso: Lullies and Hirmer (1960) figs. 202-203, Stewart (1990) fig. 478 (grave relief from the Piraeus); Pfuhl (1977) no. 66 (stele of woman from Rhodes); Pfuhl (1977) no. 81 (fragment of a stele with only the maid (?) extant); Diepolder (1965) taf. 41, Friis Johansen (1951) fig. 457 (stele for Ameinokleia); Richter (1950) fig. 306 (stele for Glykylla);
Like sculptors, Classical vase painters continued to interweave cultural notions of gender and physical appearance with myths of beautiful women. The energetic friezes adorning vases of this period often depict the judgement of Paris, or Aphrodite in the company of her lover Adonis, interspersed with women ornamenting themselves and gazing into mirrors. The identities of the latter, mortal or divine, are not always evident. The toilette of Aphrodite especially sustained the interest of Greek artists in the fourth century BC, but depictions changed markedly with the creation of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos. Mirrors and lavers no longer created a sense of moment for the viewer as they had in earlier renderings of the goddess. The setting now arose from the *hydria* draped with her clothes, and from the body language of the goddess caught in a state of *dishabille*. This new mode of depiction caught and held the interest of sculptors in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, and from about 340 BC onward vignettes of the goddess emerging from or preparing for her bath and arranging her hair became widespread.\(^7\)

### Depicting Femininity: the Arts of Magna Graecia and the Italian Peninsula

From the mid-eighth to the early sixth century BC, the Greeks colonised the large area of Southern Italy and Sicily known as Magna Graecia. Exactly what impression Greek immigrants made on the indigenous peoples of the region initially is difficult to say, but

---

the long term effects were significant. The trade spawned by colonisation proved a powerful means of Hellenising Etruscan, Sicel, and other native Italian cultures. Settlers brought their preferences for figured pottery and sculpture to the new settlements, and while the colonies were in their infancy these tastes were satisfied through vigorous trade with mainland Greece. Extensive trade in pottery between Greece, Magna Graecia, and Etruria lasted until nearly the last quarter of the fifth century BC, and there is more than enough evidence to suggest that Athens provided the colonial potteries with red-figure artists and vase prototypes until the South Italian potteries came into their own. Constant contact between colony and home-city ensured the transmission of current trends in all aspects of Greek culture, and the artistic orthodoxies of Archaic and Classical Greece resonate clearly in the arts of pre-Roman Italy.8

In South Italian red-figure, as in Attic, the activities of daily life provided painters with much subject material. The red-figure artists of Magna Graecia are best known for their theatrical scenes. Apulian, however, the most prevalent of the South Italian fabrics, yields numerous images of women with mirrors and cistae in the company of nude youths and erotes. They perform rites at funerary altars, reside in naiskoi, and relax among friends or women of their household as they bathe or prepare for a wedding.9 More unusual are detailed scenes of the type on a pelike by the Sisyphus Painter, in which two naked women, perhaps having finished their bath, are preoccupied with their toilette. One kneels as she carefully combs the tangles from her hair, a mirror on the ground before her. The other stands next to a laver wrapping a hair-band about her head. A third woman, perhaps a servant, stands fully clothed beside the laver, holding an alabastron.10

In sharp contrast to the subject material of South Italian vase-painters, toilette images appear rarely in the extant remains of native Italian cultures. A tomb from the third century BC necropolis at Cumae contains a painting of a well-presented woman sitting upon an ornate chair. Mirror in hand, she is attended by a maid holding an alabastron and a basket.

---


10 See Trendall and Cambitoglou (1978) pl. 7.1.
of pomegranates. The tableau does not suggest a toilette ritual: the maid does not arrange her mistress' hair although the woman does look into the mirror she holds in her hand.\textsuperscript{11} The relative dearth of toilette scenes is somewhat surprising given the presence of Greek artists in Italy and the powerful influence of Greek art as a whole during the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Art historians and archaeologists speak of a Greek \textit{koine} that existed at this time, a functional language of styles and conventions employed universally by artists on mainland Greece and those areas drawn within the orbit of Greek culture.\textsuperscript{12} Scarcity of evidence, however, should not preclude the inclusion of the toilette scene in the Italian artistic répertoire. Due consideration must be given to the deficiencies of the archaeological record for pre-Roman Italy and the historical events that affected this record.

One example illustrates this point. Etruscan power in central Italy and Campania during the sixth century BC was significant. Trade with the Greeks overseas and in Southern Italy flourished and the results of this commercial success can be seen plainly in the arts, whose look and feel are essentially those of Archaic Greece. Etruscan fortunes took a dramatic turn in the fifth century, during which these rich and powerful people witnessed first hand the beginning of Rome's ascendency. Rome was not the commanding force that eventually was to unify Italy, but its position in Latium strengthened after initial clashes with the Latin League. In 474 BC, a fleet from Syracuse soundly defeated the Etruscans in a naval battle off Cumae, inhibiting trade for the next twenty five years. Veii and Rome waged war intermittently throughout this century, disrupting communication and the flow of trade between the Etruscans and their trade partners to the south. The cumulative effect of these external conflicts appears in the archaeological record. Tombs, a distinctive feature of Etruscan culture, decline in number and the richness of their decoration; the quality of

\textsuperscript{11} For a description see Salmon (1967) 142-143. Illustrations of this tomb painting may be found in Maiuri (1951) 22; CAH 4 Supplement (1966) 77, fig. B; Steingrâber (1991) taf. 23.2. Two other examples of women regarding themselves in mirrors have been found at Etruscan Capua, according to Reinach (1922) 243, nos. 2 and 4, but he gives no indication of their dates. Steingrâber (1991) indicates that five toilette scenes are found in funerary contexts in southern Italy, three in Campania and two in Lucania (see his unnumbered and untitled table for exact locations). Steingrâber does not provide descriptions, but comments that toilette scenes, along with prothesis and mourning scenes, were typical representations for women. See also a painting from the Tomba Bruschi in Tarquinia, illustrated in Thomson de Grummond (1982) figs. 112-113, of a young woman holding a mirror into which an older woman gazes.

\textsuperscript{12} See for example Bonfante (1977) 158, on the link between South Italian vase painting (principally Apulian) and the decorative motifs of Etruscan mirrors. In his discussion of the chronology of southern Italian tomb paintings, Steingrâber (1991) 6 regards the high point of the Italian tomb paintings as the early fourth through mid-third century BC, and comments that there was also a flowering of the art in several areas on the periphery of Greek culture: Macedonia, Thrace, south Russia and Alexandria.
burial goods and other items that comforted the deceased in the afterlife diminishes; and the
general quality of Etruscan sculpture is poor. The quality of the material remains from
the fourth century, a time of greater stability, improves markedly. Greek pottery is more
ubiquitous for the better part of this century, there is a spate of monumental building, and
the arts seem to thrive once more.

There are indications that native artists used this motif. Almost all signs derive from the
metalwork and sepulchral art of the Etruscans, and are limited to the fourth through second
centuries BC. Bronze mirror backs have elaborately engraved scenes with mythological
women having their hair dressed; the myths of Turan and Atunis (Aphrodite and Adonis),
as well as the judgement of Paris are common themes. Typically, the central figure holds a
mirror in her hand and is encircled by a number of attendants who arrange her curls or
adjust her *stephane*, as in the toilette of Malavisch (Helen). In characteristic Etruscan
fashion, the women are very well clothed and jewelled. Few depictions of mortal women
with grooming articles are extant in Etruscan sculpture and fewer still in the plastic arts. A
second or first century BC terracotta statuette of a girl plaiting her hair was found near
Chiusi, and ash urns from Hellenistic Volterra with portraits of their owners reclining
banquet-style on the lids, are the principal examples. Several urns portray impeccably
attired women holding mirror cases or compacts in their right hands, the square cases
propped open to reveal the small circular mirror inside. The few sarcophagi executed in
this style date to the early second century BC and, chronologically speaking, are well
removed from the conventions of Attic and South Italian visual arts.

---

the theory that the 'fifth-century crisis' affected select areas. Evidence of this crisis can be found in the
material cultures of Magna Graecia, Campania, and the Etruscan littoral, which may help to explain why
the toilette scene motif is seldom seen in the graphic arts of Campania and Etruria during this period.

41-49.

15 Bonfante (1986) 157, fig. IV.89, claims that the toilette of Helen, along with the judgement of Paris, is
depicted on the Boccanera Plaques from Cerveteri, making this one of the earliest representations of the
toilette ritual in Etruscan art (550-540 BC). Helen presumably stands at the far right while behind her are
interprets the procession as the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and the three women as goddesses bearing
gifts. Because of the problems of interpretation I have not included it in the general discussion of Etruscan
toilette scenes.

16 Depictions of myth in Etruscan art: Bonfante (1977) and (1986) 240, figs. I.14; Thomson de
Consider the sarcophagus of Seianti Hanunia Tlesnasa. She is resplendent in a chiton belted just under her breasts and gathered at each shoulder to create a sleeveless effect; her himation is drawn over her head. The Etruscan partiality for jewellery is evident: an armlet, a bracelet, a torque, a *stephane*, pendant earrings, and several rings comprise her adornments. Hanunia reclines on her left side and resting on the up-turned palm of this hand is an ornate mirror case. Her right hand grasps the edge of her mantle, a gesture of modesty performed by newly married and well-bred women alike. The colour enhancing the portrait reflects the Etruscan taste for brightly painted statuary, and gives Hanunia a youthful vitality. This energy is most apparent around the eyes, which are painstakingly lined and shaped, an accent seldom seen in Greek funerary portraiture. A sense of vigour surrounds the figure of Larthia Seianti, too, who is well coiffed, richly adorned, and recumbent in the manner of her kinswoman. Strictly speaking, these two sarcophagi belong to the second phase of Etruscan art, a period when the Etruscans had ceased to be a commanding presence on the Italian peninsula and had joined other native peoples in Rome’s shadow.\textsuperscript{17}

**Summary**

In the arts of Greece and pre-Roman Italy the precisely rendered images of the female toilette, and of the articles employed in its service, reveal an undeniable link between grooming, femininity, and ideal women. Gestures vary slightly, and changes in apparel and hairstyle echo the fashions of different historical periods, but the composition of these scenes remains relatively consistent over time. Images from painting are stylised, idealised, and male-constructed, produced in workshops by the men who dominated their profession. The visual recitation of conventional female rôles and responsibilities (religious worship, wool-working, child-care, adornment), silently reinforced the normative behaviour of ideal women, just as representations of *symposia* bespoke the sexual purpose of marginalised women such as *hetairai*. Thus, we know more from this

\textsuperscript{17} Hanunia Seianti’s sarcophagus: Bonfante (1986) fig. IV.43, Brendel (1995) fig. 322. On the dating (189-180 BC) of this sarcophagus and the silver toilette articles accompanying the deposition: Serra Ridgway (1996) 327. Larthia Seianti’s sarcophagus: Sprenger (1983) pl. 270-271 and Bonfante (1986) fig. IV.44. Second phase of Etruscan art: Bianchi Bandinelli (1970) 9; Bonfante (1986) 272; Serra Ridgway (1995) 489. We might also note the images found on the third-century BC sarcophagus of an Etruscan couple, Ramtha Visnai and Arnth Tetnie (see Thomson de Grummond [1982] fig. 115). Ramtha is depicted with a train of male and female servants along with her feminine accoutrements: parasol, jewellery box, a second box with a loop handle that may have contained her mirror, comb and other toiletries.
iconography about male society's conception of female comportment than women's own standards of dress and adornment. *Gynaeconitis* tableaux of women in sensuous chitons, chatting as they dress their hair, do not accurately portray the realities of daily life for the majority of Greek women, who lived in cramped quarters and worked long hours to support and care for their families.\(^\text{18}\)

From the point of view of cosmetic use, adornment iconography may also be characterised as 'sanitised'. Ideal females are demure and pleasing to the eye, and artists emphasise this conception by portraying women with mirrors that they use to ensure that hair is tidily arranged, the face clean, or clothes neat. They are never seen to apply facial make-up because cosmetics were not included among the beauty practices sanctioned by gender ideology (cf. X. *Oec.* 10.2-13).\(^\text{19}\) On commemorative monuments the same holds true. These are not toilette or hair-dressing scenes proper: maids do not actively dress or adorn their mistresses, nor do women always look into the mirrors in their hands. Servants, mirrors, and small chests symbolise women's wealth, their beauty, or perhaps evoke a sense of pathos as the deceased seem to occupy themselves with the mundane tasks they performed while they were alive. There is not the slightest hint of powder and rouge. Women do not apply make-up nor have it applied by maids. The commemoration of a practice that ran counter to culturally defined modes of female behaviour would have been completely inappropriate.

*Depicting Femininity in Roman Art: Introduction*\(^\text{20}\)

The gender precepts that shaped the idealisation of toilette iconography in Greek and Etruscan society are very much in evidence in Roman art, most notably in the paintings that derive from the Campanian towns once influenced by Greek culture. Greek dominance in this area was strong until Oscan incursions brought dislocation to the urbanised communities of Campania in the late fifth century. The more socially and politically


\(^{19}\) For images from Egyptian art of women applying cosmetics: Forbes (1965), figs. 3-4; Manniche (1999) 140. Cf. Virgili (1989) fig. 7, who provides a schematic drawing of an undated and unprovenanced vase painting that may depict make-up application.

\(^{20}\) From here on all numbers given in parentheses, unless otherwise stated, refer to individual entries in the inventory (Appendix 1). Bibliography is provided for each image. Authors and sources cited three or more times have been abbreviated, and short forms may be found on p. vii.
complex of these towns eventually recovered from the invasion, and through the fourth century, a nascent Campanian culture, comprising elements of Greek and Etruscan cultures but adapted for an Oscan milieu, came into its own. The political unification of Italy at the close of the Samnite Wars (290 BC) brought Campania formally under Rome’s aegis, but only after the Social War (91-87 BC) did the parochial character of the region change dramatically. Sulla compelled the recalcitrant allies and their adherents to become municipia of Rome as punishment for their behaviour. The political independence of towns such as Pompeii and Herculaneum became forfeit and a Roman form of government was imposed, initiating a synthesis of Greek, Campanian, and Roman cultures that had probably begun some time before.²¹

Little evidence of Greek panel painting survives from the fifth and fourth centuries BC, but the works left by artists of the late Republican and early Imperial periods demonstrate an adherence to the principles of Greek painting. A triclinium panel from the Villa di Arianna at Stabiae (no. 4), and a decorative panel on an amphoriskos by the Eretria painter provide an excellent comparison. In each painting a woman, her hair long, loose and curling on her neck, sits on a low stool. Each holds a mirror in one hand and a lock of hair in the other; but where the young Greek woman is presented as something of an ingénue, dressed in a chiton that veils but does not entirely disguise her body, the Roman figure is clad only in a mantle draped discreetly across her lap. The composition of the paintings and the poses of the women are markedly similar in spite of the nearly four hundred years separating them. The essential difference is one of clothing, with the nudity of the Roman figure signifying perhaps that she is Venus, the goddess whose state of undress emphasised her beauty and frank sexuality.²²

Depictions of Venus occur in a variety of media and it is plain from them that goddess and mortal woman alike shared specific poses. Elaborate variations on the Villa di Arianna image were found in other Campanian wall paintings now known only from the cursory descriptions and schematic drawings of nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars. In these compositions, the fully or partially-clothed goddess was distinguished by her ornate throne, her repose (relaxing while attendants styled her hair), and by the presence of


amorini assisting the ornatrices. The elegantly clad young woman in a panel from the great frieze in the Villa dei Misteri (no. 3), has been identified variously as an initiate of the Dionysiac mysteries, a bride, or Venus. She arranges her hair with the assistance of an older woman, but the diminutive Eros figure fulfilling the role of mirror-bearer (ad speculum) contributes to the vaguely mythological feel of this scene. The silversmith who crafted the fourth century chest that formed part of the Esquiline treasure (no. 7) juxtaposed an image of Venus in the pose of the Stabiae figure, with a representation of a mortal woman, possibly the 'Proiecta' for whom the casket was made. Appropriately for a mortal woman, Proiecta is fully clothed and attended by servants bearing toiletries and towels; she holds a pyxis instead of a mirror.  

Scholars may be justified in characterising these as scenes of ritual adornment, considering how closely mortal beauty, divine beauty, and Roman religious practice were entwined. Dedicated to Venus, the month of April began with the ceremonial grooming of the goddess' cult statue. Women from all walks of life (matresque nurusque et vos, quis vitae longaque vestis abest) attended the goddess in her temple, removed the garlands and golden necklaces adorning her, bathed, dried, and decorated her anew (Ov. Fasti. 4.133-160). According to Augustine (C. D. 6.10), who quotes Seneca, similar cleansing and ornatus rites were conducted for Juno and Minerva by ritual hair-dressers who mimed the smoothing and styling of their tresses; other handmaids stood by with mirrors. The sacred toilette of Isis, witnessed by the ass Lucius (Apul. Met. 11.9), formed part of a dazzling processional that ushered in the festal day of the Great Mother. Female acolytes clothed in pure white garments and carrying mirrors were followed by other servants carrying ivory combs and performing a pantomime of a hair-dressing ritual. The ornatus rites emulated the grooming tasks women performed daily—for themselves, for their clients, and for their mistresses.

---

23 Tableaux of Venus' toilette: Reinach (1922) 62, nos. 2, 6, 9. Villa dei Misteri frieze: Maiuri (1931); Clarke (1991) 94-111. One notable feature of this depiction is the likeness between the faces of the coiffeuse, her charge, and the woman in the tomb painting from the Cumae necropolis described earlier. Roughly two centuries have elapsed between the painting of the Samnite woman and that in the Villa dei Misteri, but the manner in which the faces are rendered—the elongated noses and somewhat pursed lips—reveals a Campanian style which is distinct from the classicising depictions of women seen elsewhere in Roman art. Proiecta images: Shelton (1981) 26-28, pl.2.

24 As a side note, it is interesting how cosmetics intrudes into the religious sphere in Greek society. IG 5.11390, is a dress and make-up code for participants at the festival of Demeter.
interpretation, but they demonstrate that ideals of femininity and female self-management were reinforced in both public and private settings.

The repetition of specific details—the presence of mirrors, gestures of modesty, kinship with Venus through shared poses—combined to reinforce the canon of female self-presentation. By this standard, the ideal woman was attractive, well dressed, and expended time and energy making herself so; she was also a woman whose financial situation afforded the leisure to engage in *ornatus* and to employ slaves or servants to assist her, like the *matrona* in a stylised scene from Herculaneum (no. 1). This woman wears the costume of a respectable Roman *matrona*: a tunic gathered at the shoulders (or perhaps a *stola*) and over this a *palla* that is drawn up over the head and grasped at the edge in her left hand, a gesture performed by newly married or respectable females like the Seianti women. A girl (probably one of her daughters) leaning upon the arm of the matron’s chair is similarly clothed and adorned, but her head is not veiled, in keeping with her status as a *puella ingenua*. At right a finely accoutred young woman is in the midst of having her hair arranged by a servant; and to the left of the simply clothed *ormatrix* is a short round table upon which sits a white fillet, laurel sprigs, and a small box resembling a cosmetic or jewellery case (to be discussed below).25

We know nothing of the painting’s original context, nor is its theme listed in Pliny’s great catalogue (*Nat. 36*) of ancient genre scenes, but it invokes the domesticity and attention to self-management demonstrated by women in Greek vase painting. Mother and daughters enjoy each other’s company as the girls dress for the day, or the mother may counsel them in the propriety of adornment and coiffure. In other paintings it is not necessary to identify the partially or scantily clothed female figure, or the woman attended by *amorini*.26 Whether these were mortal women emulating the goddess or Aphrodite/Venus herself, the standard of beauty and self-presentation to which Roman women should or did aspire is clear. The toilette scenes included in the decorative ensembles of Campanian houses serve as visual reminders of the blending of Greek and Roman cultures, and of the existence of a pictorial *koine* that reiterated modes of female

---

25 The presence of fillets and laurel sprigs on the table have prompted one scholar to characterise the setting as the preparation of a religious initiate who is distinguished from the females around her by a pool of light—even though *puellae ingenuae* customarily wore white bands in their hair. Ritual dressing of initiate: Kraiker (1953–1954) 135 and 145.

26 The young woman in the panel from the Villa di Arianna (no. 4), for example, has been identified as both a mortal woman and as Venus.
behaviour and notions of femininity. Moreover, their installation in *triclinia* indicates that they were not strictly for private consumption; public and private life intersected frequently in such rooms where family members and guests convened. To a certain extent, the same can be said of the scenes when they appear in sepulchral contexts.

*Ornatus Iconography in Commemorative Contexts: an Inventory*

Commemorative art provided Romans with an opportunity to assert their identities, explain how they conceived of themselves, and how they wished to be perceived by posterity. To explore more fully the means by which *ornatus* imagery was invoked for these purposes, an inventory has been prepared of images of toilette scenes from monuments found in Italy and the Roman West. This inventory is not meant to be exhaustive and confines itself chiefly to published remains. There were few opportunities to examine monuments first hand. Nonetheless, the material remains assembled firmly establish the prevalence of the toilette motif in sepulchral art over a three hundred year period, demonstrating that conceptions of femininity predicated on a woman's appearance changed very little over time. Discussion of the inventory needs to be prefaced with more general comments about the criteria for image selection, the geographical and chronological distribution of the reliefs, and the types and costs of memorials used by the general population.

The images covered have been drawn from a broad range of sources: exhibition catalogues, publications of museum acquisitions, catalogues of provincial sculpture covering collections from western and central Europe, and genre studies such as Amedick's examination of sarcophagi with biographical episodes. A number of monuments have not been formally published and are known only from the summary descriptions appended to the publication of their dedicatory inscriptions in the *CIL*. For the purposes of comparison, the reliefs that form the core of this assemblage are supplemented by *ornatus* images from other media: painting, pottery, metalwork, and mosaics. As a result, the inventory has four sections; the first comprises representations from different media (nos. 1-8) and the second through fourth parts correspond to a typology of depictions. The first image type is the so-called *mundus muliebris* (nos. 9-49). The second is a portrait of a

---

27 These monuments will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Further, three reliefs (nos. 91, 96-97) are known only from their late nineteenth and early twentieth-century catalogue descriptions.
woman holding a toilette article (nos. 50-85); and the third is an elaborate toilette scene (nos. 86-100).

The memorials from Roman Italy come from various communities in the central part of the peninsula, with only two examples originating in the north: Aquileia (no. 53) and Gallia Cisalpina (no. 63). A cluster of toiletry reliefs derives from an area bordered on the north by the Via Salaria, the main thoroughfare that expedited the salt trade between Ostia and the east coast of Italy, and in the south by the Via Valeria. Several other examples have been discovered in the vicinity of communities on or within easy access of the Adriatic coast (nos. 10, 27-28, 37, 51). Two monuments from Dalmatia (nos. 11 and 62) are included with the Italian reliefs. Their provenance, strictly speaking, is east of Italy but their form and content warrant incorporation with the Italian evidence. For example, the stele erected by Titia Nicarium for herself and her tailor-husband (no. 64), who may have been natives of Dalmatia or Italian émigrés, closely resembles funerary portraits of married couples from Italy; Latin is the language of the dedication and the nomenclature of the couple distinctly Roman. Dalmatia's location on the periphery of the Greek East rather than at its centre suggests that members of the local population were highly susceptible to the influences of Roman culture.

Nearly half the images in the inventory derive from the western Empire, and are widely dispersed throughout Africa, Aquitania, Britannia, the three Gauls, Germania Superior, Hispania, and Pannonia Superior. Aquitania and Gallia Belgica show the highest concentration of representations, but these numbers are relatively meagre (ten and thirteen memorials respectively). There were undoubtedly differences and similarities of artistic tradition among local cultures. The images were also subject to the artistic influences of Rome, and the possibility of cultural fusion inevitably brings into question the suitability of the provincial material to the study of women's self-presentation in Roman society. We have no sure method of quantifying the exchange of social and artistic ideas, but some textual and material evidence argues for assimilation to Roman culture by provincial élites. From the beginning of the Augustan period the inhabitants of Gaul, for instance, displayed a willingness to adapt to new forms of education, new customs, and modes of dress that were introduced through contact with Roman culture. Tacitus reports (Ann. 3.43) that during the revolt of the Aedui, early in the principate of Tiberius, the rebel leader

---

28 A summary of the geographical diffusion of inventory images may be consulted in Appendix 1, Table 1.1, and a summary of monument types by region in Table 1.2.
Julius Sacrovir seized a group of young Gallic nobles, who were being educated at Augustodunum, to ensure the cooperation of their parents. Few details of school curricula in Gallia Lugdunensis survive, but young provincials, like young Italians, undoubtedly received instruction in Latin language and grammar, classical literature, and oratory. Further, togate portraits began to appear on provincial funerary monuments (nos. 57, 59, 61, 65, 70-71). The official language of commerce and administration in the western Empire, Latin was also the language of commemorative inscriptions and these inscriptions possess certain features that may communicate something about how provincials conceived of themselves. Nomenclature, and specifically the use of the *tria nomina*, may denote citizen status, and so may ages at death, names of dedicants, and special attributes of honorands. The use of Latin inscriptions on monuments can hardly be taken as irrefutable proof of assimilation to Roman culture; but at the very least we can say that honorands and commemorators were sensitive to Roman custom and practice.

Images from the Greek East are excluded from this study for two reasons. First, monuments from mainland Greece in the Roman period are rare compared with Asia Minor, a relatively rich source of *mundus muliebris* iconography. Two collections of eastern *stelai* yield seventy-five examples or variations on this theme, and added to these are the numerous images cited in Waelkens' monograph on the 'Tursteine' or door-stone memorial that were popular with the inhabitants of Phrygia. Secondly, there is the

---

29 On the continued reception of Roman culture, consider the comments of Drinkwater (1983) 86, who argues that the impact of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* on the life of the average inhabitant was insignificant, because 'the majority of people to whom the possession of Roman citizenship really opened up important doors had either acquired it, or illegally assumed it, by the early third century'. Western schools: Marrou (1956) 296-298; Bonner (1977) 157-158; Wightman (1985) 56. Favorinus as the product of the provincial educational system: Gleason (1995) 3-5. Nomenclature: MacMullen (1982) 238-239. Nomenclature and iconography: Wightman (1985) 57.

30 MacMullen (1982) regards the very act of setting up an inscription as a habit acquired from the Romans by native peoples in the west; to be read with Meyer (1990), Morris (1992) 156-173, and Woolf (1996). A summary of the inscriptions appearing on monuments in this study may be found in Appendix 2.

31 I have found only one published example from mainland Greece, a relief of a young girl holding a mirror. The memorial has been dated to the Classical period by some scholars, but her coiffure, the so-called *Melonenfrisur* which was parted front to back in several rows and gathered into a chignon, argues for an Imperial date. Clairmont (1993) 384, 5.1.471 provides pertinent information. From Sparta come two other reliefs. They are the most detailed of all extant *mundus muliebris* reliefs from the Roman period, but their interpretation is problematic given the religious context in which they were found. See Walker (1989).

32 The total sample is not enormous but given the artistic heritage of this imagery, it demands greater documentation and analysis than the scope of this dissertation affords. See Pfuhl and Möbius (1979) and Waelkens (1986). Additionally: Pfuhl and Möbius (1977), as well as Levick (1988) and (1993).
formidable task of classifying the remains from the eastern Empire. The tombstone of Marcia Antonina, with its frontal portrait resembling those produced at Rome in the late Republic, is a case in point. Marcia Antonina wears a tunic and mantle, her head is veiled (capite velato), and she grasps the edge of the mantle in her hand. Her portrait is bordered on the right by representations of a comb, mirror, and small chest, none of which are to scale. What elements of this woman's portrait and tombstone are peculiarly Roman?

Marcia Antonina lived in Asia Minor during the second century AD. The region had been part of the Empire for nearly three hundred years, since the bequest of Pergamum to Rome (133 BC). Yet, the composition and style of Marcia's tombstone is paradigmatic of Hellenistic memorials for women, in which architectural frames characteristic of naiskoi encompass portraits of the dead; solitary women sit or stand with heads cast down; others are attended by maids holding personal effects (folding mirrors, trinket-boxes, wool baskets, and spindles); or possessions fill the shelves that have been set into the backgrounds of these tableaux. The Hellenistic version of woman and servant is clearly a variant of the heavily stylised Classical adornment theme, where the quiet contemplation of the deceased creates a sense of pathos for the viewer. The imagery on Marcia’s tombstone echoes these compositions, but its frontality betrays familiarity with the conventions of Roman relief portraiture. The inscriptions that accompany many of these stelai shed no additional light on the personal history of the deceased; the names are usually Greek (Theopila, Aphrodisias, and so forth) and formal status indicators such as we often find in Latin inscriptions are rarely present. Consequently, it is more difficult to draw

Doorstones do exist in the funerary art of the western provinces [see for example Toynbee (1971) fig. 77-78], but they do not include toilette articles. The doorstone motif was known and used by artists in Roman Italy, but not with the same vigour as those in Asia Minor. On the use of this motif in Italic funerary art see the concise discussion in Davies (1978).

33 Stele for Marcia Antonina: Pfuhl and Möbius (1977) nr. 427, taf. 71; Richter (1966) 114, no. 582. Richter's description of the monument differs slightly from that of Pfuhl and Möbius. The object which Pfuhl and Möbius identify as 'ein großer Kamm', Richter identifies as a 'roll of scrolls'. The former interpretation seems most plausible. Compare similar representations of combs on funerary monuments from Roman Asia Minor in Pfuhl and Möbius (1977): nr. 475, taf. 77; nr. 884, taf. 130; nr. 931, taf. 140; and also Waelkens (1986) nr. 214, taf. 11; nr. 272, taf. 33; nr. 332, taf. 48; nr. 357, taf. 49. Hand gesture: Brilliant (1963) 45. The brief inscription, damaged at left, reads: Μαρκία Αντωνίνα ζήσοντι έεν τιμία. Compare Marcia's portrait with the freedwomen found in Kleiner (1977) figs. 11, 21, 23c, 37, 56, 69, 89, 91.


35 Friis Johansen (1952) 19-20.
conclusions from eastern monuments about participation in cosmetic culture within different social groups, or to determine the purpose for which women in the Greek East employed their κοσμητική and κοσμωτική τέχνη.\footnote{According to Sherwin-White (1973) 408, it is virtually impossible to derive from the IG or any other Greek epigraphic corpus, a picture of what the Roman citizenship meant to the inhabitants of the eastern provinces. A notable exception is the province of Lycia from which Sherwin-White (1939) 408 draws conservative conclusions about the attitudes of the élite to the Roman citizenship.}

Finally, to the best of my knowledge, almost nothing in the way of toilette imagery survives from Republican Italy or the western provinces during the Republic; at least there are no examples that can be dated securely. Explanations for the dearth of material are not easy to come by. It is possible that toilette motifs were not widely known to funerary sculptors until the early Imperial period, although their presence in the visual arts of Southern Italy and Etruria, at a time when Rome’s dominion was virtually unchallenged, argues against such speculation.\footnote{Of datable remains in the inventory, only four examples belong to the early first century AD: the ara of Herennia Doris (no. 9), the cippus of Poppaea Secunda (no. 10), and two portraits of unidentified women (nos. 50-51). Their imagery comprises the mirrors and small containers normally associated with women according to the definitions of Varro (L. 129) and the jurists (Dig. 34.2.1).} Perhaps a more sensible answer is to be found in Roman customs for disposing of the dead. From approximately 400 BC until the late first century AD, Romans preferred to cremate rather than inter their dead. The practice was so firmly entrenched in mortuary culture that Tacitus, writing in the first quarter of the second century AD, was led to remark in his description of Poppaea’s burial (Ann. 16.6) that cremation was a Romanus mos. Receptacles (cineraria) designed to hold the ashes of the deceased were made from both costly and inexpensive materials—alabaster, marble, terracotta—and were as richly carved or as unpretentious as their owners desired. They offered less, however, in the way of a substantial field for decoration than the sarcophagi, stelai and large ara (altars) that gained in popularity during the transition from cremation to inhumation.\footnote{For summary discussions of inhumation and cremation: Toynbee (1971) 39-42; Morris (1992) 31-69. The comments of Cicero (Leg. 2.56) and Pliny (Nat. 7.187) imply that throughout the Republic inhumation was the preferred method of interment among certain élite families, but as a matter of course wealthy Romans were usually cremated.}

Eighteen reliefs can be securely dated and these belong to the first and second centuries AD. Although the central period of Roman history often provides a neat frame of reference for analysis, the chronology of the inventory was extended to accommodate material from the third century (nine reliefs), much of it provincial. Dates for the latter are somewhat
problematic as many reliefs have been poorly conserved or languished in harsh climactic conditions; this is especially true of the monuments assembled by Espérandieu in the early part of this century. These *monumenta* are fragmentary and their attendant inscriptions barely legible. Representations, moreover, have been well removed from original mortuary contexts where other burials or depositions accompanying markers might have permitted a more accurate assessment of date.\(^\text{39}\)

A traditional method of dating portraits and figured reliefs of different genres, by hairstyle, cannot be applied to toilette scenes with any degree of precision. The central figure, the *domina*, is always in the midst of having her hair arranged, and the coiffures of domestics tend to be functional rather than fashionable, consisting of a simple *nodus* or top-knot (see no. 90). If we use the Noviomagus Treverorum reliefs as examples (nos. 89-90, 95), the dates of which are reasonably certain (mid-third century), we could conjecture an imprecise chronology for other provincial reliefs by virtue of similarity. This approach places the provincial evidence within the same time-frame as the friezes from Arretium and Ostia (nos. 89-90). Limited success in dating has been achieved with a few portraits of women with toilette articles; they are sufficiently well-preserved to suggest dates of the Hadrianic and Antonine periods (nos. 57-62).

The chronology of the *mundus muliebris* reliefs is more problematic; only six of forty-one reliefs are securely dated and there is no standard configuration of objects that might be used to draw parallels between monuments of known date and those without. The four reliefs from Alba Fucens, for example (nos. 30-33), display a kinship in the sort of toiletries shown but not in the pattern of arrangement. A very general chronology for the toiletry reliefs might be established by considering the inscriptions to which they are frequently appended. Studies of the epigraphic habit in the Roman Empire indicate that production of inscriptions grew and flourished during the first and second centuries AD, crested in the early third century, and then declined rapidly in the second half.\(^\text{40}\) It might be more sensible, given that thirty-nine of forty-one reliefs are accompanied by a dedicatory inscription, to locate these reliefs within this time-frame.

\(^{39}\) The result perhaps of the practice in late antiquity and the modern historical period of salvaging serviceable blocks of stone for building projects. The two-part relief from Uxellodunum (no. 98), for example, was discovered in a transept support during the restoration of the town's cathedral.

Commemorative Monuments: Types and Costs

Just as funerary monuments from Italy and the Roman West exhibit variations on toiletté iconography, so monuments themselves assume different forms—from ornate sarcophagi to plain altars, and simple plaques. All these monuments evince a keen desire, on the part of Romans, to commemorate themselves and their families. Even the impecunious found ways to venerate their dead: they were cremated and the remains placed in earthenware jars that were set in the ground, with simple tablets to mark the burial site. Numerous examples of this practice have been found at Ostia, where unpretentious memorials are humble affirmations of a life lived. At the other extreme were grand monumenta such as the tomb of Atistia, the wife of the freedman M. Vergilius Eurysaces. Although intended for Atistia, detailed friezes chronicling her husband's success as a professional baker and serving as an index of his wealth and personal prestige (auctoritas), embellished the tomb. Between the earthenware pots and the ambitious tombs were a range of monuments that suited the tastes and diverse financial circumstances of patrons in Italian and provincial society. Tombstones (stelai), for instance, were very popular with freed slaves in Italy in the late Republic and early Empire, but were superseded by altars (cippi) as the first century drew to a close. About the same time, tombstones found new acceptance among the residents of northern Italy and the West, introduced by soldiers and itinerant merchants. In the provinces, stelai eventually became the memorial of choice for a non-élite, and in some cases non-Roman, clientele.41

The transition to inhumation witnessed the adoption of new containers, sarcophagi, adorned with intricate motifs and friezes depicting a variety of mythical and realistic events. Some scholars attribute this change to a desire of both patron and artist for a larger field of decoration and to the growing acceptance of Christianity that taught resurrection of the soul. Gravestones and altars were the more conventional memorials used to mark the final resting place of the deceased. Typically, stelai were two-dimensional stone slabs erected over a burial plot, although evidence from Ostia and elsewhere indicates that reliefs resembling the shape and design of tombstones were placed within sepulchres or set into their exterior walls. Elsewhere, aediculae designed to accommodate a protome or life-size effigy of the deceased took pride of place on stelai with the epitaph relegated to a small die

or panel. A marker peculiar to Roman Italy, used chiefly in the north near Aquileia, is four-sided but shows a propensity for decoration on a single side only (no. 53). In contrast, pillar *stelai* of the Treviran region of Gallia Belgica (nos. 89-90) provided viewers with four different prospects: they were worked on all sides with gendered scenes of daily life and portraits of the honorands. *Cippi* were used in similar fashion too. Often located inside the tombs of community notables, these solid blocks functioned as altars over which libations to the dead were poured on feast days such as the *Parentalia* or the *Lemuria* (*Ov. Fast. 2.533-535 and 4.421-426*). *Arae*, on the other hand, usually constituted receptacles for ashes.42

Since the preferred modes of commemorating the dead in Roman society were tombstones, altars, and sarcophagi, the issue of who could afford a marker inevitably arises. Duncan-Jones has produced a cost-analysis of memorials based upon the expenditures listed in funerary inscriptions from North Africa that he compares with projected salaries of military officials and soldiers. From this he deduces that the sums expended on memorials were governed largely by personal preference. At least this was the case for the men of *legio III Augusta*, who are well represented in the inscriptions Duncan-Jones studies. Analysis of Italian expenses reveals a greater range of costs, but here expenditure is linked more often to social standing and less to individual opinion of what constituted an appropriate marker. Sailer and Shaw acknowledge that the purchase price of funerary monuments was higher at Rome than in Africa, but the existence of funerary *collegia* and the stipend conferred on the urban *plebs* by Nerva may have sufficiently defrayed the cost of a marker, putting proper commemoration within the reach of modest Romans. Of the sixty-four inscriptions in our inventory none contains records of expense, but many of these probably date to the second century AD, a time when the practice of publicising monument costs had all but disappeared.43

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that the erection of a marker cannot always be taken as proof of an individual’s economic status, for we have no way of measuring how seriously heirs, who were often responsible for erecting a proper memorial or carrying out the wishes of the deceased, regarded their duties and obligations. At one extreme there

42 Transition from cremation to inhumation: Kleiner (1992) 256; Morris (1992) 33, 42-51. The most comprehensive discussion of *monumenta* is still to be found in Toynbee (1971) 245-268.

might be dereliction of duty, at another zealous devotion. Pliny the Younger, for example, was outraged that the heir of Verginius Rufus neglected his responsibilities and allowed the modest tomb of a great Roman soldier, the man who had defeated the barbarian leader Vindex, to remain unfinished ten years after his death (Ep. 6.10.3-5). At the other extreme, it was entirely possible that the heirs might feel so strongly about ritual commemoration, that they willingly incurred a financial burden in order to ensure the deceased was properly remembered.44

*Commemorative Monuments: Iconographical Traditions*

The tombs and sarcophagi of élite Romans have always possessed a certain éclat for scholars, and thus their iconography is well documented and analysed. From these studies, for example, we know that coincident with the growing popularity of sarcophagi came the recurrence of mythological friezes, particularly scenes from well known myths. The myths depicted were often intended as portraits of the deceased individual: women appeared as the loyal Alcestis who was rescued from the underworld by Herakles after agreeing to take her husband’s place there; men appeared in the guise of Meleager who saved Calydon from the wild boar. Funerary portraits carved in the familiar pose of a deity, were a favourite of élite women, perhaps following the practice of imperial females. Portraits of women in the guise of Ceres, Diana, Fortuna-Tyche, Isis, and Venus attempted to impart something of the exceptional qualities of the deceased.45

Memorials for upper and lower class Romans shared certain characteristics, among which was a taste for biographical relief sometimes referred to as the *via humana*. These memorials were not without precedent: extant *stelai* from the Classical and Hellenistic periods anticipate Roman images of the deceased going about their daily lives. The life-course of an élite male, whose civic responsibilities included military service, might comprise a series of episodes: he battles his enemies, he shows them clemency, and then he appears in an intimate moment from life such as the *dextrarum iunctio*. The clasping of hands by the newly-weds is indicative not only of the marriage ceremony and the close

---


bond between the couple, but in the context of funerary art may symbolise a take-leave. These decorative schemes were not always biographical episodes in the literal sense; they also exemplified important virtues that comprised part of the Roman aristocratic ethos: *pietas*, *clementia*, and *concordia*.

Increased interest over the last thirty years, has improved our understanding too of the iconography of the lower orders of Roman society. The iconography of non-élite Romans often took the form of work representations, specifically the profession of the deceased. These images were popular in Italy, until about the late second century when they began, inexplicably, to decline; but about the same time they became increasingly prevalent in the northern and western provinces. Reliefs from Ostia depict a doctor attending a patient, a midwife helping to birth a child, and merchants and vendors, male and female, going about their business; in the provinces soldiers and tradesmen are the individuals represented most often. More reductive images, simple likenesses of tools or writing implements, also symbolised the deceased's occupation or spoke to his or her personal accomplishments, in the same way that the generalised symbols of the *coronae civicae* and laurel wreaths connoted the public service of the élite. Within this vast iconographical milieu we may locate the hair-dressing scenes and toiletry reliefs from Italy and the Roman West.

*Image Type 1: the Mundus Muliebris*

These images are the most common in the inventory and usually comprise an assemblage of the *mundus muliebris*. Roman jurists placed mirrors, containers for oils, *pyxides*, and bathing chairs under the aegis of toiletries, characterising the *mundus muliebris* as articles that enabled a woman to effect an impeccable appearance. The legal

---

46 Not all scholars believe that the joining of the right hands symbolises a leave-taking; the gesture may signify the reunion of two individuals in the afterlife. For the joining of hands on Greek funerary monuments see Johansen (1951) 53ff; on Roman monuments see Kleiner (1977) 24-25.


48 Analysis of the toiletry reliefs is necessarily discussion of the reliefs from Roman Italy given the geographical distribution of the evidence. See Appendix 1, Table 1.1.
definition of women's accessories did not specify combs, parasols, sandalia, hair needles and pins, or curling irons, but such items were evidently considered the province of women nevertheless. The iconography is clear on this point even though literary and legal texts provide few descriptions of women's toiletries. Varro's etymology (L. 5.129) of the mundus muliebris is essential for clarifying the objects represented on monuments and provides a good starting point for discussion.

Varro believed the mundus muliebris to encompass items for personal care: comb and mirror, calamistrum and discerniculum. Combs and mirrors are ubiquitous on women's memorials (thirty-five of forty-one toiletry reliefs have representations of one or both items). Mirrors comprise round or oval shaped pieces set into long narrow handles. Two precisely executed examples are indicative of the ornate styles of actual mirrors. The mirror belonging to Caecinia Digna and Numeria Maximilla (no. 12) has a scalloped rim characteristic of filigree work; the mirror for Julia Maximilla (no. 14), a middle-aged woman from Aquitania, has a detailed engraving of a woman's head on its surface, finely curled flanges (no. 14), and decorative details at the base of the handle. The image in the mirror may be the deceased herself, or indicative of the mirror back, where it was usual for highly wrought images of women, erotic scenes, or myths to constitute part of the overall decoration. Circular mirrors also appear in toiletry reliefs (nos. 10-11) and the illustrations reveal that they were stored in square or round cases comparable to the mirrors resting on the up-turned palms of the Seianti women. Combs are generally double-edged with large teeth along one side and small teeth along the other.

Styling aids such as calamistra (curling irons) and discernicula (for parting the hair) are more difficult to distinguish. Literary sources remark on but do not describe calamistra, and to my knowledge they are not among the published remains of Roman beauty culture. On two monuments (nos. 12 and 49) scholars have identified long slender objects tapering at one end as curling irons, but how these differ from discernicula, the utensils used for parting the hair, is not entirely clear. To work efficiently discernicula may have been much

---

49 Compare the shape and style of mirrors depicted in the occupational relief for a mirror-maker in Zimmer (1982) no. 181 and see Lloyd-Morgan (1978). For decorated mirror backs: Ward-Perkins and Claridge (1979) no. 58, for an image of a woman; Virgili et al. (1990) fig. 35 for an erotic scene similar to those found on moulded Arretine ware. Kleiner (1987) 255 thinks that mirrors may be associated with the goddess Fortuna, but provides no explanation. Cf. CIL 6.27863, a marble tabula with an object resembling a mirror and inscribed with the name Tyche'; and CIL 9. 2194, a tablet inscribed Fortunae Ducu, and bounded by representations of a mirror and patera. Comb of Modestina: Jenkins (1986) fig. 32. For Etruscan antecedents, particularly square or rectangular boxes containing mirrors, see the examples in Thomson de Grummond (1982) figs. 29-33.
more slender than the *calamistra* carved in these two reliefs, and it is possible that *discernicula*, because of their general shape have been confused with hair-pins (see no. 20). Still, the presence of these styling accessories together with more banal items such as combs and mirrors reflects their association with the female toilette and their characterisation as women's appurtenances.

A variety of toiletries mentioned by textual sources and depicted on women's memorials must have been staples in Roman households, and not limited to toilette purposes. Spoons were needed to remove ointments and powders from containers, and spatulas were useful for applying salves (nos. 11, 19, 21, 33). Boxes like the *pyxis* on the *stele* of Severa (no. 19) are rare in toilette imagery, but literary texts leave no doubt that these cylindrical containers held make-up, therapeutic products, and unguents. Needle for sewing and arranging the hair are part of the *mundus muliebris*, but are not easily distinguished because the scale of images on a single monument may vary (nos. 23-24, 32). On the *aedicula* from Dalmatia (no. 11) the objects comprising the toiletry frieze are cleanly executed, but the *cathedra*, mirror case, and perfume bottles have identical dimensions. In this instance the sculptor clearly meant to depict a sewing needle, for the needle's eye is carefully delineated. Many implements are not so distinct and with the complications of scale the needles might well be interpreted as the much larger *acus crinalis* (no. 20), used to style the hair or hold chignons and other hair arrangements firmly in place. From Juvenal it also emerges (2.93-95) that the *acus* was an applicator, used to apply colour washes to the eyes and brows. He says this in connection with the toilette

---


51 *Pyxides* as cosmetic boxes: Cic. *Pro Cael.* 61 (the box belonging to Clodia); Ov. *Ars.* 3.210, *Rem.* 353; Petr. 110; Sen. *Suas.* 2.21. Bone, ivory, wood, and bronze *pyxides* with little more than incised decorative elements: Virgili (1989) fig. 77-78; Virgili et al. (1990) nos. 164-166, 194-195, 221.5-221.6, 221.18. All the Virgili examples date to the first two centuries AD. Kleiner and Matheson (1996) nos. 118-119 have *pyxides* of opaque glass and wood, ascribed to the early first and third centuries AD. Richlin ([1995] 91) claims to follow Wyke ([1994] 143-144) in saying that make-up boxes were decorated with scenes of women applying make-up. The focus of Wyke's discussion are the caskets with hair-dressing scenes that formed part of the Esquiline treasure (no. 7). As far as I am aware, depictions of women applying make-up do not appear on any of the caskets in the Esquiline treasure nor on the much smaller boxes containing *medicamenta*. Standard motifs are the muses, amorini, and Venus as the patron of women's physical concerns (Virgili et al. [1990] 102).
ritual of the *cinaedus* he so despises, but there is every reason to think that women used needles for the same purpose.\(^{52}\)

Perfume vials (*alabastrum, ampulla, balsamarium, guttus, lekythos, unguentarium*) typically assume a globular or pear-shaped form. Oil and unguent bottles of various sizes were used at home and slipped into toilette cases for use at the baths.\(^{53}\) Severa's memorial (no. 20) has a highly unusual representation of a *tabulam unguentarium*, a small rectangular unguent case (the only example in the inventory). Compacts were principally female accoutrements, and to judge from a well-preserved example from the Via Cassia in Rome, they came in various shapes and materials. An ointment compact in the form of a seashell, carved from amber and secured at the hinge with gold threads, was found among the burial goods of a young girl. Analysis of organic residue from the compact verifies that it held a purplish dye, possibly a form of rouge.\(^{54}\)

Slippers (*sandalia, soleae*) of a simple sole and thong construction are a common feature of toiletry reliefs. This was the footwear of choice at home for women who could afford more than a single pair of sandals. *Sandalia* were also taken to the baths to protect feet from overly warm floors.\(^{55}\) Items that occur only rarely are the *stylus* and an object

---

52 Juvs. 2.93-95: *Ille supercilium madida fitligine tinctum lobqua producit acu pingitque trementis catollens oculos*. Courtney (1980) 137-138 provides numerous references to the manner in which women applied colour to eyes and brows. Cf. Festus (9) who indicates that needles were used by *sarcinatrix* and *ornatrix* alike. The construction and style of Roman hair-pins is well represented in Cool (1990) and Virgili et al. (1990), nos. 196-217.

53 For perfume containers see: Petr. 60.3, Plin. *Nat. 9.113, Mart. 11.8* (*alabastrum*); Petr. 78.3, Plin. *HN. 20.152* (*ampulla*); Var. *L. 5.124*, Mart. 14.62, Juv. 7.130 (*guttus*). Inventory examples: 10-12, 16, 22-23, 25, 29, 32, 36, 45, 47, 69. An excellent idea of the range of shapes and sizes may be obtained from Virgili et al. (1990) nos. 49-124. Cf. The late Republican or early Imperial wall-painting from the Villa Farnesina in Rome, of a young woman decanting perfume from a globular shaped bottle into one resembling a small alabastron (Virgili et al. [1990] no. 42, fig. 20).

54 Virgili (1989) fig. 81; Virgili et al. (1990) no. 222.2, fig. 21. See also Virgili (1989) fig. 80 for a similar compact from Taranto. Barbet et al. (1997) 51-52 comment that shell-shaped containers with purplish-blue residues have been found in hellenistic tombs for women, particularly in the region of Taranto. On the child's burial: Scamuzzi (1964) 278 and Toynbee (1971) 41.

55 Goldman (1994) 116; see also her definitions of *sandalia* and *soleae* (p. 246). Cf. the sandals worn by the woman supervising the toilette of her daughters (no. 1) which seem ill-suited for walking in the streets; and Bartman (1999) fig. 105 for a portrait of Livia wearing a similar pair. Waekens (1986) 12 regards the sandals engraved on funerary *stelai* from Dorylaion and Nakoleia in Phrygia as representing the footwear found in one's palaestra kit. Examples in inventory: nos. 10, 12-13, 15-17, 21, 25, 27-28, 32, 35-36, 41, 45, 47. Although toiletries are conspicuously absent in the representations of personal effects found in the fourth-century Tomba dei Rilievi, at Cerveteri, it is worth noting that a pair of slippers rests upon a foot bench next to a bed. It is difficult to tell whether the sandals are those worn by women at home. See the illustration in Cristofani (1965) tav. 20.1; Hamblin (1975) 67-68; Boitani et al. (1975) 173.
identified as a *perula* or small sac. The pairing of *stylus* and grooming articles (no. 48) is incongruous as toiletry reliefs tend not to mix disparate items. The *perula* from the sarcophagus of Septimia Lyde (no. 33) may in fact be a hair-net (*reticulatum*), similar to those worn by women in Campanian wall paintings. Snoods are not without precedent in sculpture from the Roman period. The middle-aged woman immortalised by a bronze portrait head of the Trajanic era, wears the *reticulatum*; and two reliefs associated with the second century sanctuary of Eleusinian Demeter at Kalyvia (Sparta) feature hair-nets created by the sprang method that was popular in the Greek East.\(^56\)

Cosmetic boxes or jewellery cases (*cistae*) appear in five of the *mundus muliebris* reliefs, and were used for storing beauty utensils and supplies (nos. 9-10, 16, 28, 32). Their design and function can be deduced from actual examples, two found together with an ornate sarcophagus of second century date at Callatis in Moesia Inferior, the other in Campania. They were rectangular, moderately sized (18.5 x 13.5 x 11.4 cm), constructed of wood, and occasionally inlaid with bone or ivory to create aesthetically pleasing accessories. Interiors were compartmentalised to keep supplies, implements, or jewellery well organised. Keyholes are found on the outside of these boxes (but are not usually among the details illustrated) indicating that the contents could be secured at the owner's discretion. A chest on the *cippus* of Poppaedia Secunda (no. 10) corresponds to the shape and design of these boxes, its lid propped open to reveal small cylindrical containers: kohl tubes, *balsamaria* or perhaps receptacles for *medicamenta*. The Callatis chest held two *pyxides* that were used for make-up. Analysis of the organic residue revealed a red powder with trace amounts of calcium, magnesium, salt, iron, and copper.\(^57\)

Three-legged cylindrical caskets also appear among the *mundus muliebris*. In construction and style they are related to the metal *cistae* of Etruscan design and may be compared with the ornate Ficoroni *cista* made at Rome during the fourth century BC by an

\(^{56}\) Depictions of hair-nets: Mottahadeh (1984) 204-205, with references to the Campanian evidence; Virgili et al. (1990) figs. 18, 35-37. Mottahadeh also comments (p. 206) that a 'sprang' wool hair-net, dated to the first century AD, was found at Vindonissa, a military installation in Germania Superior. Kalyvia reliefs: Walker (1989) 133. *Sprang* technique: Williams (1985).

\(^{57}\) Callatis chest: Virgili et al. (1990) figs. 43, 44, Settis (1992) fig. 235-236; Campanian chest: Virgili (1989) fig. 84. Cf. Cooney (1976) 100-101, no. 1060, for second or third century examples of glass make-up jars found together with a wooden box, with four interior compartments, at Akhmim in Egypt. Representations of toilette boxes in Roman painting: Kraiker (1953-1954) fig. 106 and Virgili et al. (1990) no. 46. Barbet et al. (1997) 39-40, mention an iron box, found in a first-century tomb of an affluent Gallic woman, which contained among other things several rock crystal instruments, two bronze spoons, a basalt palette, two bone handles of brushes, along with a small bronze box of tints.
Oscan craftsman, Novios Plautios. An inscription on the lid indicates that Dindia Macolnia
gave the chest to her daughter either as a wedding gift or a funeral offering. Inside were
the items of the woman's toilette: mirror, comb, scent jars, rouge pot, and pieces of
jewellery. The container on Herennia Doris' memorial (no. 9), ascribed to the late first
century BC or early first century AD, corresponds to the design of the Ficoroni cista and
was probably modelled on actual containers used during the Republican and early Imperial
periods which were often given as wedding presents. The first century aedica from
Kapljnc (no. 11), a cippus for a comb-maker and his wife (no. 13), and the toilette relief
for Claudia Lexis and her relatives (no. 16), have containers with handles that match the
example from the altar of Herennia Doris. The two latter are undated, and it is tempting to
place them within the same time-frame as the dated examples.\(^58\)

The toilette reliefs that became standard adornments for funerary monuments
represented the items used by real women in the day to day crafting of their appearances.
These accessories were manufactured from expensive and inexpensive materials—silver,
ivory, bone, wood, iron—making it likely that simple unadorned toilettries were within the
financial capacity of a wide segment of the female population. Sculptors appropriated these
accessories, as it were, rendering their likenesses in stone and creating visual statements
about women that could be apprehended on different levels. Toilettries could be said to
symbolise cultural notions of female self-presentation. The objects refer principally to
grooming, especially styling of the hair; allusions to make-up are few. Plainly, however,
they are the tools of the woman who crafted her appearance according to her own personal
tastes or to the dicta of gender ideology.

On another view, the mundus muliebris represents the tools of the ornatrix, the beauty
professional who plied her trade in town. Nostia Daphne and Cleopatra in the Vicus
Longus (CIL 6.37469), and Pollia Urbana in the Campus Martius (CIL 6.37811; cf. Pl.
Truc. 405-410) are examples. The ornatrix might also be one of a corps of servants who
performed tasks of a personal sort (clothes-folder, overseer of the wardrobe, mirror bearer,

---

\(^58\) Ficoroni cista: Bianchi Bandinelli (1970) 17, figs. 17-20; Felletti Maj (1977) 57; Sprenger et al. (1977)
145, fig. 232-233. An inscription on the lid of the cista found at Praeneste reads: *Dindia Macolnia filiae
Novios Plautios med Romai fecid*, 'Dindia Macolnia gave [me] to her daughter, Novios Plautios made
me at Rome'. Cf. a Praenestine cista of third-century BC date, containing a toilette scene in which a nude
woman holds a mirror in one hand and a discerniculum or perfume wand in the other (see Thomson de
Grummond [1982] fig. 111). Similarly, one of the attendants of Ramtha Visnai, in the frieze depicted on
her sarcophagus (Thomson de Grummond [1982] fig. 115), carries a small box with a loop-handle that
appears comparable to the Ficoroni and Praenestine cistae.
masseuse) in the households of Roman grandees like the Volusii. Only once in the inventory does mention of a woman’s occupation coincide with an illustration of the *mundus muliebris*. The memorial belongs to the slave-woman Cyparis (no. 20) and appended to the inscription are a comb and a hair-pin. Funerary reliefs for tradespeople, found in many parts of Roman Italy, depict the deceased engaged in their professions or more simply with the tools of their vocation comprising the decoration: a butcher from Amiternum with an assortment of carving knives; a baker from the region of Bolsena whose monument displays among other things a small quern for grinding grain; and a *faber pectinarius* who lived in the vicinity of Chieti, whose tombstone depicts the long-toothed combs used for carding wool along with a few toilette accessories belonging to his wife.

On conjugal *monumenta* toilettries sat abreast of images representing male professions; in our inventory they are mason, comb-maker, and muleteer (nos. 12-13, 27). The hair-dressing equipment on the lower left face of the altar for the Ferrarii (no. 12) neatly balances the tools of a mason on the right: ruler, *perpendiculum*, square, and *dolabra*. In their own way, each assemblage memorialised and publicised the expertise and useful employment of the honorands. Ferrarius was a maker of buildings; his wives, Caecina Digna and Numeria Maximilla, were *ornatrices*. Occupational reliefs not only defined gender rôles, they carved out social identities for these individuals who, like so many others in Roman society, would have remained nameless because they lacked the personal, political, and economic prestige (*auctoritas*) of privileged Romans.

On a third level, toilette accessories in mortuary reliefs may be regarded as signifiers of the social milieux assigned to men and women by gender ideology. Broadly speaking, the public sphere was the world of men who were employed outside the home and who enjoyed full participation in civic life: they voted, stood for government office at state and municipal levels, and filled the chief religious offices. A woman’s sphere was defined in

---


61 This metaphor is not unknown in Roman culture. Philolaches, the protagonist of Plautus’ *Mostellaria* (120) regards parents as the builders of their children—*parentes fabri liberorum sunt*. Consult Zimmer (1981) for numerous examples of male occupational tools on funerary monuments.
two ways. Fertility played a vital rôle in the formation of a woman’s social identity. Since social values were framed in the language of the conservative male élite, for whom *auctoritas* and *dignitas* were paramount, and for whom marriage and children served personal and familial ambitions, a wife’s or daughter’s ability to conceive and carry a child to term was highly valued. Care of the body that conferred respect and prestige upon a woman was a natural corollary of her social rôle according to Roman gender ideology.62

Further, the *sandalia* imply that a woman’s world was bounded by the walls of the *domus*. Affluent women involved themselves in the life of the community as patrons of public works and holders of minor religious offices, and women of the lower orders spent a good deal of their day outside their houses and cramped apartments, shopping for food, carrying water, or working to support their families. But in a perfect world, the world of the monied and privileged élite, a wife remained at home bearing children, performing the duties of the *lanificia*, and supervising her household staff. While at home, she wore thin-soled sandals or slippers rather than *calcei*, the sturdy boot-like footwear that was worn out of doors. Aulus Gellius (13.22) relates how a leading citizen of Rome tartly reprimanded a group of young senatorial males for wearing sandals in the street instead of the traditional and more dignified ankle-high boots that signified their rank. Plutarch claims *(QR 271E)* that the slippers dedicated in the Temple of Sanclus on behalf of Gaia Caecilia, wife of a Tarquin, were a symbol of love of home. Together with images of toilette articles, representations of *sandalia* were part of an elaborate representational system, rooted in social practice, that reinforced conventional gender rôles and constructions of womanhood.63

---


 niches adorned with representations of toiletries. Although western workshops produced most of the portraits under discussion, one can see that they are connected in form and content to Classical and Hellenistic models. In style they belong to the 'vernacular' art that evolved from the Etruscanised portraiture produced at Rome in the late Republican period. These portraits are notable for their lack of idealisation. Carved in relief and in the round, mainly for an ex-slave clientele, the portraits are more naive than their Greek counterparts, but the toiletries articulate culturally entrenched beliefs about women's self-presentation.64

The frontality and soberness of our earliest portraits locate them firmly within the family-group relief tradition. On the memorial for Caius Licinius Mancia (no. 50),65 the three-dimensional protome of a female, capite velato, is flanked by two males; the folds of their mantles envelop their right arms in the conventional 'arm sling' pose. A folding mirror of the type seen on Hellenistic stelai and two articles of jewellery occupy the spaces between the niches to the woman's right and left; masculine attributes such as the ornamenta of public office, a stylus, or book-roll, are conspicuously absent.66 On the Pisaurum relief (no. 51), feminine ideals coalesce neatly in the combination of toilette articles and mature woman in the traditional pose of modesty (pudicitia) that was common to Greek and Italian portraits of the late Hellenistic period. The use of such personal items for ancillary decoration seems odd considering the obvious reserve of group portraiture, and the fact that more dignified objects symbolising professional or religious offices—military insignia, writing implements, Isiac sistr—were the norm. Provincial sculptors used this same portrait and article configuration too; the undated cippus from Arelate (no. 65) and the bust from Andematunnum (no. 73), an early oppidum along the road to Augusta Treverorum, typify the reliefs produced in Italy for a libertine clientele.

Italian relief portraits with toiletries are rare. Their scarcity in Italy might be ascribed to the decline of the stele type at the end of the Augustan period, precipitated by a change in

---

64 Style and clientele: Gazda (1973) 855-856; Kleiner (1977) 5-7; Kampen (1994) 128.

65 Kajanto (1965) 106 identifies 'Mancia' as a cognomen of Etruscan origin, and notes that the 'influence of Etruscan nomenclature' was most noticeable among the Republican senatorial élite.

66 The mirror corresponds to the Hellenistic folding type (der Klappspiegel) used on monuments from Asia Minor. Consisting of two identical halves which are hinged in the middle, or a single round surface set in a case of metal or wood, these mirrors are held open by maids assisting mistresses with their toilette. Compare the Etruscan mirrors dated to 100 BC by Pochmarnski (1988), Abb. 1-2, 6-7, as well as the examples in n. 48 above.
client tastes to altars and more impressive commemorations. The ambitious sculptural plan in the second century tomb of the Valerii, a libertine family, well illustrates the increasing eagerness of the upwardly mobile to adopt the mortuary practices of the Roman élite. Among several statues found in this tomb, located in the Vatican necropolis, were two standing females (nos. 55-56) dressed in the uniform of respectable *matronae*—tunics and mantles. Modelled in stucco in the lunettes of the portrait niches are mirrors, cosmetic cases of the Callatis type, and *balsamaria*. Two heroic standing males balance these portraits, and they have religious and writing paraphernalia depicted in the lunettes above their heads. The scale of the tomb is such that it could accommodate family, descendants, and household. Its grandeur, sculptural programme, and the incorporation of distinctive visual imagery bespeaks the personal achievements of individual family members, emphasising their success and elevation—from slave origins to affluent Roman citizens.

Representations of women holding mirrors were used on commemorative monuments in Italy as early as the first half of the first century AD. Women do not gaze into their mirrors nor actively engage in grooming, indicating that these are not formal toilette scenes. Maia Severa (no. 53), for example, sits upon a *cathedra*, her feet upon a footstool, holding a mirror with a filigree rim in her right hand and a bird on her lap. Maia's memorial typifies the *stele* preferred by the inhabitants of northern Italy, but her pose is that of Classical (and Hellenistic) women like Hegeso seen earlier. Additionally, it bears a marked resemblance to the poses of females in painted *ornatus* scenes from Campania; especially the paintings from the Casa delle Vestale (no. 2) and the Villa di Arianna (no. 4) that are thought to represent Venus. Titia Nicarium (no. 64), depicted together with her husband, differs considerably from Maia. Titia's right arm encircles her husband's shoulders and her left hand grasps the edge of the *palla* that has been drawn up over her head. Titia's pose follows that of women in group-family sculpture, but here the artist combined the gesture of modesty with a small mirror. Titia's left hand grasps the mirror and her veil, an awkward configuration that does not permit her to look into the mirror.


68 Tomb of the Valerii: Guarducci (1953); Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1957).

The ungainly placement of arm and hand holding the mirror is also an idiosyncrasy of provincial portraits. On western stelai, three dimensional portraits were set into shallow rectangular niches. The standard arrangement was an unaccompanied frontal half or full length portrait of the deceased, who looked out at the viewer rather than at the mirror she held in her hand. References to Venus imagery are apparent here as well, but awkwardly executed.\(^70\) Axula, for example, holds her right arm across her body so that the mirror rests against the left side of her chest (no. 57); the mirror grasped in the right hand of the woman from Gallia Lugdunensis is placed to the right side of the head and slightly above eye-level yet the deceased looks straight out at the viewer (no. 66); and the mirror in Pupilla’s right hand is held away from the body, and up and to the right of the head while she looks straight ahead (no. 67). The provincial sculptor may have been forced to adapt his composition to a relatively small space, as his Italian counterpart modified the ‘arm sling’ of togate portraits to accommodate the hand-clasp in renderings of the dextrarum iunctio; but this idiosyncratic placement also parallels the configuration of female portraits with mirrors rendered by Greek sculptors.\(^71\)

In terms of dress, provincial women, like Italian, wear ankle-length tunics and mantles, possibly as marks of citizen status, but the pallae do not veil the head. Priscilla (no. 61), a young Burdigalian woman, wears such apparel. Her dress and sober air call to mind the portraits that appeared on the Italian tombstones of freed slaves. On other stelai, women wear a form of local costume. Long vertical incisions from right shoulder to waist on the protome of Pompeia Marituma (no. 58) simulate the heavy folds of the robes worn by Gallic rustici of the late second century. Details of this distinctive costume are fully preserved in the full-length portrait of Aveta (no. 60): her tunic, like that of the girl beside her, falls in thick folds to her mid-calf, the sleeves are long and full, and terminate in gathered cuffs. A different costume consisted of an ankle-length, short-sleeved, or sleeveless tunic with a shorter overdress that was gathered with a belt just under the breasts (nos. 66-67, 74, 76). It is difficult to know whether attire should be interpreted as an indicator of citizen status or ethnicity. Some portraits are accompanied by inscriptions, but formal status indicators that might reveal the legal position of the honorands do not occur in

\(^70\) Inventory nos. 75-83 are unpublished. Their descriptions in the CIL offer only elementary information: identification of monument type, figures, and subsidiary decoration. Based on the information provided by the editors of the CIL they conform to image type 2.

these texts. Regina's portrait (no. 76) was obviously made to specification, and belongs more properly to the funerary stelai of the eastern Empire where toiletries together with wool-working implements symbolised female accomplishment. Regina occupies a wicker-chair, a distaff and spindle cradled in her lap. A wool-basket, unusual for western monuments, sits on the ground to the left of her chair; she opens a cosmetic box on the ground to her right. According to her epitaph, Regina was the wife and freedwoman of a Palmyrene émigré, Barates, whose ethnic customs plainly dictated the funeral apparel and adornments of his wife: she wears a long-sleeved robe with deep folds, the ends of the sleeves are tucked into heavy ornate jewellery cuffs, and she wears a necklace.

Portraits of honorands with toiletries seem to be modelled on representations of Venus at her toilette, like those found in Greco-Roman painting. The conjunction between mortal women and Venus, a potent symbol of femininity, is a natural one and is found in other forms of funerary art. Honorific statues of mature matronae in the guise of the goddess began to appear in the late first and early second centuries AD. Modelled after the Venus pudica, these statues, with the heads of mortal women and the body of the goddess, formed part of the tomb ensembles of imperial freedwomen and members of the Roman élite. They seem ill-suited to a dignified setting even though family members and friends were the main visitors to the tomb, but the nudity of the matrona served a Roman ideal. Venus was the arbiter of women's physical concerns—beauty, sexuality, fertility—and honorific portraits of the easily recognisable pudica type conveyed the matron's capacity to fulfill her responsibilities as wife and mother. Thus although the mirror may stand as a symbol of the attention that the honorands devoted to their appearances, the adoption of a divine pose assimilates women with the goddess whose own physical appearance represented the Roman standard of female beauty and femininity.


73 On Palmyrene jewellery and dress in funerary portraits see: Stout (1994) fig. 5.5; Goldman (1994) 165, figs. 10.4-10.5.

74 For honorific statues of women in the guise of Venus (probably following the practice of imperial women) see: Kleiner (1987) 85; Kampen (1994) 126-128; D'Ambra (1996); Bartman (1999) 20. Cf. Robertson (1975) 392 and Bonfante (1989) 566-569 on female nudity in Greek art. Robertson describes the decision to portray Aphrodite bathing as 'motivated nudity'. The study of the nude male form, without regard for context, was a well-established tradition among Greek artists, but this manner of representation was never extended to women. If an artist wished to portray a woman without her clothes he needed a reason for doing so.
The shared pose of mortal and divine female may have been used for another reason. Descriptions of physical appearance occurred only rarely in commemorative contexts. Lattimore pointed out in his discussion of popular themes in Greek and Latin epitaphs that beauty might be 'indicated', but was seldom 'reproduced'. A number of commemorative inscriptions confirm the accuracy of his assertion: the female virtues listed habitually are obedience, modesty, chastity, fecundity, and proficiency in working wool. Departures from these formulaic attributes are noteworthy. The two patroni who survived Allia Potestas (*CIL* 6.37965) marked the passing of their freedwoman with an encomium comparable to those of Murdia (*CIL* 6.10230) and Turia (*ILS* 8393), yet unconventional in its fulsome description of Allia's loveliness. Similarly, the husband of Macria Helike claimed that his wife's beauty rivalled that of the goddess Aphrodite, a flattering but curious tribute considering that Macria and her husband were Christians (Kaibel 727). The epitaphs for Allia and Macria are unusual by epigraphic standards, but female beauty did not go unremarked in mortuary contexts. The portrait with toilette articles expressed in simple but eloquent fashion the esteem for beauty that honorific inscriptions generally lacked.⁷⁵

### Image Type 3: the Toilette Scene

The standard configuration of the toilette scene is a woman seated in a high-backed chair with a patterned texture indicative of wicker construction.⁷⁶ Her feet rest on a rectangular foot-stool. Clothing comprises a long tunic and mantle and the woman's repose distinguishes her from the female figures grouped around her. Typical dress for the servants consists of long-sleeved, calf-length tunics gathered at the waist with a sash, and ankle-high boots. The hair is gathered into a chignon (*nodus*) arranged on the top of the head; a functional rather than fashionable style. One of the maids stands behind the chair styling the occupant's tresses. The others stand before the central figure carrying the

---

⁷⁵ Lattimore (1962) 295-299. Specific examples: Chp. 1, n. 63. The late third century epitaph for Allia Potestas reads in part: 'Her skin was white, she had beautiful eyes, and her hair was gold. An ivory glow always shone from her face—no mortal (so they say) ever possessed a face like it'. Cf. Horsfall (1985) 256. The funerary text of Macria Helike dates to the second or third century and reads in part: 'She had looks like golden Aphrodite, but she also had a simple soul dwelling in her breast. She was good and abided by all God's laws'. Both translations are taken from Lefkowitz and Fant (1982) nos. 47 and 50.

⁷⁶ Richter (1966) 101 notes that this type of chair began to appear in Roman society in the second and third centuries AD. Thirteen of the toilette scenes in the inventory depict a woman seated on this type of chair, and among the accoutrements depicted on the aedicula from Kapljnc (no. 10) is a wicker chair. Regional styles and dress: Nerzic (1989) 232-233.
articles required for *ornatus*: mirrors, perfume vials, receptacles for water. There are of course variations on this format: a woman may sit on a stool rather than a chair (nos. 87, 96, 99), like the young woman in the Villa di Arianna panel (no. 4), or have a single servant attend her (nos. 86, 95). On monuments which seem to commemorate husband as well as wife, toilette scenes were sometimes matched by tableaux of men engaged in business (nos. 88, 90-91, 99), a visual demonstration of the way in which Roman society was divided along gender lines.\(^7\)

Activity rather than passivity characterises the Roman interpretation of the toilette scene. On Greek monuments, mistress and maid keep company and the conceit of *κοσμηματική τέχνη* is conveyed through the presence of grooming articles, but these reliefs rarely possess the vitality of the painted or sculpted image found in the Roman visual arts. It is impossible to say where and when the synthesis of the painted and sculpted image came about. The two Italian reliefs (nos. 89-90) assigned to the mid-third century are reminiscent of painted Campanian tableaux of much earlier date (nos. 1-3) which include portrayals of Venus in the company of attendants and *amorini*. At the centre of the Arretium panel (no. 89) a knot of servants surrounds a seated woman; one holds a cosmetic box and the other a large round mirror that allows the woman to monitor the progress of the *ornatrix* stationed behind her chair. Nearby two women interact with a small child. Two more, one of whom carries a *patera*, carry on a conversation. At far right, are two additional female figures holding unidentified objects.\(^8\) This episode exudes domesticity and feminine virtue in the manner of Greek vase paintings, as does the Isola Sacra relief (no. 90) where a small child pulls at the knee of the central figure. Moreover, the similarities between the toilette scenes of early and late Imperial date suggest that the image may have been re-interpreted well before the second century, possibly as early as the beginning of the first.

Modern interpretations of these grooming scenes relate them to ceremonial occasions. Kampen regards the Italian events as the ritual adorning of the bride or the preparation of a

---

\(^7\) The illustrations depict the following: three labourers bundling wood or rags (no. 85); a group of men conducting business (no. 88); a tax-collection scene (no. 89); and a landowner taking in rent from his tenants (no. 97).

\(^8\) The date of the Arretium frieze (no. 87) is problematic. Amedick [(1991) 108, Taf. 107.1] assigns it to the second half of the third century AD, based on its similarity to the fourth century *ornatus* rituals she briefly discusses. Kampen [(1981) No. 37, Fig. 75] ascribes a second century date, probably on stylistic grounds, but this is not clear. I accept Amedick's assessment.
religious initiate; Amedick argues for a private ceremony meant to accentuate the reputation or *fama* of an individual. She supposes the activities represent the late Antique practice of staging processionals with servants bearing expensive toiletries, a form of competitive display that symbolised the economic and hence the social prosperity of the deceased or her family. She says nothing about who witnessed the pageant or where it was performed. For maximum effect, one could argue, the procession should have been conducted in a public setting, on the way to the baths for example, as portrayed in the vestibule mosaic at Piazza Armerina. In such a setting, an individual's reputation and status could well have been enhanced in the eyes of those who observed her progress through the streets.\(^7\)

The presence of wicker chairs, however, and the small children under foot argues for an intimate setting within the Roman *domus*. We have no clear idea of where the mistress' toilette (or the procession hypothesised by Amedick) might have taken place, because room function in domestic architecture is notoriously difficult to establish.\(^8\) If we judge from the floor-plans of Campanian houses, rooms were cramped and could not easily have accommodated a crowd on the scale of the Arretium and Isola Sacra reliefs, except perhaps in the *atrium*. Despite the variety of activities occurring in this area—the *dominus* conducted business and held interviews with his clients, guests were received, children played—the *atrium* may well have provided a pleasant place for the toilette when not occupied by other members of the household. The Gallic reliefs (nos. 87-88, 91-96, 98-99) virtually identical to the Italian, with only minor adaptations of composition and figural arrangement, shed no additional light on the location of the woman's toilette.

Assimilations between honorand and Venus, the goddess who promoted beauty, sexuality and fecundity, may be at the root of the toilette iconography, as suggested above; but it is difficult to know how to characterise the Belgic relief (no. 96) that departs markedly from the formulaic toilette ritual. The heads of the central figure and servant are missing, but a woman rising from bed and beginning to dress for the day is clearly visible.

---

79 Kampen (1981) 89. Amedick (1991) 109. I can find no reference to the private ritual mentioned by Amedick in any of the textual material from 200 BC to 400 AD. Piazza Armerina mosaic: Dunbabin (1978) 202. The figures in this mosaic and in the *exedrae* of the *frigidarium* have been identified as members of the imperial family of Maximian or Maxentius.

80 Scholars have attempted to determine room function by considering floor and wall treatment, or by a room's proximity to important areas of the house, such as the *atrium*. Without the presence of distinguishing characteristics such as the built-in benches of the *triclinia*, or the ovens of a kitchen area it is sometimes impossible to determine room use. Clarke (1991) on decorative ensembles; Wallace-Hadrill (1994) on the articulation of the house.
A strophium, the cloth strip worn by women to bind their breasts, lies across her lap. At left stands a vestiplica or clothes-folder with a robe draped over her arms. The contours of the chair adjacent to the bed are those of the wicker chairs found in grooming reliefs. This scene has no equal in Roman sculpture, but the conceit may be compared with one found on the disci of mould-made terracotta lamps, where amorini assist Venus in tying her strophium.\textsuperscript{81} The remains of an inscription, now so fragmentary that the names of honorand and dedicant are obscured, indicate that the relief was part of a memorial. Ésperandieu's reconstruction of a Treviran pillar situates this relief beneath a typical hair-dressing scene. The match is a practical one based strictly upon subject matter; yet it is difficult to visualise this bold scene on a public marker, and harder still to imagine a woman or her family selecting an image that might be perceived as indelicate unless motivated by a divine reference.\textsuperscript{82}

To come to a better understanding of the toilette scenes and to gain a clearer sense of the status of the women memorialised by them, we need to think about Roman attitudes toward work (\textit{negotium}) and leisure (\textit{otium}). The attitudes that informed the renderings of the toilette scene were the product of an élite social group that had prospered enormously in the middle and late Republic. Generally, the idea of manual labour offended the sensibilities of privileged Romans who found it appropriate only to their social inferiors. They held management of one's estates and participation in the business of law or government as perfectly proper since this kind of participation was voluntary. Superior economic circumstances gave the rich man the freedom to engage in legal and political affairs as he desired, and therefore only property-owners enjoyed personal and economic autonomy. In reality, of course, individuals of non-élite rank possessed sizeable fortunes offering comfortable standards of living that rivalled those of land-owners. But in the view of aristocratic Romans these fortunes were obtained at a formidable cost. Freeborn and freed merchants (\textit{negotiatores}), in the course of conducting business and amassing wealth

\textsuperscript{81} Clothed images of Aphrodite appear in Greek art, but not in the context of toilette scenes. See the examples in \textit{LIMC} nos. 830, 833, 836, 839, 874, 1564, 1566-1567, 1569-1570. Venus motif: Deneauve (1969) No. 415; Goldman (1994b) 235, Fig. 13.27. Goldman has experimented with a strip of cloth eight inches wide and seventy inches long in an effort to understand just how the \textit{strophium} may have been wrapped for maximum support. Her efforts suggest that women required help with the wrapping as the ends had to be brought around the body 'from the back so that each long end crossed in front, supporting the breasts. These ends then continue around the sides to the back, where they are tucked inside the wrapping to be held securely in place'.

\textsuperscript{82} Ésperandieu (1915a) 333. Ternes' descriptions [(1988) 209] of the \textit{Eltern} and \textit{Avituspaarpfeiler} do not include the \textit{cultus} scene.
resorted, or so élite opinion held, to flattering their clients and lying to complete sales. Élite
writers characterised this behaviour as servile, for the slave's path to freedom lay in his or
her ability to display obsequium—dutiful respect—for an owner. The land-owner, in
marked contrast, was not dependent on the caprice or the beneficià of others and so
regarded such behaviour with contempt.83 Idleness was equally repugnant to élite
sensibilities and throughout the central period of Roman history privileged writers were
concerned that free time be used constructively (Cic. De Off. 3.6; Sen. Ep. 16.3; Plin. Ep.
1.3.3). The otium to pursue self-cultivation, to create an urbane persona through writing,
reading, or the study of high culture, set individuals in the élite stratum apart from the great
mass of humanity, compelled to work out of economic necessity, and limited in the time
they could devote to self-improvement.84

How does the élite formulation of leisure relate to the woman who lived in comfort,
with free time of her own, yet was denied active participation in civic life? What of women
like Calpurnia, Pliny's wife, or Ummidia Quadratilla who, Pliny tells us (Ep. 7.24.5),
used to amuse herself with board-games and pantomimes 'during the idle hours' that
women had to fill. Gender ideology directed that women be appropriately attired and
coiffed; in moralising discourse ornatus and cultus qualified as time-wasting devices. Ovid
was unusual in encouraging women to devote time to self-presentation (Ars. and Med.);
but surely a higher form of personal improvement was expected of senatorial and
equestrian women by the value system perpetuated by their own social group. As a
prominent decorative element of a funerary marker, what would an ornatus scene say about
these women? References to achievement in marriage or motherhood are understandable,
for the élite woman's success depended very much on her productive and reproductive
potential. The symbolism of books, may or may not signify her literary accomplishments,
but they aligned her with an exclusive social group that placed a premium on leisure time
well spent. Indeed, Pliny was excessively proud (Ep. 4.19.2-4) of the fact that Calpurnia
busied herself with the study of literature (albeit his) and music. Appearing in the guise of

83 Treggiari (1980); Garnsey (1981); Josbel (1992) 62-69. Textual evidence for attitudes toward work:
Cic. De Off. 1.150-151 (a catalogue of various 'sordid' occupations); Suet. Aug. 2.3, 4.2, Otho 1.1, Vesp.
1.2-4; Mart. 3.59, 3.99; Juv. S. 1.101-106, 3.41ff; DC 46.4-5, 7.4.

84 Toner (1995) 24-29 with textual references.
a goddess such as Isis or Venus also allied a woman with a particular social group, a group
which observed and emulated the fashions of the imperial households.\footnote{For a catalogue of literate women depicted with book-rolls and writing implements see D. Tkach, 'The Literate Woman in the Roman World', University of Victoria, unpublished M.A. thesis. Portraits of Romans in the guise of divinities: Wrede (1981).}

On the other hand, \textit{ornatus} iconography was entirely appropriate to women in what we
might call a sub-élite stratum. To prosperous free and freed women, the toilette ritual may
have constituted evidence of economic progress and self-cultivation. The former slave now
luxuriated in the leisure that resulted from her changed circumstances. She enjoyed the
fruits of her husband's business acumen: the purchase of a personal staff to assist with her
toilette, the purchase of make-up and cosmetic therapies to improve her appearance, and the
free time to devote to self-presentation. Equally, her newly won prestige was the
culmination of her own hard work.\footnote{The authors of a current study of women in antiquity [Fantham et al. (1994) 375] regard the rôle of the seated female in grooming scenes as subordinate to the males in the occupational reliefs that sometimes accompany them; specifically they state, 'her inactivity brings him status'.} Toilette scenes were not always accompanied by
male work images suggestive of a conjugal monument, and memorials frequently fail to
provide information about the honorands because inscriptions are fragmentary or missing
altogether. Only two of the fifteen toilette scenes in the inventory were found together with
inscriptions, and in both cases the texts are so poorly preserved that we know nothing
about the honorands. Social status is conjectured on the basis of monument type, and
complexity and subject matter of iconography; an interpretation reminiscent of Veblen's
theory of the leisure class in nineteenth century America.\footnote{Theories of competitive display: Veblen (1899); Boas (1966); Bourdieu (1984) with Burke (1993) 67-68.} Some women undoubtedly
selected and paid for monuments that reflected part of their own experience as managers of
their physical selves. These same monuments also publicised an important social and
perhaps personal achievement: their ability to present themselves as refined and elegant
women.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Roman iconography of female self-presentation assumed many forms, from painted
and sculpted toilette scenes to simple portrayals of the \textit{mundus muliebris}, suggesting that
Romans looked upon grooming as a woman's concern. The literary evidence presented in
the preceding chapter pointed to this fact and the visual evidence presented here confirms it. More problematic is the manner in which the toilette iconography should be interpreted. The fact that it occurred routinely in honorific contexts, as affirmations of women's dedication to self-presentation, or symbols of female techne, demonstrates that ornatus attained a high degree of respectability, an esteem that stands in marked contrast to moralising discourses where the adorned woman is a wastrel, expending leisure time and income on her beauty pursuits and her desire to attract male attention. We need, therefore, to consider the factors or conditions that may have motivated women and their commemorators to use this iconography.

In her seminal article on the rhetoric surrounding cosmetics and adornment, Wyke discusses the idea of the adorned woman as a work of art, a luxury object 'crafted ultimately for man's possession and pleasure'. For her, this theory is borne out by the parallels between the rhetoric of adornment that characterised ornatus and cultus as acts of vanity engaged in by leisured women, and the toilette scenes representing the actual process of female self-construction. Additionally, she points to the toiletries decorated with images of the adorned female (hairpins, mirror backs, containers) as evidence of the intimate connection between women and craftsmanship. Her assertions about the fashioning of women may well be true in some instances, but the audience to which the crafted woman was presented need not necessarily have been male. A woman's self-transformation could have been of interest to other women. Roman women may have participated in beauty culture because it afforded them an opportunity to articulate status and social position within their own gender group through the clothes they wore, the hairstyle they chose, the adornments they displayed. Toilette iconography, then, gives us a picture of women as independent agents working on their own behalf to promote their own personal prestige.

To clarify this point we might consider the characterisations of power as understood by two scholars of the modern era. In a discussion of historical studies of power, relationships, and social theory, Peter Burke points out how scholars have a tendency to convert the concept of power from something abstract into something concrete. In the course of using loaded terms such as 'ruler', 'ruling class', 'political élite', many scholars fail to acknowledge power differentials and nuances of power within a given society or period. The feminist scholar, Linda Gordon, has identified this same problem in the study

---


---
of women's history: because women had less power, scholars seem to think of them as powerless. These scholarly tendencies have shaped what little analysis of Roman *cultus* and *ornatus* has been conducted to date. Ideas drawn from theories of competitive display and conspicuous consumption formulated by sociologists and anthropologists drive studies of women's self-presentation and in the process minimise women's displays of power.\(^8^9\)

Consider the circumstances of the woman who had formerly been a slave. She had acquired her freedom through purchase or the beneficence of her owner, yet she retained the stigma of her slave origins through her name. To a degree, participation in beauty culture could diminish this stain, for she was free to assimilate herself to the *ornatus* of freeborn women, dressing as they did and styling her hair in the same fashion. Unlike élite women, whose beauty practices came under the close scrutiny of male writers, the freedwoman may have been able to take greater liberties with her make-up, dress and adornment, constructing an appearance that agreed with her own philosophy of sartorial femininity. Freedom to participate meant that when in public she could engage in the competitive displays described by our textual sources (Plb. 31.26-27, Liv. 34.7), thus acquiring a modicum of personal prestige. She might in the process draw attention to and convey something of her physical attributes to a male audience, but within her gender group self-assertion through self-presentation amounted to a competitive act—however small.\(^9^0\)

Attempts to explain the behaviour of Italian and provincial women, or to know what women were trying to communicate through the imagery that appeared on their funerary monuments are complicated by the fact that the voices of women are silent. Inscriptional evidence, however, may be of help. The epitaphs that accompany many of the monuments in our inventory have never, to the best of my knowledge, been studied or published as a unified body of material. These inscriptions, which are the subject of the following chapter, demonstrate that beauty culture was not the preserve of élite women or, as literary texts and modern scholars often imply, those women involved in the sex-trade. The personal histories revealed in these texts provide information about legal status, community offices and responsibilities, and intimate relationships. They also offer us an impression of the way in which one construction of femininity affected the lives of women. A desire to


meet or at least lend the perception of meeting one standard of femininity is evident in this group of texts. This desire was not confined to a particular social, economic, or ethnic group. Women from all social backgrounds and the families who honoured them in death, favoured a unique iconography that was emblematic of a woman's femininity and thus her character.
Chapter Four

Inscribing Femininity: the Evidence From Epigraphy

Amazing Progress of Colored Race—Improved Appearance Responsible

Radiate an air of prosperity and who is to know if your purse is lined with gold or not?

_Oklahoma Eagle_, March 3, 1928

Introduction

When Julia Basilia, a young woman from Corfinium, died at the age of seventeen, her husband Aurelius Pardus honoured her memory by purchasing a large sarcophagus on which he had her epitaph inscribed. Julia's husband was not alone in his bereavement. The inscription, no more than six lines on one side of her sarcophagus, reveals that she also left behind her mother Julia Basilissa and one Flavius Fortunatus who was almost certainly her father. To the left of Julia's epitaph stands a representation of a mirror and to the right a comb and a pair of _soleae_, the footwear often worn by Romans at home. Her immediate family relations apart, what can we learn about Julia's life? The shared _nomen_ of the two women may indicate that they were of servile origin but manumitted together by a master named Julius. Julia Basilissa may have been freed before her daughter, and then given her daughter whom she subsequently freed, or her daughter might be _ingenua_ but illegitimate. Whatever the case, it is clear that Julia Basilia did well for herself. She married and her family became sufficiently prosperous to afford a large sarcophagus for Julia when she died.

The choice of burial container and its decoration suggest something about the deceased and her family too. Appearance mattered. It mattered in terms of the family's ability to provide a suitable memorial for a loved one, and it mattered in terms of what the family wished to say about Julia as a woman. If she had died suddenly, a funerary monument could have been needed on short notice. If the inventory or decorative styles of the local atelier supplying sarcophagi were limited, then the choices of its clientele were restricted too. Whether the family selected a memorial based on the range of products available, or

---

1 For a description of the monument see Appendix 1, no. 22. For additional discussion of Julia Basilia's family see the Table Notes at the end of this chapter. _CIL_ 3237: _Juliae Basiliæ coniugil duicissimae feminae quædivixit annis XVII Aurel Pardus mariìius et Flavius Fortunatus etJulia Basilissa filiæ karissimæ b. m. posuer._
whether Julia's sarcophagus was made to their specifications we cannot know. But one fact is inescapable: the images on the sarcophagus reflect an idea of womanhood that was widely accepted and understood in Roman society.

Julia's epitaph with its depictions of toilette articles—mundus muliebris—is typical of a small but tantalising body of inscriptions which have yet to be thoroughly studied as a coherent body of material. The significance of this material cannot be overstated. The monuments on which hair-dressing scenes appear are often without dedications that might identify the deceased and provide us with some sense of the social status of the women commemorated. Yet greater consideration must be given to the identity and status of these honorands in an effort to determine the extent to which ideals of femininity crossed social and economic boundaries. The inscriptions support the perception that beauty culture was the vocation of affluent women, but they also add another dimension to this observation suggesting that women of humble and servile backgrounds, individuals traditionally under-represented in our material and literary evidence, also participated in beauty culture or wished to create the illusion of participation. The purpose of this chapter is to reconstitute something of the lives of the honorands, and after general remarks on the nature of these inscriptions, to examine select commemorations which give us an indication of the individuals using toilette iconography. With the information gleaned from the personal histories contained in this study we may be able to shed further light on how femininity was constructed in Roman society, how widely (or not) these ideas were disseminated and perpetuated within Italian and provincial society, how constructions of womanhood affected women in different social groups, and how women expressed themselves.

The Inscriptions: General Introduction

Before moving to a study of personal histories, we need to set out some of the general characteristics of the inscriptions concerned, their format, the criteria by which they were included in this study, their social function, and their geographical distribution. There are

---

2 Compare Sailer and Shaw (1984) 128: 'Though the Roman leisured classes are no doubt over-represented in our samples, those identifiable as members of the senatorial, equestrian, or curial classes constitute only a fraction of the commemorated'.

3 Funerary texts for honorands not discussed in the text may be found in the Table Notes at the end of this chapter.

4 A summary of the inscriptions discussed in this chapter may be found in Appendix 2. All numbers given in parentheses in this chapter correspond to the entries found in Appendices 1 and 2.
sixty four relevant texts. They commemorate seventy-three females, and are most easily accessible in the *CIL* volumes devoted to Italy and the Roman West. There the inscriptions are not generally accompanied by photographs or schematic drawings of the images appended to them, although several have been published elsewhere together with their monuments.\(^5\) When revising funerary inscriptions with subsidiary decoration, such as rosettes or toilette accessories, the editors of the *CIL* often wrote the Latin word for the object in its approximate location on the monument. The epitaph for Julia Basilia (no. 22) looks like this:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{IULIAE BASILIAE CONIUGI} & \quad \text{soleae} \\
\text{DULCISSIMAE FEMINAE QUAE} & \\
\text{VIXIT ANNIS XVII AUREL PARDUS} & \\
\text{MARITUS ET FLAVIUS FORTUNATUS ET} & \\
\text{IULIA BASILISSA FILIAE KARISSIMAE} & \\
\text{B \ M \ POSUER} & \\
\text{speculum} & \\
\text{pecten} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Since information about the inscriptions is concise rather than comprehensive, the identification of objects comprising the *mundus muliebris* and the objects held in the hands of the honorands rests entirely with the editors who examined the memorials first-hand. The poor condition of many monuments compelled them to rely on the work of earlier compilers to verify images.\(^6\) The difficulties of distinguishing the features of badly eroded inscriptions is well demonstrated by the epitaph for Asteris, a slave-woman of Iuvanum (no. 21). The editor concluded that a mirror was one of three implements carved on her memorial; he was less certain about the other two but conjectured a comb and spoon. Combs appear frequently on women's *monumenta* and commonly with mirrors, so we may be confident in the identification of this object. The tentative identification of the spoon is reasonable given that it is accompanied by another article normally associated with the *mundus muliebris*, that is, the mirror.\(^7\) We also know from previous discussion that

---

\(^5\) Inscriptions from published monuments: nos. 9, 10, 12-16, 18, 50, 54-61, 63-65, 67-68, 72-73, 76.

\(^6\) Sandys (1919) 20-33 describes the work of the various compilers.

\(^7\) The chronology of the inscriptions is a thorny issue, as noted in the preceding chapter in relation to the monuments. I accept that most if not all date to the second and third centuries AD, which is consistent chronologically with most of the monuments examined in the preceding chapter. Further, the expression *Dis Manibus* or *Dis Manibus Sacrum*, which occurs in nineteen of forty-two *mundus muliebris* inscriptions, is believed to be a commonplace of epitaphs of the second through fourth centuries. There are exceptions to this rule, but they are rare. For two examples see Gordon (1983) 40-41. On the problems of epigraphic dating generally see Sandys (1919) 200-203; MacMullen (1982); Meyer (1990); Morris (1992) 156-173.
Roman jurists applied the term *mundus muliebris* to accoutrements enabling a woman to be *mundior et lautior*.

The accessories appended to many funerary inscriptions are those specified by legal experts: mirrors, *cistae*, perfume and unguent containers. Smaller items such as combs and hairpins, which are elements of *mundus muliebris* iconography, rarely drew the attention of Ulpian, Paul, and their predecessors. This is probably a reflection of their relatively low worth (in most cases) rather than a sign that the jurists, who were concerned primarily with legacies of value, did not regard them as feminine accessories.

The decision to include or exclude a particular inscription from this study is based on two simple criteria. First and foremost, a woman must be the principal honorand or named among those for whom the monument was erected. Funerary texts reveal, for example, that husbands sometimes established memorials for themselves and their families of their own accord and sometimes jointly with their wives, as in the case of T. Poppedius Callidus and Octavidia Genialis (no. 23). The epitaph contains the phrase 'vivi sibi et suis', indicating that the couple established the monument for themselves and their family while they were still alive. Here a woman is both honorand and dedicant together with her husband, although representations of toiletries predominate. The second qualification is purely iconographic: an inscription must be accompanied by representations of one or more items which Romans regarded as the *mundus muliebris*. I have included here inscriptions associated with portraits of women accompanied by toilette articles, of which there are twenty-five: five are from Italy (nos. 54-56, 63-64, 77) and the rest are from the western provinces (nos. 57-61, 65, 67-68, 72-73, 76, 78-85).

To understand more fully the capacity of these inscriptions to communicate messages about women's self-presentation and femininity, we might begin by considering the rôle of monuments, and what one scholar has termed 'monumental writing', in the life of the community. On one level, these short biographies of the deceased, with records of

---

8 Paul, *Sent.* 3.6.83 and *Dig.* 34.2.32.7; *Ulp.* *Dig.* 34.2.25.10. Other uses of the term *mundus muliebris*: Col. 12.3.1, *Phaedr.* 4.5.21, *Sen.* *Nat.* 1.17.10, 7.31.2-3, *Var.* *L.* 5.129.

9 Only Ulpian (*Dig.* 34.2.25.10) lists a hairpin, in this case an *acus cum margarita*, among the ornaments of women.

10 It should be noted that of all the inscriptions surveyed in *CIL*, only two examples were found of men holding mirrors (*CIL* 12.1308, 13.5447). In both cases the inscriptions are fragmentary and shed no light on the identities or occupations of the individuals. Cf. Ésperandieu (1908) 1122, for a funerary relief, unaccompanied by an epitaph, of a male figure holding a mirror.

ancestry, achievements, personal attributes, and relationships, were meant for private consumption. Tombs and grave sites provided grieving family members with a measure of comfort, offering relatives an opportunity to visit with the deceased whenever they wished or on special religious holidays. At the *Feralia*, the festal day marking the end of the *Parentalia* (Ovid. *Fast.* 2.533), families gathered at the tombs of the dead to make sacrifices and partake of a ritual meal; and during the *Rosalia* Romans attended the tombs of their ancestors to deck them with garlands and flowers. Dedicatory inscriptions make clear that these festivals were of great importance. That the *Parentalia* was seen as an important religious holiday is demonstrated by an inscription from Ambarri in Lugdunensis (*CIL* 13.2465), revealing that one resident of the town set aside half an acre of vineyard for the purpose of its celebration. On another level, funerary markers were destined for public consumption, for leaving some record to posterity. Cicero, in a passage from the *Tusculan Disputations* (1.51), implies as much. He includes funerary monuments and commemorative inscriptions among the things that men consider when they think of their own posterity: the fathering of children, the honouring of a name, the adoption of sons, and the careful drawing up of wills.

Depending upon their location, these *monumenta* might be seen by a variety of individuals from town notables to mendicants. Roman law forbade interments within city or town limits at least from the time of the Twelve Tables (Cic. *Leg.* 2.23.58), with the result that the roads leading to and from most communities in Italy, were lined with tombs and other kinds of memorials. At Rome, for instance, a vast necropolis was located outside the Aurelian Wall between the Porta Salaria and the Porta Pinciana. Excavation of

12 Cherry (1995), in a response to Meyer (1991), argues from a study of funerary inscriptions from Lambaesis and Theueste, that sentiment and family affection—not heirship—were the motivating factors for commemoration of the dead among Romans and non-Romans in North Africa.

13 Other testators specify the times of the year that they wish the proper rites to be performed in their memory: most often the stated days are the *Parentalia*, the *Rosalia*, and the testator's birthday. For this evidence see the discussion in Champlin (1991) 164, with *CIL* 3.707, 11042; 5.2046, 2090, 4016, 4410, 4440, 5272, 5907, 7450, and Farrar (1999) 177-179 with notes. Evidence for the *Rosalia* is considerable but widely scattered.

14 Cic. *Tusc.* 1.31: *Quid procreatio liberorum, quid propagatio nominis, quid adoptiones filiorum, quid testamentorum diligentia, quid ipsa sepulcrorum monumenta elogia significant nisi nos futura etiam cogitare.*

15 Toynbee (1971) 48-49, noted two exceptions; the mausoleum of Augustus was erected in the Campus Martius, an area outside the *pomerium* and Trajan's ashes were interred at the base of his column. Cf. Morris (1992) 42.
the necropolis, which was in use from the mid first century BC well into the third century AD, has uncovered more than one thousand tombs and approximately twenty-five hundred funerary inscriptions. Here, the stratification of society was very much in evidence. Architecturally elaborate memorials of leading citizens occupied prestigious locations, while the unassuming tombstones and commemorative plaques of the lower orders were relegated to places less prominent. Elsewhere, individuals recognised for exceptional service to their community might be voted, *decreto decurionum* (*CIL* 11.6528), a burial plot on municipal land immediately outside the town. Statements about tomb dimensions are also important for they can tell us whether the plot was situated adjacent to a roadway or whether it bordered a street in a cemetery proper, both of which were prominent locations. Tomb size is given in only one of the *mundus muliebris* epitaphs, that of Flavia Tertia (no. 37). The dimensions are fifteen (Roman) feet *in fronte* and fifteen feet *in agro*. If her memorial was erected next to the road on the outskirts of Hadria, presumably it would have been visible to anyone approaching or leaving the town. It would also have been visible to anyone engaged in the various activities which often took place in the shadow of the city walls: the grazing of flocks by shepherds, the cultivation of vegetable gardens, and the gathering of townspeople who came to watch the punishment of criminals.\(^{16}\)

Lush funeral gardens where Romans socialised and exercised with friends and family also provided opportunities for viewing monuments. The buffoon Trimalchio entertained his guests (*Petr. 71*) by reciting the specifications of the tomb that Habinnas, a *lapidarius*, was building for him. It was to be one hundred feet *in fronte*, two hundred feet *in agro*, and to encompass a garden replete with statuary, a sun-dial, fruit trees and vines. Trimalchio even provided for a custodian, as much to carry out maintenance as to prevent his memorial from being defaced. That funeral gardens like Trimalchio's were designed for socialising may be inferred by the range of structures and facilities associated with them. According to the evidence from epigraphy, dining areas, store-rooms for foodstuffs used in ritual meals, sun-terraces, promenades, and pools, were common features of the larger funerary gardens.\(^{17}\)

---


Despite the existence of funerary gardens, most commemorative monuments were found in cemeteries or scattered along the roadsides leading from most cities and towns, where they were open to view by anyone who cared to linger. Of course we have no way of knowing how often people did so, but implicit in the petitions which appear on gravestones and altars, asking those who pass by not to harm them in any way, is the idea that people often did pause to look. Staberia Flora (no. 39), a freedwoman of Capua, appeals to those who pass by her monument: 'I ask you dear passerby, do not harm me' (*rogo te mi viator, noli mi nocere*). For good measure the request appears twice, once on either side of the monument face, presumably in the hope that all *viatores* will comply with her wishes. Together, the tombs and *stelai* crowding the thoroughfares, the funerary gardens with their extensive facilities and services, and the holidays devoted to worship of one's ancestors demonstrate that the deceased were far from forgotten. On the contrary, they formed a significant presence in the community and their memorials were constant reminders to the living of the centrality of kinship, social standing, and conformity in Roman society.

The Italian inscriptions total forty-two and a significant number come from the many communities and road stations hard by or within easy access of the Via Valeria, a main artery first built around 303 BC to connect Rome with the colony of Alba Fucens. The others are concentrated in two areas: among settlements along the eastern seaboard in the area between the Via Valeria and the Via Salaria, and in towns such as Volsinii, Blera, Pisae, and Luna, north and west of Rome. Inscriptions from the Roman West are much more widely dispersed through Britain, the Gallic provinces, Spain, Noricum, Germany and Upper Pannonia. The original location of many of these funerary monuments is difficult to ascertain since many were removed from cemeteries and *necropoleis* for use in building projects (no. 37, 43), in later periods. Some markers have been found within church precincts (nos. 15, 29, 31, 38), although the editors of the *CIL* are not always clear on whether they were used strictly as construction material or served in a decorative

---

18 Chapter 3, p. 23. The marker for Restituta (no. 33) may well have been found in its original context; the editors indicate the find spot was the catacomb beneath the church of St. Victor in Amitemum.
capacity. Still others came into the hands of affluent Italian families of the modern historical period (no. 23, 25, 27); a demonstration perhaps of the dilettantism and the passion for antiquities that gripped the European public in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

How might we characterise the communities which, broadly speaking, produced these epitaphs? The individuals in this study doubtless came from a variety of backgrounds and engaged in a variety of professions, and their communities must have been equally diverse. We might see the larger and more prosperous towns as microcosms of Rome with local or municipal councils, and a town élite comprising wealthy landowners and businessmen from whom the local magistrates and religious officials were chosen. The degree of prosperity and population of these towns differed dramatically. As an illustration we may compare the estimated city populations given by Duncan-Jones. He places the number of free and servile inhabitants of Corfinium, a municipium on the Via Valeria, between 2480 and 2820. Pliny the Younger's home-town of Comum on the other hand was far more urban, with a population approaching 19,000-22,000 (these are approximations only). These same communities also possessed servile and libertine populations, which lived alongside citizens of modest and poor station.

Urban centres in the Roman West, like Burdigala, Durocortorum, and Orolaunum, were particularly receptive to things Roman, and where native culture met Roman there was often a fusion of the two which produced a distinctive culture. Burdigala, for example, an international trading-port of long standing at the mouth of the Garonne, was well placed to make the most of the opportunities offered by integration within the Empire and would no doubt have developed as a prosperous Romano-Gallic township without outside intervention. Andematunnun was an early oppidum along the road to Augusta Treverorum (Trier) in the north and Durocortorum in the northwest; together they formed part of a trade triangle in the early Imperial period. At least ten of the provincial inscriptions have been ascribed to communities well connected by major arteries (nos. 14, 18, 57-61, 67, 73, 85).

---

19 For example, the altar of Gaius Iulius Philetus, a freed boy from Rome, was adapted for use as a water basin in S. Maria in Dominica in Rome (Kleiner [1987] no. 11).

20 City populations: Duncan-Jones (1974) 273, Table 7, to be read with his discussion on the methods and difficulties of quantifying such populations (259-319). Cities as social, religious, and administrative centres: Ward-Perkins (1974) 8; Gamsey and Saller (1987) 192.
and another three (nos. 65, 68, 72) are from Arelate (a veteran *colonia*), Tullum, and Dibio, towns which also enjoyed the benefits of the western road network.\(^1\)

*The Status of Honorands and Dedicants: Libertinae*

Women of freed status form the most substantial category of honorands in this study (twenty-one verifiable *libertinae* and ten probable).\(^2\) From three towns on the Italian and provincial models described above, we have inscriptions commemorating married couples, erected by *libertini* who style themselves *seviri Augustales*.\(^3\) By virtue of their former servile status freedmen were barred from municipal office-holding, a time-honoured method of enhancing one's social and economic reputation. Exclusion presented the freedman with something of a dilemma: how to gain respectability and leave one's servile origins far behind. One course of action for affluent *libertini* was membership in the *Augustales*, which brought civic as well as religious responsibilities. Candidates were probably nominated by local decurions, and during their term served the cult of the emperor and carried out euergetic duties, such as sponsoring public entertainment or municipal works. In return, they received the *insignia* of public office normally granted to freeborn officeholders: the *fasces* and the right to wear the *toga praetexta*. The husbands of Nonia Lucusta, Sextuleia Secunda and Luculla Psamathe all held this relatively distinguished position (nos. 15, 30, 77).\(^4\)

On the lateral faces of the *cippus* for Luculla Psamathe and her husband are depictions of a man and a woman whom it is tempting to identify as the deceased. The couple are

---


\(^{4}\) Cf. Ternes (1988) no. 184, for an entry on the *Elternpaapfeiler*. He makes brief mention of the fact that the badly fragmented inscription on the principal register may identify the husband as a *sevir Augustalis*. I can find no reference to this possibility in other discussions of the monument. It should be noted that while Sextuleia Secunda is married to a freedman, she is *ingenua* and will be discussed in the following section.
seated, she holding a mirror and he a diptych or writing tablet. Libicus is clearly a former slave, presumably from North Africa, who refers to himself as ‘Gallae filius’, the son of Galla. (It is not entirely clear whether this Galla is male or female.) The wife's servile origin is alluded to by a mix of names, the Greek Psamathe with the gentilicium Luculla. Libicus claims to have discharged the duties of an Augustalis, which means that he was a freedman possessed of a considerable fortune. His freedom may have been achieved through his writing skills, as amanuensis to his patron, or the appearance of being literate may be a conceit—evidence that Libicus contrived to be remembered as an accomplished individual. He is the very image of urbanitas, that quality of person and character thought to betray one's familiarity with the sophisticated tastes of urban life. The corollary of what we might call his urbanitas is the cultus and ornatus of Luculla Psamathe, who appears as a woman devoted to self-cultivation or skilled in self-management.

Different yet familiar stories are told by the commemorations for Sextuleia Secunda (no. 30) and Nonia Lucusta (no. 15). In both instances, the accoutrements of the woman's toilette, prominently displayed, make a visual statement about the women's self-presentation that corresponds to the written statements of their husband's achievements as Augustales. Thus, the memorials for these couples demonstrate a deep respect for, or an understanding at least of the high value placed upon urbanitas by the Roman élite. A woman's prestige clearly was defined in part by the social prominence of her husband, and by the quality of her physical appearance. There was a healthy respect for rusticitas too in the idealised musings of agricultural writers, poets, and philosophers, such as Varro, Ovid, and Seneca. Yet many of these same writers reveal their prejudice against rusticitas. Cicero (Fin. 3.14), for example, in an effort to impugn his enemies, referred to them as 'rustics and country folk'.

25 CIL 11.3011: T. Calpurnius Gallae filius Libicus Augustalis munere functus Luculla Psamathe uxor. The editors do not provide a description of the furniture upon which the man and woman sit; they simply write mulier sedens cum speculo and homo sedens cum diptycho.

26 Libicus' portrait brings to mind the painted 'literary' portraits from Pompeii which may have been created for the same purpose, that is to leave the impression that the sitters depicted were literate and therefore cultured individuals. Bibliography for these portraits may be found in Harris (1989) 263, n. 459.


29 For discussion of the tensions between urban and rural: MacMullen (1974) 28-56. Caracalla (P. Giess 40), we may recall, believed that poor diction and boorish manners revealed native Egyptians for the simple
Beside the memorials for the wives of the *Augustales*, we may place those of the freedman comb-maker L. Sextus Albanus and his wife Sabidia Euche (no. 13). Sabidia's toiletries (slippers, a comb, perfume bottles, and a cylindrical *cista*) occupy the face of the monument, while two long-toothed combs symbolic of her husband's profession are relegated to the left lateral face. There is also the funerary text of Amaredia Lucina (no. 31) to consider. A freedwoman of Alba Fucens who died at the age of nineteen, she was memorialised with a *cippus* erected by her parents (C. Amaredius Severus and Amaredia Psyche) and by her patron and probable husband, C. Amaredius Aper. This may explain why the epitaph states that Aper consented to have her *cippus* placed in his tomb (*in monumento suo*)—although such a practice was far from unusual.

Because Latin texts use the word *monumentum* to describe different types of memorials, it is difficult to know whether Aper's tomb was an expansive structure with space for sarcophagi and niches for urns, or a simple enclosure, open to the elements, with a burial pit for himself and space for the grave-stones of his dependents.

Why were grooming implements chosen to adorn a memorial, when they were presumably so common as to be banal? With wealthy husbands holding distinguished

---


32 There are other examples in this study of *libertae* who married their patrons. See the monuments for Mammia Zoe (no. 27), Nunnia Brysa (no. 48), and Regina (no. 76).

33 Eighteen of forty-one Italian epitaphs (44%) occur with both mirror and comb, and an additional twenty-two (54%) reveal evidence of a comb, or a mirror alone or with other toiletries. Cf. the remarks of Gardner (1995) 381, concerning the classification of these accessories. She points out that the jurists give little or no attention to the same sorts of articles when discussing the testamentary concerns of men. 'Male toiletries' are not conceived of as a separate category, one may suggest, because it is simply assumed that men's use of such things is purely practical and utilitarian and needs no further comment; when used by women, they have purpose beyond the mere necessities of cleanliness'. This attitude may stem from the fact that while men were expected to present themselves in a clean and well attired manner in public (see Chapter 2), it would not be acceptable for them to spend long hours at their own grooming rituals, for this would reduce them to the level of women. For comparable views we may recall Ulpian's (*Dig.* 34.2.232) definition of women's clothing as 'those acquired for the benefit of the matron of a household, which a man cannot easily use without incurring censure' (*muliebria sunt, quae matris familiae causa sunt comparata, quibus vir non facile uti potest sine vituperatione*); and Paul's claim that suitable men's clothing (*Sent.* 3.6.80) comprised only those items which a man could use without shaming his masculinity (*quae ad usum virilem salvo pudore virilitatis attinent*).
positions in the community, these women were expected to comport themselves in a
manner befitting their husbands' stature as were the wives of other public figures (Polyb.
31.26-27; Liv. 34.7; Plin. *Ep.* 6.32). To what degree women complied with these
standards or met these expectations cannot be determined; but the symbols of womanhood
lend the impression that they had the financial resources and the leisure to devote to the
cultivation of their appearances. Consider Ovid's *Medicamina Faciei* (51-100) in the
context of funerary monuments and the various jars which appear on them. Ovid provided
step-by-step instructions on how to create skin treatments from carefully dried, ground,
pounded, and mixed ingredients, and Green has demonstrated that these compounds were
fairly effective. Barley, eggs, and honey, three of his ingredients, may have produced a
delicate beauty cream but could hardly be spared by women whose families lived at subsistence
level. Other concoctions required imported products, such as Illyrian iris and frankincense
mixed with a special salt from Libya, items that certainly were beyond the finances of the
less well-to-do, even though their expertise in the kitchen may have provided them with the
skills necessary for drying, pounding and grinding the ingredients these ointments
demanded. Thus, depictions of cosmetic containers may in some instances speak to the
status of the individual.

To be an ideal Roman woman was always to be suitably groomed, and the memorial of
Septimia Lyde (no. 33), a resident of Alba Fucens, implies that she was attentive to this
need or possessed a certain skill in self-management. She, however, was not
commemorated by a husband but by her two freedwomen, Septimia Satura and Septimia
Primigenia, who performed the duties most often associated with the legatees of the
deceased. Cicero says these legatees (who may or may not be the heirs) were responsible
for performing the rites for the dead (*sacra*). He does not say specifically that the setting up
of a suitable memorial was part of the heir's or legatee's obligations, but it is clear that at
least some Romans believed this to be among their responsibilities. We may recall Pliny

---

34 Green (1979).
35 CIL 9.4026: SeptimiaeLydeSeptimia Saturalet Septimia Primigeniapatronetb. m. d. s. f.
36 *Leg.* 2.48-49: *Quaeruntur enim, qui astringantur sacratis. Heredum causa iustissima est; nulla est enim
persona, quae ad vicem eius, qui e vita emigravit, propius accedat. Deinde, qui morte testamentove eius
tantundem capiat, quantum omnes heredes ... Tertio loco, si nemo sit heres, is, qui de bonis, quae eius
fuierint, cum moritur, usus ceperit plurimum possidendo. Quarto, qui, si nemo sit, qui uliam rem ceperit, de
creditoribus eius plurimum servet. Estrema illa persona est, ut is, si qui ei, qui mortuus sit, pecuniam
debuerit neminique eam solvent, proinde habeatur, quasi eam pecuniam ceperis.*
the Younger's complaint (Ep. 6.10) about the lazy heir of his friend Verginius. Septimia Lyde may have had no family to set up a proper monument, particularly if she herself had been a slave and separated from her birth parents. Thus, she relied on the loyalty and goodwill of former slaves to ensure she was not forgotten. To judge from the number of articles depicted her freedwomen seem to have chosen thoughtfully: spoon, comb, slippers, hairnet, flask, and mirror encircle the epitaph found on the lid of Septimia's sarcophagus.37

The imagery of Septimia Lyde's monument is consistent with what we might expect for a woman of some wealth, but the wording of the epitaph indicates that the libertae paid for their patron's monument out of their own pockets. Had Septimia Lyde stipulated in a will that she wished her freedwomen to set up her memorial, a perfectly legitimate request in Ulpian's opinion (Digest 11.7.3-5), we might expect such phrases as testamento fieri iussit, testamento poni iussit, or ex testamento to be part of the inscription.38 Instead, the abbreviation d(e) s(uo/a) forms part of the closing line, indicating that the freedwomen paid for the monument independently. The women may have been obligated to commemorate their patrona, and consulted her on the appropriate form of commemoration and decoration before she died. A more likely scenario is that the women chose the monument based on current fashions in funerary art and in the knowledge of what symbols exemplified a highly regarded aspect of femininity.

Finally, consider the memorial for Psyche Herennia (no. 47), who died at the grand age of seventy. Still visible next to her inscription are the remains of a comb and mirror, creating the impression that the honorand was sensitive to the visual language of femininity and what it might communicate to posterity. Psyche seems to have had some semblance of family life despite beginning life as a slave. She was remembered by her 'husband' Cresimus who refers to her as his coniunx, by her daughter Aiecta [sic?], and by her son-in-law Alexander.39 It is possible that the three commemorators were of the same status as

37 Ten other monuments, commemorating thirteen women, bear elaborate mundus muliebris reliefs comparable to that found on the sarcophagus of Septimia Lyde. Two of these women are ingenuae (nos. 10 and 30), three are incerti (nos. 12 and 49), four can be securely identified as libertinae (nos. 23, 26, 32, 48), three as possible libertinae (nos. 16 and 24) and one as a serva (no. 16).

38 The pyramid of C. Cestius, for example, was finished in 330 days (ILS I.917): ...Opus apsolutum ex testamento diebus cccxxx ... Testamentary stipulations: Champlin (1991) 175; Keppie (1991) 107-108. Sailer and Shaw (1984) also note that the number of slave and freed commemorators in their study of approximately 25,000 tombstones was extremely low (5% or less).

39 CIL 11.6998: D. M. ISceni Erennie posuit Cestimus coiugi sue et Aiecta fil. et gener eiul Alexandri curandu. Ipso siderun. Vix. an. LXX. The honorand’s names are probably spelled phonetically. An
the honorand, and that Psyche's gentilicium applies to them all as former slaves of a Herennius or Herennia. Alternatively, Psyche may have been the only freed member of the family, and pointed references to personal relationships—coniunx, filia, gener—together with the imagery of the monument were meant to create a veneer of respectability and solid membership in a community that was in many respects closed to the deceased and her family unless they were newly freed. Under Roman law slaves had no fathers, nor then did they have a family from which they might derive a personal identity. With the indulgence of their owners, slaves could and did form de facto unions—contubernia—from which there was issue. What Psyche and others like her gained from the use of this written and visual funerary language was a personal identity firmly rooted in a family unit and an ability, as a respectably groomed woman, to meet Roman ideals of femininity.

The inscriptions examined above make evident the concern of freedmen and freedwomen with self-representation. They set up monuments for themselves and drew attention to their public service wherever possible, demonstrating a keen desire to be regarded as respectable and accepted members of the communities in which they lived. Through office-holding the men acquired the prestige which was an essential ingredient of one's social reputation and their wives in turn shared this success. Equally, freedwomen like the Septimiae testified to their own accomplishments, both financial and social, by setting up monuments independently. Not all freed individuals had the economic capacity to erect substantial memorials: those for Peticia Cytheris (no. 28) and Staberia Flora (no. 39) are relatively plain markers with simple imagery. On the whole, it is reasonable to say that freedmen and women were proud of their new free status, and they and their commemorators created the appearance of assimilation by imitating the ingenui. Imitation took many forms, but in funerary contexts we find freedmen and freedwomen adapting the monuments of freeborn Romans to their own purposes. They adopted the written

---

alternative reading of Erennie may be Eirene, which would suggest that Psyche was in fact a slave. Susini (1973) 39-40 attributes these kinds of errors to two factors. First, a distracted mason may have mispelled the words, and second the individual who placed the order may have been of foreign extraction and his or her pronunciation confusing to the scriptor.

---


41 A comprehensive study of this practice is Kleiner's (1977) study of the group funerary portraits from Italy.
language of commemorations, and in the case of freedwomen employed an iconography that alluded to freedom from labour, participation in beauty culture, and financial security.

**Honorands and Dedicants: Ingenuae and Incertae**

Women of certain freeborn status (*ingenuae*) form the second largest category of honorands (twenty in total). We have already mentioned Sextuleia Secunda (no. 30) who lived in Alba Fucens along with her husband, T. Tituleius Successus, an *Augustalis*.\(^{42}\) Marriages between the daughters of affluent freedmen and wealthy *libertini* were common within the *familia Caesaris*, but one wonders how common they were in smaller communities such as Alba Fucens. A freeborn woman was undoubtedly an attractive marriage partner for a freedman concerned with social mobility, but evidence for this kind of mixed marriage outside the *familia Caesaris* is thin. Weaver studied seven hundred epitaphs for couples from the city of Rome, that is couples outside the *familia Caesaris*, and among them found only eight instances of *libertinus-ingenua* relationships.\(^{43}\) The small sample size from Rome itself suggests that it is even more difficult to assess the frequency of these marriages elsewhere. Perhaps a plausible explanation for the relationship between Sextuleia and Successus is that she was the daughter of a freedman rather than an *ingenuus*, making this less of a *mésalliance*.

Flavia Tertia (no. 37), a resident of Hadria, was also *ingenua*. The brother who set up her dedication included the dimensions of her burial plot in the inscription.\(^{44}\) Given that her parents are not listed as dedicants, it may be that Flavia's memorial formed part of a large family sepulchre which already held the remains of her mother and father. Just how affluent were the Flavii? Flavia's tomb was not comparable to the grandiose burial complex constructed by P. Aelius Iobacchus (*CIL* 6.10235), an imperial freedman, but it was larger than the parcel of land awarded by the municipal council of Sassina to one of its own citizens for a tomb.\(^{45}\) With the purchase of land beyond the means of most Romans, the fact that Flavia's family, or Flavia herself, was able to afford a sizable burial plot must

\(^{42}\) Above, n. 28.

\(^{43}\) Weaver (1972) 187.


have carried a certain cachet. The memorial for Aurelia Tertia and her husband L. Veltius Bassus (no. 63) possesses only a mirror, but it is balanced on one side by a seated female and on the other by a seated male, holding unidentified objects in their hands. This imagery is comparable to that on the cippus of Luculla Psamathe and her freedman husband T. Calpurnius Libicus, where the couple are posed with implements that spoke to their urbaneitas.

In marked contrast stands the memorial for Paccia Salve (no. 38), a Capuan woman. The filiation in this brief epitaph, no more than a simple tabula, makes clear that she is ingenua. The editors identify the objects flanking the commemorative inscription as a mirror and lagoenae, narrow-necked pottery vessels. Filiation, of course, is not a foolproof method of determining status, particularly since there was a decline, beginning in the first century AD, in the use of formal status indicators especially among non-imperial libertini. Consequently, any conclusions based upon iconography and brevity of inscription must be tentative. Paccia's simple memorial may be compared with those of Carosa (no. 68) and Paulina Ianuaria (no. 72), both freeborn women of the Roman West. Although Carosa and Paulina were commemorated with portraits of women holding mirrors, their dedications comprised single lines only with their names and indications of their status, an important distinction in our view since epigraphers often take the use of a single name as an indication of slave status.

Nine incertae are also found among the honorands in this study (nos. 12, 44, 46, 58, 60, 64-65, 80). These are women whose nomen and cognomen are usually given without any indication of status (the exception is no. 60). The women were not slaves but we do not know whether they were freeborn or freed, and there is no proven method of

46 II 9.79: v p L. Veltius Lf \Cam/Bassus sibi\et Aureliae T\fTertiae uxor\il[----].

47 CIL 10.4269: Pac\cia Ti. f. Salve.


49 The desire of the free poor to live on after death (as it were), is not well attested in this study. We might compare Paccia's wish to be commemorated with the desires of another distinct group, gladiators. Sailer and Shaw (1984) 127 examined the epitaphs of gladiators from Italy and Spain which reveal that among a group of individuals whose life-span could be rather short, there was a desire to leave some record of personal relationships. See also CIL 6.10168-10202.

interpreting such texts. The omission of status was a common practice among freeborn individuals of non-élite rank (except those who were military personnel). It was also the custom among freedmen and women both inside and outside the *familia Caesaris*.\(^5^1\) Although efforts to ascertain the status of *incertae* are hampered by the absence of formal status indicators, we have other information about the honorands which allows for some speculation. Valeria Procula (no. 46), honoured by at least two generations of Cosconii, is one example. She may well be an *ingenua*, possibly even connected with the Q. Valerii Proculi who were known for their support of the Luna carpenters.\(^5^2\) Whether or not Valeria was a woman of consequence in the Luna community, the images on her *cippus*—mirror, comb, slippers, and *unguentarium*—compare with the representations found on monuments for *libertinae* and *ingenuae*. Similarly, Titia Nicarium (no. 64), set up a portrait *stele* for herself and her husband, the tailor Domitius; perhaps wife and husband were tradespeople of Dyrrhachium. The inscription suggests that Domitius predeceased Titia.\(^5^3\) The couple appear in the dress and pose typical of married couples and she holds a mirror in her hand. Filiation and reference to a manumittor are absent, but Titia's *gentilicium* and the fact that she addresses Domitius as 'husband', suggesting that she enjoyed the right of *conubium*, may reflect her free status.

Pompeia Graphis, another of our *incertae*, and her husband A. Asurius Sedatus were commemorated by their sons (no. 65).\(^5^4\) The family lived in Gallia Narbonensis. There is much that is suggestive here of free status. The portraits of the couple are configured in the manner of Roman group portraits from Italy, with a mirror set into the background. The sons Sedulus and Securus refer to themselves as *fili* and to Pompeia and Sedatus as their *parentes*. If the honorands were formerly slaves and the boys were born subsequent to their manumission, the use of these familial terms would not be unusual. Again, we cannot be certain of the couple's status because from the first century of Empire onward freedmen

\(^5^1\) For a sensible discussion of the difficulties presented by omissions of status and nomenclature see Weaver (1972) 80-86, with reference to the work of Taylor (1961) and Kajanto (1965).

\(^5^2\) A translation of Valeria's epitaph is extremely problematic owing to the great number of errors. *[CIL 11.6994: D. M. T. Cosconius Cosconius Tacilius fiius eti Cosconius nelios mairi cari[s][Valeria Procul[a]] posui bene mere[nt].] Pyipus carissim[e].* The editors of CIL comment: *Cum Valeria Procula v. 7 videntur coniuncti fiasse Q. Valerii Proculi pater et filius patroni collegii fabrum tignariorum Lunensium.*


\(^5^4\) *[CIL 12.762: A. Asurio Sedato Pompeiae Graphinis Sedulus et Securus fili parentibus vivi fecerunt.]*
and women regularly began to omit references to their legal position. The memorials for Pompeia Marituma (no. 58) and Aveta (no. 60) offer identical problems of status determination. The full-length portraits of these Burdigalan women are notable for their fine detail, yet their epitaphs make no mention of their legal status. Reference to personal relationships, relationships which under Roman law applied only to free and freed persons, are our only clues: Pompeia was commemorated by her husband, Avete by her mother Cintugena.

_Honorands and Dedicants: Servae_

Viewed against the epitaphs for _libertinae_, _ingenuae_, and _incertae_, commemorations for _servae_ give us a clear sense that the visual language of femininity transcended the social and economic stratification of Roman society. Alienation could not stem the desire of many slaves to leave some record of a life lived, of a relationship, or of an occupation, which counteracted in a small way the anonymity that accompanied their status. This much seems evident from research dealing with the epigraphic habits of slaves and former slaves, and is equally true of the inscriptions under discussion. Five of the seventy-three honorands were certainly slaves: Ecloge (no. 16), Cyparis (no. 20), Asteris (no. 21), Silvina (no. 29), and Restituta (no. 34). Another three women may well have been of servile status: Felicitas Sanbuce (no. 25), Primigenia (no. 35), and Severa (no. 19). The images appended to their epitaphs are relatively ordinary: a mirror or comb, and occasionally a hairpin, slippers or spoon. Only Severa, a woman of Parentium, commemorated by an individual named Hedylus, possessed an elaborate memorial. On her _cippus_ were _pyxis_ and _spatula_, an unguent compact, and a pair of forceps.

What is most intriguing about these memorials is that they seem to contradict the widespread prejudice in antiquity that people of servile backgrounds were physically unattractive. The aristocrat Dionysius, a central character of Chariton's romance _Chaereas_

---

55 _CIL_ 13.812: _D. M.\ Pompeiae Marituma\ Lullius Lentinus maritus\ posuit._ _CIL_ 13.664: _Avete defunctae\ annorum XXV\ mater\ Cintugena posuit._


57 *Status determination is not deduced by size of monument and sophistication of iconography but from several factors: the use of single names for honorand and commemorator (the exception is the Ecloge who was commemorated by a freedman); the fact that these names are often of Greek or foreign origins (Ecloge, Cyparis, Polydeuces, Syrion); and the presence of terms identifying an individual as a slave (e.g. _conservus_)._
and Callirhoe, tells his servant Leonas that '[i]t is impossible for a person not freeborn to be beautiful' (2.1.5). His disclosure follows close upon the revelation that Callirhoe, renowned for her beauty, is thought to be a slave. This sentiment may well have been widespread within free society, but what are we to make of Horace's reassuring words (Carm. 2.4) to Xanthias on his love for a slave girl; or Julius Caesar's acute embarrassment (Suet. Jul. 47) at paying an exorbitant sum for slaves with fine figures (servitia rectiora)? Inscriptions with attendant toilette iconography demonstrate a certain interest among slave-women in beauty culture despite the fact that they may not always have had the necessary income to participate fully. The inscriptions also illustrate that servae and their commemorators were well versed in the visual language of femininity.

Among funerary inscriptions for slave-women, as among those for freedwomen, the choice of object carved on the monument varied. Personal preferences, the sums available for funeral expenses, local fashions, or an atelier's inventory may account for this. The epitaph for Asteris (no. 21), which we have already mentioned, is accompanied by a mirror, comb, and spoon. Silvina (no. 29), contubernalis and fellow-slave of Aepinicus, has a mirror and a pair of slippers, while Restituta and Primigenia (nos. 34-35) have only mirrors. In contrast, the memorial for Ecloge, who was commemorated together with Claudia Lexsis and Claudia Donata, was unusually detailed: mirror, comb, slippers, cylindrical cosmetic box and unguentaria.

All of these implements were associated with the refined Roman woman, but what was the experience of slave-women with toiletries and cosmetics apart from dressing the hair of their mistresses? The toilette articles adorning most monuments were common possessions of women, as the grave goods from numerous burials well illustrate. Slave-women in humble situations may have owned the most basic of these, a comb say. In more affluent households servae perhaps possessed many articles and possibly even those which were costly: the cast-offs of a mistress or those purchased from the peculium. Pliny the Elder, complaining about the extravagance of his day (Nat. 34.160), remarked that silver had become so affordable that even ancillae were now using silver mirrors. How accurately Pliny's complaints reflect reality is difficult to say, but for the slaves who served at

---

58 'ajduvōtov eiv' peven, 'Ω Lewna', kalon; ei'nuai sw'ma mb; pefuko;8 ejjeuvqron'. But see also the comments of Varro (R. 2.10.6-8) who suggested that the ideal slave-woman be strong and 'not ill looking'. See Reardon (1989) 17-21 for a detailed discussion of the cultural setting and date (which he accepts as mid first century AD) of Chariton's novel.

59 CIL 9.3875: Silvinae|contubernalis |Aepinicus|conservus|b. m. p.
banquets and escorted owners in public—those like the slaves in a banquet fresco from Pompeii or the women in the well-known bath processional from Piazza Armerina—it was to the owners' advantage to ensure they were well-clothed and groomed, in every way a symbol of their own social standing. The distinction between free and slave had necessarily to be maintained at all times, but slave clothing need only be serviceable, not expensive or elaborate, just as the well-groomed individual need not be wealthy. A tidy appearance in the case of most slaves would suffice, which is perhaps why Cicero (Plis. 67) criticised Piso for allowing disheveled old slaves to wait upon guests at his convivia. In contrast, Nepos in an anecdote from his Life of Atticus (13.5), where he is concerned to demonstrate Atticus' considerable self-restraint, says that in spite of Atticus' more than healthy financial circumstances, his household staff was never extravagantly attired.

How typical of slaves generally, then, were servae who wished to portray themselves as well groomed individuals? Their ability to conform to the ideals of free society implies a favourable status, one which enabled them to present themselves in a certain fashion, surely an impossibility for most female slaves. Under Roman law owners were required to provide their slaves with the basic necessities of life—food, clothing, and shelter (Dig. 34.1.6); but while the law established a basic standard of living for slaves, it also defined the limits of an owner's responsibility (Dig. 15.3.3.3). Thus, there could be and were vast differences in the material lives of slaves, with those who lived and worked in the grand houses of the élite enjoying a superior quality of life than those in more modest situations, or those who worked at hard labour. The ragged, scarred, and dirty slaves whom Lucius observed toiling in a mill (Apul. Met. 9.12) were hardly in need of grooming implements. In stark contrast, the elderly owner of a young slave girl, maimed by a careless donkey-driver on her way to a singing lesson, would have had very different expectations for her slave in terms of personal appearance (P. Oxy. 3555). As with free and freed individuals, it made no difference to the memorials whether slaves actually conformed to standards of

---

60 On clothing requirements for slaves see Bradley (1994) 87-89, 95-100. On slaves as 'visible wealth' see: Josbel (1992) 75.

61 Bradley (1994) 98.

62 Cf. the remarks of Bradley (1994) 89: 'Generalisations about the 'typical' material environment of the slave in the central period of Roman history must necessarily be cautious ...yet the evidence described so far implies on the face of things a fairly bleak material regime for most Roman slaves'.

63 Bradley (1994) 81.
tasteful grooming. The point is that these *servae* wished to be seen as meeting a measure of womanhood defined by a society in which they could never fully participate.

**Summary**

In the main, the representations chosen by freeborn women and their families vary little from those reliefs for slave and freed individuals except in the actual number of items depicted. This specialised iconography formed part of the visual language of Roman womanhood and it applied to women of all social and economic groups: the impoverished *ingenua* Paccia Salve, the former slave Herennia Psyche, the socially mobile freedwoman Nonia Lucusta. This visual language then was flexible and allowed for a variety of readings. How was the iconography interpreted? Within the milieu of the élite these symbols spoke of wealth and standing, and of a woman's ability to reflect her husband's prestige as well as her own. To a degree, the same was true for those seeking respectability. The iconographic choices of freed individuals are clear evidence of their ability to understand the value of this visual language and its efficacy in softening the stigma of their origins, clear for all to see in the nomenclature of their epitaphs. For freeborn members of lowly status, deemed ill-bred and somewhat repugnant to polite society, the funerary trappings of the élite afforded a modicum of gentility. And for slave-women who were utterly excluded from the community under Roman law, the use of *mundus muliebris* imagery demonstrated their aspirations to become integrated into established society. They were not citizen women but their funerary reliefs suggest that they at least conformed to one aspect of Roman femininity, that of being well-groomed.

**Iconography and Age**

What, if anything, can be said about age and the use of toilette iconography? We know nothing of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the honorands, except in the case of Julia Secunda who was tragically lost at sea with her mother Cornelia Tyche and commemorated by Julius Secundus, the distraught father and husband. We know the

---

64 On élite contempt for perceived social inferiors see MacMullen (1974) 110-120.

65 This epigram appeared on the right lateral face of the monument: *lam datus est finis vitae impaussa malorumvobis quas habet hoc gnatai matremq sepulcrum litiore Phocaico pelagi vilesanima tis undvicta se vobis erat quod sit alter et alteriat comemimusque sice etoceani Tagus

et Taryrenica Hiberus sic etenim duxere ollcum primum Lucina daretitlucemq animamque int vita diversa dies foret uinaque letinobis porro alia est trinolde*
age at death for only twenty-three of seventy-three honorands. This small sample size, drawn mainly from the Roman West (fourteen females), necessarily limits analysis of the data. It also prevents us from drawing strong conclusions about the honorands and patterns of commemoration in different age groups, in the way that Sailer, for example, was able to analyse a vast body of epigraphic material from Italy and the Latin-speaking West. Nevertheless, the range of ages in our study is at once remarkable and telling because it demonstrates that age did not dictate the use of this iconography. Three women died in their teens (nos. 22, 31, 34), six in their twenties (nos. 42, 60-61, 81-82, 84), seven in their thirties (nos. 49, 54, 76, 78-79, 83, 85). Three other women died in middle age (nos. 14, 44, 83) and one at the relatively advanced age of seventy (no. 47). The youngest honorands did not outlive their girlhood: Laelia Bononia died aged five, Volumnia Priscilla aged nine, and Julia Secunda aged eleven (nos. 83, 44, 54). The use of toilette iconography on the memorials for Laelia and Julia is understandable since both were commemorated with adult females: Laelia with her grandmother and paternal aunt, Julia with her mother Cornelia Tyche (no. 54). Volumnia Priscilla is the only individual memorialised by her monument, remembered by her parents, Volumnia Euresis and Veturius Adventus.

As indicated in the previous chapter, we can compare the use of toilette iconography on monuments for girls with the range of grave goods associated with children's burials. Ten-year-old Claudia Victoria (CIL 13.2108) was interred with an articulated legionary soldier-doll and ivory hairpins; Crepereia Tryphaena with her doll, doll accessories, and toilettries. An eight-year-old girl (not in the epigraphic sample) who died in Egypt, perhaps the daughter of a Roman official, was embalmed and then returned to Italy for burial. She was inhumed in a large sarcophagus on the Via Cassia; among her possessions were an ivory doll, a small perfume container, and a rouge compact. The early deaths of Claudia Victoria and the Via Cassia girl, like those of Laelia, Volumnia, and Julia, are consistent with the grim child mortality regime of the ancient world in which a staggering fifty percent of

nemine fatildicta dies leti quam proplagare suoptelvisum ollis tacito arbitriolcum lege perennilsisti quae

cunctos iubet advdinomia mortis.

66 Sailer (1994) 28-31, Tables 2.2a-h.

67 It appears that in Roman law there were few age categories governing women's personal effects. Pomponius (Dig. 34.2.25.9) includes in bequests of muliebría the clothing of infants, girls, and teenagers, because all those of the female sex, according to him are classified as women.
children died before the age of ten. As grave goods, the mix of children's toys and
women's accessories, perhaps odd to modern sensibilities, is not surprising. In a world
where childhood was accelerated and the law permitted females to marry as early as age
twelve, social rôles had to be inculcated from an early age. As part of their education,
young girls, at least those in well to do households, must have received some training in
the art of self-presentation.

The well-known painting from Herculaneum in which an elegantly attired and neatly
coiffed woman supervises the toilette of two adolescent girls (no. 1), may be an artistic
convention but surely had some basis in reality. Individuals in pre-industrial societies
generally were formed by being made to identify with their social rôles. Through
observation, if not through formal training, girls came to understand concepts of
femaleness; only women wore certain types of garments, only women wore their hair long
and arranged it in certain fashions; and only women used face powders and eye colourings.
The fourteen-year-old girls whom Epictetus (Ench. 40) says began wearing make-up once
they realised that they were destined to be the bed-fellows of men, obviously understood
one form of behaviour associated with woman in antiquity.

As élite girls received instruction in proper deportment, slave girls and girls of free but
poor families received instruction of a vastly different kind. Their education was directly
related to beauty culture, but did not focus on personal presentation so much as the making
up and adorning of other women. These girls were trained as ornatrices. The epitaph for
Cyparis (no. 20), a hairdresser from the city of Rome, supports this interpretation. She
was commemorated by an individual named Polydeuces, who referred to her as 'a well-
deserving hair-dresser' (ornatrici bene merenti), and who took the trouble to ensure that
grooming implements adorned her memorial. Cypraris, like the young servant in the

---

68 On child mortality rates see: Parkin (1992) 92, Sailer (1994) 25, Bagnall and Frier (1994) 34, Table 2.1
(1990) no. 222.

69 Crone (1989) 114-115. The length of time girls actually spent in the company of their mothers is
difficult to assess. Rawson (1991) 20, on the topic of female education and social role-playing among
girls, contends that the influence exerted on young girls, by their mothers, was not sufficient to engender
this type of 'condition and differentiation'. While this may be true, girls could learn and observe other
female kin and nurse-maids with whom they may have spent more time. Cf. Dixon (1988) 143-155.

70 CIL 6.9727: D. M. |Cypareni ornatrici bene merenti Polydeuces fecit. The pair are almost certainly
slaves as their Greek names and the absence of formal status indicators suggest. To whom they belonged
we do not know, nor can we determine absolutely the connection between honorand and dedicant. Absent
are the terms normally used in sepulchral inscriptions—contubernalis, coniunx, maritus—to denote the
Herculaneum tableaux mentioned above, must have apprenticed early on. Exactly when this instruction began we can only speculate, but funerary texts for  
ornatrices  working in Rome, sometimes in the familia Caesaris, point to the girls being skilled professionals by the time they reached their late teens and early twenties. The little  
oratrix  Pieris was only nine years of age when she died  ( CIL  6.9731); Anthis was twelve  ( CIL  6.9726) and Sperata was thirteen  ( CIL  6.9728).  
The tasks set for young girls of Pieris' age must have been relatively simple—assisting the older and more skilled girls or fetching implements—progressing to more difficult tasks as the girl matured and her manual dexterity improved. Thus although status rather than age dictated the slave-girl's capacity to participate in beauty culture, she like her freeborn and freed counterpart had opportunities to learn about Roman constructions of femininity and women's self-presentation.

The fact that age did not strictly shape Roman conceptions of femininity suggests that it was not necessarily a woman's own personal appearance which funerary iconography was meant to emphasise. There was no distinction between the comely, youthful woman who was a pleasure to behold and the woman beyond her prime who was frequently the object of derision.  
Enhanced beauty may have been a product of good grooming, but beauty  
per se  does not seem to be the focus of toilette iconography. When appended to women's funerary texts, this iconography spoke to their qualifications as cultivated and impeccably groomed women regardless of age. In other instances, the iconography might have a double meaning: it could speak to the women's skill in constructing the appearance of the affluent, as in the case of Cyparis, or it might simply attest to the slave-woman's attempts to maintain her own appearance (cf. nos. 20, 28, 33). These concepts applied equally to

marital partners of both free and servile persons. The latter lacked  
conubium  and could not formally marry under Roman law, but this did not prevent them from using the terms of marriage.  
Cf.  
Dig. 32.1.65.3 which only speaks of  
ornatrices  as being of servile status.

71 Psamate, the  
oratrix  of Furia  ( CIL  6.9732), died aged eighteen; the Imperial hairdresser Rufina Secunda at nineteen  ( CIL  6.33784); and an unidentified imperial  
oratrix  died aged twenty-two  ( CIL  6.8960).  
Cf.  
Bradley (1991) 103-124. We can compare the ages given in these funerary texts with the ages of the children named in apprenticeship contracts from Roman Egypt.

72 See Treggiari (1991) 231-232, on the adjectives most commonly used in tomb inscriptions for women. Among the commemorations for 3728 women of Rome and northern Italy, references to appearance are notably absent.  
Cf.  
Ladimore (1962) 295-299. Amorous ageing woman:  
Hor. Carm.  2.14.3; Prop. 3.25.11, 4.5.59; Tib. 1.8.41, 2.2.20; Juv. 6.142-145; Mart. 3.72, 3.76, 8.33.17, 9.37; AP 11.408.
girls verging on womanhood, those who had blossomed into young women, and dignified yet aged women like Herennia Psyche.

Who Chose What For Whom

Analysis of the funerary monuments from Italy and the Roman West fails to answer one fundamental question: who chose the monument and what informed the choices? This is a difficult issue to tackle, demonstrably so when we consider the epitaph for Julia Basilia with which this chapter began. Julia Basilia had three commemorators, and any one of them could have chosen the decoration. If Julia Basilia endured a lengthy illness before she died she may have discussed her final wishes with her family; and if she died unexpectedly Pardus may have assumed responsibility for the selection, consulting his in-laws or not. Basilia's parents may have felt that a mundus muliebris relief was a fitting tribute to their daughter. Or the technical and artistic capabilities of the local workshop may have influenced the family's decision. Many ateliers left decorative details on tombstones and sarcophagi unfinished, adding the inscriptions only after advising clients of the expressions most commonly used.73 Rather than supervising every aspect of a memorial for a loved one, the bereaved may have left the matter in the capable hands of the stonecutter. Given the variables in the selection process, then, it might be more profitable to ask who was conversant with the visual language of femininity.

The dedicants named in these inscriptions are overwhelmingly male and connected to the honorees in a variety of ways, most often that of husband. Sixty dedicants are known in total from the inscriptions with toilette iconography; forty-six are male (77%), and fourteen are female (23%). Of these males, twenty-eight are positively identified as husbands, either legal or de facto, and another three in all likelihood, for a total of thirty-two spouse-commemorators (52%).74 Fathers, sometimes together with other family members, memorialised their daughters (nos. 22, 31, 45, 52, 55, 79, 84); sons paid proper respect to the memories of their mothers (nos. 28, 48, 65); and at least one brother commemorated his sister (no. 36). C. Memmius Ipitus (no. 16), for example, a libertinus

---


74 Three women were memorialised by husbands who also happened to be their patrons: nos. 27, 31, 76.
from Paganica, dedicated a monument on behalf of his family.\textsuperscript{75} Claudia Lexsis may be his wife but the absence of marital terms makes the relationship difficult to ascertain; Claudia Donata is related to Claudia Lexsis but whether as mother or daughter is unclear; and Ipitus' parents Ecloge and Nymphius, the slaves of Cornelia Sabina, remained slaves despite their son's manumission. Some though not all of the male commemorators must have used their own initiative when selecting monuments, based upon their own ideas of what symbolised best the reputation of their female kin. Others undoubtedly relied on the advice of workshop proprietors or family and friends.\textsuperscript{76}

Rather unusually, Volcasia Sabina (no. 44), who died aged 50, was commemorated by two husbands.\textsuperscript{77} It has been argued that epitaphs set up for women by more than one marriage partner may testify to the existence of polygamous marriages.\textsuperscript{78} It seems unlikely that Sabina, however, was married to both men simultaneously; rather one marital relationship terminated before the other began. The first marriage had ended amicably enough for Sabina's ex-husband to join in commemorating her, a practice attested elsewhere in Latin inscriptions. From the small body of inscriptions under discussion, we can also compare the funerary text of P. Ferrarius Hermes and his family (no. 12) with Volcasia Sabina's marker.\textsuperscript{79} On the former, female accessories—mirror, comb, 

\textsuperscript{75} CIL 9.3583: \textit{Claudiae Lexitis\textsuperscript{C}. Memmii Ispitii et Nymphii et Eclogeni Corneliae Sabinae ser.\textsuperscript{L}patri et matrisuis et sibi et\textsuperscript{L}Claudiae Donataeip}. The objects incorporated in the epitaph have been drawn schematically in the \textit{CIL}: a comb, toilette box, mirror, slippers and \textit{unguentaria}.

\textsuperscript{76} Eight inscriptions are set up jointly by men and women, but we have no way of determining whether one individual chose the iconography or whether it was decided by mutual agreement. See nos. 14, 23, 80 (where married couples set markers for themselves); nos. 22 and 31 (where a husband and his 'in-laws' set up a memorial); nos. 45 and 84 (parents commemorating a daughter); and no. 47 (where a family remembers their mother).

\textsuperscript{77} CIL 11.2806: D. M.\textit{Volcasiae Salbine Annius Caesianus et Marciius Proculeulcoiugi b. m. f. v.la. i m. v.} This formula follows that set out in Treggiari and Dorken (1981) 270, for women commemorated by two living husbands.

\textsuperscript{78} Polygamous marriages: Rawson (1974) 287. On multiple relationships see the evidence of Kajanto (1969) 104-105: \textit{CIL} 6.35343, 14.2676, 4663, 4904, 5026. Compare the remarks of Treggiari and Dorken (1981) 271 who find some support for the possibility of friendly separation in the Roman concept of \textit{bona gratia} divorce; and Treggiari (1981) 61-62: 'Roman manners were not ours, but it seems more believable that one husband was 'divorced' than that these were overt bigamous unions'. We might also consider here relations between Pliny the Younger and his former mother-in-law Pompeia Celerina (\textit{Ep.} 1.4); they remained cordial enough after the death of Pompeia's daughter and Pliny's subsequent re-marriage, for him to visit Pompeia at Alsium (\textit{Ep.} 16.10).

\textsuperscript{79} CIL 11.1471: P. Ferrarius\textit{HermesiCaeciniae Dignaelconiugi karissinaelNumeriae Maximillaelconiugi benet merentilet P. Ferrario Proculo filio et postelrisque suis.
calamistrum, needle, slippers and ampulla—appeared alongside the tools of a brick-layer.

That Ferrarius was at some point married to each woman, although not at the same time, is suggested by the use of the word coniunx in reference to each woman and the variation of the honorific terms for each woman: Caecinia Digna is referred to as a coniunx (k)arissima and Numeria Maximilla as coniunx bene merens.

Females appear together with males as dedicators but are seldom named first; a reflection perhaps of the rigid social and familial hierarchy in Roman society or of the child's illegitimate status. The mother of Julia Basilia, for example, is among those who paid tribute to her memory. Amaredia Psyche and Amaredius Severus, the parents of nineteen year old Lucina (no. 31), honoured her along with their patron C. Amaredius Aper. After Cresimus, Aiecta is named as a dedicator of the marble tablet for her mother Psyche Eirene. In a departure from epigraphic conventions, Volumnia Euresis leads her husband Veturius Adventus in commemorating their nine year old daughter Priscilla (no. 45). Should we infer, because Euresis is the first named of the commemorators, that she determined what image would grace her daughter's stele? Even where women precede men in funerary inscriptions we cannot be sure whether they played key or minor rôles in the selection of iconography, or whether personal preferences, tradition, or a combination of both governed these choices.

A small number of epitaphs, however, were erected by women for women. The libertae of Septimia Lyde (no. 33), for example, were familiar with the visual language of womanhood, or well advised by someone conversant with this language, for several toilette articles appear on their patron's monument. Cintugena (no. 60) commemorated her daughter Aveta. Aveta's age at death is given as twenty-five, so it is not clear whether the full length portraits of a woman holding a mirror and a young girl holding a basket of fruit are meant to be mother and daughter. Rutilia Cinnamis (no. 36) chose for her daughter and herself (filiae et sibi) a marker adorned with a mirror, a comb and a pair of slippers,* while Longeia Primigenia (no. 32) hoped to be remembered as a cultivated woman by

---


81 CIL 11.3354: D. M. Volumniae Priscillae v. a. ixim. v d. v Volumnia Euresis Veturius Adventus pr. The abbreviation 'pr' may also stand for pater or posuerunt. Compare the funerary text for Pompeia Ingenua (no. 84) where the father precedes the mother.

82 CIL 9.4355: Rutilia T. lib. Cinnamis Rutiliae luculldae filiae et sibi fecit. Octavidia Genialis and T. Poppedius Callidus (no 23) also say that they set up their memorial jointly, yet the symbols of the woman's toilette predominate.
dedicating a large *cippus* on which were carved the accoutrements of the dressing table.\(^8^3\) Longeia's epitaph also contains the phrase *se viva fecit*, indicating that she not only bought and paid for the monument, but may have composed the epitaph as well.\(^8^4\) But to what extent did the majority of women exercise their own initiative when selecting tombstones for themselves or other female family members. How many women actually had the personal wealth and independence to make such decisions?

An idea of female initiative and economic freedom in the selection of monuments might be gained by considering the contributions of women to the civic and commercial affairs of their communities generally. The goodwill and generosity (*ob merita*) of Laberia Hostilia Crispina, a senatorial woman from Trebula Mutuesca, was recognised with a public dedication erected around the mid-second century AD.\(^8^5\) An analysis of the language of honorific inscriptions for women by Forbis, reveals that there are only four words used to signify women's economic beneficence: *munificentia, liberalitas, beneficia, and merita* with *merita* being by far the most common. Since other forms of *merita*—political and legal favours—could not be part of a woman's experience, *merita* must refer in these inscriptions to civic building projects, *munera*, or the upkeep of the community's grain supply.\(^8^6\) Forbis also points out that women necessarily performed financial deeds for their communities because it became increasingly difficult in the second century AD for men of the curial class to do so.\(^8^7\) The inscriptions described by Forbis are clear evidence of women's initiative in a single community, but it is important, for our purposes, to consider women from other social and economic milieux.

---

83 Both the monuments for Septimia Lyde and Longeia Primigenia are elaborate in terms of the number and type of items represented, and as both are from Alba Fucens it may be that local sculptors permitted women to request different toilette articles.

84 *CIL* 9.4001: *D. M. S.|Longeia L. l.|Primigenialse viva posit* (sic). Funerary texts: Saller and Shaw (1984) xx; Harris (1989) 222, n. 238. Harris (1989) 263 speculates that these prosperous individuals were 'at or just below the level of the decurionate'. But compare the comments of Dyson (1992) 153 who argues that 'reader-response orientation of many of these epitaphs suggests a relatively high base level of literacy'. For other *mundus muliebris* inscriptions containing this phrase see: nos. 1, 5, 7, 16, 21, 41-42.


The material remains from Pompeii, for example, provide evidence for the economic behaviour of women. Two are particularly well known to us. Julia Felix owned an elegantly decorated home with a private bath, and a spacious garden with fish-pools and marble bridges. At the time Vesuvius erupted, she was also advertising commercial and residential properties for lease (CIL 4.1136).\textsuperscript{88} Eumachia, a priestess of Venus, sponsored the construction of a large building, in the forum at Pompeii, that included porticoes and a gallery (CIL 10.810). Less affluent women have been identified in shop and tomb reliefs from Ostia. Two reliefs in particular, those of a poultry and a vegetable vendor, merit some attention.\textsuperscript{89} Both women stand behind their counters. Their dress is modest—a simple tunic in one case, a tunic and shawl in the other—and their hairstyles are uncomplicated compared with the high maintenance styles of leisured women. These are working women. Whether they were the proprietors of the shops in which they worked cannot be established. It is difficult to imagine, however, that these women and others like them did not have some thoughts of their own as to how they would like their memories to be perpetuated. This would certainly seem to be true in the case of ante-mortem monuments, that is those with the phrase \textit{viva fecit} indicating that the honorand chose and erected the monument while she was living.

Perhaps the clearest example of a woman’s involvement with the plans for her own funeral is found in the \textit{Digest}, specifically in a judgement of Q. Cervidius Scaevola’s (floruit later second century AD) rendered in a dispute between the heirs to a woman’s estate and a legatee. The deceased’s will apparently stated: ‘I wish to be buried as my husband deems fit, and whatever I wear for the purpose of burial, I wish there to be put on me from my jewelry, two strings of pearls and my emerald bracelets’.\textsuperscript{90} Thus, by asking who chose what for whom, we find that men as well as women were acquainted with and recognised the efficacy of a visual language of femininity. There would always be occasions when product availability and sudden death dictated the type and style of


\textsuperscript{89} Kampen (1982) 64-65, Figs. 1-2. Both reliefs date to the late second or early third century.

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Dig.} 34.2.40.2: \textit{funerari me arbitrio viri mei volo et inferri mihi quaecumque sepulturae meae causa feram ex ornamentis lineas duas ex margaritis et viriolas ex smaragdis.} Cf. \textit{P. Diog.}11-12, a \textit{donatio mortis causa} dating to AD 213 in which a woman stipulates that her gold bracelets be sold to cover her funeral expenses.
monument purchased; but no matter who supervised the funerary arrangements, it is clear that toilette iconography was deemed appropriate to women of different backgrounds.

**The Provincial Evidence**

In the preceding pages we attempted to analyse the toilette iconography appended to funerary texts, in an effort to determine whether the iconography was used only within specific social groups; that is, by the well-to-do among the freeborn and freed population. It is evident thus far that use of this imagery was not confined to privileged social groups, but that women and their commemorators in all segments of Roman society, no matter how prestigious or humble their station, desired that images of the deceased as cultivated women be left to posterity. The existence of twenty-two inscriptions from the western provinces among this larger body of material, of course, raises the question of whether regional cultures possessed their own motifs of femininity or whether the toilette iconography was transmitted through contact with Roman culture and used by indigenous peoples who wished to be seen as Roman citizens in every sense of the word.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the provincial epitaphs are widely scattered throughout Britain, the Gallic provinces, Spain, Noricum, and Germany and Upper Pannonia. They commemorate twenty-five females.91 On the whole, the provincial evidence is remarkably consistent with the Italian. Relationships between deceased and commemorator are usually of an intimate or familial nature, as in the cases of Calvisinus Serdus (no. 61) and Barates Palmyrenus (no. 76) who memorialised their wives, Cassia Flavina (no. 76) who was remembered by her father, and twenty-year-old Pompeia Ingenua (no. 84) who predeceased her parents. The range of ages at death supports the claim that age did not dictate iconography (no. 49, 60-61, 76, 78-79, 81-85). Here the youngest honorand, Laelia Bononia, is five years of age and the eldest is her grandmother Samuda, a woman of fifty-five (no. 80). In the provincial texts we see a larger proportion of freeborn women. Twelve of the twenty-five honorands are *ingenuae*, four are *libertinae*,

---

91 The Spanish texts, although typical of monuments found in Italy and the West, are invaluable for fleshing out the study of toilette iconography as a pictorial language of womanhood. Until they came to light there was little indication that issues of femininity were taken up in the funerary iconography of this region. I could find only three examples from this region of monuments bearing toilette iconography (nos. 49, 78-79). None of these has been published, to the best of my knowledge, apart from their commemorative inscriptions.
five are incertae and in four instances the status of the honorands cannot be known at all.\textsuperscript{92} One notable feature of the provincial evidence is the appearance of ethnic names, like that of the freeborn woman of Tarraconensis, Buturra (no. 49), whose unusual name suggests local ancestry. Although freeborn, Buturra's name does not seem to be a derivation of her father's, and it is possible that the names of father and daughter differed because of local naming customs.\textsuperscript{93}

The provincial inscriptions constitute a small sample, too small to allow extensive analysis. It will suffice, therefore, to discuss the two texts which raise the most questions about the nature of the provincial evidence. The first is the epitaph for Ulpia Severina (no. 80) and her husband Fannius Florentinus, a soldier of legio xiii Gemina, and their four children, Fannius, Supera, Florianus, and Florus. Their dedication appears on a richly decorated sarcophagus, the funerary container of choice among fashionable Danubians towards the end of the second century.\textsuperscript{94} Small portraits of the couple are found in the aediculae flanking the inscription. An individual in military dress stands on the right and a female figure holding a mirror at left. Severina may have been a peregrina, with whom Florentinus cohabited while in service. Alternatively, she may have come from a provincial family which had received the citizenship.\textsuperscript{95}

To the minds of Ulpia Severina and her husband it may have seemed natural to portray themselves as the Roman citizens they were. Since he is depicted in full military dress, a common practice on funerary monuments for career soldiers, it would have been

\textsuperscript{92} We may compare these numbers with the Italian figures where thirty-three inscriptions commemorate thirty-six women, of whom seven are or may be of servile status, eighteen are freed, three are ingenuae, and five are free but of uncertain status.

\textsuperscript{93} CIL 2.2970: D. M. a. v. Buturra Biriati filia v. a. XXX h. s. Cf. AE (1966) 198. D.M.\textsuperscript{\textregistered}Buturalti NeOLFiti karo. The editors write, regarding this inscription: 'Le nom de Buturra, sans doute ibérique, est connu, et Buturati en peut être un datif...'. Knapp (1992) sheds no additional light on the origins of this name.


\textsuperscript{95} Campbell (1984) 439-445. If Severina was a peregrina, the inscription may post-date the edict of Caracalla granting citizenship to all members of the Roman empire (AD 212). But if Severina was already a citizen at the time she married Florentinus, the inscription may be pre-Severan in date.
reasonable to portray her as a typical Roman woman, one who devoted time and energy to a carefully cultivated appearance. If we assume for a moment that the use of toilette articles and hairdressing scenes on memorials for foreign women was not normative in all areas of the western Empire, then it had to be imported or borrowed from somewhere. Soldiers were often exposed to different cultures, or were themselves native auxiliaries who came into contact with Roman custom and tradition in the normal course of service. We have, perhaps, in the sarcophagus of Ulpia Severina and her soldier-husband a product of exposure to Roman artistic trends as well as Roman mores.

Another illustration of this cultural fusion of native and Roman is the dedication set up by P. Laelius Heraclia (no. 83), a freedman from Solva, a town given municipal status in the Flavian period, in southern Noricum. We know little about Laelius, other than that he was a former slave and married to a woman of Celtic origin named Samuda, who was the daughter of an individual named Muso. The couple had at least two daughters, one of whom died at the age of thirty. The third honorand, five-year-old Laelia Bononia, is designated *neptis*, and may have been the child of the couple’s son. The inscription is bordered by two figures, one a tunicate male, the other a female holding a mirror. Such figures are found on monuments from other regions of the western Empire which again suggests that specific funerary images could find a receptive audience in all regions of the Roman world if they did not exist in the local artistic repertoire already; it is clear that toilette articles were constantly associated with women, especially those who were well-groomed.

If the purpose of an epitaph was to commemorate the deceased and to make some statement as to her character or capacity to meet a cultural norm, we need to consider the issue of who could read and understand these funerary texts (an issue which is also applicable to the Italian evidence). When we think in terms of the value of inscriptions, particularly for making statements about the social and financial success of the deceased, inscriptions can be said to have a symbolic power. People passing by the monument need not be able to read the condensed history of the deceased, although some undoubtedly

---


97 On nomenclature of the Noricans see Alföldy (1974) 232-238, Appendix 3. He indicates that Bononia, Muso, and Samuda are attested as Celtic names.
could. The sheer expense of setting up a memorial replete with writing and images, however humble or grand, carried a certain cachet. Further, the memorialisation of the deceased in a manner that was culturally acceptable (stele, cippus, ara with a dedicatory inscription), and in a public location (cemetery, street of tombs, or necropolis) emphasised her membership in a community and implied a thorough understanding of conformity. Passersby need not be able to read to know that the toiletry or hair-dressing representations indicated something about the deceased; or that the epitaph sometimes told a story. Text and image worked in concert to create a language that Roman citizens, slaves and foreigners alike could read and interpret appropriately; a language that was crucial for articulating an individual’s place within society or a specific group precisely because it crossed ethnic, social, gender, and economic boundaries.

The similarities between the Italian and provincial texts make it tempting to paint a picture of a cultural norm of femininity radiating from Rome, crossing provincial boundaries effortlessly; but our inscription sample is simply too small to accommodate this view, nor would this interpretation necessarily be the correct one. Two dedications provide a graphic illustration on this point. Sextus Baebius Pudens erected a funerary stone for his wife (no. 78) and mother. All were residents of Solva. The names of the honorands are well attested in Latin nomenclature, and the wording of the funerary text is formulaic, as in the use of the phrase vivus fecit sibi. The problem stems from the fact that we cannot know whether Pudens and the two Julias were natives of Noricum or Italian émigrés. Moreover, depictions of women with mirrors and representations of toilette articles on monuments for women are found across the Roman Empire, as the iconographic survey in the preceding chapter confirms. To assume that text and image carried the same connotations in all areas of the Empire would be unwise. A more prudent assessment of the provincial material acknowledges that some women may have adopted a particular notion of womanhood that derived from contact with Roman culture, while for other women local custom prevailed. Funerary statues of the Burdigalan women Pompeia

---

98 Literacy rates in the Roman Empire were extremely low, according to Harris (1989) 175-193, but while many individuals could neither read nor write with great facility, they may have been familiar with their letters. Hermeros (Petr. 58) boasts to Giton, for example, that while he may not be the product of an expensive education, he does know his lapidarias literas and can do his sums. Cf. Horsfall (1989).


100 CIL 13.5353: Sex. BaebiusPudens v. f. \\

---

CIL 13.5353: Sex. BaebiusPudens v. f. \\

---
Marituma (no. 58) and Aveta (no. 60), portray the women in the long-sleeved tunic with heavy folds typical of Gallic rustici rather than the traditional garb of the Roman woman (tunic and palla), although their dedications are couched in the familiar terms of Latin funerary inscriptions.101

Conclusion

Funerary monuments, according to Ulpian, were designed to preserve a memory (Dig. 11.7.2.6),102 and in the view of many Romans it seems monumenta were also meant to safeguard an identity, to ensure that future generations were witness to the virtues or accomplishments of the deceased. When we consider the nature of the memorials that were set up together with toilette iconography we must also consider the nature of the memory being preserved. The personal histories discussed in this chapter provide considerable information about legal status, community offices and responsibilities, the fusion of cultures, and intimate relationships. The texts also offer us an impression of the way in which constructions of femininity affected the lives of the honorands. A clear desire to meet or at least lend the perception of meeting one of the standards of femininity is evident in this group of texts. Desire was not confined to a particular social or economic group. Women from all walks of life and the families who honoured them in death favoured a unique iconography which they believed emblematic of a woman's femininity, and thus her character. The two were intertwined. The images comprising this visual language were not moreover the preserve of adult females, but were appended to commemorative texts for girls, as the epitaphs of Volumnia Priscilla and Laelia Bononia make clear. Plainly, Roman females were aware of certain standards of femininity and aspired to meet them; an attitude that was cultivated during childhood, remained with women throughout their lives, and attended them even in death.

It emerges that ingenuae, freedwomen, and slaves represented themselves, or were content to be represented, as decorous Roman women through the creation of a permanent memorial between themselves and their beauty implements. This developed from the way in which they were able to present their physical selves in public as they toiled in shops, strolled through town or to the baths, and attended a variety of social functions. So, while the toiletries depicted on Julia Basilia's sarcophagus may have added poignancy to her early


death, as representations of the personal articles she used everyday, there is no mistaking
the message they were intended to convey. Julia, in the eyes of her family and others who
passed by her monument was a demure Roman woman despite her humble origins.

The visual and inscriptional evidence for Roman beauty culture strongly suggests that
women (and their commemorators) used funerary monuments to memorialise a special
quality of the deceased—her attention to her self-presentation—and to articulate the
deceased's position within her own social and gender group. The idea of status display
was not peculiar to women, but was a consequence and a commonplace of life in Roman
society. In all segments of the population individuals employed status displays to gain
social acceptance, a sense of membership in the wider community, and most importantly an
identity. Preoccupations with identity and status which we might characterise as *aemulatio*,
have been well studied by scholars in the context of patronage, domestic architecture, and
oratory: these were the staples of the élite male's public *persona*. By their very nature
these subjects confine the study of self-presentation to a privileged set and a specific gender
group, ignoring modes of expression among the silent members of Roman society—
women, slaves, and individuals of non-élite rank. If in funerary contexts women defined
themselves and their place in society through a visual language of femininity, one
combining text and image, surely this practice must be a reflection or an extension of their
habit of articulating place in daily life. In the fifth and final chapter, we return to the literary
record to search for evidence women's status displays; specifically the way in which they
employed their *cultus* and *ornatus* to make statements about femininity and to carve out,
literally, a place of their own.
Chapter Five

Contrasting Femininites: Cultus, Ornatus and Historical Perspective

Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

**Introduction**

In Terence’s play *The Self-Tormentor*, the clever slave Syrus describes (*Heau.* 285-290) for Clinia, his master’s son, what he has observed on a hasty visit to the young man’s lover. Antiphila, attended only by her elderly companion and dowdy maidservant, was working industriously at her loom. Syrus assumed she was in mourning for her recently deceased mother since she wore no ornaments, but also observed that she was attired in the manner of women who ‘dress for themselves’: her hair was unbound and her face free of make-up.\(^1\) It comes as no surprise to learn that when women dressed for themselves they adopted the artless approach endorsed by male writers, yet Syrus’s appraisal of Antiphila’s appearance is quite remarkable. Writers from Plautus to Tertullian usually emphasise that women crafted their appearances with meretricious or ambitious intent, but Terence suggests that women had motives for self-presentation different from those usually expected (by men) in the public sphere.\(^2\)

It is difficult to know how much weight we should attribute to an incidental and literary remark, but Syrus’ comment brings into focus one of the central problems for the study of women in antiquity: how do we recover women’s attitudes toward self-presentation (or anything else for that matter) without the voices of women themselves? Ancient historians, unlike those of the modern era, work with limited evidence that contains strong gender and class biases. Our sources offer a variety of information about Roman women, but convey a male perspective that developed principally from preoccupation with a small and privileged segment of the population. Clement’s *Paedagogus*, for instance, tells us more about the breed of woman a literate male public desired than about the average Roman

\(^1\) *Ter. Heau.* 285-290: *texentem telam studiose ipsam offendimus mediocriter vestitam veste lugubri—eius anuis causa opinor quae erat mortua—sine aura; tum ornatom ita uti quae ornantur sibi nulla re interpolatam muliebri: capillus passus prolixe et circum caputreiectus neclegenter...

\(^2\) A fact suggested also by Macrobius’ account (*Sat.* 2.5.5) of Julia’s behaviour. See above Chap. 2, p. 42.
woman. However, Clement's descriptions of Alexandrian beauty and fashion culture also imply that women used adornment to interpret femininity independently of male opinion, and literary, iconographic, and epigraphic evidence from Italy and the Latin West strongly suggests, as I have argued in preceding chapters, that this mode of interpretation was not limited to a particular place and time, nor to a specific stratum of society. The sepulchral commemorations erected by women alone for their mothers, daughters, grand-daughters, or trusted female servants certainly bring us closest to understanding how real women conceived of femininity.

The constraints of working with material that is strongly coloured by class and gender have encouraged historians to seek creative approaches to the study of antiquity in order to gain a deeper knowledge. In addition to exploiting material culture and quantitative methods, ancient historians have also engaged in cross-cultural comparison. The latter approach is particularly effective for the study of women's self-presentation. First, by using an historical perspective, we can contrast the motives ancient writers ascribe to feminine display with the opinions of writers in periods that are much better documented. During the high Middle Ages and early Modern eras, prescriptive literature for both sexes was published at a significant rate. Although predominantly male-authored, this body of literature includes one work by the first woman of letters, Christine de Pizan (1364-1431), whose evaluation of the personal display of her contemporaries was incisive. De Pizan's critique bears striking similarities to the less comprehensive evaluations of classical male writers, but also conveys a woman's outlook on the benefits and disadvantages of self-presentation. Second, if we wish to obtain a more complete picture of personal display in Roman society, which has hitherto involved only the dominant social groups, we need to think about the significance of self-presentation in the lives of the humble and servile. De Pizan's work is less helpful on this point, but we can remedy the problem by looking closely at the beauty practices of African-American women, both before and after emancipation, who regarded transformation of the physical self as a means of minimising the stigma of their servile origins. Taken together, the modern evidence helps us achieve a

3 Scholars have come to a better understanding of the economy of the ancient city by analogy with the economies of European cities in the late Medieval and early Modern periods; historians of slavery have looked to the slave-holding systems of the antebellum United States and Brazil to grasp more fully the implications of being a Roman slave; and studies of ancient populations rely heavily on the quantitative methods of demographers of the modern era. On the ancient city and the use of comparative historical models see the summary in Jongman (1988) 48-55. Materials applicable to the study of ancient slavery: Bradley (1994) 185. Ancient demography: Parkin (1992). On the dangers of historical comparison see the sensible caveats of Burke (1993) 21-28, and more pertinently Golden (1992).
much sharper picture of feminine display at different levels of Roman society, but also helps us to realise the centrality of *cultus* and *ornatus*, as a symbolic system, in the lives of Roman women.

Modestia Non Forma: *Prescribing Female Behaviour* (1400-1800)

The late Medieval and early Modern period were eras of remarkable social, economic, and political change. Plague had combined with famine in the first half of the fourteenth century to decimate the populations of Europe, helping to set in motion a process of transformation. Once plentiful, labour had become scarce and thus placed workers in a strong position to demand better wages and working conditions from their employers. The land-owning élite (as principal employers) refused to be coerced and replied by petitioning governments for wage controls, a strategy that fostered seditious activity and compelled the government to take repressive action against dissenters. Eventually land-holders and workers found common ground. To ensure that their lands did not lie fallow, property-owners made concessions such as granting life-long tenure of land to labourers in exchange for annually agreed upon sums, an arrangement that altered the financial circumstances of many peasants significantly, and that led over the long term to the emergence of a petty land-owning class. As this non-aristocratic group and others like them began to grow and prosper, it began to clamour for greater political and economic participation, a challenge to long-standing privilege felt keenly by the nobility. One strategy the nobility adopted to counteract this affront to their prestige was the codification of dress, manners, and general behaviour. Aristocratic individuals resolved to distinguish themselves from those whom they looked upon as parvenus: the upwardly mobile bourgeoisie who realised that personal presentation was instrumental in achieving visual assimilation with the élite. Manipulation of fashion modes and etiquette enabled the nobility to define and re-define some of the most visible marks of status as quickly as the middle classes usurped them.⁴

Codification of self-presentation took the form of didactic literature, largely male authored, that governed a broad spectrum of public and private behaviour. From 1400 to 1800, writers across England and Europe composed conduct guides for aristocrats of both

---

sexes, together with marriage manuals and handbooks on household economy. English authors published their own prescriptive works as well as translating popular foreign language texts, the first being William Caxton and his version (1484) of *Le Livre du chevalier de la Tour*, a manual of social and religious comportment for women originally published in 1372. What began as a trickle in the early fifteenth century became by the late sixteenth a steady stream, with professional writers and booksellers publishing English editions of French, Greek, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, and Spanish instructional books for both sexes. By the 1650s, over half the English language books for women were instructional in content (eighty-five), offering women—and men who had the care of women—practical advice on midwifery, cookery, comportment, education, and apparel. Little more than a century later, books on conduct and domestic management for the 'ideal' woman, outnumbered books specifying the desirable qualities of her male counterpart. Maiden, married woman, widow, or nun—conduct literature had something to offer women of all marital and social statuses.

These handbooks stressed, among other things, that personal appearance was a reflection of character, a theme redolent of the prescriptive literature of antiquity. An interest in classical literature which began in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and flowered in the sixteenth, furnished writers with models for deportment manuals. Both ancient texts (typified by Xenophon and Clement) and newer writings precisely defined rôles for women, recommended a modest approach to dress, and

---

5 The seminal work on instructional literature for women in the Middle Ages is A. A. Hentsch's *De la littérature didactique du Moyen Age s'adressant spécialement aux femmes* (Cahors, 1903). To date, I have not seen a copy of this text. An excellent overview of prescriptive literature for women written between 1475-1640 is found in Hull (1982), which contains basic and supplemental annotated lists. Hull is occupied with the broader question of a 'female literature' and so focuses less on the social impetus and purpose of conduct books, but her survey is nevertheless compelling. Cf. Crawford (1985) 234-263 for a provisional list of books published by women, although not necessarily for women. On courtesy books for men, see the comments of Curtin (1985) 396-409.

6 The genre was common to European culture generally. Discussion here confines itself chiefly to published material from English society. Caxton's *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* (1484) was followed by others such as Stephen Scrope's version of *Le Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie* (*The Boke of Knyghthode*); Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1561); George Pettie's translation (1581) of Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversatione*; and N. N. London's English edition (1639) of Jacques DuBoscq's popular social and educational guide for women entitled *The Compleat Woman*. Hull (1982) 1-37 provides a general introduction to the character and content of this emerging instructional literature. Eighteenth century conduct literature: Armstrong (1987) 98-99.
charal.terised interest in cosmetics and adornment as the vocation of the idle and immoral. Consider Geoffroy de la Tour Landry's view of female instruction. Solicitous of the moral welfare of his three daughters, he provided them with a manual of religious and social conduct. In a series of conversations and edifying stories he stressed the value of female silence, chastity, humility, and obedience, treated the dangers of marrying beneath one's station, and pointed out the punishments due to women who altered their looks. In the tale on pretension, a woman who wastes time in arraying herself for church receives a visit from the Devil—an event which plunges her into temporary madness. This intimate link between female vanity and the Devil is hardly surprising. Long before de la Tour Landry, Tertullian had blamed (De Cultu 1.2.1) fallen angels for introducing women to artifice, a notion clearly inherited by later cultures.

During the Renaissance conduct literature became less severe in tone than that of late Medieval society, in some cases advocating greater independence of thought and action for women in the area of self-presentation. Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528),

7 The most explicit example of the link between the two traditions is Thomas Tuke's *A Discourse Against the Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women* (1616), in which he quoted liberally the texts of classical writers and Christian theologians alike to defend his position on the nature of cosmetics.

8 De la Tour Landry borrowed from the anonymous *Miroir des bonnes femmes* or *Miroir au preudes femmes* (Mirror for Noble Women), a collection of moral *exempla* composed about 1300 that relied heavily on Biblical literature for models of female behaviour. His work enjoyed enthusiastic receptions in England and on the Continent, for which see Offord (1971) xxxviii-xxxix; Hull (1982) 31; Ashley (1987) 33 and 38, n. 22; Régnier-Bohler (1988) 391.

9 There was a lady/whiche had her lodging by the chirchelAnd she was alweye accustomed for to be long to araye her/And to make her fresshe and gaylin so moche that it annoyed and greved moche the parson of the Chircheland the parysshens ...And some said softly, god sende to her an euyll syght. in her myrroure that causeth us this day. and so oftymes to muse & to abyde for her. & themen as it plesyd god for an ensample. as she loked in the Myrroure she sawe therin the fendelwhiche shewed to her his hynder parte so fowle and horrablethat the lady wente oute of her wytteland was al demonyak a long tyme ...And therfore this is a good ensamplehowe ought not to be so longfor to apparyle ne to make her gaye'. Text is from Caxton's translation, *Capitolo xxx*, as found in Offord (1971) 53.

published more than a century after Le Livre du chevalier de la Tour, exemplifies the transition from frank improving tale to a gentle, more sophisticated discourse. Conceived as a series of philosophical debates between refined men and women on the qualities most desirable in the ideal courtier, Castiglione's book offered cosmopolitan Italians—especially those with social and political aspirations—explicit guidelines on education, poise, and dress. He rejected the heavily painted and adorned woman, but held no serious moral objections to make-up itself, conceding that a light application was permissible provided a natural look was maintained. He even invited his female discussants to think for themselves about the consequences of cosmetic use.\footnote{Bull (1967) 86-87: 'Surely you realise how much more graceful a woman is who, if indeed she wishes to do so, paints herself so sparingly and so little that whoever looks at her is unsure whether she is made-up or not, in comparison with one whose face is so encrusted that she seems to be wearing a mask'. Castiglione's education: Bull (1967) 12-13; Hull (1982) 32; Jones (1987) 42-43.}

Outwardly liberal, his advice did not lack the moral tone that usually distinguished conduct literature. The classical commonplace of a female sexuality that threatened masculine virtue lived on in the Renaissance imagination. Artless simplicity, Castiglione informed women, held the greatest appeal for men 'who are always afraid of being tricked by art'.\footnote{Select classical examples: Clem. Paed. 2 and 3 passim; Cypr. De Habitu 9; Tert. De Cultu 1.4.1. Male fears about the adorned female body persisted well into the twentieth century. On July 14, 1908, The Globe and Mail reported that a Canadian legislator had introduced a bill designed to curb female stratagems. Mr. Glenn of Whitfield declared the bill necessary after vacationing at a summer resort, where he was tricked into making an offer of marriage to a woman with 'enhanced ruby lips'. Using the British Parliamentary Act of 1770 as his model, Glenn drafted a bill which made void any marriage contracted by a woman who had seduced 'any unsuspecting male subject...by scents, paints, powder or perfumes, cosmetics, artificial teeth, false hair, iron stays, corsets, pads or padding, hoops or high-heeled shoes, low-cut waists, lingerie, lace, variegated, drop-stitch or rainbow hosiery or by any other deceitful means or artificial practices'. British Parliamentary Act of 1770: Gunn (1973) 124; Peiss (1998) 26.}

Where European authors had composed works for a largely aristocratic audience, seventeenth-century English writers modified prevailing standards of deportment to make them relevant for different segments of the population. Growing public resentment in sixteenth-century English society (as in European) of the sumptuary standards of the dominant classes intensified observation and analysis of female display, the results of which can be seen in the spectrum of opinion surrounding cosmetics, forms of dress, and forms of behaviour appropriate to women in different social groups.\footnote{Italian and French writers also wrote for different classes: in 1421 L. Battista Alberti composed but did not publish Libri della Famiglia, an instructional book for the wealthy Florentine commercial class; G. Bruto, La Institutione di una Fanciulla nata nobilmente (1555) which appeared in English in 1579, courtesy of Thomas Salter, advocated complete rejection of aristocratic practices in favour of sensible instruction and sound moral values; in the Discorso della virtù feminile, e donnesca (1582), Torquato Tasso pointed out for...} Gervase...
Markham’s audience for The English Houswife (1615), a manual of household governance, comprised the wives and daughters of the modest country gentleman. Wenceslaus Hollar’s Orratus Muliebris Anglicanus or the Several Habits of English Women (1640), contained illustrations only of twenty-six ensembles representing apparel for élite, middle class, and wage-earning women. Moderates differentiated between make-up and cosmetic therapy which they regarded as less offensive and part of every good ‘huswife’s’ expertise. Staunch conservatives (often Puritan writers) still insisted that cosmetics, regardless of purpose, were the hallmark of lewd women and condemned the immorality they promoted. Yet in spite of the new focus on classes of individuals and behaviour, male essayists continued to determine the standards of female behaviour and to employ the pedestrian themes of their predecessors: the woman whose vanity brought economic hardship to her family and who neglected domestic responsibilities (more classical truisms) never faded from view.

The social aim of conduct discourse evolved dramatically during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as writers began to focus on the creation of a harmonious domestic environment. Manuals no longer explained how to create the woman whose appearance matched and extended the public prestige of male kin, or who was expected to stand as an exemplar of fashion and morality. Instead they ascribed social and moral value

14 Countrey Contentments, the companion to The English Houswife, explained for the modest independent landowner—that is, men ‘whose more serious employments will not afford them so much leisure’ and who ‘must draw their pleasure into a more streighter circle, proportioning an hower or two in the morning for the full scope of their delights’—how to attain the high style of the gentry. Excerpt from Jones (1987) 62, but see the comments of Hull (1982) 62.

15 Face paint insulted the Creator, they argued, for implicit in Christian doctrine was the notion that neither woman nor man possessed the privilege of self-construction. Thomas Tuke adopted this view in A Discourse Against the Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women (1616) as did Dod and Cleaver in A Godly Forme of Householde Gouernment (1617). Treatises on beautifying and cosmetics that echo the Puritan position: John Hynd, The Mirrour of Worldly Fame (London, 1603); Joseph Swetnam, The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, Unconstant Women; or, The Vanitie of Them, Choose You Whether (London, 1615); John Williams, ‘A Sermon of Apparel’ (London, 1619); Richard Brathwait, The English Gentlewoman, Drawne Out to the Full Body (London, 1631), Ar’t asleepe Husband? A Boulster Lecture (London, 1640); Thomas Hill, Natural and Artificial Conclusions (London, 1670); John Wecker, Cosmeticks; or, The Beautifying Part of Physick. By Which All Deformities of Nature in Men and Women Are Corrected, Age Renewed, Youth Prolonged, and the Least Impediment, From a Hair to a Tooth, Fairly Amended (London, 1660).
to the domestic expertise of women, and the 'new woman' came to symbolise a rejection of aristocratic ideals. At the same time, there was a blending of audiences for these manuals. Normally, subjects such as cookery, domestic economy, and daily devotion were treated independently; but as *The Young Ladies Companion or, Beauty's Looking-Glass* (1740) makes evident, writers had come to address a host of topics relevant to female instruction within a single volume.\(^{16}\) Conduct literature aimed increasingly to provide practical guidelines which ensured that men acquired wives thoroughly versed in the running of a household. It no longer sufficed for the 'compleat' woman to be well-presented and schooled; she had also to be conversant with every facet of the governance and economy of her household.\(^ {17}\)

The function of advice literature remained consistent across a four hundred year period: as arbiters of feminine display and conduct male writers sought to educate women as well as the men who had responsibility for them.\(^ {18}\) Constructions of femininity were, however, a different story. The re-working of ideas in response to social, economic, and political impulses caused a notable shift in the analytical context for femininity. Typically, discussions had taken place within the context of status; that is, they focussed on the visual differentiation of the socio-economic groups comprising society. By the close of the eighteenth century, these discussions had begun to take place within the framework of gender. A woman's sphere now contrasted sharply with a man's: his world embraced politics and business, her world was wholly domestic. Within the realm delimited by the boundaries of home and kitchen, a woman had responsibility for the rearing and proper instruction of children, and care of family morality and refinement. By the turn of the eighteenth century writers could allude to a model of feminine domestic behaviour, unlike writers of the preceding century who had been compelled to devote considerable space to the articulation of this same model because it had not then 'passed into the domain of common sense'.\(^ {19}\)

---

18 Comportment texts habitually addressed the men responsible for women, not women directly; see Aughterson (1995) 67-69. Thomas Jeamson (*Artificiall Embellishments; or Arts Best Directions: How to Preserve Beauty or Procure It*) was an exception: 'The design Lady of the Book is not to make any addition to Your spotles[s] features, but to borrow that from You which it promiseth to others, Beauty and Splendour.' Jeamson (1665) n.p.
Christine de Pizan and the 'Drama of Woman'

In the instructional literature written between 1400 and 1800 women's voices are virtually silent. A notable exception is the unblinking observer of French culture, Christine de Pizan, who composed a work of prudence mondaine for women grounded upon three virtues: reason, rectitude, and justice. Her book is indispensable for thinking about feminine display in historical perspective for it provides a view which has no Roman equivalent. It is difficult to believe that literate Roman women—the doctae puellae—were never impelled to compose a treatise on a subject that played a central rôle in their lives. Medical texts mention the beauty book of Cleopatra and Plutarch (Mor. 145A) says his wife Timoxena wrote a treatise on personal adornment for Aristylla (cf. FHG 3.520). Plutarch's claim is easily believed given that his letter to Timoxena on the death of their small daughter (Consolatio ad Uxorem) is composed in a style that presupposes some familiarity with literary culture. Knowledge of this culture may have acquainted Timoxena with the Hellenistic tradition that encouraged compositions on female conduct and morality by well-educated women. For example, a Neopythagorean woman, Perictione, gave advice on female behaviour. Her work stressed avoidance of

20 Of course there were exceptions. Isabella Whitney, a single woman working in London as a domestic and struggling to make a living, published two collections of poems in the 1570s (which included A Sweet Nosgay of Pleasant Posye and The Copy of a Letter Lately Written in Meeter by a Yonge Gentilwoman: to Her Unconstant Lover), in which she set down the responsibilities of the married woman; and in 1675 Hannah Wolley (The Accomplished Lady's Delight) provided practical advice on a multitude of household tasks, including the manufacture of beautifying physic. Until the eighteenth century, however, and the development of a greater female consciousness, as demonstrated by the work of Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, Charlotte Smith, and Mary Wollstonecraft, few women turned their hands to treatises on self-improvement. Whitney: Jones (1987) 53. Eighteenth century female writers: Armstrong (1987) 103. On growing female consciousness in the eighteenth century see Smith (1983) 19-45.

21 The translation of Le Livre de trois vertus used throughout this chapter is that of Willard and Cosman (1989). 'Our first students must be those whose royal or noble blood raises them above others in this world. Inevitably, the women, as well as the men, whom God establishes in the high seats of power and domination must be better educated than others. Their reputations will lead to great worthiness in themselves and in others. They are the mirror and example of virtue for their subjects and companions. The first lesson, therefore, will be directed at them—the queens, princesses, and other great ladies. Then, step by step, we will begin to explicate our doctrine for women of the lower degrees, so that the discipline of our College may be useful to all' (p. 70). And again at the beginning of Book II: 'Our lesson in this second part of the discourse is addressed to ladies, demoiselles, and other women, those who live at the court of a princess to serve her and to maintain her estate and likewise those who live on their own lands and in their own castles or manor houses, or in enclosed or open cities. We insist that this doctrine applies to...all women' (p. 149).

22 Gal. 12.403, 432, 446, 492; Ps. Gal. 14.233, Frag. 60.1; Aet. lat. 6.56.27-34, 8.6.31-34.

ostentation in dress and adornment, restraint in food and drink, and toleration of a husband's sexual peccadilloes. Perictione also cautioned women against the use of stratagems (make-up, rouge, perfumes, and hair-dye) by employing a virtue as ornament metaphor: 'The beauty that comes from wisdom and not from these things brings pleasure to women who are well born'.

Like Timoxena, de Pizan was well placed for her literary enterprise. She was born into an affluent Italian family which placed great store in education. As a small child, de Pizan moved with her family to France, where her father took up a position as astrologer and physician to Charles V. From an early age she was exposed to a varied artistic and intellectual life, although her scholastic training did not begin in earnest until after the death of her husband. Married at fifteen to a man whom she truly loved, de Pizan suddenly found herself widowed at age twenty-five and responsible for three small children, as well as her own widowed mother and a niece. Her husband's estate, about which she knew little, was in disarray. Alone and without male relatives to counsel her, de Pizan sought solace from the emotional and psychological strain of her misfortunes by immersing herself in writing and study, and within ten years of her husband's death had gained considerable notoriety as a poet. During this time she also engaged in a programme of self-study, introducing herself to classical authors as well as contemporary scholars.

A thirst for knowledge and a talent for writing led eventually to a number of publications that reflected the depth and breadth of her erudition, among them the well-known *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*.

Intensely aware that women were much maligned by the ancient and medieval literary traditions, de Pizan mounted a defence of her sex by recounting tales of feminine rectitude and offering examples of women's contributions to society and culture. On the heels of this apology followed *Le Livre des trois vertus*, a

---


25 De Pizan wrote on the body politic, the nature of love, and human integrity. She engaged in a spirited debate on the nature of women with a distinguished poet and misogynist, wrote a biography of her father's employer Charles V, as well as a book of weaponry and knighthood (*Le Livre des faits d'armes et de chevalerie*) for which she is said to have consulted a French translation of Vegetius' *De re militari*. Willard (1984) is the standard biography of Christine de Pizan. For the debate with Jean de Meun especially see the comments of Richards (1982) xxxi-xxxii and Willard (1984) 73-133; Gottlieb (1997) 279-283.

26 Willard (1984) 135; Blumenfeld-Koskiniski (1997). Her book was modelled after Augustine's *City of God* but inspired by Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris*, which had been translated into French in 1401. De Pizan drew her material from myth and history, and from pagan and Christian society. Some of the women she lauds are: Penthesilea for coming to the aid of Troy (1.19); Ceres for inventing the art of cultivating the earth (1.3535); Pamphile who discovered the art of weaving and dyeing silk (1.40); Esther for saving her
social and moral guide that explained how to cultivate the qualities most beneficial to the utopian community of ladies.\textsuperscript{27} She spoke on subjects of special relevance for women, such as arrangements for the instruction of children (1.15), management of personal finances and revenues (1.19), appropriate behaviour for widows (1.23; 3.4), and preservation of feminine virtue (1.26)—issues which surely derived from the difficulties that ensued after her husband's untimely death.\textsuperscript{28}

From her advice on feminine display we gain an unusual view of class consciousness and economic competition among women. French society of the fifteenth century was sharply stratified, and although de Pizan was sensitive to this she saw no need to tamper with the established order. Conventional beliefs about social mobility and identity run throughout each of the three books comprising \textit{Le Livre des trois vertus}. Speaking to women of different estate, age, and marital status, she reiterated the necessity of observing class boundaries and claimed that only strict observance could preserve order and curb the unhealthy competitive tendencies that afflicted French society.\textsuperscript{29} Competition, moreover, could be minimised only if the upper classes acted as models of restraint for those beneath them. 'Grammars' of dress and adornment clearly existed, but many women modified or

people from Haman (2.32); Clotilda who converted her husband King Clovis to the Christian faith (2.35); Claudia Quinta for her virtue (2.63); and several women martyred for their Christian beliefs and later canonised (3.4-3.5, 3.6-10).

\textsuperscript{27} Willard and Cosman (1989) 39. De Pizan's advice was meant to have practical application, for it was dedicated to eleven-year old Marguerite de Nevers, wife of France's future king and granddaughter of de Pizan's patron, the Duke of Burgundy.

\textsuperscript{28} With her closest male relatives in Italy, she alone had defended her husband's estate from predatory court officials and dishonest associates. Unable to afford a suitable dowry for her daughter, she became resourceful, enlisting the aid of high-ranking friends and arranging for Marie to enter a prestigious Dominican convent near Paris. Likewise, she saw to her son Jean's future by securing him a place in the household of the Earl of Salisbury who was well connected in the court of Richard II. See Willard (1984) 42-43.

\textsuperscript{29} To de Pizan's way of thinking there were sharp distinctions between and within classes: 'As I have said several times, the wife of a laborer in the Low Countries has equal status with the wife of an ordinary artisan in Paris; but the ordinary artisan's wife does not have the importance of a burgher's wife, nor does that woman, in turn, have the social status of a demoiselle. The demoiselle is unlike a lady, the lady dissimilar to a countess or duchess, and neither of these is comparable to a queen. Each ought to maintain her proper place in society and, along with this, her particular lifestyle. But these rules are not at all well observed today in France, nor, regrettably, are many of the other old, good, once typical customs' (3.3). Consider too de Pizan's advice to propertied and bourgeois women (3.2): 'She who belongs to the bourgeoisie and wears garments appropriate for a gentlewoman, and the demoiselle who sports what a lady should wear, so on up the steps on society's ladder, clearly overstep the bounds of propriety'.

---

\textsuperscript{27} Willard and Cosman (1989) 39. De Pizan's advice was meant to have practical application, for it was dedicated to eleven-year old Marguerite de Nevers, wife of France's future king and granddaughter of de Pizan's patron, the Duke of Burgundy.

\textsuperscript{28} With her closest male relatives in Italy, she alone had defended her husband's estate from predatory court officials and dishonest associates. Unable to afford a suitable dowry for her daughter, she became resourceful, enlisting the aid of high-ranking friends and arranging for Marie to enter a prestigious Dominican convent near Paris. Likewise, she saw to her son Jean's future by securing him a place in the household of the Earl of Salisbury who was well connected in the court of Richard II. See Willard (1984) 42-43.

\textsuperscript{29} To de Pizan's way of thinking there were sharp distinctions between and within classes: 'As I have said several times, the wife of a laborer in the Low Countries has equal status with the wife of an ordinary artisan in Paris; but the ordinary artisan's wife does not have the importance of a burgher's wife, nor does that woman, in turn, have the social status of a demoiselle. The demoiselle is unlike a lady, the lady dissimilar to a countess or duchess, and neither of these is comparable to a queen. Each ought to maintain her proper place in society and, along with this, her particular lifestyle. But these rules are not at all well observed today in France, nor, regrettably, are many of the other old, good, once typical customs' (3.3). Consider too de Pizan's advice to propertied and bourgeois women (3.2): 'She who belongs to the bourgeoisie and wears garments appropriate for a gentlewoman, and the demoiselle who sports what a lady should wear, so on up the steps on society's ladder, clearly overstep the bounds of propriety'.
De Pizan realised that enforced sumptuary restraint would prove unpalatable in élite circles, for women as well as their husbands and male kin were highly competitive. Husbands viewed elegantly appareled wives as extensions of their personal prestige and deliberately encouraged ostentatious display; or so de Pizan assumed when she adopted a male point of view. She claimed to be familiar with the bickering of aristocratic women and how they manoeuvred continually for precedence in court, but also observed women vying for precedence at assemblies and weddings. Perhaps most offensively, they

31 De Pizan's grammar of fashion comprises a relatively simple body of rules. She recommends dress that is neither ostentatious, tight, nor provocative—that is low-cut (1.18, 1.23, 2.11). As an example to her readers of 'outrageous superfluity' she describes a tunic made by a Parisian dress-maker for a rather vain woman from the country, that required five ells of brocade (much of which trailed on the ground) and bombard sleeves which skimmed the ground (2.11).

32 'I am more a gentleman than he, so my wife should precede his'. The other will think, 'but I am richer', or 'I hold more important office', or 'I have greater pretensions to grandeur, so I will not allow his wife to be honoured before mine' (2.12).

33 'Why should my lady favour this one or that one more than myself, or prefer her to take her more into her confidence? Am I not of equal lineage, or more noble than she, even if she is better dressed? I am wiser, more gentle born, and better suited to be where she is. She came up from nothing. She is ignorant. She isn't worthy. She is so forward, so obviously obsequious, however, could my lady have advanced her, or given her such rewards or such status? ...But I will stop it if I can. I will get ahead of her in the end. I know how. I know such and such things about her. What I don't know I will invent. At the very least I will add some spice to what I know. I will act fast before I let her get further ahead of me...She wants to outdo others, pushing them behind her...I simply will not put up with this any longer. She wants to put herself in my place...I will not let her do it!' (2.5). Cf. de Pizan's comments on the temptations which can overwhelm the young princess: 'Is there any lady greater than you in this world, any more worthy? ...Don't you have the right to walk ahead of all others? Neither this exalted woman nor that one can be compared to you, though both may be married to princes. You are richer, you come from a better family; you are held in higher esteem because of your children, are more feared, more renowned, more respected because of your lord's power...[N]o one accomplishes anything without great financial resources. Therefore, amass treasure to carry out your intentions. Money is women's best friend and the surest means to any possible end...Think only enticing thoughts to amuse yourself. For whom will you be pretty? You must have just such a robe, such ornaments, such jewels, such gorgeously wrought, newly fashionable apparel' (1.3).
jostled in church as they advanced toward the altar during the Offering—even coming to blows when outdone by rivals (2.12). To de Pizan's way of thinking, such women were nothing short of absurd: they impoverished themselves through extravagance and disgraced themselves before their fellow citizens. 'Nothing is more ridiculous' she wrote candidly, 'than to see a woman pretending to a great, exaggerated status when one knows it is not really her own, and that she does not possess the means for maintaining it' (2.11).

Rivalry was not unique to the dominant classes: noble women (2.11) and petty Lombard retailers alike were guilty of pretension. Conceit and snobbery infected a broad spectrum of the population, 'from the great to the low' (3.3). De Pizan singled out wives of merchants—rich Parisian ones and those of humble retailers in different regions of France—as particularly susceptible among the lesser ranks to sartorial impropriety. They attired themselves 'in other people's costumes', adopting 'another's estate rather than being content with their own'(3.3), a practise she deemed dishonest.34 When she addressed wives of artisans (3.8), female domestics (3.9), and women of 'light morals' (3.10), her primary concern was not physical but moral presentation. Such women, of course, derived benefit from her advice on self-transformation, but de Pizan plainly felt that disadvantaged women required little in the way of apparel beyond what was serviceable and clean. Advice to lower-class women consisted of urging them to assist their husbands in business, to exercise restraint in pleasures of the body (sex, food, and drink), and to recite their Pater Nosters faithfully. As for the wives of simple laborers and the poor, she remarked that it was unnecessary to deny such women fine clothes and accoutrements—'they are well protected from all that' (3.12).

On the surface, de Pizan's counsels differ little from those of male authors in either ancient or early modern conduct literature.35 Much of what she has to say about feminine presentation is underwritten by a Christian ethic emphasising the high social value of female virtue. Thus, the portrait of female vanity and competition that emerges from Le

---

34 'Such displays are out of all proportion, coming from presumption rather than good judgement. They gain scorn rather than admiration, for though these women take upon themselves the status of great ladies or princesses, by no means are they really such, and they cannot be called so. Certainly, they do not lose the name 'merchant's wife'" (3.3). This absence of decorum was common to commercial classes in other parts of Europe too for she twice mentions the rivalry among women of the same class in Italy who tended toward more extravagant display. De Pizan willingly conceded, however, that it was less costly to maintain an elegant appearance in Italy than in France where fashions changed annually (2.11; 3.3).

35 She adopts, for example, the virtue as ornament metaphor: 'If every noble lady and indeed every woman knew how becoming good bearing is, she would make a great effort to acquire it over every other ornament. No jewel enhances her so greatly' (1.27; cf. 1.2).
*Livre des trois vertus* is hardly flattering. But this portrait should not surprise. Although sensitive to the social and historical treatment of women, de Pizan was very much influenced by the dominant gender ideology of her day (patriarchalism), and we fall prey to anachronism if we expect to see a feminist perspective of women's lives here. Her sumptuary advice did differ in a proto-feminist way from that of male writers, for the latter tended to assume that surface reflected soul and that if clothes were provocative, ostentatious, or loud, dissipation naturally followed. Moralists also insisted that feminine display was primarily for the benefit of men. But de Pizan's address to the wives of burghers and city officials ran counter to these notions. She recommended that women adopt a simple mode of dress to stop rumours of promiscuity, stressing that provocative apparel was not synonymous with libertine behaviour: 'Even though a woman may be inspired only by good will and has neither a wicked act nor thought in her body, the world will never believe it if she is indiscreet about her clothes. False opinions will be formed no matter how good she is in reality' (3.2). Her counsels had a moral edge, but were pragmatic and designed to protect from censure women who were guilty of nothing more than stylistic infractions. Significantly, she said little about feminine display being for male benefit, implying instead that women—like those who elbowed one another in church in order to secure a more prominent place—were intent on impressing other women by their mode of adornment.

The social function of the impeccably presented female and the value of her appearance in consensual economic competition (including competition for marriage partners), two themes de Pizan touched upon, would not be taken up again by female writers until the late eighteenth century. Until that period there is scant evidence that women challenged cultural perceptions about their modes of presentation, much less the circumscribed nature of their daily existence. Female writers may have felt but did not acknowledge that a woman's social worth resulted from her productive and reproductive capacity, or that civic

36 Gottlieb (1997).

37 Admittedly, women who vied for distinction in court or church must have been sensible of attracting male attention. For unmarried women especially drawing the notice of males might help in the search for a suitable marriage partner, and the contracting of a suitable marriage could lead ultimately to social and economic elevation. De Pizan says little about this, however, focusing instead on the cultivation of moral conduct.

38 At that time there emerged a developing female consciousness of women's relationship to society and a growing sense of women's social insignificance. Smith (1983) 19-45.
participation was limited along with career opportunities apart from those available through the church. If this attitude toward women's existence prevailed in the fifteenth century, how did women achieve a sense of self or independence in a position of dependency and social invisibility? Did they care? The answers to both questions are found in *Le Livre des trois vertus*. As the highly-principled de Pizan urged that feminine appearance be a window onto Christian character, her contemporaries circumvented the restrictive boundaries of their social rôles and found through personal display a means of articulating rank and expressing self.

The use of feminine display in this manner derives in part from the so-called 'drama of woman'. Social and legal conventions in patriarchal societies generally regard woman as Other and deem her non-essential in relation to man. This condition of alterity coupled with narrow definitions of the spheres of activity appropriate to women (principally child-rearing and house-keeping) combine to deny women the freedom to realise their aspirations through full community participation. Seeking other means to achieve personal satisfaction and social validation, women look to the one area of their lives in which they are more or less completely autonomous—personal presentation.\(^\text{39}\) In fifteenth-century French society, care of children and household management undoubtedly gave many women a sense of accomplishment, but the elegantly dressed and adorned body enabled them to realise other ambitions according to de Pizan. First, self-presentation helped them attain a position of preeminence within their own peer and gender groups and secondly, if they stood outside a dominant social group the well-presented body helped them gain membership in a society to which they did not belong by birth or economic circumstances. Women could

---

\(^\text{39}\) De Beauvoir (1952) xxxv and 630. Cf. Smith (1983) 25-28, Blok (1987) 26-27, and Hallett (1989) 59-60 on de Beauvoir's work. Her theory of women's behaviour in the face of dependence and lack of fulfillment may be compared with Joseph Shaw's observations of Dutch women made during his visit to Holland in 1709. He claimed he had never encountered so many handsome women of good sense, education, and integrity; their faces 'entirely free from vanity', completely lacking in 'patch or paint'. Shaw attributed their appeal to 'being better provided for by the laws of their country than in other nations [so that they] are not forced to trust to their wits, nor put on those poor pitiful shifts to jilt mankind and bubble their husbands for money'. He compared these virtuous and content women to those he glimpsed in a *Spinhuis* (work-house). There prostitutes, vagrants, and petty thieves were assigned spinning and weaving tasks and were 'clothed in the gay habiliments of love ...patched and painted and just as they used to charm and coax the fond, admiring and deluded gulls who know not the fatal Arts of women'. (Shaw failed to recognise that the women of the *Spinhuis* were being sexually exploited by their overseers.) See Schama (1987) 403-404, citing Shaw (1709) xii, and 44-46. Cf. Rousseau's (1979) 373 assessment of women's behaviour: 'A woman who spends six hours at her dressing table is not unaware that she does not go out better made up than a woman who only spends half an hour at it, but those hours are subtracted from the tedious march of time; and it is better to be entertained with oneself than to be bored with everything. Without the dressing table what could one do with life from noon to nine o'clock?"
accomplish the latter either spuriously or legitimately; spuriously by usurping the symbols of superior rank and assuming an estate that was not their own, or legitimately by attracting marriage partners above their station. Self-presentation was essential for mobility within and between groups, but personal display also gave women an opportunity for self-definition through the control they exerted over what they wore and how they wore it.

African-American Women in the Nineteenth Century

If women in fifteenth-century French society were conditioned to think of themselves as non-essential and so used their physical selves to articulate place in the community and to define self, what was the situation of African-American slave-women in the United States of the nineteenth century? Being of little consequence in all but their official capacity as wives and mothers, French women had nonetheless the personal and legal autonomy to work out strategies of self-formation provided the economic means were available. The African-American slave-woman confronted a more immediate problem. Gender ideology defined her as Other in the manner of the French woman, but skin-colour and ethnic origin combined to distinguish her as Other in a far more graphic way. Her status as a slave defined her as chattel, a kind of Other that was expendable even though her productive and reproductive capacities might be of significant value to an owner. And for the most part she lacked the resources that enabled the interpretation of femininity through modes of adornment and dress. The socio-economic condition of black women changed little with the abolition of slavery. But remarkably, in the face of a bleak existence, African-American women used self-presentation as a means of creating identity and articulating status within their own oppressed social world. Further, slaves and former slaves used carefully fashioned appearances to create identities that were meant to counteract the stereotype of the slovenly and apish black perpetuated by white society.40

A sense of the female slave’s perception of femininity and its value to her can be obtained from autobiographies that were published both before and after the American Civil War, as well as interviews with ex-slaves that were conducted during the 1930s.41 Life

40 Discussion here is greatly indebted to Peiss (1998) Chapter 7, which is to my knowledge the only comprehensive study of the cosmetics and fashion industry that catered to African-American women. Racist imagery abounded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See for example the arresting images of the ‘New Negro’ compiled by Gates (1988) figs. 18—32, that could be found on postcards in the early 1900s. Cf. Peiss (1998) 204-205.

41 Rawick 1: xiii-xxi. These narratives derive from autobiographies written by slaves who had escaped to the northern states and Canada, by slaves with the assistance of an amanuensis, and by zealous white
was especially precarious for slave-women subjected to physical, mental, and particularly sexual abuse at the hands of masters and overseers. At least this was the view of Harriet Jacobs, born a slave in 1813 in Edenton, North Carolina. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Jacobs chronicled her journey from child to young woman, her harrowing escape from a sadistic master, and her desperate efforts to keep her young family together during seven years in hiding.\(^{42}\) She was fortunate in that she learned to read and write, laboured in her master's house rather than his fields, and enjoyed through the nurturing of her iron-willed and freed grandmother a sense of family and domestic life unknown to a great many slaves.\(^{43}\) This position of relative privilege only serves to heighten the grim reality of slave life that threads its way through her narrative: back-breaking labour, constant hunger, fear of beatings and reprisals for any and all misdemeanors, and anxiety over separation from family members which might be capriciously inflicted by an owner. Yet mingled with these grave preoccupations is an interest in caring for the self that reflects an awareness of the advantages and dangers of self-display.

Jacobs learned at a young age that it was of little advantage to slavewomen to cultivate a fine appearance. Observation taught her that her owner, the odious Dr. Flint, had a prodigious sexual appetite: he was father to at least eleven mulatto children whose slave-mothers were too terrified to acknowledge their children's paternity. Flint became obsessed with the fifteen-year-old Jacobs and his fixation eventually drove her to escape, but not before he had made her life intolerable through frequent acts of cruelty. She was proud of her lush hair, for example, and arranged it prettily—a modest but purposeful act of physical care that gave Jacobs a measure of personal satisfaction. It also brought reproach from her master who regarded her behaviour as immoral, although he quite

---

42 Jacobs (1861), writing as Linda Brent, should be read together with Garfield and Zafar (1996), a collection of critical essays which examine and question the authenticity of Jacobs' narrative, as well as the editorial assistance she received from Lydia Maria Child. See especially J. Goldsby, "I Disguised My Hand" and F. Smith Foster, 'Resisting Incidents'.

43 Jacobs (1861) 85. As chattels, slave-parents and children could be sold indiscriminately as Jacobs knew from personal observation. Whenever her master Dr. Flint (a pseudonym for Dr. James Norcom) fathered a child by one of his slaves, he had mother and child sold promptly if he noted any obvious resemblance between himself and his offspring. Jacobs (1861) 44-57 is eloquent on the sexual indignities endured by slave-women.
obviously admired the result. Flint later wielded Jacob's enjoyment in an authoritarian display. Infuriated by her confession that she was pregnant for a second time by his wealthy white neighbour, the doctor immediately cropped the hair which gave Jacobs a small measure of pride.\footnote{Sexual obsession of Flint: Jacobs (1861) 44-48, 79-81, 118. It is not clear from Jacobs' narrative how exactly she styled her hair. African-American women were sensitive to a different cultural aesthetic and sometimes straightened their hair in order to arrange it more easily in 'Anglo-American styles'. See Peiss (1998) 13.}

We know from other textual and visual evidence that African-American women employed some of the dress and beauty techniques that formed part of their cultural heritage. Head-wraps, threading, and corn-row braids used by the Mende women of West Africa and the first generation of slaves to reach the Americas, can be seen on slave-women in American plantation photographs. Skin and hair therapy specific to the needs of black women formed part of an oral tradition transmitted from one generation of women to the next. One of the first beauty culturists of African-American descent, Annie Turnbo Malone, born in Louisiana in 1869 to former slaves, claimed to have acquired her knowledge of hair-care by studying with an elderly female relative well versed in plant lore.\footnote{Photographs: Ward (1991) 7-9. On beauty practices see: Fields (1983) 187-189, 219; Peiss (1998) 13; White and White (1998) 54-62. Peiss notes (p. 13) that African-American women incorporated the beauty techniques of aboriginal women as well, such as using berries to enhance the colour of the cheeks.} How closely slave-holders observed or regulated the beauty practices of their slaves is uncertain. Delia Garlic, an ex-slave born in Powhatan, Virginia, remembered an unpleasant incident involving her owner's second wife:

'I seed [her] blackin' her eyebrows wid smut [soot] one day, so I thought I'd black mine jes' for fun. I rubbed some smut on my eyebrows an' forgot to rub it off, an' she kotched me.' The mistress was powerful mad an' yelled: 'You black devil, I'll show you how to mock your betters.'

Delia's innocent experiment was, for her mistress, a serious violation of the boundary between slave and free, and Delia suffered greatly for this transgression: she was beaten senseless with a stick of stove-wood. This same mistress denied Delia and her fellow slaves 'clothes for going round,' and compelled them to wear 'a shimmy and a slip for a dress', which Delia described as 'made outen de cheapest cloth dat could be bought.'\footnote{Rawick 6: 129-130; Peiss (1998) 32.}

The attitude of Delia's mistress was not unusual. The quality of slave clothing varied
according to the generosity of slave-holders. Owners' cast-offs were regularly given to the house-slaves, but for the rest homespuns were the rule. With the permission of owners women adapted the techniques of dyeing and weaving (in some cases the techniques formed part of their cultural heritage) in the design and manufacture of their own clothing, particularly their Sunday best. Millie Evans, an ex-slave born in 1849, and Jesse Davis, a former slave from South Carolina, recited for their interviewers the spectrum of colours that could be obtained from organic sources. Lizzie Norfleet characterised the frocks of slave-women as 'beautiful' with 'one dark stripe and one bright stripe', declaring 'folks dem days knewed how to mix pretty colours'. Less is known about African-American jewellery tastes, but it is evident that women spent the meagre resources they accumulated on clothes and accessories. Ex-slaves mention purchasing ribbons from itinerant pedlars and receiving colourful bandanas as gifts at Christmas. Eda Rains' owner sometimes gave his slaves a few coins at Christmas which they promptly spent on a string of beads or other trinkets. Some women may have shunned certain types of adornments as Harriet Jacobs did. When her father's kindly owner made a gift of a gold chain to Jacobs' daughter at her christening, Jacobs accepted the gift reluctantly recognising it as a potent symbol of slavery which she did not wish fastened about her child's neck.48

With the abolition of slavery self-presentation took on new meaning for the newly freed slaves. Before the Civil War hierarchies of colour and occupation existed between plantation slaves who toiled in cotton and tobacco fields and those who served in the great house; and between black slaves and racially mixed mulattos—the offspring of sexual relationships between slave-women and their white masters—who often enjoyed preferential treatment.49 In the decades after emancipation these hierarchies intensified in

---


48 Peter Clifton, an ex-slave from South Carolina, recalled that it was the custom on Christmas day at the Biggers-Mobley plantation for every woman to receive a kerchief and every girl a ribbon for her hair (Rawick 2.1: 207). Slave wardrobes and Christmas gifts: White and White (1998) 30. Adornment: Rawick 5.3: 225-226 (Eda Rains); Jacobs (1861) 121.

49 Rawick 2.2: 11-16. Ryer Emmanuel recalled the varying treatment of mulatto and black children when she was a child and claimed, 'Dat bow-come dere so much different classes today, I say. Yes, mam, dat whe' dat old stain come from.' When interviewed about her experiences as a slave, eighty-three year old Rosa Stark recalled (Rawick 3.4: 147-150) 'Dere was more classes 'mongst de slaves', which she itemised for the interviewer. See also the comments of ninety-two year old Mary Raines (Rawick 3.4: 1-2): As I wasn't scared of de cows, they set me to milkin' and churnin'. Bless God! Dat too me out of de field. House
the debate over social equality. The pale skin colour and Anglo-American features of many mulattos made it easier for them to assimilate themselves into white society and some believed the mulattos hoped to strengthen this advantage by distancing themselves from the African-American community at large.\(^5\) During this same period, however, black women of all shades were emulating a white European model of beauty, using skin bleaches and facial powders and straightening their naturally curly hair with hot-combs and oils, believing that personal presentation corresponded to acceptance and elevation.\(^5\) These practices were so widespread that black leaders began urging women, from the pulpit and in the press, to celebrate rather than conceal their racial heritage.\(^5\) Women were assisted in their efforts to transform the physical self by black female entrepreneurs, like Annie Turnbo Malone and Madame C. J. Walker, who catered to their special hair, skin, and cosmetic needs; and by authors of comportment literature, like E. Azalia Hackley, whose *Colored Girl Beautiful* (1916) aimed to educate the young black woman whose visibility in urban centres increased with her entry into the workforce.

Several significant features of black self-presentation are discernible here. Under slavery, women's expressions of femininity and self were governed, as in most things, by the consent of their owners; and a change in juridical status did not alter life immediately. Emancipation gave women the legal freedom to transform and express themselves as they saw fit, but many continued to live under wretched conditions on the plantations and farms.

---

servants 'bove de field servants, them days. If you didn't git better rations and things to eat in de house it was your own fault, I tells you!' Sexual relationships between mistress and male slave were not unknown. Jacobs claimed (1861) 80-81 to have known a white woman who carried on a relationship with a black slave, and after bearing him a child, had him freed and sent out of the state to prevent her father from taking revenge on him. White and White (1998) 27 note that slave-holders fostered the hierarchy between slaves by using attractive clothes as incentives for hard work.


52 They encouraged women to reject the aesthetic characterised by the editor of an African-American newspaper as part of the 'good looks supremacy'. Claimed Chandler Owen, 'If people of color ruled the world, white people would curl their hair and darken their skin.' Peiss (1998) 203 after C. Owen, 'Good Looks Supremacy,' *Messenger* 6 (March 1924): 80.
of former owners. The transition from slavery to freedom entrenched more firmly an existing hierarchy of colour and intensified competition between mulattos and other black Americans; it even fostered new forms of prejudice, as urban African-Americans came to regard their poor rural cousins as unsophisticated, ill-mannered, and in dire need of deportment advice.\textsuperscript{53} On the whole, the main barriers to self-realisation for black women were an inability to participate fully in society as free women because of their gender, colour, and economic circumstances. "[P]owerlessness and poverty", in other words, were key factors constraining women's self-definition.\textsuperscript{54} In spite of these obstacles, black women attempted to emulate the beauty and fashion trends of white society believing that social acceptance could be accomplished through cultivation of the self—a belief that flew in the face of encouragement from black leaders to regard their distinctive physiognomy as a symbol of racial pride.\textsuperscript{55}

\textit{Roman Women and Personal Presentation}

This brief analysis of feminine display among women of different social groups, and within two historical periods widely separated in time, illustrates how adornment techniques were pivotal in female expressions of status and identity, for they enabled women at all levels of society to interpret self or place in the community despite the gender and social ideologies which conceived of them as Other.\textsuperscript{56} I have already provided some indication that the same is true for Roman women. The case becomes stronger still when ancient and modern are viewed together. In several respects, the modern evidence for female self-presentation resembles that of Roman antiquity, although we cannot pretend that historical conditions in Rome were identical to those of the \textit{ancien régime} or the \textit{antebellum} United States. It is imprudent, of course, to speak of modern and ancient

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Carby (1992) \textit{passim}; Peiss (1998) 207. A sophisticated appearance was especially important in preventing young black women who migrated north from the secessionist states in the early part of the twentieth century from becoming easy prey for the disreputable elements in white urban society.
\item Zemon Davis (1986) 53 singles out these two factors above all others as the 'greatest obstacle to self-definition' in a study of boundaries and conceptions of self in sixteenth-century France.
\item As Azalia Hackley proclaimed, 'kinky hair is an honorable legacy from Africa’. See Peiss (1998) 206-210.
\item De Beauvoir (1952) 97-109 on the treatment and conceptualisations of women from the Middle Ages through the early twentieth century. On woman as Other in the gender philosophy that informs contemporary thought see Blok (1987) 40-41.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
society in the same breath without acknowledging the historical features especially characteristic of Rome: its social organisation, the staggering disparities of wealth, the limitations of social mobility, and the pervasiveness of slavery.\textsuperscript{57} Valid analogies can, however, be made between the ancient and modern treatment of women given the inheritance of contemporary gender ideology.\textsuperscript{58} Élite and non-élite Roman women were similarly marginalised: gender ideology defined them as inferior to men, barred them from full participation in the civic community, and prescribed social rôles that consigned them largely to the domestic sphere. Those women who comprised the great unprivileged mass of Roman society suffered additional prejudices arising from their lack of personal wealth, the necessity of earning a living, and their servile and ethnic origins. It is true that Roman slaves did not encounter the colour discrimination suffered by African-Americans, but the two groups had in common life experiences that must have shaped behaviour and outlook: deracination, an utter lack of autonomy, and the persistent threat of random physical, mental, and sexual maltreatment.\textsuperscript{59}

Ancient sources seldom acknowledge expressly that meticulously crafted appearances were part of a non-verbal language that permitted women, independently of male kin, to make statements about identity and status. Instead, writers diminish the importance of women’s actions by categorising their behaviour broadly and arbitrarily, making little allowance for varying motives of self-presentation. Known for her provocative modes of dress and feared for her sexuality, the hoyden appeared frequently in Greek and Latin literature alongside the respectable but over-dressed woman who epitomised economic imprudence and incontinentia.\textsuperscript{60} There were exceptions, such as the dignified Servilia

\begin{footnotesize}
58 For example, Pomeroy (1994) 73-90 sketches the afterlife of Xenophon’s Oeconomicus and its influence on modern constructions of gender, noting in particular discussions by feminist writers such as de Beauvoir (1952), Friedan (1963), Firestone (1970), and Gilligan (1982). Cf. Foucault (1986) passim.
59 Little work has been done on Roman women and alterity, as first pointed out by Hallett (1989) 60. The Otherness of women is implicit in Wyke (1994) and Richlin (1984) and (1995). Hallett modifies de Beauvoir’s thesis of Other in the case of élite Roman women, arguing that the élite male’s conceptualisation of the female included a sense of Same and Other that arose from attributing desirable male qualities to women. On women in classical thought see Arthur (1984) and Hallett (1989) 73, n. 5. On the dangers of comparing Roman and New World slavery see Bradley (1994) 9.
60 Select examples: Clem. Paed. 2 and 3 passim; Cypr. De Habitu 9; Juv. 6.352-356; Petr. 67; Tac. Ann. 14.2. We may especially recall Tertullian’s characterisation (De Cultu 1.4.2) of make-up and adornment here: Alteri ambitionis crimen intendimus, alteri prostitutionis ...
\end{footnotesize}
whose father Marcius Barea Soranus was charged with treason in AD 66 (Tac. Ann. 16.23). Destitute and alone because her husband had been driven into exile, the teenaged Servilia was compelled to speak at her father's trial and to answer charges that she had distributed money to magicians, money that her accuser alleged she raised from the sale of her dotal ornaments. Servilia's defence was simple: out of filial love and concern for a most excellent father she had consulted magicians to ascertain the outcome of his legal troubles. 'My jewels and robes and the emblems of my rank, she said passionately, 'I gave as I should have given my blood and life, had they demanded them'.\(^{61}\)

Reflected as it is through a male lens, Servilia's speech is one of the few passages we have in which a woman speaks to the value of her sartorial possessions. But with the help of historical perspective, the benefits and disadvantages of self-display to Roman women become easily recognisable. First, the vivid picture that de Pizan conveys of highly competitive aristocratic French women prompts us to think more carefully about privileged Roman women, modes of presentation, and personal aspirations. These women were often the originators of the fashions in hair and dress that were employed in articulations of status. Secondly, de Pizan makes absolutely clear that personal ambition was not limited to the most affluent social groups: women who enjoyed a comfortable standard of living showed considerable interest in personal display. Thus although ancient writers and modern scholars may create the impression that Roman women outside of the senatorial, equestrian, and decurial orders paid little attention to their appearances, we might give greater consideration to the behaviour of non-élite women whose financial circumstances allowed them to seek visual assimilation with the élite by emulating their modes of dress and ornament. Third, because financial means often dictate the degree to which women engage in economic competition or acts of self-definition, the desires of humble and servile women tend to be overlooked in discussions of \textit{cultus} and \textit{ornatus}. This is true of both the ancient and modern studies.\(^{62}\) But the autobiographies and narratives of African-American slaves encourage us to see even small gestures of physical care as important to an

\(^{61}\) Tac. Ann. 16.30-31: \ldots post altaria et aram complexa, 'Nullos' inquit 'impios deos, nullas devotiones, nec aliud infelicens precibus invocavi, quam ut hunc optimum patrem tu, Caesar, vos, patres, servaretis incolumem. Sic gemmas et vestes et dignitatis insignia dedi, quo modo si sanguinem et vitam poposcissent.

\(^{62}\) De Pizan virtually dismissed the issue of self-presentation for humble and poor women (3.8-3.11), and Carcopino (1940), Balsdon (1962), Pomeroy (1975), Bonfante and Jaunzems (1988), Fantham et al (1994), Wyke (1994), and Richlin (1995) do the same when discussing Roman women.
individual's formulation of selfhood. As Harriet Jacobs' book so poignantly illustrates in the account of the hair-cutting, a carefully cultivated appearance gave pleasure and a measure of respectability under the most difficult living conditions. And there is every reason to think that the same may have been true for Roman women of humble and servile status.

Élite Roman Women and Motivations for Self-Display

It has been pointed out that discussions of the élite Roman woman's self-presentation frequently took place within the context of gender, but greater consideration needs to be given to the issue of status. At times writers collapsed their social and political concerns onto discussions of the female body and sexuality, but they also attempted to differentiate between the woman of wealth and her lower class counterpart, between virtuous and immoral women (equated respectively with wealth and poverty in the Roman mentalité), and in the Christian era between the discipula of Christ and her pagan cousin. Whatever the objective, self-presentation was believed to be an index of moral and social status. Issues of status especially were at the forefront of Roman discussions of the élite female and sartorial display just as they were in de Pizan's advice to women of the French court. Cultus and ornatus were essential in reiterating position atop the social pyramid and integral to consensual economic competition. We assume an intense level of competition among the cream of Roman society from critics protesting the luxuria of their generation and from the sumptuary legislation set in place to check economic extravagance. In assessing the behaviour of affluent individuals, Plutarch once remarked (Cato Maior 18.3) that the well-to-do felt deprived of their wealth if denied the opportunity of showing it off. Conspicuous consumption may have been the stamp of the Roman élite but its propensity for display must be understood from the perspective of social validation and self-definition.

The dominant social classes stood apart from the vulgus ignobile in terms of birth, civic responsibilities, affluence, and the moral integrity that was supposed to accompany

---


64 See too the comments of Livy (34.4.11), Propertius (3.13) and Pliny the Elder (Nat. 33.152). Cf. the discussions of Griffin (1976), Wyke (1994), and Dench (1998). More broadly, see the papers in Wyke (1998) that explore this tendency in different time periods and cultures within the central period of Roman history, but which do not limit discussion to the female body. Sumptuary legislation: the lex Oppia (215 BC), Orchia (182 BC), Fannia (161 BC), Didia (143 BC), Licinia (between 143-102 BC); Suet. Iul. 43.1 and Dom. 8.3.
superior birth and economic circumstances. Within the three élite orders differentiation played a central rôle in fostering inter-class prejudice. Property qualifications, visual markers such as purple stripes, and even a 'hierarchy of epithets' combined to separate senators from equestrians, and equestrians from members of the decurial order.65 However, categories were not clear cut: the qualifications of rank were sufficiently elastic that they were modified from time to time. There were also more acute indexes of social acceptability. Individuals of patrician birth, an exclusive group that stood at the pinnacle of the senatorial order, enjoyed precedence over those of non-patrician birth. Personal fortunes that derived from extensive land-holdings were deemed socially acceptable compared with the fortunes of the nouveaux riches, amassed through business ventures such as tax-farming. The disdain of the nobiles whose families had long and distinguished records of public service tempered the success of newcomers who were the first in their families to enter the senate, and those like Cicero who rose miraculously to the consulship.66

These 'unofficial' indices of acceptability promoted resentment whenever individuals of lesser auctoritas acquired privileges not enjoyed by their betters. Under the Principate, equestrians rose to prominence through the patronage of emperors and received a greater share in the political and military administration of the state. The praetorian prefect, a man of equestrian rank, ultimately took precedence over many men of senatorial rank. Relative outsiders to the ranks of the very élite such as Cicero, or the wealthy freedman newly enrolled in the equestrian ordo, carried with them the mark of otherness.67 Social pressure compelled these individuals to display their merit constantly to their associates, which they did through public benefactions, services rendered to the civic community, grand houses, elaborate banquets, and modes of personal presentation. Conspicuous display served as a reminder, to élite and non-élite Romans alike, of an individual's stature. The reality is suggested by a fictional source. Lucius, the protagonist of Apuleius' Metamorphoses, 


67 Cicero's understanding of his own position is made plain in the second of the Verrine orations where, during his summation, he discourses upon his weighty achievements (2. Ver. 5.180-182; cf. Agr. 2.3). Wealthy freedman: Gamsey (1981) 309 argues that a considerable number of freedmen achieved positions of relative affluence, and were usually assimilated to the higher orders.
realised (2.2) that the woman he spied in the market-place of Hypata was a woman of some importance—even before he recognised her as his aunt. Byrrhaena, ornamented with gold jewellery and wearing clothing shot with gold, stood amidst a large crowd of servants.\(^{68}\)

There is every reason to think that élite women were as sensitive as men to the hierarchy that existed within their own peer group, and that women were as ambitious for recognition and validation as their male kin.\(^{69}\) Three very different stories of female behaviour can be adduced to demonstrate the value of personal presentation to women in the classical world and explain how élite women—that is those of senatorial, equestrian, and decurial rank—conceived their function in the communication of status and identity. First, toward the end of the Second Macedonian War (197 BC), the Spartan tyrant Nabis assumed control of Argos at the request of Philip of Macedon under whose protection the Argives had voluntarily placed themselves. Polybius (18.17.5) and Livy (32.40.10-11) both report on the occupation of the town. Their accounts differ slightly, but in the main indicate that once Nabis had taken control of Argos, plundering all the portable assets of the Argive males, he sent his wife Apia at the head of a female delegation to despoil the women of the town.\(^{70}\) Together with her companions, Apia (herself of Argive descent) summoned prominent women of the community by flattery and threats and confiscated their gold ornaments, their precious clothing, and their female appurtenances.\(^{71}\) There is strong emphasis in both narratives on Apia’s actions, with the authors stressing that her cruelty

\(^{68}\) On Byrrhaena’s status see the brief discussion in Mason (1983) 138-140, noting that she was descended from an equestrian family. Lucius’ description of Byrrhaena typifies the Roman male view of the élite woman’s self-presentation: *Aurum in gemmis et in tunicis, ibi inflexum, hic intextum, matronam profecto confundatur.*

\(^{69}\) Cf. MacMullen (1981a) 3.

\(^{70}\) According to Polybius (18.17.2), Nabis asked his wife to travel to Argos for the purpose of raising money (presumably for his military ventures). On events pertaining to the occupation of Argos see Cartledge and Spawforth (1989) 74-75. Polybius, and Livy following him, gives the name of Nabis’ wife as Apega (13.7.6). Walbank (1967) 421s suggests her name may have been Apia. Cf. Cartledge and Spawforth (1989) 69.

\(^{71}\) Livy 32.40.10-11: *Et Nabis firmato praesidio Argis Lacedaemonem regressus, cum ipse viros spoliasset, ad feminas spoliandas uxorem Argos remisit. Ea nunc singulas illustras, nunc simul plures genere inter se iunctas accersendo blandiendoque ac minando non aurum modo iis, sed postremo vestem quoque mundumque omnem muliebrem ademt.* Briscoe (1973) 246-247 thinks that Livy misinterpreted Polybius’ narrative slightly by including the *mundus muliebris* among the items Apia plunders; Polybius (18.17.5) says: τὸν χρυσὸν ἀσκελετό κόσμον, ἄλλα καὶ τὸν λατισμὸν τὸν πολυτελέστατον. Also, where Livy claims that Apia despoiled the women by means of flattery and force, Polybius claims only force was used.
surpassed even that of her husband (an element of the narrative that may be nothing more than a cultural stereotype of female behaviour). Apia's conduct might also be interpreted in another light. If the purpose of plundering the town was to degrade its inhabitants, as Livy suggests it was,\(^72\) then Apia and her companions humbled the Argive women most effectively, stripping away all physical evidence of their status and erasing part of their identity. In antiquity generally, much capital was invested in clothes and ornaments by the affluent, and these items would have been the most visible manifestations of membership in a given group. How conscious Apia was of the impact of her actions on the women of Argos we cannot say. Nor can we know for certain what the loss of feminine accoutrements meant to the Argive women. But if the remarks of Plutarch can be taken as indicative of Greco-Roman thinking on the import of display (Cato Maior 18.3), then the loss for the Argive women was significant.

Secondly, that women especially believed attire and ornament were credentials of status and identity is at the heart of Livy's treatment of the debate over the repeal of the lex Oppia.\(^73\) Enacted in the wake of disastrous military losses in the battle of Cannae (216 BC), the law placed limits on women's luxuries and prevented them from using a carriage within the confines of the city. Cato the Elder, favouring retention of the law, spoke for the conservative element. He also pretended to speak for a wealthy matron who angrily protested what she perceived as the equality (exaequatio) of the prohibition on gold and purple. The ban had, in one sense, created parity between women of disparate rank: the wealthy woman could no longer distinguish herself from her poor neighbour whose financial situation normally prevented the purchase of such a luxury.\(^74\) Failure to maintain this type of equality could lead, Cato argued, to an escalation in sartorial competition that would see the rich woman desirous of owning what no other woman possessed, and the poorer woman spending beyond her means in an attempt to keep pace with her wealthier

---

\(^72\) Livy claims (32.38.5) that Nabis was looking for a reason to plunder the town, and that he was spurred on when he happened to overhear the townspeople cursing him at an assembly: *ut frequenti contione non aspernatos modo sed abominatos etiam nomen tyranni audivit, causam se spoliandi eos nactum ratus tradere ubi vellet urbem Philoclen iussit.*

\(^73\) It is important to remember that Livy is attributing views to his speakers which may reflect Augustan values rather than those of second century BC Rome.

\(^74\) Livy, 34.4.14-15: *'Hanc' inquit 'ipsam exaequationem non fero' illa locuples. 'Cur non insignis auro et purpura conspicior? Cur paupertas qui sit? Nihil habet qui sit? Cuius habet, cuius habet?' Vultis hoc certamen uxoribus vestris inicere, Quirites, ut divites id habere velint quod nulla alia possit; pauperes, ne ob hoc ipsum conteremur, supra vires se extendant?*
sister. Cato speaks hypothetically of course, making it difficult to assess how accurately his words reflect the sentiments of women he regards as unduly conscious of social distinctions. But we can see from the opposing speech of Lucius Valerius, that the abrogation debate involved more than women's desire to manage their physical selves by whatever means they chose.

Under Roman law, women could not participate in most of the civic and political activities of their communities. They had no access to official insignia such as the fasces of public office, nor did they participate in war which brought with it the privilege of displaying enemy spoils in the vestibule of one's home. As a consequence, said Valerius, jewellery, fine clothing, and a refined appearance had to suffice as their badges of office. More revealing is Valerius' claim that the wives of Latin allies could be seen in elegant apparel and riding rather than walking through the streets of Rome—two privileges forbidden to Roman women by the lex Oppia. This disparity allegedly upset the women because of their weak natures, but plainly rankled where Roman male pride was concerned (virorum hoc animos vulnerare posset). Both sexes recognised that elegance of appearance was a symbol of membership in a given group, social or cultural, yet Livy's narrative implies that Roman women clung more tenaciously to this notion. When news circulated that two of the tribunes wished the legislation to be upheld, the women thronged all approaches to the forum and waylaid voters in an attempt to persuade them of the need to rescind the law. So strongly did women feel that their insignia ought to be restored, that in the days prior to the vote their ranks began to swell as women from nearby towns and

---

75 Livy. 34.8-9: Non magistratus nec sacerdotia nec triumphi nec insignia nec dona aut spolia bellica, iis contingere possunt; munditia et ornatus et cultus, haec feminarum insignia sunt, his gaudent et gloriantur, hunc mundum muliebrem appellantur maiores nostri. On the display of spolia in the Roman house see Wiseman (1987). Also found within the domus were the imagines, the portrait busts that symbolised male civic and ancestral pride. Even though the portraits could include ancestors from both the male and female line, they were limited to male kin, thus emphasising the exclusion of women. On the imagines see Flower (1998) 32-59. For a remarkable visual demonstration of male and female insignia, we might look to the late fourth-century BC sarcophagus of Ramtha Visnai and Arnth Tetnie, found at Vulci. Portraits of this Etruscan couple occupy the centre of a decorative frieze, and the couple join hands in a gesture that suggests the dextrarum iunctio. To Arnth's right are several attendants carry what appear to be the symbols of public office: curule chair, lituus, and rods. Ramtha's servants, as noted in Chapter 3, n. 13, carry female accoutrements: jewellery box, fan, perfume flask, and cosmetic case. For discussion and illustrations see Richardson (1976) 143-145, pl. XLIII and XLIV, and Thomson de Grummond (1982) 180-181, fig. 115.

76 Livy. 34.5-6: At hercule universis dolor et indignatio est, cum sociorum Latini nominis uxoris videt ea concessa ornamenta quae sibi adempta sint, cum insignes eas esse auro et purpura, cum illas vehi per urbem, se pedibus sequi, tamquam in illarum civitatibus, non in sua, imperium sit.
neighbouring districts poured into Rome in protest. Emboldened perhaps by these ever increasing numbers, some women even approached the senior magistrates to plead their case, behaviour which seriously displeased the obdurate Cato.\textsuperscript{77}

The third example comes from Polybius, who described (31.26.1-10) how Aemilia, wife of Scipio Africanus and sister of L. Aemilius Paullus, processed from her house in high style whenever she attended religious functions for women. She dressed sumptuously and travelled in a richly-decorated carriage accompanied by a large company of slaves carrying baskets for the sacrifices and utensils made from precious metals. Aemilia made the most of her opportunities to exhibit these appurtenances, which she owed to the good fortune and prosperity of her husband, since her own family was impoverished (Plb. 18.35.5).\textsuperscript{78} Upon Aemilia's death (163/2 BC) her elegant equipage passed to her nephew and adoptive grandson Scipio Aemilianus. He promptly bestowed it on his mother Papiria, whose financial circumstances, it was said, were sorely reduced. She was long divorced from Aemilius Paullus, had not as far as we know remarried, and poverty prevented her from appearing in public in a style befitting her rank.\textsuperscript{79} Papiria's inability to dress and travel in a manner reflecting her social position discouraged her from participating in women's gatherings where her situation would have been apparent to all those of her rank who attended. Her discomfiture eased with the acquisition of Aemilia's possessions, and she passed through the streets whenever the occasion demanded with all her former sister-in-law's pageantry (Plb. 31.26.7).

\textsuperscript{77} Livy. 34.1.5: Matronae nulla nec auctoritate nec verecundia nec imperio virorum contineri limine poterant, omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant viros descendentes ad forum orantes ut florentem re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur. Augebatur haec frequenita mulierum in dies; nam etiam ex oppidis conciliabulisque conveniebant. Iam et consules praetoresque et alios magistratus adire et rogare audebant.

\textsuperscript{78} Walbank (1979) 503 suggests that Aemilia's penchant for display may have contributed to the mood in which the lex Voconia was passed (169 BC), legislation which regulated the size of bequests and forbade testators in the foremost census class from appointing women as their heirs. This argument is tempting but we have no information on what prompted the passage of this law. Dixon (1985) 187; Gardner (1986a) 72 and 170-178; Treggiari (1991) 365-366. Gardner (1998) 215 argues that the Voconian legislation aimed to ensure wealth remained accessible for élite males embarked upon public careers.

\textsuperscript{79} Diodorus Siculus (31.27.3-5) corroborates Polybius' account. Cf. Walbank (1979) 505. Evidence from the Digest (34.2.6, 34.2.8, 34.2.10, 34.2.13, 34.2.15, 34.2.16, 34.2.32.4, 34.2.32.6, 34.2.32.7, 34.2.38.1, 34.2.40.2) reveals that bequests of jewellery, certainly, but also clothing were not unusual. Compare the legal evidence with the anecdote in Tacitus (Ann. 13.13) describing Nero's gift to Agrippina of the appurtenances of former imperial women, perhaps in an effort to assuage her anger over his dalliance with the freedwoman Acts: Forte illis diebus Caesar inspecta ornatu, quo principum consules et parentes effusserant, deligit vestem et gemmas misique donum matri...
Like other élite women, Papiria was fully aware of the capacity of feminine display and knew what this non-verbal language might communicate whenever she ventured from home. To clarify this point we might contrast bodily adornment with another form of adornment that was also integral to the social and economic competition of status-conscious Romans: the decoration of the Roman domus. Affluent and socially established Romans were anxious to distinguish themselves from upwardly mobile individuals, and so incorporated selected motifs in the decorative ensembles of their homes. These patterns and designs served as a 'vocabulary' for the symbolic system of the élite. As less privileged individuals adopted these motifs for the adornment of their own homes, the élite were impelled to re-define this visual vocabulary because it was integral to the preservation of the boundaries between the élite and those whom they regarded as arrivistes. Consequently, this system of symbols was not permanent but constantly evolving. In decorating the body as in decorating the home distinctions of status were secure for periods of time, but as the lines of demarcation inevitably blurred competition was renewed with intensity. Fashions in hair, dress, and adornment, can be said to function in the same manner. Together they formed a language of signs that could be used by women to articulate status and self.

On balance these three items strongly imply that élite women were thoroughly familiar with the symbolism and value of feminine display, and that they used their bodies laden with the symbols of superior rank to affirm their stature in the community. It was also crucial for élite males to ensure that their women were properly and appropriately equipped. Men could not adorn their bodies to the same extent as women without serious damage to their reputations. The over-dressed male left himself open to public ridicule and compromised his masculinity; he might well go the way of Gabinius, despised by Cicero for curling and oiling his hair (Red.Pop. 15). Women surely recognised that they helped to publicise the position and affluence of their menfolk, but Papiria's behaviour makes


81 Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 169 in discussing how the elegant villas of the Roman élite provided the model for more modest Campanian homes , singles out as an example of motif appropriation the bird and fruit panels. This motif has been found in the villa at Oplotantis, but also in a small workshop (I 7.5) at Pompeii.

absolutely clear that women employed self-presentation on their own behalf, to engage in competition within their own social and gender groups. Modern scholars recognise but often minimise this type of behaviour simply assuming that élite women were expected to be impeccably presented whenever they ventured outside the home. Care of the physical self is seen as no more than a constituent of the élite woman’s persona, together with marriage and motherhood.\(^8^3\)

Non-Élite Women and Motivations for Self-Display

The history of self-presentation in Roman society, such as it is, has been for the most part the story of the dominant classes. Governed by cultural impulses, élite tastes are believed to have trickled down to the lower orders.\(^8^4\) But the lower or non-élite stratum of Roman society encompassed an extremely broad range of individuals who possessed varying degrees of wealth and respectability, and whose perceptions of the purpose and value of self-presentation were correspondingly diverse. Some may have wished to emulate their superiors, but other issues might be at stake. When the Elder Pliny remarked (\textit{Nat.} 33.152), for example, on contemporary fashions in gold and silver accessories, he referred to a vogue for silver shoe buckles as a \textit{luxus feminarum plebis}, an extravagance of the female plebs.\(^8^5\) Among the plebs were individuals who amassed considerable sums through trade and commerce, but who lacked respectability in the eyes of the élite because of their vocations. Here were former slaves who carried with them the stigma of their servile origins but who managed a comfortable living for themselves and their families with the assistance of patrons. Here too were soldiers, small businessmen, craftsmen,

\(^{83}\) This aspect of female comportment has been remarked upon by feminist scholars but never fully explored. Discussion of competitive display among women focuses mainly on the aim and outcome of sumptuary laws such as the \textit{lex Oppia}, at the expense of expressions of female status-seeking. The \textit{lex Oppia} and its repeal: Pomeroy (1975) 181-182; Culham (1982); Hemelrijk (1987); Fantham et al (1994) 261-263.

\(^{84}\) Wilson (1938); Carcopino (1940); Balsdon (1962), (1969); Matthews (1970); Sensi (1980-1981); Bonfante and Jaunzems (1988); Sebesta and Bonfante (1994). The Fayum portraits provide the most graphic illustration of the spread of imperial fashions among men as well as women, although these are not necessarily individuals of non-élite status. See specifically Doxiadis (1995); Walker and Bierbrier (1997).

\(^{85}\) Quite clearly Pliny was thinking about the plebeian women of Rome, but among the rank and file in Italy and the Latin West were women like Nonia Locusta (no. 15), married to a \textit{sevir Augustalis}; Regina (no. 76), the freedwoman from Roman Britain married to her Palmyrene patron; and Severina (no. 80), residing in Pannonia Superior with her soldier-husband and their children. The elegant memorials of these women suggest that they too had the economic capacity to purchase such luxuries for themselves.
labourers, and the hapless poor. Some women in this vast social group undoubtedly observed the latest fashions in dress, adornment, and makeup. Although the level of participation must have been commensurate with time and money, scattered references imply that some women of lesser rank used *cultus* and *ornatus* to achieve visual assimilation with more affluent women, and to differentiate clearly between themselves and other elements in Roman society, such as slaves. If we compare the behaviour of non-élite women with the behaviour of *arriviste* males, about whom we know more, it may also be possible to argue that non-élite women helped to stimulate sartorial competition and posed a challenge to the fashion dominance of aristocratic women.

It is difficult to identify with any degree of accuracy these women of lesser rank, but we might recall how de Pizan singled out as highly competitive the women (and men) of the commercial classes who possessed large incomes and who had aspirations beyond what she felt was appropriate to their estate (2.11). Roman women of similar economic disposition, such as those of the commercial élite in large urban centres, may have desired social validation or perhaps a sense of uplift, but hard evidence for the use of *cultus* and *ornatus* in meeting this goal is very meagre. An enigmatic line from a comedy of T. Quinctius Atta (floruit 100 BC) hints that women did use adornment to cross social boundaries. In his *Aquae Caldae*, set presumably in a stylish spa on the Bay of Naples, an unidentified character remarks *cum nostro ornatu per vias meretricie lupantur*. The speaker is probably female but we cannot be certain of her status nor the status of the women she refers to by the phrase *'cum nostro ornatu'*. She may be a respectable *matrona*, indignant that prostitutes are passing themselves off as decent women, or a *meretrix*

---


88 The desire of wealthy freed individuals to appropriate the credentials of status is well attested in funerary contexts as Kleiner's (1977) study of freedmen monuments in Roman Italy well demonstrates.

laughing at loose-living society women.90 The humble woman who mimicked the *ornatus* and *cultus* of the female élite, so far as her income allowed, might gain admiration within her peer group or a measure of satisfaction from the crafting of a fashionable appearance. Little benefit accrued to the honourable woman who dressed provocatively and her behaviour could have serious repercussions. Failure to assume the appropriate attire might bring harm in the form of unwanted male attention, attention that the man would not be wholly liable for because he could not discern the woman's status (*Dig.* 47.10.15.15).91

The scope of this problem cannot be determined but the argument surfaces often enough in classical literature: adherence to dress codes reduced sexual harassment and prevented idle tongues from wagging. The reputation of Claudia Quinta, the woman associated with the arrival of the *Magna Mater* in Rome, serves to illustrate this point. It was said that she was unchaste because of her tart responses to implacable old men, because she liked to vary her hairstyle, and because she went about in stylish clothes (Liv. 29.14.12; Ov. *Fast.* 4.307-310).92

Pliny the Elder's comments on the topic of gold jewellery are suggestive, though do not prove, that a desire for advancement was at the heart of self-presentation among non-aristocratic women. With characteristic dismay, Pliny protested (*Nat.* 33.40) the *luxuria* of the Vespasianic era: Dardanian bracelets were popular with men, and women were wearing an abundance of gold (*in armillis digitisque totis, colo, auribus, spiris*)—even on their sandals. The women's behaviour prompted Pliny to observe rather drily that there could well be a need for a new female *equesrem ordinem*—between the women who wore the *stola* and those of the rank and file (*inter stolam plebemque*). He does not attribute motives here, but Pliny's general views on extravagance might lead us to suppose that social and economic competition is the cause. Clement ascribed a much different purpose to female

90 See Gardner (1986b) 252 who speculates that the speaker might also be male. Compare Plautus *Miles* 790-793 where Periplectomenus takes a young courtesan home and dresses her up as a married woman.

91 Gardner (1986a) 117-118; Treggiari (1991) 310. Cf. McGinn (1998) 160-162. This legal evidence corresponds with the warnings of Seneca the Elder (*Contr.* 2.73). Cyprian (*De Habitu* 9) informed Christian women of the dangers of appearing in public sprucely dressed. We might also note here, for comparison's sake, the warning of George Pettie (the sixteenth century translator of Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversatione*) appended to Guazzo's comments on female attire: 'I will tell you moreover, that it is ordained by the civile law, that if a man offer abuse to an honest matrone, [she] being attyred like a harlot, there is no remedy against him by law'. (Cited in Jones [1987] 580).

92 On Claudia Quinta and the events surrounding the advent of the *Magna Mater* see Gruen (1990) 26 with extensive bibliography.
fashion behaviour, asserting (Paed. 3.58.3) that one of the factors compelling Alexandrian women to wear an abundance of gold was their fear of being mistaken for slaves. Clement dismissed this fear out of hand, pointing out that individuals of superior birth were easily distinguished from their inferiors, but his remark suggests that slaves dressed in fine clothes and wearing fine accessories were not an unusual sight. Non-fictional and fictional sources indicate that slaves of Roman grandees might well be better and more stylishly dressed than the majority of free Romans, and were incomparably better off than the indigent. Seneca professed to be dumbfounded (Tranq. 1.8) when he saw pedagogues adorned with more gold than was typical of leaders in public processions; and Byrrhaena, as one of the foremost women of Hypata (primatem feminam), clothed her slaves in attractive and richly coloured clothes as Lucius discovered when he dined in her home (Apul. Met. 2.19). We cannot know the response of non-élite Romans upon seeing slaves apparelled in this fashion, but if we think in general terms about the Roman propensity for competition and the need for strict and particular categorisation of individuals it is easy to believe that the sight of well-dressed slaves must have rankled among an affluent but non-aristocratic population, thus providing a spur for self-display. The rhetoric of Seneca, Pliny, and Clement is hardly indicative of a social climbing phenomenon; but if Juvenal is right, self-display was so vital a part of Roman social relations that many individuals were determined to create the pretense of prosperity. It was Ogulnia’s habit, Juvenal said (6.352-356), to rent apparel for special occasions, along with a litter, cushions, and a variety of attendants that gave the impression of affluence:

Ut spectet ludos, conducit Ogulnia vestem, conducit comites sellam cervical amicas minutricem et flavam cui det mandata puellam ... multis res angusta domi, sed nulla pudorem! paupertatis habet nec se metitur ad illum quem dedit haec posuitque modum.

93 We have few expressions of resentment among the lower orders on the circumstances of well-to-do slaves, but we might draw a parallel with the indignation of the younger Pliny complaining to Montanus about the presumptuousness of the imperial freedman M. Antonius Pallas (Ep. 7.29.2), and the remarks of Tacitus (Ann. 13.26-27) on deliberations in the senate over the growing insolence of wealthy freedmen. Consider too the audacious ‘sabbath toilet’ of African-American slaves. Travelling through Richmond Virginia of a Sunday, the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead observed that ‘there were many more well-dressed and highly-dressed coloured people than white’. The slave-holder and Civil War diarist, Mary Chestnut, apparently overheard a woman in a Columbia hotel complain that it was ‘one of our sins as a nation, the way we indulged them [the slaves] in sinful finery. We let them dress too much. It led them astray. We will be punished for it’. See White and White (1998) 28-30.

94 Courtney (1980) 303 suggests that Ogulnia is a fictitious character, as the gens Ogulnia had died out by Juvenal’s day.
We can gain a stronger sense of the desire for elevation among non-élite women by examining the behaviour of their male counterparts who frequently appropriated the *insignia* and privileges of equestrian rank. One of the earliest examples (circa 37/36 BC) of such behaviour comes from Horace who chided (*Epod.* 4.15-16) an ex-slave for his haughty ways; apparently the freedman made a habit of wearing a voluminous toga and in the theatre seated himself among the *equites* in their specially reserved seats. This kind of behaviour was especially problematic during the first century of Empire. Under the Principate, individuals did not dare to represent themselves as members of the senatorial class in view of its small size, but ineligible males, such as proprietors of eating establishments (*Plin. Nat.* 33.8) represented themselves as *equites* by wearing a gold ring; other individuals regularly occupied the theatre seats reserved for equestrians. The latter practice was endemic by the time of Domitian (*Suet. Dom.* 8), but solved temporarily by the hiring of two freedmen, Leitus and Oceanus, who escorted offenders toward the exit. Martial pokes fun at several individuals who reluctantly relinquish their seats, such as Nanneius, who 'half stands, half sits in the last row of seats' (*Mart.* 5.14).\(^7\) Expropriation of status necessarily involved wearing costly or costly-looking clothes (*Mart.* 5.8, 5.23), something that was easily accomplished with inexpensive dyes and fabrics, and the addition of costume jewellery. This may have been the strategy of Eucleides *coccinatus* (dressed in scarlet)—a colour worn frequently by the Roman élite—who dropped a key as Leitus tossed him from the reserved seats (*Mart.* 5.35). The key hinted at his menial rôle. Explicit references to women usurping status by the same means are rare, but by analogy with the behaviour of Eucleides, there is every reason to suppose that affluent women in *Fraenkel* (1957) 57-58 dates Horace's epode to 37/36 BC. For detailed discussion on the expropriation of status symbols see *Reinhold* (1971) with references.

\(^{95}\) Although Caligula (*Suet. Gaius* 26) promoted conflict between equestrians and plebeians by encouraging the latter to occupy the reserved seats of the former, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius tried to discourage pretensions to rank and citizen during their administrations. Augustus banned the use of purple garments by everyone except certain civic officials (*Dio* 49.16); Tiberius tried to uphold Augustus' ban by standing as a model of behaviour rather than prosecuting offenders (*Dio* 57.13.4-5); and Claudius is said (*Suet. Claud.* 25.3) to have executed, in the Esquiline field, anyone who usurped the privileges of Roman citizenship. Martial implies (1.103, 4.67, 9.49) that so many individuals passed themselves off as equestrians that it was impossible to distinguish between imitators and those legally entitled to the *insignia* of the order. The usurpation of status symbols continued well beyond the second century AD. Caracalla complained about native Egyptians who tried to assimilate with the linen weavers of Roman Egypt by adopting their modes of dress (*P. Giess* 40); and Ulpian and Paul had to persuade (*SHA. Sev. Alex.* 27) Severus Alexander that a formal dress code for all Romans, including slaves, could adversely affect social relations.

what we might think of as a sub-aristocratic group, had pretensions to social climbing and that they used their beauty and adornment practices to do so. Such behaviour would have been natural for women who, like their élite counterparts, had been taught to identify with their bodies and to seek acceptance through personal presentation.

The crossing of social boundaries through the expropriation of visual cues by Romans of lesser rank undoubtedly occurred, but our sources prevent an adequate assessment of the practice. Ancient literary texts of different genres tell us that a range of items necessary for feminine display were available to women in most strata of Roman society. Make-up and skin-care products could be had very cheaply, in some cases from kitchen-gardens, and economical substitutes for expensive dyes were easily manufactured. The humble did purchase costume jewellery that was produced at a fraction of the cost of real ornaments; Pliny says (Nat. 35.48) that the white pigment anularis was so named because of its similarity to the rings of the rank and file (volgi anulis) which could be purchased in the market-place from impudent craftsmen (Nat. 37.197-200). Differences in quality cannot have been apparent from a distance, as when women sat together in the amphitheatre or glimpsed one another in the street. Closer inspection would probably reveal that the clothes of the wealthy were properly fitted, smooth in texture, uniformly dyed, and elegantly trimmed, whereas those of the rank and file did not fit as well, were more coarse, and less well-finished. The woman of middling rank who imitated current modes of fashion through the use of inexpensive products may have seemed a poor cousin to affluent women in their costly apparel, but she still stood apart from poorer individuals clothed only in their pulla sordida vestis. On the whole, the evidence for feminine display among the lesser ranks is consistent with the notion that cultus and ornatus were indispensable for articulating status and self. The Roman evidence is also analogous to the claims of de Pizan that French women of all social backgrounds engaged in articulating status through personal presentation. As she remarked in the context of social competition, snobbery and competitiveness were endemic among all classes of French society—'from the great to the low' (3.3).

Humble and Servile Women and Motivations for Self-Display

As noted above, the term non-élite constitutes a broad range of individuals who enjoyed (or endured) varying standards of living. In thinking about issues of social acceptance

---

98 Whittaker (1993) 278-279 points out the difficulty of identifying pauperes and argues that these individuals included everyone from the penniless to moderately well-off merchants and craftsmen. He would
and uplift among this group we are faced with the difficulty of isolating the wishes of women whose material circumstances severely curtailed participation in economic competition and offered fewer opportunities for self-expression through feminine display: the free poor and slaves. These women were more likely to be found serving the needs of the wealthy (both élite and non-élite) than occupying themselves with personal presentation. They were spectators rather than participants in the world of feminine display, despite the fact they might possess one nice ensemble or a few pieces of jewellery. Poor and servile women were more likely to be encountered in shops, serving patrons as they browsed through the latest offerings of the vestiarii and the unguentarii, or perusing the wares of silversmiths in the street of the argentarii, when not examining the merchandise of pedlars in the privacy of their homes. The poor and servile must have been conscious of the personal display of a woman like Byrrhaena as she sat near them at spectacles or swept along in the wake of a lictor in the market-place; and when not worrying about the pressing problems of daily existence perhaps they even admired her deportment. Slave-women like Cypris (App. 1, no. 20), Plecusa (Mart. 2.66), and Psecas (Juv. 6.490-491) assisted with the toilette of the well-to-do (nos. 86-94).

99 The two works that paint the most vivid picture of urban poverty in Roman antiquity (about which we know more than rural) are Scobie (1986) and Whittaker (1993). Other accounts of poverty are widely scattered, but may be found in the annotated bibliography in Whittaker (p. 299). Whittaker outlines (p. 276) the difficulty of identifying the poor in Roman society and how the picture is complicated by the presence of slavery. He notes that even Roman writers had only vague ideas about what constituted subsistence: Gaius (Dig. 50.16.234.2) mentions food, clothing, and straw; Sallust (Cat. 48) mentions only food and clothing; and Tacitus is even more imprecise, speaking only of 'the necessities of life'.

100 The mid-second century contracts of two wet-nurses, the freeborn women Thaesis (P. Ross. Georg. 2.18, rr.65-76) and Hero (P. Ross. Georg. 2.18.LXXI, rr. 309-321), from the Arsinoite nome in Roman Egypt, stipulated that the women receive a pair of gold earrings as part of their wages. And we may remember that even women from humble villages possessed, as part of their dotal property, items of jewellery such as bracelets and earrings (see above Chapter 2).

101 To envision the effect of a Byrrhaena's appearance on poor Romans is difficult. If we imagine any number of the women depicted in the Fayum portraits moving through the streets of Alexandria, or one of the small towns dotting the area around the Nile, the impression they created through their feminine display must have been significant; especially so when we remember that the circumstances of the poor and the servile relegated them to the role of onlookers rather than participants (Clem. Al. Paed. 3.31).
and suffered abuse at the hands of mistresses displeased with their styling efforts or some other misdemeanor (Ov. Am. 1.14.15-16; Mart. 11.49). The daily toilette ritual also provided an opportunity for the slave-hierarchy to be reinforced. According to Juvenal (6.499-500), *ornatrices* were called upon, in order of age or skill, to assess their mistress’ appearance. But the self-presentation of affluent women made the exclusion of poor and servile most acute, particularly since the bodies of the latter bore all the hallmarks of the excluded. Clothes that were patched or permanently soiled and shoes that were split provided sport for their betters (Juv. 3.147-151). Additionally, the bodies of slave-women were inscribed with the anger of the *domina*: Ovid’s lover was wont to stab her *ornatrix* in the arms with a hair-pin or scratch her face to register her displeasure (Ov. Ars. 3.239-240; Am. 1.14.15-16), while Psecas had her hair pulled out at the roots (Juv. 6.490-491).

Clothes, jewellery, fashionably styled hair, even complexions formed part of an apparatus of élite oppression. The trappings of femininity reinforced the fact that wealthy women were not just different, but somehow superior because they were rich and they were free. Their appearances indexed in every possible way their superior intellect, morals, and social status. What might have been the response of humble and servile women in Roman antiquity in the face of such domination? Pliny the Elder noted (*Nat.* 9.115), that *pauperes* did take an interest in contemporary trends, coveting apparently the *crotalia* popular under Vespasian. We need not assume that when the *pauperes* took an interest in self-presentation they always engaged in *aemulatio*. Elevation and acceptance was important to some plebeians, but social and economic exclusion fostered a different

---

103 Shearing the head was a common form of servile punishment but also used against African-American women by their white mistresses. The sexual dynamics of the slave-holding system prompted white mistresses to disfigure or mar the appearances of their slave-women in order to prevent their husbands and sons from paying a call to the slave cabins. Jack Maddox, a former Texas slave recalled that his mistress had treated a 'pretty mulatto girl' in this fashion. See discussion in White and White (1998) 56-57.

104 Our sources tell us very little about the self-presentation of slave-women such as *ornatrices*, but we can easily imagine how they might have been treated in instances where mistresses perceived them to imitate too closely the self-presentation of owners. But as a model of behaviour we might consider here the relationship between Augustine’s mother Monnica and her maids, and Monnica’s treatment of them, for which see Clark (1998).

105 MacDowell (1984) 10 argues for this kind of domination in the context of twentieth century society, but his formulation of fashion as a process carefully controlled by a select group of individuals has application to the fashion system of Roman antiquity, where the symbols of status were easily manipulated by the élite as quickly as they were emulated by individuals of lesser rank. Cf. Craik (1994) x.

106 On this count we might also remember Pliny’s characterisation (*Nat.* 33.152) of silver shoe ornaments as a *luxus feminarum plebis*, suggesting that fashions might also be generated by the rank and file.
perception of self-presentation and selfhood in women who typified the Other most profoundly. For one thing, the poor and servile probably enjoyed greater freedom in their personal presentation because they were not expected to engage in economic competition and were generally overshadowed by better dressed women. But small acts of physical care enabled the poor and servile to counteract the prejudices of the élite, who equated poverty and slavery with immorality, ugliness, and all that was distasteful to them.\footnote{Attitudes toward the poor: Whittaker (1993) 274. Toward slaves: Bradley (1994) 65-66. The aristocrat Dionysius, a central character of Chariton’s romance Chaereas and Callirhoe, tells his servant Leonas that ‘[i]t is impossible for a person not freeborn to be beautiful’ (2.1.5): ‘οὐδὲν ἄντων ἔλεγεν, ὃς ἢν ἔτεινεν, καὶ ἔτοιμα, μὴ πεφυκός ἐλεύθρων’. But see also the comments of Varro (R. 2.10.6-8) who suggested that the ideal slave-woman be strong and ‘not ill looking’.

107 Working women stood under the sun as they plied their trade, like Abudia Megiste (CIL 6.9683) who sold grain and beans at the Middle Stairs and the other negotiatrices who sold their wares from stalls in the market-place, not to mention the many women who laboured in fields. Kampen (1981) fig. 40 for the Ostia relief.

108 White and White (1998) 57-58. The ex-slaves, Gus Fester, Amos Lincoln, and Olivier Blanchard, questioned in the 1930s, remembered in fair detail the ‘threading’ and braiding sessions of slave-women. The elaborate braiding and wrapping procedures usually took place during the week in preparation for combing out and arranging on Sundays.}

Complexion was an index of stature and of considerable importance in self-presentation; it distinguished the leisured from those who laboured. A light complexion was desirable and cultivated from an early age. Soranus advised (Gyn. 2.35) the midwife to mix a small quantity of oil with warm wax and apply it to the infant’s body after massage; this procedure nourished the skin, made it whiter, and more supple. Complexion might mark disadvantaged women whose diet and living conditions brought any number of skin disorders, or whose vocation exposed them to the elements daily. Undoubtedly, these women could not afford or were not permitted the use of a sun-shade, like those depicted on funerary monuments (App. 1, no. 10; Plin. *HN.* 13.30) which were the mark of the genteel woman who used them to protect her skin from the harsh glare of the sun when out of doors.\footnote{White and White (1998) 57-58. The ex-slaves, Gus Fester, Amos Lincoln, and Olivier Blanchard, questioned in the 1930s, remembered in fair detail the ‘threading’ and braiding sessions of slave-women. The elaborate braiding and wrapping procedures usually took place during the week in preparation for combing out and arranging on Sundays.} Make-up might also help to conceal the darkness of the complexion or irritations of the skin accompanying poor diet. Hairdressing could be undertaken in the spare moments women spent in each other’s company. An independent hairdresser or tonstrix like Syra, supporting herself by working for hire (Pl. Truc. 405-410), must have been conscious of her own physical care, as a reflection of her professional skills, but no doubt was willing in spare moments to oblige friends and female kin. Slave ornatrices, similarly, must have devoted a small part of their day to personal care which also reflected well upon owners.\footnote{White and White (1998) 57-58. The ex-slaves, Gus Fester, Amos Lincoln, and Olivier Blanchard, questioned in the 1930s, remembered in fair detail the ‘threading’ and braiding sessions of slave-women. The elaborate braiding and wrapping procedures usually took place during the week in preparation for combing out and arranging on Sundays.} The hairstyles of the ornatrices depicted in toilette scenes (nos. 89-
195

91, 94-96) are not elaborate, indeed they are notable for their simplicity. Still other women, possibly of servile status, have kerchiefs covering their hair, a fashion strategy born perhaps of little time for hair-styling, but which might also be a statement in itself. Colourful head wraps were a relatively inexpensive form of adornment, and there is every reason to think that the meagre resources of the slave-woman's peculium might be put toward an inexpensive necklace such as those made with glass beads meant to imitate pearls (Tert. Ad Mart. 4.9). Simplicity of appearance need not connote inattention. In the Roman context it is the hallmark of exclusion and otherness, of women whose personal presentation was constrained by economic circumstances and lack of autonomy We may remember that Harriet Jacobs, despite her servile status was proud of her hair and derived enjoyment from arranging it stylishly.

The lives of women in the lower classes remained one of hardship and it would come as no surprise if simple survival superseded any thoughts of personal beauty. Equally, these women may have had goals for personal display that were more modest than those of the affluent, such as avoiding unwanted sexual attention. Slave-women could be subject to indiscriminate sexual abuse, and under Roman law (Dig. 47.10.15.15) even free women could not expect protection if because of inappropriate attire their aggressors could not determine their status. For poor and servile women in Roman antiquity, the aim of personal presentation may have been to achieve an air of respectability and through respectability self-protection. It cannot be stressed enough that women with few resources had little time to engage in an extensive programme of physical care, but the capacity to attend to skin and hair on a basic level may well have brought personal satisfaction and counteracted the stereotypes of the poor and servile that existed among the Roman élite: that lower class women were not necessarily ugly and immoral because they were poor and servile.


111 In describing the manners and customs of the Gauls, Ammianus Marcellinus remarked (15.12.2) that it was common practice among them to effect a neat and clean appearance, while in Aquitania itself both men and women, regardless of how poor they were, ensured their clothes were neither soiled nor ragged (although presumably they might be patched). Compare the observations of Joseph Ingraham, a visitor to 1830s Mississippi, who was struck by the industry of slaves on their day of rest. In the 'negro quarters' dotting the plantations could be heard the sounds of slaves preparing for church: 'In every cabin the men are shaving and dressing—the women, arrayed in their gay muslins are arranging their frizzy hair, in which they take no little pride, or investigating the condition of their children's head—the old people neatly clothed are quietly conversing or smoking about their doors'. White and White (1998) 37-38.
Theatres of Feminine Display

Women's articulations of status or self did not always have to take place in public, as in the episodes recorded by Polybius and Livy. Status could be conveyed within less formal contexts, from *salutationes* to shopping excursions, where women reinforced their position in the social hierarchy and communicated identity through display. On these occasions, women were more than mere extensions of a husband's or father's prestige, but players in their own right in the status-seeking games of élite society. The daily ritual of the *salutatio* is widely regarded as the setting in which public figures, especially candidates for civic office, affirmed their superior position within society, consolidated the vast network of contacts and clients that were indispensable to public and private business, and distributed *sportulae* to ensure the continuing goodwill of their clients. Modern discussions of the *salutatio* seldom refer to the presence of women, yet we know they accompanied their husbands (Juv. 1.120-122) and even hosted *salutationes* of their own (Juv. 3.128-130). Women's receptions may not have served the same purpose as those of Roman men, but they held potential for displays of rank and identity.

After Augustus' death Livia held her own receptions and met with members of the senate and other individuals (Dio 57.12.2) to Tiberius' consternation; and while married to Claudius, Agrippina had been accustomed to preside over her own levees (Tac. *Ann.* 13.18). Details on the identities of their callers are in short supply, although senatorial and equestrian women must surely have been among them (Suet. *Cl.* 35.2). We do not know the exact size of the crowd or the protocol that governed interviews, but Seneca says (*Ben.* 6.33.3-34.3) it was standard practice to establish a hierarchy of visitors that reflected the level of intimacy between host and caller. Presumably, the receptions of Imperial


114 The *cohortes* were classified as follows: certain individuals were received in private, others in company, and the rest *en masse*. See the comments of Sailer (1982) 11-12, and Millar (1977) 21-22 on the *salutationes* of the emperors, and the crush that might be found at designated holding areas, identified by Aulus Gelius (*NA* 4.1.1.) as the *vestibulum* of the Palatine and as (20.1.2) in *area Palatina*. We might also note that among the slaves of Antonia Minor was an *ab admissione* (*CIL* 6.33762), the individual who received Antonia's callers and who carefully controlled access to his mistress. See Treggiari (1975b) 51-52.
women were organised along these lines, but if not visitors would have been conscious that an interview in the Imperial household was an opportunity to see and be seen by social equals. It was an event at which scrutiny of personal presentation quite naturally occurred as the crowd milled around in anticipation of an interview. Women outside the Imperial family held smaller less formal receptions, sometimes during their morning toilette if we take Ovid at his word (Ars. 3.209). Here was the salutatio of the paterfamilias in miniature, where a woman of stature might emphasise the hierarchy within her own peer group, or confirm her aspirations for elevation. During these visits the appurtenances afforded by wealth and required by position did not necessarily adorn the host but were still highly visible. When callers arrived, the materfamilias might be surrounded (cf. nos. 86-94) by a retinue of specialised slaves (cf. Clem. Paed. 3.26.3); an ornatrix to style her hair, a slave to hold her mirror (ad speculum), another to hold her hairnets, a vestiplica tending to her clothes, perhaps even a supervisor of her wardrobe (ad vestem). In plain view were the expensive toiletries used to craft her appearance as well as her ornamenta et vestimenta, the styles of which changed annually if not more often (Pl. Epid. 228-299). Much later in the day, her appearance must have been noticed by the many humiliores (tradesmen, business agents) who arrived at her door and with whom she consulted in the atrium.116

Smartly dressed women attended the games, the circus (Juv. 11.202), and especially the theatre. At the latter, Terence objected (Hec. 35; cf. Plaut. Poen. 32-35) to their noisy chatter and Tertullian disapproved of erotic plays when women were in the audience (De Spec. 17.3; cf. Clem. Paed. 3.10.4, 3.76.4). In the theatre, men could pursue the cultissima femina (Ov. Ars. 1.99; cf. Juv. 6.61) who attended to see and be seen. At the games she was relegated to the upper tiers (summa cavea), near the poorer members of society in their dark and dingy clothes (pulla sordida vestis), from which she observed the entertainments, and undoubtedly the apparel and ornaments of the women with whom she sat. Did women concern themselves with the ornatus of one another? Plutarch

---

115 As an early riser, Vespasian was accustomed to meet with friends upon waking (Suet. Vesp. 21), and would dress himself and put on his own shoes while they conversed.


117 That women were segregated and confined to the upper tiers is suggested by Propertius (4.8.77) and Ovid (Am. 2.7.3), who complain of having to twist round in their seats in order to catch sight of women at the games. In his seventh eclogue (27), Calpurnius Siculus gives an impression of the wooden amphitheatre built in Rome by Nero. His description of the seating arrangements can be compared with that of Suetonius (Aug. 44.2) who indicates that men and women sat together before the reorganisation of Augustus. Rawson (1987) 515-518 also argues that there was strict organisation in the women's section according to status. Libertae probably enjoyed the same privileges as the plebs ingenua, but matronae and
describes (Mor. 142C) a curious Egyptian custom that prevented women from wearing shoes by day in an effort to keep them at home. It may have been effective in Plutarch’s eyes, for he declared that all women would stay indoors if they were denied gold-embroidered shoes, jewellery, purple, and pearls. The implication seems to be that women valued these possessions highly and knew they would be noticed in society, presumably by both men and women (cf. Plut. Mor. 12.). Fortunata, the vulgar wife of the equally vulgar Trimalchio, relished the admiration of her guest, Scintilla (Petr. 67; cf. Plin. HN. 33.40), to whom she had passed her bracelets, gold hairnet, and anklets for intimate perusal. Not to be outdone, Scintilla in turn withdrew her much coveted pearl earrings from the little gold ‘lucky’ box she wore on a chain about her neck and passed them to her hostess for approval.

Visits to the baths created additional opportunities for informal display, since bathing occupied a central position in Roman life and any community of substance had public complexes that were gathering points for its citizens. It was an experience seldom conducted behind closed doors, even when large personal fortunes like those of Cicero and Pliny the Younger, allowed for private facilities. Consider two well-known mosaics from the villa at Piazza Armerina. In the vestibule of the baths is a depiction of a Roman matrona processing through the streets with her children. She is stylishly dressed in a dalmatic, bejewelled, and her hair is elaborately arranged and ornamented. Two female slaves, attired in a manner reflecting the status of the more elegant domina, accompany the family bearing the equipment they will need for the baths: one casket for towels or perhaps a change of clothes, and a second containing the instrumenta balnei. This representation is a very strong indication of the importance of cultus and ornatus. But personal display did not end with the processional.

---

their daughters would have sat apart from meretricies and probrosae. It is unclear whether female slaves sat with their mistresses or with other slaves and the poor.

118 DeLaine (1988) 29 comments that the rich were the main players in visits to the baths; they ‘went to be seen’, while the unprivileged masses ‘went to gape as much as to bathe’. Cf. Fagan (1999) 216.

119 Piazza Armerina mosaic: Dunbabin (1978) 202; Shelton (1981) pl. 7; Fagan (1999) figs. 27-28. The receptacles carried by the slaves are markedly similar to those comprising part of the Esquiline treasure. One of the caskets has been identified as belonging to a woman named Proiecta who may have been married to a member of the gens Turcia, a prominent Roman family of the fourth and fifth centuries AD. Decoration of the casket includes a representation of a bath processional. The second is the so-called Muse casket. See Shelton (1981) for an overview and catalogue of the Esquiline pieces.
The second mosaic depicts a woman, having just emerged from her bath, attended by two slaves offering towels and clothes. Within the *apodyterium*, quality possessions (woolen rather than linen towels, expensive unguents, gold and silver utensils) and specialised slaves (a masseuse perhaps) distinguished the woman of rank from her inferiors as well as the less affluent members of her own order during what might otherwise have been an 'equalising' experience. The élite woman's *dignitas* was less obvious once she disrobed, but material evidence indicates that determined individuals could command deference even outside the changing room. The drains of bath complexes in Roman Britain filled in the course of time with small personal items of bathers: gemstones, rings, and glass beads. We might also compare here a fragment of a petition filed with the strategos of Euhemeria (*P. Ryl. 2.124*) dating to the first century AD. The appellants, Aplounous and her mother Thermis, were attacked at the local baths by a woman and two men known to them. In the melee, Aplounous lost a gold earring, a bracelet, and a bronze bowl. Her mother lost a gold earring. Clearly, bathing could be and was transformed into a pageant-like occasion, in which a woman's person and possessions formed part of the credentials that distinguished her in the eyes of her peers and commanded respect from lesser Romans. That women recognised this was so is made evident by Pliny. In discussing the various types and uses of pearls, he complained (*Nat. 9.114*) that women wore far too many pearls because they regarded them as badges of status. The popularity of pearls even gave rise to a common saying among women: 'a pearl is as good as a lictor for a lady when she walks abroad'.

**Conclusion**

In summarising the motives for self-presentation among the women of Roman society, we might draw from Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death*, and think about feminine display as a reaction to socialisation. In his cross-cultural analysis of slave

---

120 That is, the bathing experience necessarily divested the élite body of the trappings of rank. Fagan (1999) 215-219 generally on articulations of status at the baths.


122 Pliny *Nat. 9.115*: *hos digitis suspendere et binos ac ternos auribus feminarum gloria est, subeuntque luxuriae eius nomina externa, exquisita perditio nepotatu, siguidem, cum id fecere, crotalia appellant, ceu sono quoque gaudeant et collisu ipso margaritarum; cupiuntque iam et pauperes, lictorem feminae in publico unionem esses dictitantes.*
systems, Patterson looks closely at the behaviour of slaves in the face of deracination, lack
of autonomy, and indiscriminate maltreatment, arguing that slaves developed numerous
responses to the 'social death' imposed upon them. Rebellion and flight were two of the
most common responses, but there were other more subtle approaches to desocialisation,
as the evidence of African-American fashion culture shows.\(^1\) Naturally, it would be
absurd to equate the treatment of all Roman women with that of the black slaves described
earlier in this chapter, but between the two there are definite similarities of treatment and
reaction. Roman women and African-American slaves were excluded by prevailing
ideologies from full participation in their communities, yet both worked out strategies that
allowed them to participate in the community and to demonstrate their sense of selfhood
despite their liminality. It might be objected that affluent Roman women can hardly be
compared with slaves since they did not lack the material needs of life. In contrast to the
servile, élite women were well clothed, housed, and fed. The enjoyment of creature
comforts, however, did not preclude the possibility that other needs or desires, perhaps
those of individuality, elevation, or gentility, might arise—a point argued convincingly by
the ex-slave, Frederick Douglass (1817?-1895), in his autobiography.

In his memoirs, Douglass described his year-long sojourn at Covey's farm, a training
ground for intractable slaves run by a former plantation overseer. Covey's methods
involved the completion of arduous tasks, daily beatings of a sadistic nature, and gruelling
working hours. Slaves were sent to the fields well before daylight and returned at Covey's
discretion, which meant midnight on some occasions. Several months of brutalisation left
Douglass and his fellow slaves longing for return to their normal living and working
conditions, no matter how deplorable the former might have been. Departure from
Covey's farm brought a dramatic improvement in the slaves' mental and physical outlook.
They might well be abused upon return to their masters, but this abuse could not match, so
Douglass believed, the wretchedness of their experience at Covey's. And once released
from the mind-numbing fear of such mistreatment, the slaves began to concern themselves
with other things, such as freedom. Douglass' point here is that human preoccupations or
aspirations are often proportional to physical and mental welfare.\(^2\) Thus although many

\(^1\) Patterson (1982) 337.

\(^2\) Douglass (1881) 185: Beat and cuff your slave, keep him hungry and spiritless, and he will follow the
chain of his master like a dog; but feed and clothe him well, work him moderately, surround him with
Roman women did not suffer materially they existed all the same under a condition of marginalisation. Gender ideology perceived them as less important than men and denied them the privilege of expressing the self through culturally approved male patterns of validation. For non-élite women and slaves this condition was far more acute because they experienced the added indignity of élite prejudice which regarded them with indifference if not complete disdain. Self-presentation, however, offered women a coping mechanism. It helped them acquire a sense of self and place despite the limitations of their social position.

A number of factors might shape motives for self-presentation, but key were economic circumstances and rank. Within the Roman élite, women looked upon physical appearance as a commodity that could be tightly controlled and employed in articulations of status and identity within their own social milieu. It would not be too much to say that among élite Roman women, for whom conspicuous display was a common exercise, affirmations of status were of paramount importance. Competition was intense among the dominant social groups. Personal prestige along with rank had to be reinforced in the face of challenges by peers and less privileged individuals. The latter were not simply upwardly mobile freedmen, but could well be individuals of senatorial, equestrian, or decurial status. Changing styles in hair, adornment, and dress comprised a sign language comprehended by an exclusive few. Visual idioms were not unknown in Roman society. We might compare, for example, the bodily adornment of the foremost social groups with the decorative programmes of their homes. In the context of domestic architecture, Wallace-Hadrill has demonstrated that one means of differentiating between the established élite and the upwardly mobile was through interior design, specifically the use of selected decorative motifs which formed a sort of vernacular. As the vocabulary of this unique system was expropriated by less privileged social groups, the élite re-defined it in order for their articulations of power to continue. This system of symbols, like fashions in hair, dress,

125 Of course women had other ways of participating in the community and defining or expressing self. We cannot rule out the very real possibility that women derived much satisfaction and enjoyment from their roles as wives and mothers. Public benefaction was one vehicle of expression for élite Roman women, for which see MacMullen (1980b); Forbis (1990); Boatwright (1991); Delia (1991).

126 Hopkins (1983) 171-175 sees distinct sets within the senatorial order of the Imperial period who competed for social and political honours. Among the 'grand set', for example, were patricians who, under the personal patronage of the emperor, advanced swiftly from quaestor to consul, but who acquired little military experience in the process. The 'power set' comprised senators who administered important military provinces.
and adornment, was not static but constantly evolving. In decorating the body as in decorating the home distinctions of rank were secure for periods of time, but inevitably the lines of demarcation blurred and competition renewed with intensity.\textsuperscript{127}

Humble Romans and slaves must have had more modest aspirations for self-display, as their financial circumstances necessarily excluded them from the economic competitions of the affluent. Indeed, we might readily believe that the humble and servile had few aspirations at all because they were preoccupied with material needs and general survival.\textsuperscript{128} But there were varying standards of self-presentation in the ancient world and, as Pliny tells us (\textit{Nat.} 33.152), not all were established and controlled by the dominant classes. Personal display offered non-élite women an opportunity to defy the stereotypes of the aristocratic Roman who saw an intimate link between surface and soul.\textsuperscript{129} A neat, clean appearance brought an air of respectability and counteracted the notion that the poor woman was immoral or that the slave-woman could not be attractive simply because she was a slave. This desire for validation and respect among the humble and the servile can also be detected in their mortuary practices. Modest Romans and slaves of private citizens alike strove to affirm identity and self by setting up memorials that often included a statement of the deceased’s occupation. When individuals could not meet this expense, they were assisted by burial clubs or their professional associations.\textsuperscript{130} If the humble were determined to commemorate themselves and their kin in this manner, it is easy to believe they took an equal interest in personal presentation. Financial capacity necessarily dictated the frequency and extent of their self-display, but these limitations should not overshadow the fact that humble and servile women desired recognition and approval—the latter perhaps most of all. And although self-presentation among the lower classes probably involved greater ingenuity and resourcefulness, these circumstances make their feminine display no less vital. We should not be surprised, consequently, to find \textit{mundus muliebris} representations on the funerary monuments of non-élite women such as Asteris (no. 21), Silvina (no. 29), and Psyche Herennia (no. 47). This symbolic

\textsuperscript{127} Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 184-185.

\textsuperscript{128} Food crises, for example, were endemic in the ancient world. See Garnsey (1989) 271.

\textsuperscript{129} Cf. White and White (1998) Chps. 1 and 2, \textit{passim}, who interpret the African-American slave’s crafting of a respectable or eclectic appearance as a response to social exclusion, and as reflective of ‘a way of seeing and ordering the world’ (p. 36).

vocabulary may have signified the skills that the deceased employed in making up the bodies of the affluent, but they were also expressions of selfhood and affirmations of presence in the citizen community.
Chapter Six

Designing Women

I have great pleasure in sending you...a pair of clasps which [my sister] sometimes wore & a small bodkin which she had in constant use of more than twenty years. I know how these articles, trifling as they are, will be valued by you & I am very sure that if she is now conscious of what is passing on earth it gives her pleasure they should be so disposed of.

Cassandra Austen to Anne Sharp, after the death of Jane Austen

In a particularly chatty letter to his friend Calvisius Rufus (Ep. 2.20), Pliny the Younger gossips about the continued bad behaviour of M. Aquilius Regulus, the senator and legacy-hunter he detests. Pliny finds his behaviour so reprehensible that he is compelled to report the morbid details to Calvisius, claiming fervently that he could relate several incidents. On one occasion the artful Regulus had exacted a legacy from the ailing widow of a prominent senator, but on a second failed—despite his wheedling ways—to have himself named among the beneficiaries of a dying ex-consul. A third affair involved a woman named Aurelia,\(^1\) whose will was to be witnessed by Regulus. Upon arriving at the signing ceremony, Regulus was struck by Aurelia's magnificent appearance and pressed her to bequeath him the very clothes that she was wearing. Initially hesitant, she eventually consented, opening her will and altering it under Regulus' expectant gaze.\(^2\) Pliny's indignant yet amusing accounts of *captatio* apart, there are several points of interest in this letter. Aurelia's last-minute change to her will seems unusual, for Pliny says nothing about the presence of the *tutor* she was required to have under Roman law, unless released by the *ius trium liberorum*.\(^3\) Aurelia's willingness to accommodate Regulus' tactless request is also somewhat surprising, for legal evidence implies that women were more likely to leave their wardrobes to female friends and kin. But the image of Aurelia splendidly dressed for the notarising of her will is most interesting, because the degree of formality surrounding

---

\(^1\) Sherwin-White (1966) 204 speculates that she might be related to Aurelius Priscus, consul in AD 67, or possibly the Aurelii Fulvi, a family of consular background.

\(^2\) Ep. 2.20.10: *Aurelia ornata femina signatura testamentum sumpserat pulcherrimas tunicas. Regulus cum venisset ad signandum, 'Rogo', inquit 'has mihi leges'. Aurelia ludere hominem putabat, ille serio instabat; ne multa, coegit mulierem aperire tabulas ac sibi tunicas quas erat induta legare: observavit scribentem, inspexit an scripsisset.* On these particular incidents and Pliny's inability to be completely impartial on the subject of Regulus, see the comments of Champlin (1991) 99-100.

such ceremonies varied greatly, from solemn to 'remarkably casual'.\footnote*{4} Did Aurelia decide that the signing of her will was a special occasion, for which she had to be appropriately adorned?

Pliny's brief narrative of the interaction between Regulus and Aurelia epitomises the kind of evidence scholars work with in writing the history of Roman women. Although plentiful, our sources are scattered, anecdotal, and coloured by class and gender, sometimes raising more questions than they answer. Who decided, for example, whether the signing of a will would be an informal or ceremonial event, and what constituted an appropriate standard of dress? How often did women make legacies of clothing and jewels to male relations? Does the absence of Aurelia's tutor indicate that guardianship of women (tutela) had become a matter of form by the early second century, and that women enjoyed wide discretionary powers over the dispersal of their property? The tantalising but often indistinct images of womanhood that result from incidental references have encouraged scholars to seek fresh approaches to the study of Roman women, with the result that our knowledge has improved enormously. The expanding scholarship has included a handful of studies on feminine display, but as these are founded largely upon literary frameworks, the subject is far from exhausted. A deeper understanding of the rôle of self-presentation in women's lives is possible if we synthesise all of the evidence—literary, visual, and documentary (epigraphic). These are fundamental pieces of a larger puzzle which when integrated, rather than studied independently, provide a more complete picture of women and personal display.

As we saw earlier, Clement of Alexandria provides one of the most comprehensive discussions of women and self-presentation in the Roman period, conveying clearly the educated male's philosophy of feminine display. Underlying Clement's work—and that of the classical writers he cites throughout the Paedagogus—is unease about the well-presented woman's capacity to influence men, distress at the consumerism of beauty and fashion culture, and tension between the human desire for self-expression and the need for social conformity. Like his many predecessors, Clement did not know what to make of women who refused to adhere to conventional notions of female appearance. Thus although Clement contributes much to our understanding of toilette practices, at the same

\footnote*{4} Bequests of clothing: Dig. 34.2.6, 34.2.8, 34.2.16, 34.2.32.4, 34.2.32.7, 34.2.36, 34.2.38.1, 34.2.40.2. But see P. Diog.11-12 from Ptolemais Euergetis, dating to AD 213, in which a woman bequeaths her jewellery and clothes to her young son. Ceremony surrounding the notarisation of wills: Champlin (1991) 76, with references. He suggests that the frequency of revision discouraged formal signing ceremonies.
time he brings clearly into focus two shortcomings of a purely literary approach to feminine display. First, the strong urban-élite bias of the *Paedagogus* reflects the beauty culture of privileged women in Alexandria who popularised certain modes of dress, make-up, and cosmetic therapy. How well can Clement be said to represent the sartorial behaviour of women in Alexandrian society as a whole? As a Christian teacher he was concerned, in principle, with the salvation of all Alexandrians, but he seldom spoke about non-élite men and women. Should we assume that the humble and servile merely imitated the fashion modes of the élite, or that serious preoccupations prevented them from engaging in anything but a very basic level of personal care? Secondly, what was the purpose of the rhetoric surrounding feminine display? Criticism of female appearance persisted in Roman literary culture over the course of several centuries. Writers from Terence to Tertullian raised their eyebrows at women's beauty practices, yet their comments carried little weight with women if we judge by women's behaviour. Material evidence from Roman Egypt, in the form of mummy portraits depicting elegant women, seems to suggest that censure was highly ineffective at moderating what women actually did.

At most, protest dismissed non-conventional women and soothed the apprehensive writer. Other literature, most notably the work of Pliny the Elder, tells a different story of women and self-presentation, and challenges the cultural assumptions found in more comprehensive sources like the *Paedagogus*. The former strongly suggests that women perceived *cultus* and *ornatus* as techniques of femininity that were integral to the design of their appearances and to the interpretation of femininity. Women viewed the make-up regimens and therapies comprising personal care as facilitating mastery of the physical self, and this mastery ultimately contributed to their social and gender success. Even sensible medical writers acknowledged the benefits of attending to hair and skin. Further, if we trust Pliny the Elder and Columella, care of hair and skin was easily undertaken with organic materials, from markets and gardens, that women handled on a daily basis. Clothing and jewellery items were more difficult to obtain, but cheaper quality fabrics, dyes, and imitation jewellery could be had. Time and finances naturally governed a woman's devotion to personal care, but as appearance was regarded as a manifestation of internal self, there is no reason to think that women in the lower orders lacked interest in maintaining a respectable appearance any more than upper class women. A variety of

---

evidence points strongly to women in all walks of life seeing self-presentation as a vital aspect of their lives, in sharp contrast to the counsels of moralists.

The conflict between male opinion and female behaviour becomes even more pronounced if we place the iconographical evidence for female self-presentation next to the literary. The relationship between femininity and self-presentation was widely disseminated in Roman material culture through the skill of painters, coroplasts, silversmiths, and sculptors. But funerary monuments especially give us a sense of the importance of *cultus* and *ornatus* in the lives of women, and stand in direct opposition to the comments of classical authors attributing only dubious motives to women's display. Consider the portrait-stele of Priscilla (App. 1, no. 61) who lived in Aquitania during the Antonine period, and who died at the relatively young age of twenty-one. Priscilla stands tall, slender, and clothed in a tunic and *palla*, the traditional garb of the Roman woman. She gazes into a mirror held in her left hand while her right arm is poised at her side; in this hand is a comb, as if she is about to tuck a few stray wisps of hair into her chignon. The idealisation of grooming in a mortuary context, where Romans wished to leave some record for posterity of their earthly achievements, points strongly to *cultus* and *ornatus* as activities suited to honorable women, and approved by women as well as the men who commemorated them. Representations of the *mundus muliebris* and toilette scenes were not limited to a particular place and time, but formed part of the artistic repertoire of sculptors in Italy and areas of the Roman West from the early Imperial period through the late third century. The longevity of this iconography well demonstrates that the link between femininity and self-presentation was firmly entrenched in Roman society and culture.

Material and literary sources combine to argue persuasively for a rather different view of feminine display than that offered by many male writers; but the constraints of the visual evidence demonstrate the need for analysing many types of evidence for self-presentation. Hair-dressing scenes, for example, are often taken to symbolise the competitive ethos of elite Romans who valued leisure more highly than work, and who placed a premium on conspicuous consumption; that is, the capacity to show the public they possessed a significant degree of wealth. Further, by virtue of their expense (materials, size, and complexity of iconography) monuments suggest rather convincingly that toilette

---

6 There is a discrepancy between Nerzic (1989) 234, who gives Priscilla's age at death as sixteen (*d(e)functae) an(norum) xvi*], and CIL 13.869 which states that she died at the age of twenty-one (*d(e)functae) an(norum) xxi*].
iconography found favour largely with affluent women and their families. These interpretations, although plausible, are usually given without knowing the identity or social status of commemorators and honorands. Analysis of the sixty-four inscriptions accompanying *mundus muliebris* reliefs and portraits of women holding toiletries adds another dimension to this picture. The inscriptions support the perception that beauty culture was the vocation of affluent women, but also reveal that women of humble and servile backgrounds, who are under-represented in our literary sources, participated in beauty culture or wished to create the illusion of participation. Literary sources suggest that there were a number of ways women could engage in *cultus* and *ornatus*, and epigraphic evidence confirms that free and slave, rich and humble saw the techniques of personal display as a viable and respectable activity. So while hard evidence for the cosmetic and fashion habits of women in the lower orders may be elusive, meagre evidence should not be interpreted as indifference. *Mundus muliebris* reliefs and toilette scenes comprised a visual language that accompanied funerary texts for women in all walks of Roman life.

The wealth of evidence affirming the central rôle of personal display in women's lives is invaluable, but does not make explicit what women hoped to achieve by designing themselves and their own conceptions of womanhood with the techniques of femininity. Historical perspective helps us to see that *ornatus* and *cultus* may have been part of a strategy for achieving differentiation and expressing self in a society that placed great emphasis on conformity. Roman women were defined by their relationships to other individuals, principally males, but self-presentation gave them an opportunity to create a sense of individuality—as the mummy portraits so graphically illustrate. In attributing motives and goals to women's care of the self, we assume a level of awareness, a consciousness of feelings and motives, that some scholars believe did not normally exist in pre-industrial societies. In one view, individuals identified 'with their social rôles, rather than [distinguishing] between their selves and the social rôles they happened to fill'.

From infancy, people were trained and accustomed to function within culturally established rôles that were defined in terms of biological function and the exterior self: clothing, adornment, language, and mannerisms. Adherence to conformity, not resistance to the status quo, brought respect and recognition. Those who challenged established norms by charting their own life-course, paying little or no heed to collective opinion, were seen to

---

undermine group stability, be it family or community. Can we say, then, that Roman women desired to be seen as individuals? Did they develop strategies for independence, expressing self in the face of subordination and marginalisation by their communities?

As a final demonstration of the Roman woman's understanding of self, we might think more carefully about the way in which she disposed at death of the items that were integral to the construction of self. A convenient body of evidence is provided by eight legal texts pertinent to women's wills dealing with legacies of jewellery and clothing described in the *Digest* (34.2). Although limited, this material is telling. First, there is some indication that the practice of bestowing carefully described items on individuals according to the degree of intimacy between testator and beneficiary was fairly common. This accords with Champlin's assertion that Roman wills were expressions of deep emotion, and not undertaken lightly by testators. A sense of this emotion can be obtained from the language of the bequest, where testators used terms of endearment such as most dear, most affectionate, and so forth. Two of the women's wills contained in the *Digest* follow these conventions: one *testatrix* left a legacy (Dig. 34.2.32.4) of jewellery, gold, and women's accoutrements (*alia muliebria*) to her most sweet daughter (*mea filia dulcissima*), another stipulated that her heirs respect a *fideicommissum* allowing Seia *dulcissima* the gold cup of her choice (Dig. 34.2.36). Precise descriptions of bequests is a feature of two examples. Seia bequeathed (Dig. 34.2.6) her 'large pearl with the hyacinths' to Antonia Tertulla, while Sempronia Pia was the recipient of 'Tavian covers' (Dig. 34.2.38.1). Sempronia was also permitted to choose three tunics with matching cloaks from among the personal effects of her donor. Other legacies are described more broadly, but convey perhaps their earthly importance to the testator because of their personal nature. Titia was given clothing, jewellery, and toilette articles (Dig. 34.2.8); Septicia (not necessarily a generic name) received Titia's toilette equipment (Dig. 34.2.32.7); and Seia received the entire collection of her friend's jewels (Dig. 34.2.40.2).

There are several caveats to be made if we wish to consider this legal evidence as indicative of women's sense of self. We need to be reminded that testamentary evidence, like other forms of evidence from Roman antiquity, is strongly coloured by status and gender. Most extant wills can be attributed to affluent males who were, for the most part,

---


concerned for the proper and equitable disposal of considerable assets. Women's wills are far fewer in number, but show similar preoccupations. With the evidence in the *Digest*, it is difficult to determine the identity of the *testatrices* or whether the wills cited are authentic, because the jurists often supply a generic name, rather than the original of the *testatrix*, when dispensing their advice. Titia (*Dig.* 34.2.8, 34.2.32.7) and Seia (*Dig.* 34.2.6, 34.2.36, 34.2.40.2) are examples of these legal pseudonyms. It is also entirely possible that the wills cited in connection with bequests of jewellery and clothing are not actual case histories but *exempla* manufactured for the sole purpose of clarifying legal arguments. Thus we cannot determine with any degree of certainty the identities of the *testatrices*, nor the reality of their wills. We can say, however, that even if the wills are hypothetical only, they must still reflect the manner in which women could be expected to dispose of their personal effects. Finally, it is extremely difficult to assign dates to any of these cases histories, or to detect marked change over time in women's testamentary behaviour. It is worth noting, however, that although six of the eight cases discussed in this section of the *Digest* are attributed to the Imperial jurist Q. Cervidius Scaevola, it is evident that jurists of the Republican and early Imperial periods (Q. Mucius Scaevola, P. Alfenus Varus, M. Antistius Labeo, and Masurius Sabinus), were also compelled to deal with legacies of women's personal effects.

If we use cross-cultural comparison to ease the constraints of our legal evidence, we can see that Roman women sometimes bequeathed very personal items to family and intimates, in the manner of French and English women of the modern era. Sixteenth-century French women, in the view of Zemon Davis, developed strategies for independence and personal expression that demonstrated their sense of self, and these strategies are closely linked to testamentary behaviour. Jewellery and clothing constituted part of the dotal property women brought to their marriages, but women could also anticipate additional items from husbands during their lifetime or legacies from friends and relatives. Women usually bequeathed these possessions to other women through wills.

---

10 By Champlin's calculations (1991) 46-49, the wills of Roman males outnumber those of females by three or four to one. He considers a broad range of sources here, literary, papyrological, epigraphic, and legal.

11 We cannot know how women in the lower orders passed on the few possessions they had, but it is probable that they did so informally. On this see Champlin (1991) 49-50. We might also consider Pliny's claim (*Ep.* 8.16.1-2) that he permitted his slaves to make *quasi testamenta* that were valid within his household, disposing of their possessions and making gifts as they liked. These 'wills' had no force in law obviously, but Pliny considered them binding.
with wonderfully explicit instructions. Legacies were described precisely, in the testators' own words not in technical legal language, and corresponded to the 'status and closeness of the recipients': 'my fur-lined gray cape' and 'my third-best petticoat'. Similar patterns of distribution existed among eighteenth-century English women. In a will signed November 21, 1744, the Honorable Margaret Mugge specified that Mrs. Hesse Nugent of Westminster receive:

six of my best shifts and two old fine ones, six of my best cambrick tuckers, four of my best holland aprons...two pair of my best cotton stockings...my best pair of stays, my white silk stomacher and waist hoop, my velvett mantelett and pilgrim and short hood...two pair of new kid gloves...my black enamelled gold ring, one pair of worsted stockings, [and] my biggest pair of shoes...13

We also see interesting variations, with wills stipulating that kin and friends be allowed to choose freely, from the personal effects of the deceased, items that had been long admired or which held sentimental value; and acquaintances as well as servants of the deceased were beneficiaries of elegant clothing and valuable articles. In a will probated on September 30, 1741, Claude Margaret Gouijon, Marchioness Dowager of Vannevelle, asked that her impoverished cousin be permitted 'the choice of what will please her best of my clothes and goods'; Lady Elizabeth Compton, in a will dated May 16, 1741, left to her 'affectionate and faithfull servant Mary Green', all her clothes, laces, and linen; and Margaret Mugge left her Kensington landlady a ring valued at one guinea.14 In this form of gift-giving, which is very carefully thought out, Zemon Davis detects women's sense of individuality. Although they were recognised as talented artisans, businesswomen, and household managers, women were expected to employ these skills on behalf of the men to whom they were related, rather than on their own behalf. Women were also accustomed to being given away in marriage. But through their last will and testament women turned social convention on its head and gave themselves away in the form of their many treasured

12 Zemon Davis (1986) 62. Men's wills lacked such exact directions; they left their clothes to the principal heir who disposed of them as he or she saw fit.


possessions. If women could bestow a small part of themselves in this fashion, it is not too much to say that they also exercised greater autonomy over their physical selves.\textsuperscript{15}

Zemon Davis’ interpretation of the French woman’s sense of self may be provocative, but it does stimulate thinking about Roman women and selfhood. The latter may have been talented in their own right, but were seldom celebrated as such. Roman women, according to the conventions of funerary commemorations derived personal prestige from service to their natal and marital families: showing devotion and obedience to husband, spinning and weaving with great skill, managing a household prudently, guarding their chastity, behaving modestly.\textsuperscript{16} Roman women, too, were given in marriage together with their \textit{ornamenta dotalia} as we know from Tacitus’ account of Servilia (Ann. 16.23) and the dotal contract of the young woman from Tebtunis, who brought to her marriage a robe worth sixty drachmae, a pair of gold ear-bobs, a gold choker, silver bracelets, and a variety of other items (\textit{P.Mich.} 2.121). Taking into account all the constraints of our legal sources, we can say without pressing the Roman evidence that the testamentary behaviour of Roman women resembles that of French and English women of the modern era. It is equally possible, therefore, that the dispersal of clothing and jewellery among female family and friends was part of the Roman woman’s strategy for making a personal, individualistic statement. Seneca once complained (\textit{Ben.} 4.11.4-6) that the testamentary distribution of personal effects was a futile exercise: it required much time and thought to determine who was most deserving of a bequest and the favour would never be returned. It is plain that some Roman women thought otherwise. By bequeathing to family or close friends the personal items of clothing and jewellery which had formed part of her appearance a woman hoped that the strong presence she had carefully designed and cultivated during her lifetime would not soon fade from memory.

It is sometimes difficult for moderns to grasp fully the power of personal display in conveying status or personality, because we are unable to see Roman women, as it were, in living colour. Portrait sculpture acquaints us with how women clothed themselves, how they styled their hair, and in some cases what type of adornment they preferred, but the combination of pale marble and idealised physiognomies makes it hard to conceive of

\textsuperscript{15} Zemon Davis (1986) 61-63.

\textsuperscript{16} For example, \textit{CIL} 1.2.1211, 1.2.1221, 3.3572, 6.1779, 6.16090, 8.23808, 13. 1983, 14.1826, 14.10230; and \textit{CE} 63.4, 1988.14, 492.16.
sculpted figures as individuals, even when we know their names.\footnote{17} We fare much better with coloured images, like the well-known mosaic \textit{emblema} from Pompeii depicting a fashionable woman wearing earrings, a necklace, and what may be a tunic with an embroidered border (fig. 4); or the painted portrait of a Pompeiian couple (fig. 5), in which carefully styled hair, jewellery, and writing implements combine to mark the wife as a woman of refinement. The visual effects of mosaic and painting are obviously very different, but we begin to see nonetheless greater individuality.\footnote{18} Yet a more graphic demonstration of the direct effect of self-presentation can be found, and we need look no further than a body of evidence mentioned at the outset of this dissertation—the mummy portraits from Roman Egypt. These arresting portraits have been under-utilised in the study of feminine identity, perhaps because significant (but not insurmountable) problems of interpretation accompany them. Scholars find it virtually impossible to discern the ethnicity and citizenship of the sitters because of the remarkable co-existence of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures within the province. There are also varying opinions on chronology and artistic conventions. But these problems should not diminish the value of the portraits in the study of feminine display.\footnote{19} Although the sitters are formally posed and we see them in their 'Sunday best' rather than their everyday clothes, there is an immediacy about their portraits that gives us a sense of living, breathing, individuals and makes clear the power of \textit{cultus} and \textit{ornatus} in expressing the self.

To understand the visual impact made by these women in daily life, we might imagine three of them passing through the streets of their communities, shopping in markets, visiting with friends, or attending the theatre. The portraits under consideration date to the first half of the second century AD. The first depicts a refined but austere-looking woman from Hawara, in the Fayum, aptly named 'The Jewellery Girl' by Flinders Petrie (fig. 6).\footnote{20} She is clothed in a scarlet tunic with dark purple \textit{clavi} edged in gold. A mantle of the same colour is draped over her left shoulder. Her hair is intricately arranged. Four rows

\begin{itemize}
\item For an overview of these issues see the excellent introductory essays in Walker and Bierbrier (1997).
\item Doxiadis (1995) no. 72, Walker and Bierbrier (1997) no. 33.
\end{itemize}
of snail curls neatly frame her face; at the back the hair has been plaited into several small braids which have been pulled into a flat bun and secured with hair-pins. One pin of plain gold is worn horizontally, the other a pearl and garnet rosette is worn vertically like an aigrette. Encircling the bun is a gold chain with a small medallion in the centre and two small gold boxes located at either side. The woman wears the trident earrings typical of those found throughout Roman Egypt,\(^\text{21}\) and three necklaces which sit high on the neck. A garnet and pearl rosette that complements her hairpin is the principal feature of the uppermost strand. Immediately beneath are two other necklaces, one of square-cut emeralds and alternating gold beads, and a plain gold chain with pendant. A fourth gold chain, much longer and heavier, sits well below her collar-bone, and has an oval medallion set with a large emerald.

More interesting from a social historical perspective is the second portrait (fig. 7), which is believed to come from Saqqara, less than two hundred kilometres north of Hawara. The sitter is a young woman with a distinctive physiognomy that prompted Doxiadis to describe her as 'Ethiopian-looking'. The woman's ethnicity is extremely difficult to determine, but certain features—very full lips and high cheek-bones—suggest that Doxiadis' assessment is not unreasonable.\(^\text{22}\) The dressing of her hair also supports this theory. It resembles the so-called *Melonenfrisur*, which called for the hair to be arranged in a series of plaits radiating from the temples to the back of the head, but might equally be understood as 'corn-row' plaiting, a technique that formed part of the African beauty tradition.\(^\text{23}\) The woman is dressed in a white tunic with matching mantle that is draped over her left shoulder. Barely visible in the lower left corner of the panel, a light purple *clavus* embellishes her tunic. Jewellery comprises gold hoop earrings with pearls, of a style common to Roman Egypt. A stylised wreath in her hair and two necklaces, one an ornamental band sitting high on her neck, the other a heavy chain with an *ankh* pendant, have been rendered in gold-leaf appliqué.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{21}\) For detailed description of trident earrings, and variations of this style, consult Walker and Bierbrier (1997) nos. 198, 201, 203, with an illustration on p. 167.

\(^{22}\) Doxiadis (1995) no. 8, Walker and Bierbrier (1997) no. 103, see nothing unusual in the woman's facial features.

\(^{23}\) See the regional variations discussed and illustrated in Sagay (1983).

\(^{24}\) More detailed discussion of the symbolism of the wreaths worn by some of the Fayum sitters may be found in Corcoran (1995) 61-64. She argues for associations with the Egyptian deities Osiris, Re, and Isis.
The last portrait, depicting a middle-aged woman from Philadelphia, also in the Fayum (fig. 8), provides a striking contrast to the first two. Her age is suggested by the deep lines around her mouth and nose, her furrowed brow, and thick black eyebrows that appear to be flecked with grey. She wears her hair centrally parted, combed back from the face, and plaited into a braid which sits high on the back of the head; a variation on a coiffure worn during the reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138). A particularly interesting feature of this portrait is the rendering of the woman's hair. A light grey colour along the central part may be meant to suggest highlights in the woman's jet black hair, or possibly grey roots where her dyed hair has begun to grow out. In comparison with the other sitters, this woman's personal presentation is very simple. She wears an amethyst tunic with a black clavus at the right shoulder; a mantle of similar colour is draped over her left. Remarkably, she wears no jewellery.

Just as women's personal presentation conveyed messages about status, femininity, or individual tastes, that might be read by those who saw them in the market-place or the theatre, so the portraits which we now eagerly read and try to interpret were encoded with symbols. However these women really thought of themselves, it is evident that they wished to be commemorated in Roman fashion. The colours of their tunics and the clavi that adorn them suggest this much. Pliny claimed (Nat. 21.45-46) that red, amethyst, and murex purple were the most prestigious colours (principales) worn by men and women. The stripes are not necessarily indicative of senatorial or equestrian rank, but are a general allusion to Roman status conventions. Hairstyles especially demonstrated a woman's awareness of the sartorial fashions at Rome, as the portraits of the Jewellery Girl and the middle-aged woman reveal. The hairstyle of the 'Ethiopian' may also imitate a mode of the Hadrianic period, but as noted above, this portrait may in fact reflect a blending of cultural conventions, African corn-rows and Roman dress.

In examining the women's adornments, we find our strongest indication of the way in which the personal freedom to choose or to reject certain modes of dress or adornment affected appearance. It is tempting to try to identify individuals of disparate status based upon their personal presentation, but comparison of these three portraits with others in the corpus demonstrates the danger of this approach. In mummy portraits, women typically wear some form of ornament. The exceptions are notable. The well-known 'Jewish Woman' from Philadelphia has neatly styled hair but no jewellery; and an elderly woman

---

25 Doxiadis (1995) no. 27.
from the Fayum wears only a hair-band of terracotta wool. We might interpret the absence of adornment in one of two ways: either the women had little interest in jewellery as part of their feminine display, or economic circumstances prevented them from owning a few ornaments. The latter interpretation cannot be ruled out, but seems less plausible given that the men and women portrayed in the Fayum portraits are generally regarded as individuals of means. Most of the portraits are painted on wood, a resource that was in short supply; and several of the panels have been identified as lime, a wood that was not indigenous to Egypt. More telling, however, is the portrait of Hermione (figs. 9-10), a young woman of Hawara who died during the reign of Claudius. Her adornments comprise only gold and pearl earrings, yet at considerable expense her body was carefully swathed in several layers of good-quality linen that were wrapped in such a way as to create an intricate lozenge pattern. An inscription at her right shoulder suggests that Hermione enjoyed a position of privilege in Hawara. It reads: Ερμιώνη γραμματική. She may have been a teacher of Greek grammar, or more likely a literate individual recognised for her promotion of Greek culture among the élites of her community. Whatever the case, the portrait of Hermione, like those of the Jewellery Girl, the Ethiopian, and the middle-aged woman, leave no doubt about the immediacy of self-presentation in antiquity. The techniques of personal display gave women the means and the independence to create a strong and effective presence, as differentiated individuals, in the communities to which they belonged.


28 Hermione: Doxiadis (1995) no. 33, Walker and Bierbrier (1997) no. 11. Corcoran (1995) 22 notes that the rhombi covering the body are six layers deep, and the octagonal shape that frames the face is seven to eight layers.
List of Works Cited


Canfora, L. (1990) *The Vanished Library*. Berkeley


Corcoran, L. (1995) *Portrait Mummies from Roman Egypt (I–IV Centuries AD).* The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization No. 56. Chicago.


Douglas, F. (1881) *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Hartford.


—— (1911) *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule Romaine*. 

—— (1913) *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule Romaine*. 

—— (1915a) *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule Romaine*. 

—— (1915b) *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule Romaine*. 


Madrid.


——— (1971) 'Usurpation of Status and Status Symbols'. *Historia*


Schenk, P. V. (1879) 'Chronic Lead-Poisoning Following the Use of Cosmetics—With Cases'. *St. Louis Courier of Medicine and Collateral Sciences* 1: 506–518.


——— (1975a) 'Family Life Among the Staff of the Volusii'. Transactions of the American Philological Association 105: 393–401.


Trendall, A. D. (1989) *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily*. London.


Weaver, P. R. C. (1972) *Familia Caesaris*. Cambridge.


Appendix One
Inventory of Grooming and Mundus Muliebris Reliefs

Representations in Various Media

001 Item: wall painting
Provenance: Herculaneum
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: a matrona, well attired, capite velato, and seated on a chair, observes a simply dressed servant dressing the hair of a young girl. Another young girl, well dressed and adorned, leans on the arm of the matron's chair.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Helbig (1868) no. 1435; Reinach 266, no. 7; Virgili et al. no. 43.
Date: mid first century AD

002 Item: wall painting (now lost)
Provenance: Pompeii, Casa delle Vestale
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: a woman, nude to the waist, is seated in a high-backed chair. She is attended by four women, one of whom is dressing her hair.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Helbig (1868) no. 1436; Reinach 266, no. 4; Kampen no. 30.
Date: mid to late first century

003 Item: wall painting
Provenance: Pompeii, Villa dei Misteri
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: a young woman seated upon a chair, gazes at herself in a mirror held by an Eros figure. An older woman, who is assisting with the arrangement of her hair, seems to be conferring with the Eros.
Inscription: none
Date: first century AD

004 Item: wall painting
Provenance: Stabiae, Villa di Arianna
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: fresco of a young girl seated on a stool. Draped to the hip area only, she holds a mirror in her right hand as she grasps a lock of hair in her left.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Reinach 59, no. 4; Virgili et al. no. 44.
Date: late first century AD

005 Item: lamp (terracotta)
Provenance: Italy
242-

**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** a partially draped woman, seated upon a stool, is having her hair dressed by a servant standing behind her.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Virgili et al. no. 47.  
**Date:** 40-70 AD

---

**006**  
**Item:** Statuette (terracotta)  
**Provenance:** Thysdrus  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** a woman dressed in a long-sleeved robe with a shawl (?) about her neck, sits in a high-backed chair with her feet resting upon a foot-stool. Her hair-style is after the manner of the empress Julia Domna. An *ornatrix* (head now missing) in a calf-length tunic, is arranging the woman's hair.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Kampen no. 38, fig. 85.  
**Date:** circa 220-250 AD

---

**007**  
**Item:** relief panel from Proiecta Casket (metal-work)  
**Provenance:** Rome  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** a woman seated on a chair, holds a pyxis in her left hand and a lock of hair in her right. She gazes into a large round mirror held by servant.  
**Bibliography:** Bandinelli (1971) figs. 92-93; Shelton (1981) pl. 11; Settis (1992) no. 239.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Date:** fourth century AD

---

**008**  
**Item:** mosaic  
**Provenance:** Carthage  
**Image Type:** portrait with articles  
**Description:** in one section of a large tableau of country life, stands a woman holding a necklace which she has withdrawn from a small casket held by a servant.  
**Bibliography:** Bandinelli (1971) fig. 208; Dunbabin (1978) pl. 43, no. 109.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Date:** late fourth century AD
Image Type 1: the **Mundus Muliebris** Relief

009 **Item:** *ara*
**Provenance:** Ager Amiternum (Preturo)
**Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
**Description:** A small scale Doric frieze comprising five metopes separated by columns, runs the width of the altar. Each of the panels contains an object (from left to right): an eagle, an unidentified object, a wool basket, a three-legged *cista*, and a mirror (?). Bucrania, garlands, and rosettes are set beneath the frieze, and the epitaph for Doris below these.
**Inscription:** *Herenniae P. I. Dorini.*
**Bibliography:** Persichetti (1912) 308, n. 5; Moretti 271; Diebner (1987) 29-30, fig. 2.
**Date:** late first century BC or early first century AD

010 **Item:** *cippus*
**Provenance:** Ortona
**Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
**Description:** The *cippus* has a small pediment set between pulvinars. The inscription sits immediately below the pediment. On the monument face are a pair of slippers, one on either side of an open cosmetic or jewellery case. A mirror in a case and two small flasks occupy one side of the marker, while the other contains depictions of a comb, parasol, and two additional flasks.
**Inscription:** *Poppaedia P. f. Secundafiliae ossa sitae Eitae M. f. matrilossa sita.*
**Bibliography:** *CIL* 9.3826; Felletti Maj 362, fig. 188; Virgili et al. no. 37; Settis (1992) 162, figs. 197-199.
**Date:** early first century AD

011 **Item:** *aedicula*
**Provenance:** Kapljnc
**Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
**Description:** The figure of Venus and two Tritons, executed in low relief, occupies the centre of the pediment. A frieze running the width of the pediment contains a variety of female accoutrements: a wool basket, spindle, *balsamarium*, loom shuttle, wicker-work chair, open mirror case, cylindrical casket, an unidentified object, stool, parasol, another *balsamarium*, sewing needle, and a spatula.
**Inscription:** none
**Bibliography:** Virgili (1989) fig. 64 (mistakenly identified as the *cippus* of Poppaedia Secunda); Virgili et al. no. 8
**Date:** first century AD

012 **Item:** *stele*
**Provenance:** Pisae
**Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
**Description:** The epitaph occupies the upper half of the monument. On the lower right face are a ruler, plumb-bob, square, and hammer or hand-pick. At lower left
are a mirror with a scalloped rim, a comb, a small flask, a calamistrum, a pair of slippers, and a hair-pin.

**Inscription:** P. Ferrarius|Hermes|Caecinia|Dignae|coniugi|karissimae|Numeriae|Maximillae|coniugi|benel|merent|etler|P. Ferrario|Proculo|filio|et|postelris|suis.

**Bibliography:** CIL 11.1471; Zimmer (1982) 166, nr. 90; Felletti Maj 350; Virgili et al. no. 39.

**Date:** late first/early second century AD

---

013 **Item:** cippus  
**Provenance:** Teate Marrucinorum  
**Image Type:** mundus muliebris  
**Description:** the altar is crowned by a pediment with a rosette in the centre. Directly beneath the pediment is the dedication. The decoration on the face consists of a cylindrical cista set in the centre, with a comb and two small oil bottles above it. To the viewer's left is a slipper. A second slipper was probably located on the right hand side of the face which is now damaged. On the left lateral face are two long-toothed combs, indicative of Albanus' profession as a comb-maker.  
**Inscription:** L. Sextius L. Albanus|et|Sabidiae T. l. Euche v. a.  
**Date:** first/second century AD

---

014 **Item:** cippus  
**Provenance:** Limonum  
**Image Type:** mundus muliebris  
**Description:** the epitaph for the deceased occupies the face of the marker and is bounded on both sides by schematic pilasters. A mirror in the upper right corner has an ornate handle and a woman's reflection on its face.  
**Inscription:** Ave D. M.|et memoriae|Juliae Max(i)milliae|coniugi|karissimae|animae|bonae|qua|vixit|annis|p.|m.|xxxx|x|una|domu|L.|Iul(ii)|Frontonis|Cavariani|Iul(ius)|Basileus|maritus|posuit.  
**Comment:** the editors of the CIL conjecture plus minus, for p.m.  
**Bibliography:** CIL 13.1144; Espérandieu 2, no. 1393.  
**Date:** mid-late second century AD

---

015 **Item:** stele  
**Provenance:** Peltuinum  
**Image Type:** mundus muliebris  
**Description:** the monument has sustained heavy damage, but in the remains of the tympanum are images of a comb, a mirror, and a pair of sandals.  
**Inscription:** Sex|Sinitius|Memor|vi|Vi[r]|Aug.|viv.|sib.|et|Noniae|Lucusta[e]|coniugi|suae.|f.  
**Bibliography:** CIL 9.3442; Moretti 271.  
**Date:** unknown

---

016 **Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Pagus Fibiculanus  
**Image Type:** mundus muliebris
Description: the stone slab is broken in two and its base damaged. In the tympanum surmounting the inscription are a comb, cylindrical toilette box, mirror, slippers, and unguentaria.


Bibliography: CIL 9.3583; Moretti 276.

Date: unknown

017 Item: cippus
Provenance: Italia
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: the remains of the cippus contain representations of sandals and a basket.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Moretti 280.
Date: unknown

018 Item: cippus
Provenance: Andematunnum
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: the upper half of the altar only is extant. A pediment-like triangle sits atop the die panel, and mirrors have been carved at the apex of the triangle.
Inscription: Dis Mani(bus). Placidiae Spectatae.
Bibliography: Espérandieu 4, no. 3300.
Date: unknown

019 Item: cippus
Provenance: Parentium
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: the commemorative inscription, set within a rectangular panel, surmounts engravings of a spatula resting on top of a pyxis with simple decorative bands. Beneath the pyxis, and to the right are a needle or calamistrum, an unguent compact, a cylindrical container (?), a pair of forceps, and an unidentified object.
Inscription: D. M. Hedylus iut potuilmeritiatiibi feci Severa
Bibliography: II 10.39; CE 1042; CIL 2.2970
Date: unknown

020 Item: tabula (?)
Provenance: Roma
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: this monument is unpublished but according to a description by the editors of the CIL a comb and hair-pin flank the text.
Inscription: D. M. Cypareni ornatrici benelmerenti Polydeuces fecit
Bibliography: CIL 6.9727; Daremberg and Saglio (1962-1963) fig. 5428.
Date: unknown
021 Item: tabula (?)  
Provenance: Iuvanum  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished but the editors of the CIL indicate in their description that a comb, mirror, and spoon surmount the text.  
Inscription: D. M. S.\l\textit{Eventius Asteridi conservælb. m. p.}  
Bibliography: \textit{CIL} 9.2970  
Date: unknown

022 Item: sarcophagus  
Provenance: Corfinium  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished but the editors of the CIL say that a mirror, comb, and pair of slippers flank the inscription.  
Inscription: \textit{Iuliae Basiliaeconiugt\textit{di}cullissimae feminae quae\textit{xv}vixit annis xvii Aurel Pardus\textit{mar}itus et Flavius Fortunatus et\textit{Iul}ia Basilissa filiae karissima\textit{e}b. m. \textit{posuer.}}  
Bibliography: \textit{CIL} 9.3237  
Date: unknown

023 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Aveia  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL note two \textit{lekythoi}, a mirror, comb, and pin engraved above the epitaph.  
Inscription: T. Poppedius T. l.\textit{Callidus et Octavi\textit{dia P. l. Genialisvivi sibi et suis\textit{p.}}.}  
Bibliography: \textit{CIL} 9.3593  
Date: unknown

024 Item: tabula (?)  
Provenance: Marsi Marruvium  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. To the left of the commemorative inscription are carved a pin, mirror, comb, and \textit{balsamaria}, to the right a pair of shoes.  
Inscription: \textit{Sancta\textit{e animae} \textit{Claudiae} Rhodes sace \textit{Hermes contubernal}}  
Bibliography: \textit{CIL} 9.3680  
Date: unknown

025 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Marsi Marruvium  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished but the editors of the CIL indicate that a comb is depicted on the right of the inscription.
Inscription: D. M. S. Felicitati Sanbuce P. Avius Felicitissimus coniugi et P. Allius Felix cognatus b. m. p.
Bibliography: CIL 9.3720
Date: unknown

026 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Marsi Marruvium
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: this monument is unpublished but a description by the editors of the CIL indicate that representations of a small bag, a balsamarium, a pair of slippers, an unidentifiable object, and a mirror are carved beneath the name of the deceased.
Inscription: Gavia L. l. Cinura
Bibliography: CIL 9.3725
Date: unknown

027 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Ortona
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: this monument is unpublished but the editors of the CIL say that the inscription is surmounted by a mirror and bordered along the bottom by a man leading a mule bearing wood bundles.
Inscription: S. Mammeie Zoe c. s. Q. Mammio Saturnino filio piemtissimo Q. Mammius c. f. Saturninis pater infelicitissimus suis et sibip.
Bibliography: CIL 9.3819
Date: unknown

028 Item: tabula (?)
Provenance: Ortona
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL conjecture a pair of slippers and two small caskets are engraved below the inscription.
Inscription: Peticia P. l. Chiteris Gemelus filius fec.
Bibliography: CIL 9.3824
Date: unknown

029 Item: tabula (?)
Provenance: Supinum
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL indicate a pair of slippers to the right of the inscription and a mirror beneath.
Inscription: Silvinae contubernal Aepinicus conservus b. m. p.
Comment: the original text gives contibernal, which is emended here to contubernal.
Bibliography: CIL 9.3875
Date: unknown
030 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Alba Fucens  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished but the editors of the CIL note on the left side of the inscription a mirror, comb, needle, and two lekythoi and to the right a small casket and a pair of shoes. Immediately above the text is a representation of the head of Sol.  
Inscription: D. M. S. IT. Tituleius|Successus|Sextuleiae|M. f. Secundaechoiugi b. m.|p.  
Bibliography: CIL 9.3952  
Date: unknown  

031 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Alba Fucens  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL indicate that a pair of shoes are located on the left of the inscription, a mirror to the right.  
Inscription: D. M. S.|Amarediae|Lucinae|quae vixit annos|xviii|men. vii quam con|didit in monument|suo C. Amaredius Aperlpatronus C. Amaredius|Severus et Amaredia Psyche filiae piissilmae  
Comment: the editors of the CIL give quem for the interrogative pronoun, the text has been emended to quam.  
Bibliography: CIL 9.3971  
Date: unknown  

032 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Alba Fucens  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished, but according to the description in the CIL, the text is surmounted by a mirror, comb, needle, small casket and a pair of shoes.  
Inscription: D. M. S.|Longeia L. l.|Primigenia|se viva posit  
Bibliography: CIL 9.4001  
Date: unknown  

033 Item: fragment of sarcophagus lid  
Provenance: Alba Fucens  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished but its summary description in the CIL reveals a mirror to the left of the text and a spoon, comb, pair of slippers, a flask, and a small bag to the right.  
Inscription: Septimiae|Lyde|Septimia Saturalet Septimia Primigenia patronae b. m. d. s. f.  
Bibliography: CIL 9.4026  
Date: unknown
034  **Item:** *tabula (?)*
    **Provenance:** Amitemum
    **Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
    **Description:** this monument is unpublished. The editors of the *CIL* say that a mirror surmounts the text and flanking the mirror are rosettes.
    **Inscription:** *D. M. S.|Syrius ser.|Restitutae conser a x[v]|Daphnidi|ann vii|M. Valeri Rufi ser.|lb.| m.*
    **Bibliography:** *CIL* 9.4301
    **Date:** unknown

035  **Item:** *tabula (?)*
    **Provenance:** Ager Amitemus
    **Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
    **Description:** this monument is unpublished. The editors of the *CIL*, despite the fragmentation of the inscription, conjecture a mirror to the left of the text and an object which may be a parasol to the right.
    **Inscription:** *Dis Manib|Sac|L. Otin|Prisc.|Primigen.*
    **Bibliography:** *CIL* 9.4354
    **Date:** unknown

036  **Item:** *stele (?)*
    **Provenance:** Ager Amiteminus
    **Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
    **Description:** this monument is unpublished, but according to the editors of the *CIL* two rosettes, a comb, a mirror, and a pair of slippers stand immediately above the epitaph.
    **Inscription:** *Rutilia T. lib|Cinnamis Rutiliae Iucun|dae filiae et sibi fecit*
    **Bibliography:** *CIL* 9.4355
    **Date:** unknown

037  **Item:** *stele (?)*
    **Provenance:** Hadria
    **Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
    **Description:** monument is unpublished; but the editors of the *CIL* indicate an *alabastrum*, mirror, comb, and a pair of slippers are found above the inscription.
    **Bibliography:** *CIL* 9.5025
    **Date:** unknown

038  **Item:** *tabula (?)*
    **Provenance:** Capua
    **Image Type:** *mundus muliebris*
    **Description:** this monument is unpublished. The editors of the *CIL* conjecture two pottery jars flanking a mirror beneath the name of the deceased.
    **Inscription:** *Paccia Ti. f. Salve*
Bibliography: CIL 10.4269
Date: unknown

039 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Capua  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL identify a mirror surmounting the epitaph.  
Inscription: Staberiae P. l. Florae ossa sita sunt rogote mi viator noli mlnocere  
Bibliography: CIL 10.4352  
Date: unknown

040 Item: stele  
Provenance: Pisae  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL indicate a mirror surmounting the text and the ascia immediately below.  
Inscription: D. M.|Hostilia|Omphale|hic adq.|m. b. m.  
Comment: the editors of II read mater bene merens for m b m.  
Bibliography: II 7.1.81; CIL 11.1474  
Date: unknown

041 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Portus Pisanus  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL indicate a mirror, comb, and patera surmounting the inscription, and a pair of slippers are depicted below.  
Inscription: D. M.|Gabiniae L. f. Proculae|coniugi Caesili Mercurialis|matri Caesili Proculi Caesilius Mercurialis suo et Caesili|Proculeiani fili sui nomine|coniugil sanctissimae|castissimae cum qualvixit annis xxvi diebus|xxx  
Bibliography: II 7.1.116; CIL 11.1524b  
Date: unknown
043 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Florentia  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL speculate, although the memorial is poorly preserved, that a representation of a mirror stands between two unidentified objects set above the text.  
Inscription: D. M. | Wareniae | Hermiona. | orius  
Bibliography: CIL 11.1665  
Date: unknown

044 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Volsinii  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL note a mirror set between the first two letters of the text and an unidentified container set beneath the text.  
Inscription: D. M. | Wolcasie Salbine Annius Claesianus et Malarcius Procululoiciug  
Bibliography: CIL 11.2806  
Date: unknown

045 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Blera  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: this monument is unpublished. The inscription takes up the front according to the editors of the CIL and on the right lateral face is engraved a mirror.  
Inscription: D. M. | Volumnilae Priscilliae | v. a. ix | m. v  
Bibliography: CIL 11.3354  
Date: unknown

046 Item: cippus  
Provenance: Luna  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL say that a crown with ribbons is set in the typanum. Below the inscription are an unguentarium, mirror, comb, and a pair of slippers.  
Inscription: D. M. | T. Cosconius!Cosconius Tacitus fius et!Cosconius nelios matri car!Valeria Proculaposui bene merent!Pupius carissime  
Comment: the original text reads mairi , which is emended here to matri.  
Bibliography: CIL 11.6994  
Date: unknown

047 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Luna  
Image Type: mundus muliebris
Description: This monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL indicate a crown with ribbons surmounts the inscription. The remains of a comb and mirror are set beneath the text.


Bibliography: CIL 11.6998

Date: unknown

048 Item: cippus (?)  
Provenance: Luna  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: This monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL say that decoration is found on four sides. On the front is the inscription; on the left lateral face are two rings, a mirror, stylus, and two ampules; on the right lateral face is a comb, an unidentified container, and a pair of slippers. On the rear face is another unidentified container.


Bibliography: CIL 11.7002

Date: unknown

049 Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Carenses Sadava  
Image Type: mundus muliebris  
Description: This monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL say that a protome of a woman, and items identified collectively as mundus muliebris, surmount the inscription. A running bull is found below.


Bibliography: CIL 2.2970

Date: unknown
Image Type 2: portrait with toiletries

050 Item: stele
Provenance: Interamna Praetutianorum
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: portrait busts of three individuals in niches (possibly a father, mother and son) take up most of this relief. The woman—capite velato—is at centre, with male figures on either side of her. Representations of a folding mirror (to the right of the woman's head) and two bracelets or necklaces (to the left) occupy the spaces between the niches.
Inscription: C. Licinius C. fil. I Vel. Mancia[...]
Date: Augustan period

051 Item: stele
Provenance: Pisaurum
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a portrait bust of a woman wearing a tunic, mantle, and pearl necklace, is set into an aedicula flanked by pilasters. To the right of her head is a folding mirror and to the left a tall container.
Inscription: none
Date: mid Augustan period

052 Item: ara
Provenance: Roma
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a togate man and a woman wearing a tunic and palla, both carved in low relief, are found on the face of the altar, hands joined in the dextrarum iunctio. A mirror with a scalloped rim and two small perfume bottles are depicted on the pediment together with bucraania and garlands.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Toynbee (1965) 95, fig. 58; Felletti Maj 318-319, pl. 149;
Kleiner (1987a) 104, pl. 5.1.
Date: AD 40-50

053 Item: ara
Provenance: Aquileia
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a female figure identified as Maia Severa sits in a high-backed chair, her feet resting upon a foot-stool. She is dressed in a full-length tunic. Her hair is parted in the centre and pulled back into a braid. She caresses a small bird with her right hand and holds a mirror with a scalloped edge in her left.
Inscription: too fragmentary for reconstruction
Bibliography: Toynbee (1971) 250; Santa Maria Scrinari (1972) 129, fig. 368.
Date: first half of first century AD
054  Item: ara  
Provenance: Roma  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries  
Description: protomes of mother and daughter, who died in a tragic accident on the Gulf of Leon, are set within a square niche; both wear tunics and mantles. Tyche wears the hairstyle typical of Faustina the Elder, her daughter the style of Faustina the Younger. Depicted in the architrave of the altar are a quiver and bow, cornucopia, a torch, a rudder on a globe and a wheel. A mirror is found on the right lateral face.  
Inscription: D. M. Juliae Secundae filiae Corneliae Tyches uxoris. Et forma singulari et moribus piissimis doctri

Date: mid second century

055  Item: stucco relief  
Provenance: Roma  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries  
Description: this is one of two portraits of women (possibly Flavia Olympias or Valeria Maxima) set into niches in the walls of the tomb for the Valerii. Modelled in stucco in the lunette of her portrait niche are a mirror, cosmetic case and balsamarium.  
Bibliography: Guarducci (1953) fig. 1; Toynbee and Ward Perkins (1957) 84; Toynbee (1971) 143.  
Date: second century AD

056  Item: stele  
Provenance: Burdigala  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a full-length portrait of a woman stands inside a niche with a triangular pediment. She is dressed in a calf-length tunic and mantle. In her right hand she carries a mirror into which she gazes, and in her left is a small box or possibly a basket of fruit.

Inscription: D. M./Axula Cintulgeni fifilia

Bibliography: CIL 13.672; Espérondieu 2, no. 1157; Braemer no. 22, pl. 6.

Date: mid second century AD

058 Item: stele
Provenance: Burdigala
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a poorly preserved fragment of a full-length portrait (?) of a woman is set into a niche with a triangular pediment. She appears to wear a heavy long-sleeved robe. In her right hand she holds a mirror but does not gaze into it, and in her left hand is a round object, perhaps a piece of fruit.

Inscription: D. M./Pom. Maritullul Lentinus m.pios. s.

Bibliography: CIL 13.812; Espérondieu 2, no. 1167; Braemer no. 49, pl. 14.

Date: mid/late second century AD

059 Item: stele
Provenance: Burdigala
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a badly weathered portrait bust of a woman sits inside a niche crowned with a triangular pediment. The woman wears a tunic and mantle and holds a mirror in her right hand, but appears to look out at the viewer. She wears a bracelet on her right wrist.


Bibliography: CIL 13.736; Espérondieu 2, no. 116; Braemer no. 48, pl. 14.

Date: mid/late second century AD

060 Item: stele
Provenance: Burdigala
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: in a deep niche with a triangular pediment stand full-length portraits of a woman and a small girl. Both are clothed in mid-calf length, long sleeved robes. The woman's tunic is gathered at the cuffs. The child clutches a small basket and the woman holds a mirror in her left hand. Both figures look out at the viewer.

Inscription: Avete d. an. xxv mater/Cintugena p.

Bibliography: CIL 13.664; Espérondieu 2, no. 1128; Braemer no. 50, pl. 15.

Date: mid/late second century AD

061 Item: stele
Provenance: Burdigala
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: a full-length portrait of a female figure, executed in high relief. She is dressed in a long tunic and mantle, and stands inside a niche crowned with a
pediment. She holds a mirror in her left hand, and appears to be looking at her reflection. In her right hand is a comb.

Inscription: D. M. [Verecundiae Priscillae defunctae annorum xxil Perpetui filiae\ Calvisinus Serdus de suo dedit

Bibliography: CIL 13.869; Espérandieu 2. no. 1171; Braemer no. 20, pl. 6; Nerzic 234.

Date: mid/late second century AD

062 Item: stele
Provenance: Burdigala
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: the portrait bust of a woman is set in a shallow niche. The monument is poorly preserved and the garments worn by the woman are difficult to distinguish. She holds in her right hand a balance (statera), and in her left hand is a mirror which she holds close to her chest.

Inscription: none

Bibliography: Espérandieu 2, no. 1122; Braemer no. 57, pl. 17.

Date: end of second century

063 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Gallia Cisalpina
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: the epitaph is surmounted by depictions of a male seated on a high-backed chair and female seated on a stool, who are holding unidentified objects. Set between these two figures is a large mirror.


Bibliography: II 9.79; CIL 5.7734

Date: unknown

064 Item: stele
Provenance: Dyrrhachium
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: portrait busts of the married couple are set within a shallow rectangular niche crowned by a shallow pediment. Husband and wife are dressed in tunics and mantles, he with his right arm draped in the fold of his toga, she with the mantle partially covering her head. Titia's right arm encircles the shoulders of her husband, and in her left hand is a mirror.

Inscription: Domitius sarcinator Titia Nicario coniug[i] Domitii sarcinatoris ave.


Date: unknown

065 Item: cippus
Provenance: Arelate
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: portrait busts of a husband and wife have been set into a shallow niche on the front of the cippus. Both figures are dressed in tunics and mantles. A
representation of a mirror occupies the space between the two portraits. The dedication is immediately beneath the niche.

**Inscription:** A. Asu(r)io Sedato Pom(peiae) Graphini[Se]dulus et Securus fili. parentibus v. fecerunt

**Bibliography:** CIL 12.762; Espérandieu 1, no. 194.

**Date:** unknown

---

**066 Item:** cippus

**Provenance:** Gallia Lugdunensis (Châtillon)

**Image Type:** portrait with toiletries

**Description:** a poorly preserved female figure dressed in a sleeveless tunic and short over-dress, stands in a niche facing the viewer. She holds but does not look into a mirror held in her right hand.

**Inscription:** none

**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 4, no. 3407; Nerzic 234.

**Date:** unknown

---

**067 Item:** cippus

**Provenance:** Durocortorum

**Image Type:** portrait with toiletries

**Description:** poorly preserved, full-length portrait of a woman set in a shallow niche. She is dressed in a heavy robe. In her right hand she holds a napkin and in her left a mirror.

**Inscription:** D. M. Pupilla

**Bibliography:** CIL 13.3386; Espérandieu 5, no. 3716.

**Date:** unknown

---

**068 Item:** stele

**Provenance:** Tullum

**Image Type:** portrait with toiletries

**Description:** a portrait bust of a woman is set into a shallow niche, below which is a dedication. The relief is poorly preserved but the woman appears to be holding a mirror in her right hand and a napkin or towel in her left.

**Inscription:** Carosae Melindi fil.

**Bibliography:** CIL 13.4672; Espérandieu 6, no. 4713.

**Date:** unknown

---

**069 Item:** stele

**Provenance:** Augustodunum

**Image Type:** portrait with toiletries

**Description:** portrait bust of a woman set into a niche; appears to be dressed in a dalmatic. She holds an unguent container in her right hand and a mirror in her left.

**Inscription:** D. M. . . .

**Bibliography:** CIL 13.2795; Espérandieu 3, no. 1952.

**Date:** unknown
070 Item: stele
Provenance: Gallia Lugdunensis (Savigny)
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: A woman dressed in a tunic and palla stands holding a cup in her right hand and a mirror in her left.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Espérandieu 3, no. 2098.
Date: unknown

071 Item: stele
Provenance: Gallia Lugdunensis (Beaune)
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: A full length portrait of a woman stands in a niche. She is dressed in a tunic and palla and stands facing the viewer with a cup in her right hand and a mirror in her left.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Espérandieu 3, no. 2098.
Date: unknown

072 Item: stele
Provenance: Dibio
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: A portrait bust of a woman is set into a niche. She appears to be dressed in a tunic and mantle. She holds a mirror in her left hand and an unrecognisable object in her right. E. suggests a perfume vial.
Inscription: Paulina Ianuar(is filia).
Bibliography: CIL 13.4459; Espérandieu 4, no. 3548.
Date: unknown

073 Item: stele
Provenance: Andematunnum
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: A portrait bust of a woman is set into a niche; her attire is difficult to identify. The inscription die is located beneath the portrait, while above the niche, at the viewer's left, is a comb and at right a mirror.
Inscription: Domina p c.
Bibliography: CIL 13.5760; Espérandieu 4, no. 3283.
Date: unknown

074 Item: stele
Provenance: Gallia Belgica (Temple de la Forêt d'Halatte)
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: Fragmentary portrait of a woman, dressed in a full-length tunic with a shorter overdress occupies the centre of the tombstone. She holds a mirror (?) in her right hand.
Inscription: none
075 Item: stele
Provenance: Germania Superior (Senon)
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: fragmentary portrait of a woman wearing a mantle. She has an elaborate hair-style which may be of Antonine date. Over her left shoulder is a mirror comparable to those depicted in the portraits from Burdigala. Because the stele is broken at torso level, and the woman's left arm is missing, it is not clear whether she was holding the mirror or whether it was meant to hang in the background.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Espérandieu 9, no. 7252.
Date: unknown

076 Item: stele
Provenance: Arbeia
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: portrait of a woman, seated in a chair, dressed in a full-length tunic and a long-sleeved over-dress. She is adorned with necklace and bracelets. A ball of wool and a spindle rest in her lap. Her right hand rests upon the lid of a small box located at her feet. To the left of her chair is a basket of wool.
Inscription: D. M. Regina liberta et coniuge|Barates Palmyrenus natione|Catuvellauna an. xxx
Bibliography: Collingwood (1965) 356, pl. 15.
Date: unknown

077 Item: cippus
Provenance: Ager Viterbiensis
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished. The editors of the CIL indicate that the inscription occupies the front of the monument. On the left side is a depiction of a seated female holding a mirror; on the right is a seated male holding a diptych.
Inscription: T. Calpur|nius Gallae|filius Libicus|Augustalis|munere functus|Lucula Psamatheluxor
Bibliography: CIL 11.3011
Date: unknown

078 Item: cippus
Provenance: Tritium
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished; the editors of the CIL identify a rosette surmounting the inscription and below it a depiction of a seated female holding a mirror in her right hand and a fan. Next to this figure is a three-legged table upon which sit a small container and a wreath.
Inscription: Arceae|Longine C.|f. an. xxxvi|Q. Emea f.|matri f. c.
079 Item: cippus
Provenance: Tritium
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished; the editors of the CIL identify a rosette surmounting the inscription and below it a seated female figure holding a mirror in her right hand and a small wreath in her left. She is poised to place the wreath on the head of young girl who stands next to her.
Inscription: *Cassiae\Flavinae\Cassil\Flavi f.\an. xxxv*
Bibliography: *CIL* 2.5799
Date: unknown

080 Item: sarcophagus
Provenance: Pannonia Superior
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished; the editors of the CIL speculate that the figures represented here may be the individuals named in the inscription. Two aediculae flank the inscription. On the left is a portrait of a woman holding in her left hand a mirror. On the right is a portrait of man dressed in military garb holding a key. The other portraits comprise two girls standing between two small boys.
Inscription: *Fann.Florentinus\mil. leg. xiii g. et Ulp.\Severina coni. v. f. s.\et\Fannis Florentine\Floriano\Florolarm. i filis*
Bibliography: *CIL* 3.14065
Date: unknown

081 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Solva
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished; the editors of the CIL indicate an unidentified standing figure to the left of the text and a standing female with a mirror and casket on the right.
Inscription: *Sex. Baebius\Pudens v. f.\sibi et\Juliae\Festaekon. ann. xxv et Muliae Verecundae\matri*
Bibliography: *CIL* 13.5353
Date: unknown

082 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Solva
Image Type: portrait with toiletries
Description: monument is unpublished; the editors of the CIL indicate a portrait of a standing girl with a small container and a mirror to the left of the text; and on the right a standing boy with a small container.
Inscription: *Claudiae\Ti. f.\Iucundae\an. xxiii*
Bibliography: *CIL* 13.5358
Date: unknown
083  Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Solva  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries  
Description: monument is unpublished, but the editors of the CIL indicate a tunicate man flanks the text on the left and a woman holding a mirror stands on the right.  
Inscription: P. Laelius P. l.\[Heraclav. f.\] sibi et|Samudae Musonis\|f. con. piennissimaelan. l v. et Laeliae P. f.|Secundinae an.\[xxx\] et Laeliae| Bononiae nepti\[an v.\]  
Bibliography: CIL 13.5365  
Date: unknown  

084  Item: stele (?)  
Provenance: Solva  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries  
Description: unpublished monument; flanking the text from left to right is a female figure holding a mirror and a male figure holding an unidentified instrument.  
Inscription: Q. Pompeius\[Eugamus\|et Pompeia|Venusta|v. f. sibi et\|Pompeiae |\[Ingenuae\|ffiliae def. an. xx\]  
Bibliography: CIL 13.5376  
Date: unknown  

085  Item: cippus  
Provenance: Burdigala  
Image Type: portrait with toiletries  
Description: the altar, discovered in the foundations of a tower of Roman date, contained a protome of a woman holding a mirror in her right hand and an apple (?) in her left.  
Inscription: ..... memoria .....iae Centurionis|fil. def. an. xxx .....in\[a\] fil. et heres p. c.  
Bibliography: CIL 13.864  
Date: unknown
086 Item: stele
Provenance: Carthago
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: a woman dressed in a tunic and mantle sits in a high-backed chair, her feet resting upon a foot-stool. She holds a lock of hair in her right hand, assisting perhaps the servant who stands behind her chair arranging or possibly combing her hair.
Inscription: none
Bibliography: Reinach (1911) 2, no. 3; Marrou (1964) no. 52.
Date: mid second century

087 Item: stele (?)
Provenance: Gallia Belgica (Clausen)
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: this panel forms part of a larger monument. Beneath an arch a woman wearing a tunic and mantle sits on a low stool (?). She is attended by two servants, one is combing her hair while the other holds a mirror before her. On a small table at right is an open box; a container for jewellery or perhaps perfumes.
Bibliography: *CIL* 13.4285; Espérandieu 5, no. 4156.
Date: second century AD

088 Item: stele (Avituspaarpfeiler)
Provenance: Noviomagus Treverorum
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: this panel is one of several comprising the decoration of a funerary pillar. Only two persons are extant, both from the thigh area down. One, possibly the *domina*, wears a full-length robe, ankle-high shoes and sits in a wicker chair. In front of this figure is the second, dressed in a calf-length tunic and some type of coarse shoe.
Bibliography: *CIL* 13.4172; Espérandieu 6, no. 5145; Kampen no. 33.
Date: mid third century AD

089 Item: sarcophagus
Provenance: Arretium
Image Type: toilette scene
Description: to the right of the panel centre a woman sits in a high-backed chair. She gazes into a large circular mirror held by a servant standing immediately in front of her, as another servant arranges her hair. Two other attendants stand behind the *ornatrix*; one holds a ewer, the other a jewellery box (?). Behind the servant with the mirror stand five other figures and a small girl, each holding a variety of objects which are difficult to distinguish.
Inscription: none

Date: second half of third century AD

**090**  
**Item:** sarcophagus lid  
**Provenance:** Ostia  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** the relief is located to the right of the die panel. A woman sits in a high-backed chair washing her hands in a basin provided by a servant. There is a small child at her knee. A second attendant stands behind the seated woman arranging her hair, and a third stands in front holding a mirror.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Date:** second half of third century AD

**091**  
**Item:** stele (*Elternpaarfleiler*)  
**Provenance:** Noviomagus Treverorum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** this depiction of five women is carved in high relief, and framed by ornate pilasters. A woman dressed in a tunic and mantle is seated in a wicker chair, her feet resting upon a foot-stool. Behind her stands a servant arranging her hair. To the woman's left is a second servant holding an *alabastron*. A third servant stands in front of the seated woman, holding a large round mirror. A fourth attendant stands at the far right holding a ewer. Ternes (1988) 209 speculates that this monument was set up by a *sevir Augustalis*.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 6, no. 5142; Kampen no. 32; Virgili et al. no. 40.  
**Date:** third century AD

**092**  
**Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Agedincum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** poorly preserved relief fragment. Only the bottom half of figures are extant. A woman sits in a high-backed wicker chair. She has three attendants: one stands behind her chair, two others stand in front of her. She holds a small box on her knees. Figural arrangement is similar to the Noviomagus Treverorum monument.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 4, no. 2789.  
**Date:** third century AD

**093**  
**Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Durocortorum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** this scene was executed in low relief and comprised a representation of three women. It is now lost but E. provides a schematic drawing of the scene. One woman dressed in a long robe is attended by two others. An attendant stands
behind her preparing to dress her hair; a second stands in front of her holding a mirror.

**Inscription:** none
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 9, no. 7199.
**Date:** third century AD (?)

094 **Item:** sarcophagus lid  
**Provenance:** Aginnum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** a woman at left sits in a wicker work chair having her hair dressed by a servant. In front of the former is another servant holding a mirror, or perhaps a large sponge. A third servant standing on the far right holds a ewer and an unidentified object. At her feet is a basin. All attendants wear full-length tunics which are gather with a band just below the breasts.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 2, no. 1253.  
**Date:** third century AD (?)  

095 **Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Gallia Belgica (Niederemmel)  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** fragmentary relief with two figures extant. On the right is a female figure seated on a high-backed chair. Her hair is being arranged by a woman dressed in a calf-length tunic which is gathered under her breasts with a sash.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 10, no. 7597; Kampen no. 34.  
**Date:** late third century AD  

096 **Item:** stele  
**Provenance:** Noviomagus Treverorum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** poorly preserved fragment of a larger block. A woman seated and wearing a full-length robe sits at centre on a low stool. Behind her and to the right is a woman dressing her hair. In front of the woman stands a second attendant holding a large circular mirror.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 6, no. 5189; Kampen no. 35.  
**Date:** late third century AD  

097 **Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Noviomagus Treverorum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** poorly preserved scene of dressing, executed in low relief. A female figure, nude from the waist up, sits upon a bed holding a strophium in her hands. The panel is broken at her shoulders. To the right, next to the bed, stands a high-backed chair. At left stands an attendant dressed in a tunic, with clothing draped over her arms.
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 6, no. 5258.  
**Date:** unknown

---

**Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Gallia Belgica (Eppeldorf)  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** fragment of a toilette scene, now lost. A woman sits in a high-backed chair. The panel is broken at the left edge. To the woman's right is a second figure who appears to be dressing the woman's hair.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 5, no. 4237.  
**Date:** unknown

---

**Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Orolaunum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** this relief panel may be one of several comprising the decoration of a larger monument analogous to a tower-monument from Igel. At left, a woman dressed in a long loose robe sits on a low stool. She is attended by a servant who is arranging her hair. In front of the former is a table and beyond the table are three male figures dressed in knee length tunics carrying unidentified objects.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 5, no. 4102.  
**Date:** unknown

---

**Item:** stele (?)  
**Provenance:** Uxellodunum  
**Image Type:** toilette scene  
**Description:** two panels comprise this scene. At left, a woman sitting on a wicker chair is having her hair done by a servant. On her knees is an open toilette or jewellery box. At right, a small erote presents a large round mirror to a woman standing in front of him.  
**Inscription:** none  
**Bibliography:** Espérandieu 2, no. 1658.  
**Date:** unknown
Table A.1: Geographical Distribution of Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Mundus Muliebris</th>
<th>Portrait/Article</th>
<th>Toilette Scene</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquitania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Belgica</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Lugdunensis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Narbonensis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germania Superior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noricum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pannonia Superior</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2: Summary of Monument Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Arae</th>
<th>Cippi</th>
<th>Sarcophagi</th>
<th>Stelai</th>
<th>Unidentified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquitania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Belgica</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Lugdunensis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia Narbonensis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germania Superior</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noricum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pannonia Superior</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix Two
**Summary of Inscriptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inv. No.</th>
<th>CIL</th>
<th>Honorand(s)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Commemorator(s)</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Herennia Doris</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>case, mirror (?)</td>
<td>A. Amilemuni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.3826</td>
<td>Poppaidia Secunda</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Honorand (?)</td>
<td>parasol, balsmaria, cista, slippers, mirror, comb</td>
<td>Ortona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.1471</td>
<td>Caccinia Digna</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>P. Ferrarius Hermes (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, needle, slippers, calamistrum, balsamarium</td>
<td>Pisae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Sabidia Euche</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>L. Sextius Albanus (C)</td>
<td>slippers</td>
<td>T. Marrucininum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.1144</td>
<td>Julia Maximilla</td>
<td>L. (?)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Julius Basileus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Limonum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.3442</td>
<td>Nonia Lucusta</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Sextus Sinitius (C)</td>
<td>slippers, mirror, comb</td>
<td>Peltuinum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.3583</td>
<td>Claudia Lexsis</td>
<td>L. (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>C. Memmius Ipitus (C?)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, slippers, cista, unguentaria</td>
<td>Paganica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Status: I=ingenua; L=liberta; S=serva; Inc=incerta; Ign=ignota

2 Commemorators: C=coniuix; Co=cognatus; F=filius/a; Fr=frater; G=gener; Ig=ignatus; L=libertus/a; M=mater; N=neper; P=patronus/a; Pr=pater
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inv. No.</th>
<th>CIL</th>
<th>Honorand(s)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Commemorator(s)</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Placidia Spectata</td>
<td>Ign</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirrors</td>
<td>Andemalumnum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.2970</td>
<td>Severa</td>
<td>S (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Hedlylus (C)</td>
<td>pyxis, spoon, needle,</td>
<td>Parentium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>calamistrum, unguent compact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.9727</td>
<td>Cyparis</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Polydeuces (C?)</td>
<td>comb, hairpin</td>
<td>Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.2970</td>
<td>Asteris</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Eventus (C?)</td>
<td>mirror, comb (?), spoon (?)</td>
<td>Lucanum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.3237</td>
<td>Julia Basilia</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Aurelius Pardus (C) Flavius Fortunatus (Pr) Julia Basilissa (M)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, slippers</td>
<td>Corfinium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.3593</td>
<td>Octavia Genialis</td>
<td>L (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>T. Poppedius Callidus (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, needle, lekythoi</td>
<td>Aveia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3680</td>
<td>Claudia Rhode</td>
<td>L (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Hermes (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, needle, calcei,</td>
<td>M. Marruvium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>balsamarium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.3720</td>
<td>Felicitas Sanbuce</td>
<td>S/L (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>P. Avius Felicissimus (C) Pallius Felix (Co)</td>
<td>comb</td>
<td>M. Marruvium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inv. No.</td>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Honorand(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Commemorator(s)</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.3725</td>
<td>Gavia Cinura</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror, slippers, balsamarium, basket instrumentum ignotum</td>
<td>M. Marruvium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.3819</td>
<td>Mammia Zoe</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Q. Mammius Saturninus (P/C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Ortona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.3824</td>
<td>Peticia Cytheris</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Gemelus (F)</td>
<td>slippers, cista (?)</td>
<td>Ortona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.3875</td>
<td>Silvina</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Aepinicus (C)</td>
<td>mirror, slippers</td>
<td>Supinum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.3952</td>
<td>Sextuleia Secunda</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>T. Tituleius Successus (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, needle, lekythoi gallicae duae, casket</td>
<td>Alba Fucens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.3971</td>
<td>Amaredia Lucina</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>C. Amaredius Aper (P/C)</td>
<td>mirror, gallicae duae</td>
<td>Alba Fucens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Amaredius Severus (Pr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Amaredia Psyche (M)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.4001</td>
<td>Longeia Primigenia</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Honorand</td>
<td>mirror, comb, cista gallicae duae</td>
<td>Alba Fucens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>9.4026</td>
<td>Septimia Lyde</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Septimia Satura (L)</td>
<td>mirror, comb, flask, hair-net, spoon (?) slippers</td>
<td>Alba Fucens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Septimia Primigenia (L)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inv. No.</td>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Honorand(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Commemorator(s)</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4301</td>
<td>Restituta</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>15 (?)</td>
<td>Syrion (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Amiternum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.4354</td>
<td>Primigenia (?)</td>
<td>S (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>A. Amiternus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.4355</td>
<td>Rutilia lucunda</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Honorand (M)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>A. Amiternus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rutilia Cinnamis</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>slippers (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>9.5025</td>
<td>Flavia Tertia</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>L. Flavius (Fr)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>Hadria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slippers, alabastron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.4269</td>
<td>Paccia Salve</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror (?), jar</td>
<td>Capua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.4352</td>
<td>Staberia Flora</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Capua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.1474</td>
<td>Hostilia Omphale</td>
<td>I (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Pisae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.1475</td>
<td>Hostilia Zoe</td>
<td>I (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Coniunx (?)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>Pisae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>needle (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>11.1524b</td>
<td>Gabinia Procula</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Caesilius Mercuralis (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>Portus Pisanus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slippers, patera (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.1665</td>
<td>Varenia Hermione</td>
<td>I (?)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Florentia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inv. No.</td>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Honorand(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Commemorator(s)</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.2806</td>
<td>Volcasia Sabina</td>
<td>Inv</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Annius Caesianus (C)</td>
<td>mirror, utensil</td>
<td>Volsinii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcius Proculus (C)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.3354</td>
<td>Volumnia Priscilla</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Volumnia Euresis (M)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Blera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Veturius Adventus (Pr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.6994</td>
<td>Valeria Procula</td>
<td>Inv</td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Cosconius (F?)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>Luna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T. Cosconius (N?)</td>
<td>slippers,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>unguentarium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.6998</td>
<td>Herennia Psyche</td>
<td>L (?)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Cresimus (C)</td>
<td>mirror, comb</td>
<td>Luna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aiecta (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander (G)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>11.7002</td>
<td>Nunnia Brysa</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>C. Nunnius Festus (F)</td>
<td>mirror, comb,</td>
<td>Luna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stylus, slippers,</td>
<td>slippers,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>unguintarium</td>
<td>ampullae,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>utensils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.2970</td>
<td>Buturra</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mundus muliebris</td>
<td>Carenses. Sadava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.20674</td>
<td>Julia Secunda</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Julius Secundus (Pr/C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cornelia Tyche</td>
<td>L (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.20674</td>
<td>Valeria Maxima</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>P. Valerius Maximus (Pr)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cosmetic case,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>balsamarium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.20674</td>
<td>Flavia Olympias</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>P. Valerius Maximus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cosmetic case,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>balsamarium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inv. No.</td>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Honorand(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Commemorator(s)</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.672</td>
<td>Axula</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Burdigala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>13.812</td>
<td>Pompeia Marituma</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Julius Lentinus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Burdigala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>13.736</td>
<td>Gallicana (?)</td>
<td>Ign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Honorand (?)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.664</td>
<td>Aveta</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Cintugena (M)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Burdigala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.869</td>
<td>Vercundia Priscilla</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Calvisinus Serdus (Pr)</td>
<td>mirror, comb</td>
<td>Burdigala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.7734</td>
<td>Aurelia Tertia</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>L. Veltius Bassus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Gallia Cisalpina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.762</td>
<td>Pompeia Graphis</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Arlate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Titia Nicarium</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Honorand</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Dyrrhachium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>13.3386</td>
<td>Pupilla</td>
<td>Ign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Durocortorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>13.4672</td>
<td>Carosa</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror, perfume vial</td>
<td>Tullum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paulina</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror, cista</td>
<td>Dibio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.4459</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>13.5760</td>
<td>Domina</td>
<td>Ign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Honorand (?)</td>
<td>mirror, cista</td>
<td>Andematunnum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inv. No.</td>
<td>CIL</td>
<td>Honorand(s)</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Commemorator(s)</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Regina</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Barates Palmyrenus (P/C)</td>
<td>mirror, <em>cista</em></td>
<td>Britannia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>11.3011</td>
<td>Luculla Psamathe</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>T. Calpurnius Libicus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>A. Viterbiensis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>2.5799</td>
<td>Arcea Longine</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Q..... Emea (F)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Tritium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.5800</td>
<td>Cassia Flavina</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Cassius Flavius (Pr)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Tritium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.14065</td>
<td>Ulpia Severina</td>
<td>Inc</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Fannius Florentinus (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Pannonia Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>13.5353</td>
<td>Julia Festa</td>
<td>L.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sextus Baebius Pudens (C and G)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Solva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>13.5358</td>
<td>Claudia lucunda</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Solva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>13.5365</td>
<td>Samuda</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>P. Laelius Heracla (C)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Solva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>13.5376</td>
<td>Pompeia Ingenua</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Q. Pompeius Eugamus (Pr)</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Solva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>13.864</td>
<td>Daughter of Centurio</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>mirror</td>
<td>Burdigala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total inscriptions:** 64  
**Total honorands:** 73
Fig. 1. Burial shroud from Antinoopolis. Athens, Benaki Museum.
Fig. 2. Burial shroud from Antinoopolis. Paris, Musée du Louvre.
Fig. 3. Marble relief of a woman's toilette from the *Elternpaarpfeiler*, Neumagen. Trier, Rheinisches Landesmuseum
Fig. 4. Mosaic portrait of a woman. Naples, Museo Nazionale.
Fig. 5. Portrait of a married couple. Naples, Museo Nazionale.
Fig. 6. Portrait of the 'Jewellery Girl'. Edinburgh, National Museums of Scotland.
Fig. 7. Portrait of the 'Ethiopian'. London, British Museum.
Fig. 8. Portrait of a woman. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts.
Fig. 9. Detail of portrait of Hermione. Cambridge, Girton College.
Fig. 10. Mummy of Hermione. Cambridge, Girton College.