Imagery and ideology : aspects of female representation in Roman art, with special reference to Britain and Gaul.

Rene Heather Rodgers

IMAGERY AND IDEOLOGY: ASPECTS OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN ROMAN ART, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BRITAIN AND GAUL

(TWO VOLUMES)

RENÉ HEATHER RODGERS

VOLUME I

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Durham, in the Department of Archaeology, 1998

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The exploration of visual imagery can provide us with a route to a fuller understanding of the perceptions and constructions of gender in Roman society. Therefore, this thesis examines different facets of the various Roman ideologies of gender and the ways in which these ideologies may have influenced visual representations within Roman culture. Two ideological facets of the construction and representation of gender are analysed: the association of women with Otherness and Nature, and the representation of women within the context of personification and ideals. A variety of examples from a range of media are examined in order to address these seemingly paradoxical constructions of femaleness within Roman culture and imagery. The ideological perception of women as both 'inside and outside' of Roman culture seems to have been influential on their textual and visual representation. Also, images of women, and their portrayal in metaphors of difference, were often utilised in the self-definition of the dominant group within Roman society: elite citizen men. Finally, the examination of Roman visual imagery, specifically female representations, contributes to our understanding of the creation and maintenance of ideologies of gender within Roman culture and their possible manifestation within provincial society.

"Women are supposed to behave demurely. They can be manipulating tyrants in private, so long as the good Roman myth of female subservience is sustained. The trouble with Helena Justina was that she refused to compromise. She said what she wanted, and she did it too. That sort of perverse behaviour makes it extremely difficult for a man who has been brought up expecting deceit and inconsistency to be sure where he stands."

(Davis, 1992, 50)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

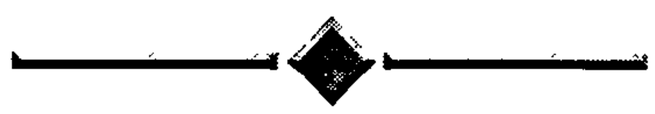
There are several people whom I would like to thank for their assistance during the production of this thesis. My supervisor, Martin Millett, has given me both support and encouragement throughout the past four years. His guidance has been an important factor in the success of my research. The interest shown in this topic by Sarah Scott has helped me to develop my ideas and her encouragement has been instrumental to my persistence in the study of women and Roman art.

At the beginning of my research I wrote to several people and their advice and suggestions helped me to develop my topic. These include Lin Foxhall, Natalie Kampen, Gillian Clark, Henrietta Moore, Janet Huskinson, Martin Henig, Barbara Bender, Roberta Gilchrist, Glenys Davies, Roger White, and Francis Grew. Emma Stafford, Suzanne Spencer-Wood, Lynn Meskell, Margarita Diaz-Andreu and C. E. Schultze have all read parts of my thesis or discussed the subject with me. Their comments and suggestions have been influential on my arguments. I would also like to thank Jocelyn Nelis-Clermont and D. S. Levene for their advice on epigraphy and the Latin language. My correspondence and discussions with Pat Witts on Romano-British mosaics have been extremely useful. Tom Blagg and Graham Webster gave me access to their unpublished forthcoming CSIR data-bases which was very helpful in the production of my own data-base. Yvonne Beadnell and Simon James have also given me a great deal of advice on illustrations and other aspects of my research. I would also like to acknowledge the suggestions and references that were given to me through my discussions on the Anahita e-mail list.

Thanks are also due to the postgraduate community at Durham. John Pearce and Jeremy Taylor have given me infinite advice concerning my research. Chris Constable helped me with the computer problems that seemed never-ending. The production of my illustrations would have been overwhelming without the help of Lisa Hodgetts. Louise Revell, however, bore the heaviest burden and proofread my entire thesis - an invaluable contribution! Most of all, I would like to thank all the postgrads and my friends for their support, encouragement and their creation of the lighthearted atmosphere that made the job easier.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Joyce and Robert, and my family for all they have done for me throughout these years and for the loving support that has helped me get this far. And to my husband, Nic Holland - his commitment, love and encouragement have made this all possible. Therefore, this work is dedicated to him and my family.

CHAPTER 1



GENDER AND ART: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Recent publications by feminist scholars (Conkey and Spector, 1984; Dobres, 1988; Conkey, 1991; Conkey and Gero, 1991; Conkey and Williams, 1991; Walde and Willows, 1991; Claassen, 1992a; Spencer-Wood, 1992; Conkey, 1993; Gilchrist, 1993; Moore and Scott, 1997) underline the need for gender studies in archaeological research. A critical analysis of gender and its significance in ancient societies is especially necessary in classical archaeology. Unfortunately, until recently, classical archaeology has not benefited from the feminist influence that has contributed to the development of gender theory in other disciplines (Brown, 1993, 238). Visual imagery is one route to an exploration of the perception and construction of gender in Roman society. An analysis of different facets of the various Roman ideologies of gender and the ways in which these ideologies may have influenced visual representations can expand our understanding of Roman culture. This thesis therefore explores two ideological facets of the construction of gender and their representation in the visual imagery of Roman society. With this analysis, I hope to move away from traditional treatment of art in relation to questions of aesthetics and stylistic change, typological catalogues and iconographical classifications in order to gain a more nuanced insight into the society that constructed, patronised and viewed Roman art.

This chapter is an introduction to relevant theory on gender and art in order to establish a framework for an analysis of female representation in Roman art. I shall first address the concept of gender itself, before moving on to a summary and critique of the study of gender in past archaeological research. Recent feminist approaches and theory on gender will be examined, and an exploration of their application to the study of Roman art and society will follow. The use and relevance of current art historical theory in relation to gender and Roman art will also be considered. Finally, a brief outline of the main body of my thesis and its parameters will be presented.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF GENDER IN ARCHAEOLOGY

It is first necessary to examine the definition and use of the term gender in archaeology. In the Collins Concise English Dictionary, gender is defined in several ways. Linguistically, it is described as "a set of two or more grammatical categories into which the nouns of certain languages are divided [and] any of the categories, such as masculine, feminine, neuter or common, within such a set." With regard to animals and humans, gender is seen as "the state of being male, female, or neuter, [or related to] all the members of one sex: *the female gender*" (Hanks, 1988, 465). Within these definitions, there is essentially no differentiation between sex and gender. However, contemporary research in anthropology, archaeology and sociology draws a clear distinction between biological sex and the cultural construction of gender. As Gilchrist asserts, "gender centres on the social construction of masculinity and femininity: the social values invested in the sexual differences between men and women. In this respect gender archaeology is part of the study of social structure, as significant as rank in the social stratification and the evolution of past societies" (1991, 497).

With the emphasis on gender as a cultural construction and not as simply representative of biological difference, a more critical analysis of gender relations and constructions is necessary. Despite this acknowledgement, past examinations of gender have often been restricted by a tendency to equate sexual difference indiscriminately with the disparity found in gender roles and relations. This tendency has revealed itself in several ways. Firstly, perceived differences and inequalities between men and women in the past have been viewed as arising 'naturally' from the biological differences between the sexes. This assessment of 'naturalness' inevitably leads to the idea that gender roles are unchanging and universal through time and space, rather than the product of social constructions which are variable within different cultures and periods. As Kampen states, gender is a constructed feature of society which "comes into being [through] and lives in social customs, practices, ideals and norms" (1996a, 17). Secondly, an unfortunate consequence of this common perception of gender as unchanging and universal is that gender is then viewed as a passive aspect of past societies. Thus, it has taken feminist scholars a long time to emphasise the active and integral aspect of gender in the social, political and economic structuring of a culture.

The past assumption of gender as biologically determined has led to its often problematic usage in archaeological research. Ardener, referring to work by Hastrup, points out that biological properties are used more often as 'markers' of social categories for women. These social markers often act as restricting elements on female life (Ardener, 1978b, 13). In general, this type of biological determinism seems to be applied predominantly to women. The perception within a society that women do not have a certain quality or property which is deemed male has frequently resulted in the exclusion of women from certain roles or activities. However, it is significant that within evolutionary biology, there is an assertion of biological potentiality over biological determinism. Evolutionary biologists like Gould assert that the problem with the idea of biological determinism is found in its common social and political usage. Biological determinism is often based on assumptions and pre-conceived notions, and then subsequently "used to defend existing [and past] social arrangements as biologically inevitable (Gould, 1977, 258).

There is one last element of the concept of gender which must be addressed. Traditionally, gender is divided into the binary opposites of male and female. However, Meskell (1998, 142) points out that sex is a contextual issue and its perception is based on cultural location. Within the classical period, while male and female were obviously differentiated, some ancient scholars perceived the two genders as points on a continuum of one primary sex where the female was simply a mutation or negative variation on male biology. This can be seen in the work of Aristotle where he states that "just as it sometimes happens that deformed offspring are produced by deformed parents, and sometimes not, so the offspring produced by a female are sometimes female, sometimes not, but male. The reason is that the female is as it were a deformed male; and the menstrual discharge is semen, though in an impure condition; *i.e.*, it lacks one constituent, and one only, the principle of Soul" (Aristotle, Generation of Animals, 737a). At the same time, Gleason (1990) addresses the influence of physiognomy on Roman ideas of maleness and femaleness. The second century AD physiognomist Polemo expressed the belief in the existence of masculine and feminine types where one type would prevail in a person thus determining their 'gender.' Masculinity therefore was viewed as an achieved state, and any traits or characteristics perceived as effeminate could tip the scales towards a man being of the feminine type. These characteristics could range from physical self-fashioning such as grooming or clothes, more internal traits such as lack of courage, or elements of sexual deviancy where men played the feminine role in their sexual relations with other men

(Gleason, 1990, 390-96). Martial illustrates the construction of masculine or feminine self in an epigram where he places himself in opposition to Charmenion:

> Seeing that you boast yourself a townsman of the Corinthians, Charmenion -- and no one denies it -- why am I called "brother' by you, I, who was born of the Iberians and Celts, and am a citizen of Tagus? Is it in face we look alike? You stroll about sleek with curled hair, my locks are Spanish and stiff; you are smoothed with depilatory daily, I am one with bristly shanks and cheeks; your tongue lisps, and your utterance is feeble; my guts will speak in stronger tone: a dove is not so unlike an eagle, nor a timid doe a savage lion. Wherefore cease to call me "brother" lest I call you, Charmenion, "sister"!
>
> (Martial, Epigrams 10.65)

Unfortunately, the question of the prevalence of these ideas of gender outside the spheres of philosophy, ideological discourse and satire is difficult to answer. However, they do point to a different conception of gender than is commonly addressed; a conception which could perhaps be altered and manipulated for various motivations by ancient individuals.

1.3 PAST ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND ITS 'BLIND SPOT': THE NEGLECT OF A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER IN SOCIETY

> *Like people of color asking, 'Whose flesh?' of beige products labelled 'flesh-toned', feminists and others are now asking of white men, 'Whose past?'*
>
> (Brown, 1993, 257)

Feminist scholars have levelled several criticisms against archaeology concerning its neglect of women and gender in past research. The most serious of these criticisms concerning the treatment of gender is that of androcentrism: a male-centred bias within scholarship. Androcentrism can be found in archaeological investigation within the use of language and at both the methodological and interpretative level. Most of the criticism has derived from recent re-evaluations and analyses in prehistoric and New World archaeology (Conkey and Spector, 1984; Dobres, 1988; Conkey and Gero, 1991; Conkey and Williams, 1991; Dobres, 1992; Spencer-Wood, 1992; Conkey and Tringham, 1995). I shall first address a few of these feminist evaluations in order to provide a general picture of the

androcentric nature of some past scholarship, and then move on to the criticisms which have been aimed at classical archaeology.

ANDROCENTRISM AND LANGUAGE

Man, being a mammal, breast-feeds his young.

(Frank and Treichler, 1989, 4)

One of the more obvious manifestations of androcentric bias in archaeological discourses is often found in the language used within the research itself. The example above, taken from a book on the use of gender in language, specifically within professional writing, clearly illustrates the problem. Many archaeological books and papers use this common linguistic bias - that of the use of Man or the pronoun He to stand for all of humanity. While it is professed to be used as a generic term to cover both men and women, all too often the general Man becomes the individual man. In other words, the general term of Man is repeatedly followed by details of individual men's contributions to cultural and social change in past societies, with very little reference to women as active agents in these processes. By relying on this gender inclusive terminology, women are therefore effectively excluded from reconstructions of the past. For instance, Glacken's Traces on the Rhodian Shore states his intent in using the term Man quite clearly: "In general 'man' is used as a convenient word meaning 'mankind'; 'culture,' [or] 'society,' however, are the more exact terms. 'Man' is so abstract that it conceals the complexities and intricacies which the other words suggest" (1967, xiv). Unfortunately, it also frequently conceals the presence of woman.

Androcentric bias is also expressed within the actual usage of language. Many archaeological studies suffer from a differential usage of language to the disadvantage of women. This androcentrism is found in the secondary representation of women in the text (Spencer-Wood, 1992, 99). Conkey and Spector note the rare use of the term 'activity' in reference to women. Instead, women are described with passive verbs, consequently implying a passive role for women (1984, 10). Another symptom of this problematic use of language is the description of women predominantly in relation to men. While these relationships are obviously an aspect of the past and important to the make-up of the society, this emphasis rarely takes women into consideration as contributing and important individuals of the past.

PROBLEMS OF METHODOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION

Spencer-Wood defines androcentric bias in archaeology as the representation of "male dominance and female subordination as universal, natural, and therefore inevitable and justified" (1992, 98). She then addresses several common sexist assumptions which have coloured archaeological theory and research, resulting in an androcentric focus in past scholarship. Spencer-Wood's analysis of androcentric bias in archaeological scholarship is fairly representative of the critiques levelled against the discipline by feminist scholars, and therefore has been summarised below (ibid., 99).

- There has been a definite equation of gender with women, and consequently the neglect of both gender as a concept and women as a subject has been a prevalent aspect of past archaeological research.
- Men and their roles, behaviours, activities and viewpoints have been perceived as representative of society as a whole. With the generalisation of the male as the cultural norm, men have become the ruler against which all other societal classifications have been measured. Also, women's roles, behaviours and viewpoints have often either been ignored or valued as less important or relevant to our study of a particular culture. Their position and viewpoints within a society have therefore not been viewed as the 'norm', and often have been perceived as secondary to male correlates.
- Men are viewed as the primary and sometimes exclusive agents of cultural change. Relative to this notion, women have been viewed as passive objects rather than active subjects in the past.
- Women have been classed in male-oriented and defined categories, and thus have become 'invisible'.
- There has been an uncritical reliance on modern gender stereotypes in the interpretation of past societies. This has resulted in the assumption of biological and social universals with regard to the perceived passive position of women.
- Any member of society who steps outside of the perceived boundaries of gender roles and activities is viewed as an exception or anomaly. Thus, there has been limited scope for a broader interpretation of male and female roles in the past by assuming that these examples of human variety are simply special cases and not representative of the nuances and variety implicit in any past culture and society.

It will be useful to address the methodological and interpretative problems in a more detailed fashion. The empirical neglect of women in past androcentric research becomes apparent when we acknowledge that women have rarely appeared in the reconstruction of the past as integral and active participants. Rather, several assumptions about gender roles have been continually made. Feminist scholars have charged the research community with reinforcing and perpetuating "a set of culture-specific beliefs about the meaning of masculine and feminine, about the capabilities of men and women, about their power relations, and about their appropriate roles in society" (Conkey and Spector, 1984, 1). This charge is related to the uncritical use and reliance on stereotypes concerning gender, which are often not based on archaeological evidence, but are derived from contemporary perceptions and assumptions. These stereotypes are readily discernible in the frequent emphases on men as the primary agents of cultural change (see Man-the-Hunter model of human evolution in Washburn and Lancaster, 1968; critique by Conkey and Spector, 1984).

The exclusion of women as active participants or interesting subjects of the prehistoric past has often been justified through the claim of women's 'invisibility' in the archaeological record. Assumptions about men as the primary agents in environmental and technological changes have resulted in women being neglected as acknowledged and integral contributors in cultural and social evolution. There is also the prevailing trend of linking artefacts to primarily male activity, and consequently valuing those activities on a higher scale than perceived female activities. However, archaeological remains "reflect human behaviour in the past,...[and] the link between an artifact in a particular context in the ground and the [gender,] social role and the conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, and intentions of a person who made or used it is tenuous" (Brown, 1993, 249). In addition, it has been argued that gender and women are more difficult categories to study in past societies due to this perceived invisibility. Conkey and Gero (1991, 6-7) assert that conceptual frameworks far less 'real' than gender, such as population pressure and sociotechnic systems, continue to be important in archaeological research, and therefore the argument of invisibility is faulty. They ask "Why is there a 'need' to 'find' females and not the same need to 'find' males who are, by implication, already present, active, the primary contributors to the archaeological record and the human past?" (ibid., 12). And to be even more forceful, Nixon (1994, 6-7) asks "how is it possible to exclude...[women] from a scholarly reconstruction of an important phase of *human* development? How can it be

academically respectable to provide a gender-specific model for which little or no evidence exists?"

In line with the preconception of important social activities being male-oriented is the sexual division of labour found in artefactual pattern studies. Differential treatment has been given to perceived gender-linked activities of the past, often to the detriment of women. This is often more telling of contemporary prejudices and preconceptions, than related to the actual data. Coupled with the interpretation of certain artefacts or activities as gendered is an implicit value judgement where perceived male-oriented aspects of the past are given a higher value in that society and in the interpretation of cultural evolution. For instance, Dommasnes (1992, 2) refers to one of the richest and most interesting Viking Age finds in Norway - the Oseberg ship burial discovered in the 1970s. This burial contained the remains of two women, many tools, personal equipment and artistic work. However, she notes that when this find has been addressed, the majority of the discussions have centred on the carvings and the ship, and their connection to the supposed men involved as carvers, builders and sailors. This uneven emphasis on the material evidence and the assumptions within its interpretation effectively turns the spotlight away from a serious consideration of the obviously important women in the burial.

1.4 FEMINIST CRITICISM AND CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

It is obvious from the previous section that numerous problems of methodology and interpretation have coloured past archaeological research. The majority of feminist criticism has come from prehistoric and New World archaeology, with the first real critique of androcentric bias appearing in Conkey and Spector's 1984 article. However, there has been limited criticism of the traditional research and a slow acceptance of feminist theory within the field of classical archaeology (Brown, 1997).

Brown (1993, 257) states that there are three important stages of feminist research essential in classics and classical archaeology:

- the criticism of androcentric bias
- a focus on women as subjects in archaeological research of Greco-Roman society
- the broader methodological and theoretical inquiry into the character of gender relations and constructions in the ancient world.

Unfortunately, Brown notes that the majority of classical scholars have focused on the second option while largely ignoring the important first and third stages. It is also interesting that most of the past concern with feminist theory or female subjects has been found within Greek studies rather than Roman ones, and the field of classics rather than classical archaeology (Hallett, 1993, 54).

THE FOCUS ON WOMEN AS A TOPIC

It will be useful to examine the ways in which a focus on women has been addressed within the study of the ancient world. While there have been several books and articles which focus on women as a subject, many of these works have been historically based in content and approach. These studies are often presented in a very traditional vein, reflecting many of the same assumptions as past research, and not really benefiting from recent feminist theory. Unfortunately, research of this nature often simply documents women's roles and associated artefacts, with little critical interpretation. Recent research which focuses on the archaeological evidence, such as Allason-Jones' (1989) book on women in Roman Britain, often moves beyond the historical approach by applying the material evidence to women's day-to-day lives. This text is an excellent introduction to the type of archaeological material used for evidence of women's activities in Roman Britain and what these artefacts may signify. While some of her chapter headings on traditional categories such as 'At Home' and 'Fashion' can seem slightly restricting, she also examines the possibility of women at work and in relation to the army, broadening the conceivable activities and roles of women. Her work is important because she effectively uses an interesting and varied database in her examination of the topic of women. She also acknowledges the frustrating problem inherent in the study of women in a province such as Britain where we have very little direct literary references, and where the diversity of the material is often limited in comparison to other provinces like Gaul. Her main aim was to present the evidence which exists and try to formulate an idea of the nature of women's lives in Roman Britain, while also underlining the usefulness of looking at the female along with the male in archaeological studies of the Roman period (Allason-Jones, 1989, 8-10). Her study will hopefully lead us to the critical questions about women and their roles, the construction of gender and its maintenance, and the dynamics of gender relations which need to be addressed within the classical world.

Gilchrist advocates a historical revision with emphasis on women as the centre of analysis (1991, 499). While an acknowledgement of women as important and integral to the past is absolutely essential to critical archaeological research, there is the danger of reversing the bias to the point where men or other factors are in turn neglected. This again can result in an isolated and exclusive perspective on the past simply from the female perspective. We must recognise that no single aspect of the past, nor a single gender, exists in a vacuum, and therefore all factors of cultural life must be taken into account if we are to produce penetrating and comprehensive analyses of the past. At the same time, Moore (1988, 5-9) points out three dangers inherent in an exclusive focus on women:

- There is the possibility of 'ghettoization' where the study of women is seen simply as a sub-discipline, and consequently remains marginalised from the main archaeological subjects. This type of isolation can also be found in books which advertise a comprehensive interpretation of the past, but place women in a separate chapter of their own as if women were separate from the society and culture itself.
- A false reliance by scholars on the idea of the 'universal' woman can result in a uniform depiction and interpretation of women from all past societies. Rather, it is more beneficial to acknowledge that ideas of the female are always "culturally and historically specific", and therefore a plurality of interpretation and constructions of women can exist.
- There is the added problem that our focus on women to the possible exclusion of other factors such as race can result in ethnocentrism and yield similar problems to androcentric bias. We must move away from the idea of sameness and rather acknowledge and celebrate the various differences found in ancient societies.

A CRITICISM OF ANDROCENTRIC BIAS IN CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Recent years have finally seen the beginnings of feminist critique within classical archaeology on similar lines to the prehistoric and New World evaluations of androcentric bias (Brown, 1993; Hallett, 1993; Rabinowitz and Richlin, 1993; Allason-Jones, 1995; E. Scott, 1995; E. Scott, 1997). One of the problems of past research has been the prevalent focus on philology and history, rather than art history or archaeology. As traditional avenues of interest are pursued such as literature or military history, critical questions of social class, ethnicity, gender, the relationship between the author/creator and the audience, or how contemporary perceptions attribute value and meaning to the evidence are often neglected (Rabinowitz and Richlin, 1993, 5). These traditional concerns are often followed

by the interpretation of men as social and cultural actors, and women perceived solely within the male-defined categories of "goddesses, whores, wives and slaves" (Pomeroy, 1975). Unfortunately, until recently, there has been no real parallel exploration of how these perceptions of the female were constructed and maintained, or of the variety of interpretations possible for women's lives and roles in the classical period. It also seems that the majority of the new feminist theories and methodologies are being developed not within classical archaeology, especially Roman archaeology, but rather are found in classical art history (Brown, 1997; Kampen, 1996a; Kampen, 1996b; Kampen, 1997; Lyons and Koloski-Ostrow, 1997a). Though, again, this change within Greco-Roman art history has been slow due to the continuing focus on style, aesthetics and what has been judged as 'good art' (Brown, 1997).

The problem is best summed up by Moore's analysis of anthropological androcentric bias which is equally applicable to classical archaeology. Moore notes that women have always been present in anthropological discourses. Thus, rather than being an empirical problem, it has been a question of representation. Ethnographic studies have tended to place more emphasis and importance on the male perspective at the expense of the women. Therefore, because men were believed to be the primary informants and actors in society, it was their accounts and activities which were focused upon. Moore identifies three levels of male bias in the representation of women in anthropological studies: 1) biases found in the studied society; 2) imported bias or preconceived ideas concerning gender relations and constructions and their significance which consequently influences the framework of the study; and 3) a bias inherent in Western culture which perceives all instances of difference and asymmetry in past gender dynamics and roles as analogous to our society's unequal and hierarchical gender relations (Moore, 1988., 1-2). These problems are also at the root of androcentric bias in classical research where the focus has too often been on male viewpoints, perceptions and categories of analysis. This approach leads to the problem where what we learn about women is not from our analysis of female lives and evidence of female activity and perceptions, but rather through men's attitudes and constructions of women (Conkey and Spector, 1984, 4; Gero, 1991, 96-97). Androcentric bias is further amplified by classical scholars extensive and often uncritical reliance on textual evidence as a primary tool in the interpretation of ancient society. The difficulty with this reliance on texts is again an obvious one, and a concern that is often ignored by the scholar. As Rabinowitz and Richlin claim, "if we separate history and literature, or referential women and representational women, we find that we have many male

representations of women but not much 'hard' data about women, let alone material written by women" (1993, 9). Thus, the textual evidence we use will first be coloured by the past attitude towards women and then by our imported contemporary preconceptions about women - and a balanced interpretation of the past will rarely be forthcoming.

J. W. Scott points out the continuing problem of the 'invisibility' of women within archaeological research. "In the evaluation of what is important, of what matters to the present in the past, women as individuals or as a definable group rarely receive mention. The story of the development of human society has been told largely through male agency; and the identification of men with 'humanity' has resulted for the most part in the disappearance of women from the record of the past" (J.W. Scott, 1988, 5). Eleanor Scott further elaborates the nature of androcentric bias in archaeological research of the Roman period. She sets out three specific ways in which women and questions of gender dynamics have been made invisible within Roman scholarship. She addresses the difficulty that most historical, social and political narratives and theoretical discourses have been written by, for and about men (E. Scott, 1995, 176).

Scott views the first method of rendering women invisible as that of exclusion. Exclusion is characterised by the neglect of women or gender issues within research, coupled with a focus on explicitly male or perceived male-oriented aspects of Roman society. Within 'exclusive' scholarship, "the general narratives and theories set priorities in subject matter and data which focus attention on social processes and activities in which women were only marginally involved, if at all" (E. Scott, 1995, 176). Coupled with this trend is the further usage of exclusionary and androcentric language. Birley's The People of Roman Britain (1979) is a good example of a text coloured by the problem of exclusion. At the beginning of his book, Birley points out that the title may be misleading because his focus is on people from Roman Britain whose names are known. However, the nature of his classificatory system within his chapters automatically places women in a position of relative anonymity. His chapters are divided into different categories of people, but the categories chosen are almost completely those which have been assumed as male: 'High Official and Senior Officers', 'Equestrian Officers', 'Legionary Centurions', 'Legionaries', 'Auxiliaries', 'Veterans', 'British soldiers in the Roman army', 'Merchants and Craftsmen'. There are a few chapters within this book which do not imply male dominance such as 'People of the Frontier', 'Curial Class and Urban Population', 'Country Dwellers', and 'Slaves and Freedmen'. Women whose names have come down to us are found in this book, but the way

in which the book has been divided does not make this obvious, and the focus is almost exclusively male. As a result, his book cannot possibly reflect the full reality of 'the people of Roman Britain.'

Scott's second category is termed pseudo-inclusion. In research of this type, the author includes women in the account, but at the same time marginalises them through his/her treatment of women. As a result, women's significance is consequently diminished. "Women become defined as a 'special case', as anomalies, exceptions to the rule which can be noted and then forgotten about. What is normative is male" (E. Scott, 1995, 178). As a notable example, Scott examines Frere's interpretation of the infant burials at Hambleden villa. Frere states that "the discovery of the skeletons of ninety-seven new-born babies in the yard of the villa at Hambleden, Buckinghamshire, suggests the exposure of unwanted female offspring of a slave-run establishment" (Frere, 1987, 259). However, as infants cannot reliably be sexed through the use of physical anthropology, this argument is fundamentally flawed. Rather, he is presuming that the infants' disposal would be an illicit and guilty act by the serving women who hid these pregnancies and the physical evidence of them, and seems to be basing their sex simply on the assumption that any of what he terms "unwanted offspring" would be female (E. Scott, 1995, 178; E.Scott, 1997, 7). At the same time, he does not carry the discussion of his interpretation any further, nor does he address the variety of other possibilities for infant skeletons on a villa site. For instance, Scott notes that infant burials were often associated with important features of a site such as walls or floors, ritual features or agricultural areas. They are also sometimes buried with grave goods. Scott views these burials as culturally significant through their possible "ritual or ideological treatment" (E. Scott, 1997, 7). Therefore, it becomes evident that often stereotypical interpretations associated with women should be questioned rather than simply accepted in order to get a more balanced conception of the past.

Finally, within Roman studies we find examples of alienation where the theories relied upon in many instances are 'extensionally male.' Women are included in works of this type, but they and the parameters of their lives are not interpreted or viewed without bias, be it conscious or unconscious. Rather, "women's experience is interpreted through male categories because the methodologies and values of the theorists remain androcentric" (E. Scott, 1995, 179). I believe that an aspect of this type of alienation can be observed in Garnsey and Saller's The Roman Empire (1987). The book is divided into sections on administration, economics, social and cultural factors. However, the only tangible place that

women can be found within the text is in the small section on the family and household, especially the part which focuses on husband and wives. By isolating women within this section, they give the impression that these were the only roles for women within the Roman empire, therefore falling into the trap of exclusively male-defined categories. The areas within the book devoted to patronage, public munificence, and religion imply through their language (i.e. the use of men in the non-general way) that these activities were only participated in by men. Women also participated in these procedures and activities. Within the upper stratas of society, women could wield a great deal of influence within the community, their households and the empire itself; while the lower levels of society saw female clients and women as active members of the workforce. These possibilities within female life are not acknowledged in Garnsey and Saller's text. Therefore, this book appears very one-sided with its restriction of women to the role of wife or daughter, rather than acknowledging that women, like men, could be active agents in the workings of the Roman empire.

1.5 FROM CRITIQUE TO NEW THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

From the extensive feminist critique of archaeology and other disciplines within recent years, a framework of theory has developed which can be applied to an examination of gender during the Roman period. I shall briefly address the diversity of this theory and its relevance in this section.

GENERAL FEMINIST THEORY ON GENDER AND WOMEN

It will be beneficial first to explore some of the general theory on gender and women which has developed in feminist archaeology and related fields, before moving on to the frameworks of analysis being employed specifically in classical archaeology. Ortner and Whithead (1981b, 2-4) suggest two interrelated approaches to the study of gender. Firstly, a culturalist approach postulates that in order to understand a specific gender symbol, it must be studied and analysed within the larger context of inter-related symbols and meanings. Secondly, a sociological approach questions the relationship between the social order and its cultural perceptions of gender and sexuality. This idea places emphasis either on cultural features as reflections of social, political and economic structures or on culture as an ideological tool used to justify and maintain the social order. By applying both of these approaches to our consideration of the past, we move beyond the simple identification of

gender and start questioning how it operated as an active force. Once we explore the symbolic and social conceptions of gender, it is then essential to integrate them within a comprehensive contextual study of a particular society. We can then view gender constructs "as highly 'ritualised statements' which elaborate on what individual women and men perceive as particularly salient political, [social and cultural] concerns" (Moore, 1988, 37).

Furthermore, Ardener observes a cyclical effect of gender within past and contemporary societies. She suggests that the classification, roles and position delegated to women by a society are influenced by the perceptions about women within that society. These classifications in turn direct the perceptions and attitudes about women (Ardener, 1978b, 9). This trend is especially obvious in the classical and historical periods where we have copious textual evidence informing us about these perceptions. We can then examine the way in which these attitudes and assumptions about women have influenced the visual imagery and cultural institutions of a society. Though words and images may not reflect the reality of women and men within a culture, we can explore the ways in which these conceptions were constructed, utilised and maintained.

The above notion leads us to Edwin Ardener's theory of 'muted groups'. "The implications are that a society may be dominated or overdetermined by the model (or models) generated by one dominant group within the system. This dominant model may impede the free expression of alternative models of their world which sub-dominant groups may possess, and perhaps may even inhibit the very generation of such models" (Ardener, 1975b, xii). This is an interesting concept to assess in classical archaeology because most of the evidence which reaches us is versed in and coloured by the male idiom. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how the dominant ideology in past societies may have influenced the make-up and conception of that society, and explore the possible manifestations of alternative models by the 'sub-dominant' groups within that culture.

NEW APPROACHES WITHIN CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

It is only in recent years that feminist theory has been developed and utilised within classical archaeology, history and art history. Several scholars have begun the process of developing new approaches to gender and women, and consequently have advanced fresh interpretations in their studies of classical archaeology and art. Allason-Jones makes it clear in her article on 'sexing' small finds that simply re-questioning accepted data can be

illuminating. She points out that artefacts like brooches, earrings, bracelets and other jewellery are frequently used to point to female presence or burial. However, within Roman Britain, brooches are worn by both men and women, and other types of jewellery like bracelets and earrings found in military contexts could indicate a possible continuation of various native traditions - both native Briton or from the auxiliaries (Allason-Jones, 1995, 22-27). She uses the example of Coventina's Well to further illustrate the problem of assuming sex based on small finds. Many of the items found as votives within this well - brooches, finger-rings, hairpins, bracelets, beads - are traditionally viewed as female-oriented artefacts. In the past, there has been the supposition that these items were thrown into the well by love-lorn women in an effort to gain the goddess' sympathy and help. However, all the inscriptions to Coventina are by male dedicants (though with the small ratio of female inscriptions in general, this is not necessarily the significant point). Supposed male artefacts such as studs, belt buckles, and a seal-box have also been found in the well. In addition, Coventina seems to be what Allason-Jones terms an 'all-rounder' deity - she is responsible for healing and various human concerns. What becomes apparent is the ambiguity of the data and the possibility that votives were thrown to Coventina for a host of reasons, rather than the fantasy that she was approached by exclusively female devotees in a bid to regain their lost loves (ibid., 29-30). Allason-Jones' work points out the hazards of assuming sex based on artefacts, and especially of constructing elaborate explanations for these artefacts which have no real basis in the evidence.

Interestingly, a substantial amount of feminist work in classical studies is found in recent art historical approaches. Kampen has developed extensive theoretical frameworks for the study of women in ancient society. One facet of the Roman social system is the actual construction of gender. "Gender is the social transformation of biological sex into cultural category...[T]his process of transformation is about power, about the establishment and justification of power relations, and about the creation and maintenance of hierarchies" (Kampen, 1996a, 14). Thus, Roman gender relations were connected to concepts of power which involved a difference in hierarchy, where the structure of Roman society privileged Roman elite men with the greater level of power over several other groups, including women. At the same time, gender interacts with other factors within the power structure of society. "Gender... speaks constantly in the languages of age, status, ethnicity, and they in the language of gender; it exists only and always in relation to other social categories" (ibid., 14). In other words, the power system is defined and influenced by several interconnected elements of a society. Gender is consequently constructed, through society's perceptions of

men and women and coupled with its conception of other cultural categories, in order to contribute to the generation and continuation of a particular power structure within Roman society.

However, this is not to say that women did not wield power in the ancient world. Their power was not officially or structurally based within the legal or government institutions of the Roman empire. Rather, they could possess extensive influence and authority within their communities, their homes, and even within the empire itself. We know of numerous examples of this type of 'de facto' power that was most often based upon the different factors of gender, social status, age and wealth (Kampen, 1996a, 14). For instance, Plancia Magna was an influential and powerful member of her community in second century AD Perge. She completely reconstructed the main city gate and embellished this monument with numerous statues of gods, heroes, historical benefactors and the 'city-founders'. The inscriptions on this gate state that she dedicated the arch to her city, and dedicated many of the statues to Artemis Pergaia, the tutelary spirit of the state, and also to several members of the imperial house (Boatwright, 1993, 193-97). What is most interesting is Plancia Magna's status within her community. Her independent wealth is underlined through her dedication of this monument in her name alone. However, her community also held her in high regard as a woman of authority and beneficence which is evident in the town council and assembly's inscriptions that honoured her. These epigraphic texts identify Plancia Magna as "daughter of the city"; *demiourgos* (the most important and annual eponymous magistrate of the city); priestess of Artemis; first and only priestess of the Mother of the Gods for life; and as a pious and loving member of her local community (ibid., 200-201). This extraordinary example attests that women could wield a high degree of influence and be honoured and respected for it by their peers, despite their exclusion from the official power structure of Roman society (see Chapters 2 and 6).

Many scholars have also postulated the possibility of discerning acts of resistance by women against the power structure that, in many ways, defined their lives. Robb, in his study of symbols in early Italian society, suggests that due to this culture's emphasis on female sexuality there was consequently the opportunity for women to disrupt and question male power through acts such as public or private ridicule and cuckoldry. There is also the possibility that women might have challenged the system through their use of humour, mythology and folklore, rather than through a direct offensive against the traditional male sphere structured around politics (Robb, 1997, 57). Unfortunately, this kind of evidence will

very rarely be found in the archaeological or historical record. Due to the parallel Roman emphasis on female sexuality and honour, it may be possible to apply Robb's theory for women challenging the system within Roman society. Richlin's analysis of the so-called 'Julia's jokes' is one possibility (1992c). One of these jokes from the Saturnalia describes Julia's assertion of her adept handling of her extramarital affairs: "To certain persons who knew of her infidelities and were expressing surprise at her children's likeness to her husband Agrippa, since she was so free with her favors, she said: 'Passengers are never allowed on board until the hold is full'" (Macrobius, Saturnalia 2.5.9). Though these jokes were probably not actually made by Julia herself, they were possibly devised in the Augustan period as a reaction against Augustus' social and moral policies on families and sexuality. The jokes utilise a common negative stereotype which defined women by their propensity to promiscuity. However, this stereotype is used in a novel way as the jokes express a level of self-assertion against the traditional *mores*; one where 'Julia,' the female protagonist, is often more clever and admirable than the male foil of an over-controlling Augustus (Richlin, 1992c, 74-78).

Connected to the prospect of women challenging the dominant system is the notion of women's empowerment of themselves and reaction to the symbols found in the visual and textual imagery. Many scholars have utilised the 'male gaze' theory articulated most clearly by Mulvey (Kappeler, 1986; Richlin, 1992b; Brown, 1993; Kampen, 1996a; Brown, 1997; Koloski-Ostrow, 1997). Mulvey, in her analysis of gender and cinema, states that "in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey, 1989, 19). This concept of the male gaze expresses the idea that "both the subjects an artist chooses, and how one views them, depend on who has power in society" (Brown, 1997, 15). Thus, images of women are frequently not very representative of their lives, concerns or views, but more indicative of male fantasies and fears as products of the dominant male gaze. We can consider ancient images in relation to the possible assumptions held by the dominant spectators (i.e. elite men) about themselves and others; but also explore "ways of seeing ancient images from outside the viewpoint of their intended viewer, and outside his/her idea of that viewpoint as the only or the natural one" (Brown, 1993, 240-241). Both Laird and Sharrock note the importance of the viewer in the interpretation of art, and thus exploring the ways in which the viewer might imbue meaning onto an image is relevant to a study of ancient art (see Laird, 1996; Sharrock, 1996). Within this framework, scholars are beginning to question the response of the female

spectator and ask whether women would have been able to use these images for their own purposes and through their own interpretations rather than simply within the dominant framework (Brown, 1997, 16-17).

Spencer-Wood advocates this approach when she points out that men and women must both be viewed as active agents in their environment "who construct their own gender ideologies, behaviors and relationships" (1992, 106-107). We can begin to ask how women may have controlled and influenced their own lives and even those of others in the male-dominated societies of the classical period. Is it possible that women had their own female-positive ideologies or interpreted traditional symbolic systems in ways different from the dominant ideology? We must view women as individuals who were not simply placed in rigid categories and then only defined by those categories within the structured system of Roman society. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the probability that these women could use that system to their advantage, and react to it in a variety of ways outside the ancient's and our preconceived notion of what it was to be female (ibid., 107; Spencer-Wood, pers. comm.). This type of study is in its infancy within classical archaeology and art history and can be found in recent studies of the reaction that women might have to the symbolic systems found in Greco-Roman art (Osborne, 1994; Kampen, 1996a; Stehle and Day, 1996; Kampen, 1997).

1.6 "ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS": MOVING BEYOND THE NOTION OF ART AS A STRAIGHTFORWARD REFLECTION OF SOCIETY

> *Einfühlen: "the act of feeling one's way into the past not by holding up a mirror but by stepping through the mirror into the alien world"*
> (Vidal, 1997, 115)

In the past, the study of art has often been limited to traditional art historical analyses of certain works of art or media. Scholars have focused on the question of aesthetics, development of styles, typological classifications of certain media and motifs, iconographical catalogues, and the development of art as a practice. However, art can also be utilised in the study of social factors of different cultures. For our purposes, visual imagery is one route to an understanding of the perceptions and constructions of gender in Roman society. I shall first outline some of the general theory on art in its social context,

and then turn to the potential use of art to illuminate ideological narratives, which relates more specifically to the objectives and remainder of this thesis.

ART AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

In our studies of past societies, our contemporary notion of 'art for art's sake' is not a realistic one (Duby and Perrot, 1992, 11). Boas, writing on primitive art, clearly articulated the idea that art was not simply about form or style, but could also reveal a deeper meaning often obscured by our limited conception of art and its use. His understanding of representative art is as follows: "The term itself implies that the work does not affect us by its form alone, but also, sometimes even primarily, by its content. The combination of form and content gives to representative art an emotional value entirely apart from its aesthetic effect" (Boas, 1955, 64). Thus, we must explore the significance behind the construction of imagery and its utilisation within society - a significance which elicits a response in the viewer which can move beyond simple admiration for the work and towards the realisation of the perceived values and concerns of the society.

Many scholars have developed this view of art being more deeply relevant than its form and style. Ruesch and Kees suggest that art is a type of communication - "a non-verbal form of codification" (Ruesch and Kees, 1970, 30). It represents a symbolic structure which constructs and expresses identities and value systems, influences and is influenced by social relations and concerns. "Only by means of...[art and visual images] are we able to get an inkling of how people who lived at a given period attempted to symbolize - or inadvertently succeeded in symbolizing - thoughts, feelings, or even the entire pattern of their lives" (ibid., 30). The artistic system which is developed by a particular culture can thus be manipulated, understood and interpreted within the social setting of the community and state. This is why it is so important to study art within its social and cultural context. This contextual analysis entails the study of "the artwork's relation to a system of ideas, and its part in a system of social relationships. It may be that art provides a medium for expression of universal human emotions but, as Firth aptly observes, all art is composed in a social setting and has its context in a specific body of beliefs and values" (Layton, 1981, 41). Layton goes on to propose that art be investigated in order to determine the consequences of its production and use, and also to explore the values and concerns which are expressed through the symbolic system of visual imagery (ibid., 41).

Different ways of looking at imagery itself have been developed in line with the conventional theory on art and its social context. Panofsky was one of the earliest scholars to define ways of analysing images. In his Meaning in the Visual Arts, he differentiates between the study of iconography and iconology. Iconography is seen as the examination of the subject matter of an art object or motif, rather than its artistic form or style. It is based on description more than interpretation, and seeks simply to define the subject viewed and address its conventional significance (Panofsky, 1955, 26; 32). Iconology moves beyond the simple description found in iconographical catalogues and attempts interpretation of the subject and its significance. In line with iconology's emphasis on interpretation is the search for the intrinsic meaning or content of an image or piece of art: "those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion" (ibid., 30-32).

A recent book on imagery and society in ancient Greece clearly articulates the importance of visual representations and the cautions which must be acknowledged as we examine and interpret them. In A City of Images (1989), the scholars focus on Athens, and it will be useful here to quote Vernant's preface on the purpose of their investigation. The images chosen within the text were those

> "which project a strong light on some of the most pronounced traits of what one might call the social construction of reality of classical Athens, the way it functions, the figures it privileges, and those it rejects, the scenes it highlights and those it leaves in shadow, the classifications created by the interplay of connections and oppositions, as well as by the displacements, the shifts and sometimes blurrings between different categories of images...[We must also realise that]...no figurative system is constituted as a simple illustration of discourse, oral or written, nor as an exact photographic reproduction of reality. The imagery is a construct, not a carbon copy, it is a work of culture, the creation of a language that like all other languages contains an essential element of arbitrariness. The repertoire of figural forms that each civilisation elaborates and organises after its own fashion, in its own style, wherever it chooses, seems always to be the product of a filtering, framing or encoding of reality according to the modes of thought native to that civilisation."
>
> (Vernant, 1989, 8)

Therefore, while imagery can be explored in order to construct an impression of the society that created it and gain an understanding of their values and concerns, motivations and reactions, the image will never give us a complete picture - it will never function as a mirror that reflects the reality of that society back to us.

Consequently, we must acknowledge that while the image is not simply reflective of the constructor's reality, neither is it imbued with a single and exclusive meaning. As Beard points out, our interpretations of an image can change in relation to different contexts, different viewers, different uses, and different expectations. Images may be used to express a range of different ideas such as those related to politics, prestige and status, religion, historical events, social values and concerns, and the expression of power. At the same time, a visual symbol can contain several of these notions on different levels and in relation to its different viewers (Beard, 1991, 13-14). Elsner further notes the importance of the viewer and the act of viewing:

> "What, then, is viewing? One answer is that viewing is one activity in which people confront the world. They themselves may change under the influence of what they see, or what they see may cease to be a neutral object and become something interpreted by them according to the prejudices and associations present in their minds. Viewing is always a dual process of interpretation in which what is seen becomes fitted into the already existent framework of the viewer's knowledge and thereby, very subtly, changes both the content of what the viewer knows (because something new has been added) and the meaning of what is seen (because it is now framed by the viewer's knowledge)."
>
> (Elsner, 1995, 4)

This concept of the plurality of art's meanings and the role of the viewer - both within art's construction and its interpretation - is one of the most important realisations. We can therefore explore art through the variety of its motivations and uses, and attempt to discern the diverse meanings found by its creator and the people who viewed it.

ART AND IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

> *"Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth."*
>
> (de Beauvoir, 1997, 175)

When we examine art from any period, it is necessary to consider the motivations behind the construction of an image and its potential functions. One of the more powerful influences on art is that of ideology. Wharton defines ideology not as "rigidly held, extremist political views" that have become the media's characterisation of ideology, but rather as "habits of thought that naturalize idiosyncratic social practice and mask the structures of authority which those social practices empower" (1995, xii). This definition is

also a convenient one for our analysis of Roman art. Specifically, I shall be exploring the type of representation which de Beauvoir implicates in her quote found above: the representation of women and the ideological motivations and influences behind these representations. These textual and visual representations can reveal the pattern of thought and perceptions about women held by the dominant minority of the Roman male elite, and the ways in which this sector of Roman society attempted to maintain the social structure and influence social practice through these representations.

However, it is first essential to examine the general theory on representation and ideology. In line with the notion of ideology defined above, Kampen views representation as constructed upon a similar foundation: "The job of representation, if we can call it that, is to reconfigure the world; in the process it may help to challenge or to reproduce social arrangements in such way as to make institutions and practices seem completely natural, so inevitable and universal that they couldn't possibly need any help at all" (Kampen, 1997, 267). Therefore, both ideology and representation may be used in inter-related ways by a society and its members. They may be used to mark difference or conformity, hierarchies and structural privilege, the ideals, values and concerns of a society and what it deprecates and fears.

The most important realisation within the context of an analysis of representation and ideology is that both of these aspects of society are frequently based upon ideals. Whether the ideals are personal or related to the dominant values and concerns of a culture, representation and ideology will not simply reflect to us the way in which a society functions day by day, the 'normal' lives of its people, or the actual practice of gender roles. Rather, the representation and its influencing ideology will present to us the ways people view themselves and others, the ideals and values which are defined by the society as desirable, and the various differences which are often rejected. At the same time, representation can be used to challenge the dominant ideology and thus produce an ideology of its own. These images do not reflect reality. Rather, they display an idealised vision of what is socially acceptable and expected, but not necessarily what is actually put into practice throughout the community on individual or wider levels (Kampen, 1996a, 17-18; Spencer-Wood, pers. comm.). Some aspects of everyday life may be revealed from these images and ideological categories, but a definitive picture of that everyday life will not be forthcoming due to the idealised character of the symbolic system and the ideological narratives which influence it.

1.7 IMAGERY AND IDEOLOGY: FRAMEWORK FOR AN ANALYSIS OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN ROMAN ART

I shall first define the parameters of this study, and then briefly outline the remainder of my thesis. My study is intended as a broad overview of female representations in Roman art, with comparative analysis of some male imagery and with special reference to the art of Roman Britain and Gaul. The media considered are mostly confined to mosaics and sculpture, though relevant and interesting examples from other media will also be taken into account. The contexts from which the objects are derived are diverse. Most of the mosaics are taken from private and domestic contexts; however, the sculpture comes from funerary, commemorative, private and religious contexts. The majority of representations mentioned in the text are illustrated in Volume II, and their plate numbers are noted in bold type with their descriptions. I have also attempted to draw upon pertinent textual references to women. However, due to the focus of this thesis on visual imagery, I have generally relied upon previous scholarship and secondary sources for my information on Roman women. Where relevant I have utilised primary sources. It is important to realise that the ancient texts cannot be seen to simply reflect the reality of women's lives, and it is equally vital to take into account the motivations of the author. Nonetheless, the texts can give us an insight into Roman society's perceptions of women which will consequently complement our analysis of the use of visual images. Finally, I have also examined epigraphic evidence where applicable to my argument.

My thesis ranges broadly across time and space. The analysis focuses on images from the imperial period, mostly from the late 1st century BC through to the late 4th-middle 5th century AD. Obviously, changes in both the perception of women and their images occurs within this time-frame. For example, we can observe the changing interpretation of representations of Omphale and Hercules. The works of this subject from the early imperial period have been interpreted as a symbolic reference to the controlling power of Cleopatra over Mark Antony, while by the third century AD images of these two figures were viewed more favourably. This could be due to the influence of Julia Domna as an empress from Syria, but is also attributable to the myth's positive associations with Bacchic mysteries and ritual (see Kampen, 1996c). However, while perceptions and the uses of art may change over time, we can still use the art to establish the general ideological climate concerning gender in Roman society. I am not attempting to construct a monolithic interpretation of female images throughout the Roman empire in both time and space. Rather, I am aiming to

explore the motivations and uses of these images within the negotiation of gender in the Roman world, with reference to specific examples. Again, while the geographical context of my thesis is focused on art from Britain and Gaul, I have found it beneficial to draw upon examples from other areas of the empire where they are clearly illustrative of a point.

Chapter 2 outlines a general background of our knowledge about women in antiquity. It examines various aspects of female life in Roman imperial society such as the political and legal spheres, social and religious integration, roles and activities, and ideological perceptions of women. This framework draws upon both primary and secondary sources in order to gain an insight into female life during the Roman period.

Chapters 3-6 address themes which are based upon different theoretical approaches to ideology and imagery. These four chapters will explore two general ideological facets in the Roman construction of gender, especially femaleness. This ideological construction of the female seems almost paradoxical as we explore two seemingly separate spheres of representation - the equation of women with Otherness and with ideals. The third chapter addresses the concept of female as Other. A general pattern in the representation of women in Roman imperial art expresses an often valued differentiation between male and female. One facet of the Roman gender ideologies categorised women as outside the perceived 'norm' of the dominant minority in Roman society i.e. the male citizen sphere. Women, frequently perceived as outsiders, became a useful visual representation within the construction of Otherness. Within this chapter, I shall first outline the theoretical framework for this notion drawing upon contemporary literature and colonial discourses, followed by an examination of the expression of Otherness in Greco-Roman textual evidence. This theoretical framework can then be related to the visual language of the Roman imperial period. I shall examine the use of images that imply this concept of Otherness within different contexts, and explore the motivations and uses of these representations.

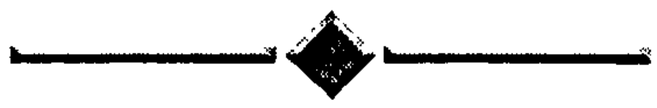
My fourth chapter will follow up the idea of female as Other with an investigation of the relation of woman to nature and man to culture. I shall first examine the theoretical analyses of the nature:culture dichotomy and also the attitudes of Greco-Roman society to nature. A scrutiny of several motifs within art and myth which are implicitly related to nature reveals that these images are frequently represented in female form. Within this chapter, I shall analyse these motifs and their significance in Roman ideology, with special emphasis on a variety of figures and scenes such as Medusa, the Seasons, Orpheus and hunt

tableaux. The background to this chapter was explored earlier in my 1994 Masters dissertation from Durham University.

The fifth chapter moves away from the construction of female as Other, and focuses on the paradoxical relation of women with the abstract concepts of virtue and ideals within Roman personification. An examination of Roman art reveals a trend where the visual depiction of personifications is almost exclusively in the female form. I shall explore the possible reasons for this phenomenon, along with an analysis of the Greco-Roman use of allegory and personification within textual and visual imagery.

The sixth chapter continues the exploration of female images and ideals through the analysis of the Roman construction of ideal images in both textual and visual representations of women. I shall explore the motivations behind the creation of these ideals, along with the ways in which people may have challenged these images through a construction of alternative ideals from those of the traditional social norms.

Chapter 2



Women in Roman Society: Aspects of Political, Legal, and Social Life

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Several classical scholars have conducted extensive research on the political, legal and social position of women in the Roman period (Pomeroy, 1975; Hallett, 1984; Cantarella, 1987; Clark, 1989; Snyder, 1989; Vidén, 1993; Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992; Clark, 1993; Fantham et al., 1994; Kleiner and Matheson, 1996; Treggiari, 1996). The purpose of this chapter is to establish a background summary of our knowledge of Roman women and construct a broad picture of women's lives and opportunities within the Roman empire. While I will utilise some primary sources, I will draw particularly on the enormous amount of secondary source material and previous research on women in Roman society . There are obvious drawbacks with the evidence used to build our interpretations of ancient women, and these problems will be addressed from the start. It becomes clear that we will never fully comprehend the day-to-day reality of Roman women. However, our knowledge of the social, legal and political climate within which Roman women and men moved and worked can at least give us an idea of the possibilities open to them and the directions that their lives might have taken.

2.2 THE NATURE OF OUR EVIDENCE

While some studies on women in antiquity have drawn on archaeological research and material evidence, and more and more focus on art historical approaches, the majority of our knowledge has been drawn from the literary sources of the period. There are several problems inherent in the heavy reliance on textual evidence and its use to reconstruct Roman women's lives. Despite the problems of this literary evidence, it provides us with a fairly clear idea of the political, legal and social environment that was promoted during the Roman empire. Therefore, this chapter continues to use these literary sources, while acknowledging

their fundamental biases and the probability that there was a distinction between the ideals created by Roman society and the actual practices of the people within it.

Textual sources have their own special problems which need to be recognised and addressed. First, all texts were situated and created within a particular context and often with a particular purpose. This contextual background will influence the mode of expression and the content of the text, and thus must be acknowledged in our utilisation of literary sources. However, Garnsey and Saller, in reference to a critique by Finley, reiterate that written evidence "constitute[s] a random selection in both time and place, and...often lack[s] a meaningful context" (1987, 46). In other words, we cannot always know the context in which a text was written, nor be certain that what was written is either directly applicable to a known context or more broadly applicable to other situations. We must also accept that various motivations behind the written documents will influence their content and form, and therefore, these texts will rarely present us with a complete or wholly accurate picture of the Roman period or its people. As Levine notes, textual representation is not inevitably about social reality, and any social realities which are consequently postulated from the literary sources cannot be easily generalised for all sectors of Roman society (1991, xii).

It is also necessary to address the biases of the literary sources. In spite of the extensive textual evidence from the Roman period, Clark points out that the evidence on women themselves is scarce and often contains very little detail on their lives (1993, 2). The information that does come down to us is frequently in the form of 'discourses' which inform us of "the ways in which women's lives were perceived, interpreted, and...regulated in terms of leading ideas, priorities, assumptions and interests" (ibid., 2). The difficulty with these textual discourses is that they are almost exclusively written by men, and therefore give us an idea of how men perceived women and their lives rather than a direct testimony from the women themselves. These works by male authors are often coloured by their assumptions and prejudices about women. For instance, Snyder notes that Cicero's comments on Leontion, a female member of the Athenian Epicurean school, are hostile. He remarks on the audacity of her daring to contradict another philosopher Theophrates in her writings. Cicero labels her a prostitute and a woman, and thus her status and gender become more important than the legitimacy of her arguments or her accomplishments in the Epicurean school (Snyder, 1989, 103-104). While there are examples of women's voices from antiquity found in poetry, prose and epigraphy, their limited nature hinders a full and critical reconstruction of the thoughts and lives of ancient women. Thus, we must use the

textual evidence cautiously and accept that its focus has primarily been on men and their perceptions of their world.

Another major bias is derived from the predominance of elite authors. They were upper-class men, like Pliny the Younger, writing about upper-class lifestyles and concerns, or men from other social situations who often wrote for that male elite audience and therefore frequently articulated elite attitudes in their texts. As Shaw points out, "the vast bulk of our literary texts, generated by the propertied upper classes of Roman society...tend to stress their ideals and some of their actual behavior, at the expense of what was actually happening in the society at large" (1991, 72). While some of these elite authors may have written about other classes, their knowledge would inevitably be both limited and coloured by their preconceived ideas. Epigraphic evidence, especially honorific inscriptions, will also provide limited social evidence. Epigraphy is not a fully representative source for the Roman population due to its prominent use by the upper and middle echelons of society and the inevitable invisibility of those whose acts of self-commemoration were restricted by poverty (Garnsey & Saller, 1987, 108).

We have the additional difficulty that most of our textual evidence either originates from the Mediterranean core of the empire or is written in reference to it, with a special focus on Rome itself. Direct references and details about the differing social situations possible in the provinces are scarce, and thus speculation on the position of provincial women is made more complicated. While we can infer the general cultural environment from the Mediterranean evidence, we must recognise that comprehensive knowledge of provincial society is impossible with the limited evidence at our disposal. Roman law and ideology could be influential to varying degrees in the provinces. However, the Roman legal codes were not universally or structurally imposed upon the different sectors of the empire. Native traditions would also affect the legal and social position of provincial women, and the cosmopolitan nature of the provinces means that influences from outside the Roman world might also have affected the cultural climate (Allason-Jones, 1989, 8-9). Tacitus' Germania records some of the native Germanic traditions which he perceived as different from those of Roman society. He notes that marriage for both men and women took place at a later age than that of Roman elites, and the German couple were frequently closer to each other in age. Also, the ideal of the female *univara* was more strictly adhered to within German society (Tacitus, Germania, 19-20). These types of different native traditions must have had some relevance to the resulting provincial social and legal climate.

While the biases inherent in the ancient evidence complicate our interpretations of ancient women, it is modern scholarly bias that is more insidious. Too often our present political and social environment, along with our preconceptions, have influenced our interpretations of ancient women and society. This can be observed in the past focus on men as the social actors in the classical period, and in the priority given to male activities and products in our reconstructions of the Roman world (Clark, 1989, 1). However, what is even more disturbing is the way in which current preconceptions and stereotypes colour interpretations of ancient women, and are validated in the name of academic research. One example of this trend can be found in a simple and mostly unquestioned assumption elucidated by Kraemer in her study on the possibility of women's authorship of Judaeo-Christian literature during the Greco-Roman period. She notes that a great deal of early Judaeo-Christian literature is anonymous or pseudoanonymous, but has almost exclusively been assumed to be male authored, despite women's extensive participation in the early Church. Kraemer goes on to ask why male authorship can be supposed with limited or no evidence, and female authorship is presumed as improbable, and therefore must be explicitly proven (1991, 221; 242).

The problems of ancient textual evidence and modern scholarship on women thus becomes obvious. However, the outlook is not entirely bleak. The information which we can glean from texts about the social, legal and political environment of the Roman empire can still be useful in our examination of women's lives. We can gain a generalised notion of the ideals of Roman life advocated throughout Roman society and the political and social ideology under which women functioned. Through inscriptions, letters and funerary epitaphs we can gain insights into individual lives and concerns. Finally, we can augment the literary evidence with visual imagery and material evidence. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will attempt to reconstruct a general picture of the social context for Roman women, while acknowledging the limitations and biases of the sources used.

2.3 POLITICAL AND LEGAL LIFE

POLITICAL LIFE

As has been observed before, the official political structure of the Roman empire excluded different sectors of Roman society, including women, who did not play a formal role in its workings. The formal power in Roman society was held and controlled by elite citizen men. This was a complex power system and the prohibition of the participation of 'outsiders' such as women was acknowledged and recorded within the literary sources (Kampen, 1996a, 14; see section 1.4). Women could not vote, hold military command or any form of elected civic office, including magistracies and judicial posts (Treggiari, 1996, 118; Savunen, 1995, 195). However, this is not to say that women did not participate in the political process and public life. Savunen notes that women could take part in preliminary public meetings called *contiones*, where presumably their views could be expressed. Also, as is abundantly evident from Pompeii, women often considered themselves an active element in the election of certain candidates. This was exhibited through *programmata* which must have formed an effective part of a candidate's campaign (Savunen, 1995, 195; 202). For example, a first century AD *programmata* painted on the side of Caprasia's wine shop states: "Caprasia along with Nymphius - her neighbours too - ask you to vote for Aulus Vettius Firmus for the aedileship; he is worthy of the office" (CIL, 4.171; Lefkowitz & Fant, 1982, 213). Finally, unlike Athenian women, Roman women were considered citizens, and as such could pass on their citizen status to both legitimate and illegitimate children and freed slaves (Treggiari, 1996, 118).

While ancient literature records that women could not hold civic office, we do have inscriptions honouring Eastern female office-holders and magistrates with titles such as *stephanephorus* or *strategos*. Though the amount of power they held is debatable, these inscriptions illuminate the possibility of female public participation, influence and power through the workings of honour, patronage, status and wealth (Fantham et al., 1994, 361-362). Van Bremen points out that from the Hellenistic period through to the Roman era, women increasingly held civic titles and liturgies, and were public benefactors in the Greek East. Their participation in the community through public munificence was rewarded, like the men, with the titles of public office, priesthoods, and honorific inscriptions (Van Bremen, 1993, 225). For instance, during the first century AD, Claudia Metrodora twice held the office of *stephanephoria*. This position was the highest civic title or office, and all

inscriptions and laws were dated from the individual who held the title in a particular year. She was also recorded as a great benefactor of Chios with contributions to the gymnasium and public baths. Her influence in the community was also reflected in her representation of Chios in the league of Ionian cities. Finally, she held the *gymnasiachia* four times. All of these positions were political offices (C. Lagos, pers. comm.).

Scholarship on women holding civic titles has frequently emphasised that these positions were strictly honorary, and that the real power was delegated to the woman's husband or other male official. Researchers have stressed that these positions were bestowed simply due to the woman's wealth, and therefore, were not really significant. Unfortunately, there is very little tangible evidence of whether or not these titles were more than honorary or held any real authority, for men or women (Marshall, 1975, 125; MacMullen, 1980, 215). What is disturbing is that when presented with a woman bearing a magistrate's title, many scholars search for and accept any other explanation for her presence within the public realm except the simplest one: that she held that position and exercised its authority. We can acknowledge that women were officially prohibited from these positions in the literature, and that if these civic titles expressed real positions of power, than female magistrates were a great deal less common than male magistrates. It is also true that women inevitably received these civic titles through their wealth, family connections and community munificence. However, those were also the male routes to authority and power. Until we have definitive evidence to the contrary, we must at least entertain the possibility that women could have functioned within the public realm and exercised influence for a probable variety of reasons: growing wealth, the need of the cities for public munificence from both elite men and women, intercity competition for status allowing women a route to public roles or the example of the public roles of imperial women (Van Bremen, 1993; Boatwright, 1991, 260-261). Thus, examples like Plancia Magna (Ch. 1), Claudia Metrodora and other elite women illustrate that women could wield a high degree of influence in their communities and that the interpretation of women and power or authority is not as straightforward as has been assumed.

I have found no evidence of women bearing civic titles of this sort from the Roman West (Nicols, 1989, 117-118). However, a lack of evidence does not mean that women could not be found in positions of authority in the western empire. Though no civic titles are known, women as municipal patrons existed in North Africa and central Italy. Despite the small sample of 21 examples of female municipal patrons, the language of the inscriptions which record their patronage does not imply that women patrons were unusual

(ibid., 120-122). Nicols further notes that after a person was co-opted as patron of a community, he/she would also become an honorary member of the town council (ibid., 118). Though it might not signify formal patronage, an example of a female patron is also known from Gaul. An inscription to Antistia Pia Quintilla honours her as an 'excellent patron' of Saint-Paul-Trois-Château (Goudineau, 1979). Women were also seen as patrons of *collegia*, the trade and religious associations (Nicols, 1989, 126; Fantham et al., 1994, 366; see Ch. 6). Finally, we might regard Cartimandua, the Romano-British client queen of the Brigantes during the first century AD, as an example of a woman wielding a great deal of power and authority over her community and in her negotiations with the Romans (see Braund, 1996).

THE NATURE OF THE LEGAL EVIDENCE

Before addressing the legalities that affected women in Roman society, it is important to briefly outline the nature of the legal evidence itself. Again, the problem with the legal sphere is that the majority of our data is derived from Mediterranean sources, especially those which refer to Rome itself. Allason-Jones points out that each province would have had its own variation of the legal code which combined elements of both Roman law and native social and legal traditions. Therefore, legal codes throughout the empire would not have been consistent, but would have been defined by provincial, regional and even local interpretations of the law (Allason-Jones, 1989, 8-9; 15). At the same time, our knowledge of provincial law codes is rather unbalanced, with some areas like Egypt fairly well-documented and very little evidence deriving from Britain. There is also the problem that the legal codes were frequently aimed at the aristocratic classes, and it is difficult to estimate how extensive an effect they had on other social groups. Also, the legal tenets were argued and created by men about how women should be treated within the legal system (Clark, 1993, 7). Millar further notes that it is undeniable that "just as the social and cultural values of ancient society meant that the intricate pattern of relations between the emperor and his subjects...affected only the more civilized areas, so these same values meant that the social range of these contacts was generally limited to the upper classes" (1977, 10-11). Exceptions might be found where small villages petitioned the emperor for a legal decision or he was approached by a member of the lower classes during a mass entertainment (ibid., 10-11). However, in general, upper-class concerns tend to dominate.

Much of the legal system was dependent on the emperor. Millar states that "a very large proportion of his [the emperor's] contacts with his subjects fell into a pattern which may be called 'petition-and-response'. This will cover not merely the interminable

embassies from cities..., but also the vast mass of imperial rescripts which we know from the *Codex* of Justinian and the legal writings collection in the *Digest*" (1977, 6). Thus, legal verdicts were frequently in response to petitions from individuals and groups or cases and disputes brought before the emperor himself (ibid., 7). The emperor was expected to listen to petitions or *libelli* from his Roman subjects and answer them through "verbal or written pronouncements which were themselves effective and legal acts" (ibid., 11). Emperors might also issue imperial edicts which presented general rules on a variety of subjects i.e. the Augustan edict of AD 8 which addressed the torture of slaves in gaining evidence (ibid. 252-253). Finally, much of our knowledge of later Roman law comes from the Theodosian and Justinian Codes of the fifth and sixth centuries respectively. These law codes presented the legal tenets in the form of the emperor speaking directly to his people and were assumed as applicable throughout the empire. Again, laws were often established in response to a specific occurrence or problem, and were frequently more indicative of common expectations. Therefore, in general, it seems that many legal decisions and tenets were more reactive than proactive during the Roman imperial period. However, it is difficult to know how familiar people were with the various laws or if they were either strictly administered or followed (Clark, 1993, 6-11; Garnsey and Saller, 1987, 127).

Finally, flexibility in some legal matters is implied in Pliny's letter to Statius Sabinus which describes a case when the letter of the law was not strictly followed. Within Sabina's will, she had written of a legacy to be given to her slave Modestus and ordered his manumission. However, since she had not directly instructed her heirs, Pliny and Statius Sabinus, to set Modestus free, the legal experts said he should neither be set free nor receive the legacy. Pliny writes that they should follow the spirit of the will rather than the law, and fulfill Sabina's intentions (IV.10). It becomes apparent that while the law codes may not have been absolutely definitive nor strictly followed throughout the Roman empire, we can at least glean a general idea of the legal ideology that surrounded people's lives.

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

Again, it must be understood that the majority of our evidence on the family and marriage is elite-oriented. The legal codes and anecdotal evidence on these issues were frequently aimed at the aristocratic classes, and it is hard to tell how many of the legalities and ideals concerning marriage and family were embraced and adhered to by the lower classes. However, we can at least gain a broad overview of the legal and moral climate surrounding the Roman family and marriage. In theory, the male head of the family, the

father, had the power of *manus*: the complete power over his wife and descendants (Cantarella, 1987, 113). Augustine described the power of *paterfamilias* as the paternal authority over the entire household - wife, children and slaves - and the father's dominance was viewed as the route to an assurance of familial and household harmony (Shaw, 1987, 11). This ideal of the father's complete control over his family and household is also expressed in the early legislation favouring male children over female children. Early Roman law obliged the father to acknowledge and raise all sons and his first-born daughter, but he had no legal responsibility to raise any further daughters (Kleiner & Matheson, 1996, 141; Cantarella, 1987, 115-116). It is hard to gauge whether this discrepancy in treatment between male and female children was widely practiced, or its method of application. For instance, the question of exposure is a difficult one. While it is mentioned in the literature and foundlings were an unquestioned circumstance, there is no real way of knowing if female children were exposed more often than male ones or if female infanticide was a serious problem. At the same time, Hallett's postulation of the importance of daughters to fathers implies an often strong bond of affection between the two (1984). This theory makes it more difficult to simply assume that fathers took the responsibility of raising daughters less seriously.

By the end of the Republican period, however, *patria potestas* or paternal power was diminishing. Previously, women had been considered as under legal guardianship throughout their lives. On marriage, the woman would either pass into the guardianship of her husband or remain within her father's power, or if her father was dead, under the power of a guardian of his choice (Treggiari, 1996, 118-119). However, by the late Republic, a woman had the option of replacing her appointed guardian with one of her own choice, thus effectively allowing her more freedom and autonomy. Augustus created what he hoped would be an incentive for procreation by rewarding independence from guardianship to free women who produced three children and freed women bearing four children. By the time of Claudius, the legitimate guardianship of free women was essentially discontinued, while freed women remained under the guardianship of their former masters. With Constantine, guardianship of women was effectively ended (Cantarella, 1987, 122-123; 139). The reasoning behind guardianship during the Roman period was expressed by Ulpian in the third century AD: "Guardians are appointed for males as well as for females, but only for males under puberty, on account of their infirmity of age; for females, however, both under and over puberty, on account of the weakness of their sex as well as their ignorance of business matters" (Ulpian, Rules 11.1; from Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, 193). However, the

distinction between the ideal of guardianship and the reality is found in a statement by Gaius, a jurist of the second century AD:

> "But hardly any argument seems to exist in favour of women of full age being in *tutela*. That which is commonly accepted, namely that they are very liable to be deceived owing to their instability of judgment and that therefore in fairness they should be governed by the *auctoritas* of tutors, seems more specious than true. For women of full age conduct their own affairs, the interposition of their tutor's *auctoritas* in certain cases being a mere matter of form; indeed, often a tutor is compelled by the praetor to give *auctoritas* even against his will."
>
> (Institutes of Gaius, 1.190)

Thus, within the system of Roman guardianship a division often existed between the ideal expressed in law and ideology and its actual practice in day-to-day life.

A differentiation in age of marriage is also evident between men and women. Within elite families, a woman might marry in her early to late teens, while their prospective bride-grooms would often be in their early twenties or a great deal older (Parkin, 1992, 124-125; Treggiari, 1996, 118). For example, in traditional upper-class pattern, Augustine was set to marry a twelve-year old girl at the age of thirty-two (Shaw, 1987, 34). Many of these marriages would have been arranged, and commonly involved a political or economic alliance between two elite families. Marriage within the other classes probably took place with more comparable maturity with the average age for women in the late teens to early twenties and for men in the mid to late twenties (Parkin, 1992, 124-125). However, it must be noted that these ages are simply generalities, and there would have inevitably been a great deal of diversity in the character of the marriage and its motivations. Williams notes that for a marriage to be considered valid, all that was necessary was the consent of the two partners; no formal ceremony was required though one frequently occurred. Also, despite the different reasons for a marriage, epitaphs seem to indicate that the bond between spouses often became one of affection and of a more equal basis than might be indicated from the seemingly mercenary motivations for marital alliance (Williams, 1996, 137). For instance, a third century AD epitaph from Rome honours a wife with eloquence and seeming sincerity:

> "Sacred to the gods of the dead. To Urbana my sweetest, chastest and rarest wife. Surely no one more distinguished ever existed. She deserved honour also for this reason, that she lived every day of her life with me with the greatest kindness and the greatest simplicity, both in her conjugal love and the industry typical of her character. I

> added this so that those who read may understand how much we loved one another. Paternus set this up in honour of his deserving wife."
>
> (CIL, 6.29580; from Lefkowitz & Fant, 1992, 20)

Augustus' desire to increase morality and create progeny for the state resulted in his marriage laws of the late first century BC. These laws 'encouraged' men between the ages of 25 and 60 and women between the ages of 25 and 50 to marry or remarry through a system of advantages given to the married state and disadvantages for those that remained unmarried (Cantarella, 1987, 122). Cassius Dio refers to this system of reward and punishment in his Roman History: "He [Augustus] laid heavier assessments upon the unmarried men and upon the women without husbands, and on the other hand offered prizes for marriage and the begetting of children. And since among the nobility there were far more males than females, he allowed all who wished, except senators, to marry freedwomen, and ordered that their offspring should be held legitimate" (54.16.1-2). This law contrasts with the contemporary ideal of the *univara* - a woman who had known only one man during her life.

On the arrangement of a marriage, a dowry was promised. According to the early *ius civile*, the husband acquired the wife's dowry on their marriage. However, by the late Republic and Augustan period, the husband's power over the dowry was limited as the wife was given primary control over it. This change meant that the woman was somewhat protected from her husband's control and also provided her with a measure of independence. If the marriage eventually ended, the wife was entitled to take her dowry with her, although if the divorce was due to the wife's adultery, the husband was sanctioned a portion of it (Cantarella, 1987, 138; Clark, 1993, 16-17). The wife was not similarly compensated for her husband's infidelity. Indeed, while mutual consent in divorce was allowed, the grounds for one person to divorce the other existed within a legal double-standard. This difference in treatment between men and women is well-illustrated in Constantine's divorce law of AD 331:

> "It is Our pleasure that no woman, on account of her own depraved desires, shall be permitted to send a notice of divorce to her husband on trumped up grounds, as, for instance, that he is a drunkard or a gambler or a philanderer, nor indeed shall a husband be permitted to divorce his wife on every sort of pretext. But when a woman sends a notice of divorce, the following criminal charges only shall be investigated, that is, if she should prove that her husband is a homicide, a sorcerer, or a destroyer of tombs, so that the wife may thus earn commendation and at length recover her entire dowry. For

> if she should send a notice of divorce to her husband on grounds other than these three criminal charges, she must leave everything, even to her last hairpin, in her husband's home, and as punishment for her supreme self confidence, she shall be deported to an island. In the case of the man also, if he should send a notice of divorce, inquiry shall be made as to the following three criminal charges, namely, if he wishes to divorce an adulteress, a sorceress, or a procuress..."
>
> (Theodosian Code, 3.16.1)

The reasons for divorce were enlarged under later Roman law. Thus, a man could divorce a woman simply due to his assertion of her frivolous character and if she went to a theatre, circus or arena without his consent. At the same time, a woman could now divorce her husband for blatant infidelity and marital violence (Clark, 1993, 23-24).

Adultery was heavily condemned in women, not necessarily due to the breach in marital loyalty, but because it cast doubt on the legitimacy of the father's children. At the same time, infidelity by husbands seems to have often been both accepted and ignored as a problem (Clark, 1993, 28). Augustus changed the way in which adultery was dealt with by the creation of his family morality laws in the late first century BC. Whereas previously adultery had been addressed within the family, it was now treated in the legal sphere through the formation of permanent courts to deal with the accusation. A woman who committed adultery could be punished at the request not only of her husband or family, but of any person who chose to accuse her. The husband was now expected to declare her guilt in public even if that was not his wish (Cantarella, 1987, 123; D. Cohen, 1991, 110). Pliny records an adultery case where the husband was obliged to condemn the wife. The husband, a military tribune, had wanted the centurion lover of his wife punished, while sparing his wife. The centurion was duly banished and the wife found guilty. Despite the husband's continuing affection and professed support, she lost one-half of her dowry, one-third of her property, and was banished to an island under the Julian law (Pliny, VI.xxxi). The punishment for a woman's adultery could exceed banishment. During the Augustan period, it was illegal for a husband to kill his adulterous wife, but a father was allowed to kill his daughter if he caught her in her infidelity (Cantarella, 1987, 123). By the third century AD, Paulus decreed that "it has been decided that a husband who kills his wife when caught with an adulterer, should be punished more leniently, for the reason that he committed the act through impatience caused by just suffering (Paulus, Opinions 2.26.1-17; from Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, 182).

Abortion was also decisively censured. This was not due to any concern for the rights of the foetus, but rather to protect the father's interests. Abortion was viewed as an example of dishonesty in a woman. It was postulated that she might have an abortion to hide the evidence of an illicit union or even to preserve her figure. The right to life and death over a child was that of the man alone, and abortion was therefore viewed harshly as a possible example of the woman going against her husband's wishes (Cantarella, 1987, 149). This attitude towards abortion thus led to the custody of the womb being given to the husband in the second century AD, and by the third century AD, abortion was also made into a public crime rather than a family affair (ibid., 149; 165).

Throughout this section on family and marriage, I have made several references to the Augustan morality laws - aimed at marriage, procreation and adultery. It will be useful to briefly consider the perceptions and attitudes which are indicated by these laws. The legislative purpose behind such laws has been interpreted in various ways: an effort to preserve female chastity; a response to the perceived familial moral degeneration, especially in the aristocratic families; or a form of state planning (D. Cohen, 1991, 123). D. Cohen further connects these laws with the traditional sexual ideology of many Mediterranean regions that associated female sexual purity or lack thereof with male honour or shame. This could lead to a desire by men to control and restrict female sexuality (ibid., 112-113). While the Augustan laws were viewed as 'family morality' laws, many of their tenets seem to be aimed primarily at women. In his examination of Livy's story of the rape of Lucretia and her subsequent suicide, Williams connects the use of the myth with contemporary Augustan legal changes.

> "This idea that if Lucretia continued to live after submitting to rape, her behavior would provide a precedent for women inclined to sexual misconduct, forms the climax to Livy's shaping of the narrative, and it is clearly composed against the background of Augustus's attempts in the 20s to pass penal legislation against adultery. The whole emphasis of that legislation, when it was finally passed in 18 BC, was on the female propensity to adultery, as if controlling female sexuality was the essential key to moral reform. The double standard is very evident here."
>
> (Williams, 1996, 129)

Therefore, we can view the Augustan legislation as influenced by the traditional male perception of female sexuality, and its desire to control social morality through restrictions on Roman women. Interestingly, the jurist Ulpian later made an observation which is perhaps obvious to the modern scholar, though it did not seem to make a great impact on the

ancient perception of familial morality. He commented that "it is very unjust for a husband to require from a wife a level of morality that he does not himself achieve" (Ulpian, Digest 48.5.14 (13).5; from Pomeroy, 1975, 159).

THE LEGISLATIVE CLIMATE: FURTHER ASPECTS CONCERNING WOMEN

Women were not disadvantaged in the realms of inheritance. They could inherit equally with other male members of their family (Treggiari, 1996, 118-119). Tombstones throughout the empire attest to women as heirs. For instance, a third century AD tombstone from Chester declares: "To the departed spirits, Titinius Felix, *beneficiarius* of the legate of the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix, served 22(?) years, lived 45 years. His wife and heiress, Julia Similia, [set this up]" (RIB 505). Despite the early emphasis on guardianship, women could also own, buy and dispose of property or land at their discretion (Treggiari, 1996, 119). Two letters of Pliny illustrate this point. The first explains that Pliny had sold land to Corellia for 700,000 sesterces because he had known she was interested in owning property around Lake Como. The second is a later letter to Corellia after she has offered to pay him the real price of 900,000 sesterces for the land. Pliny responds that he has given her the better and lower price out of friendship (VII.11; VII.14). Several papyri from the early third century AD refer to Claudia Isidora and her business dealings within Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, including a sub-lease agreement by a tenant on a building she owned and also the leasing of some of her land (Kleiner & Matheson, 1996, 95).

Treggiari points out that in theory women had restricted access to the law courts - it was not viewed within the ideology as an appropriate place for a woman (1996, 118). In fact, until recently very little research has been done on women in the legislative sphere due to their assumed exclusion from it. However, both MacMullen (1986) and Marshall (1989) note the presence of women in the legal domain. Marshall notes that from AD 117-304, approximately one-fifth of the imperial *responsa* from the Codex Justinianus were addressed to women. He also points out that most of these women were *sui iuris* Roman citizens who were living in the provinces and were derived from a range of social classes. Primarily related to property and family legal matters, some also refer to personal status, guardianship, business, religious, public and criminal issues. Marshall identifies many of these claims as *libelli*, where the person was asking for legal advice which did not automatically lead to a trial. At the same time, women could also be witnesses at trials and

were treated equally with men in this role (Marshall, 1989, 48-51). Valerius Maximus, writing during the first century AD, describes one early adept female litigant:

> "Amasia Sentia, a defendant, pled her case before a great crowd of people and Lucius Titius, the praetor who presided over the court. She pursued every aspect of her defense diligently and boldly and was acquitted, almost unanimously, in a single hearing. Because she bore a man's spirit under the appearance of a woman, they called her Androgyne"
>
> (Valerius Maximus 8.3; from Lefkowitz & Fant, 1982, 206)

Finally, legal tenets addressed the situation where women followed their husbands to the provinces. In AD 24, new legislation made Roman governors accountable for their wives' behaviour while on duty, and inevitably any misdemeanors were focused on by ancient authors. Women were viewed as a possible source of influence, be it good or bad. Several activities, however, were viewed with disfavour, such as female interference with military discipline, adultery, and the acceptance of favours that could be perceived as bribery from client-princes or other foreign officials (Marshall, 1975, 120-122). An example is found in Sosia Galla, who was exiled in AD 24. She was a co-defendant with her husband in a case charging them with *maiestas* or high treason (Marshall, 1996, 20). However, by the end of Tiberius' reign, the governor's wife had a recognised and useful role within the provincial hierarchy where she could act as a hostess, liaison or partner on official visits (Allason-Jones, 1989, 52).

2.4 FEMALE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE: ASPECTS OF EDUCATION AND RELIGION

OPPORTUNITIES AND INFLUENCE IN EDUCATION

Additional factors in the cultural and social spheres had an impact on female life. Firstly, the question of female education should be addressed. In general, girls were mostly educated within the household. At least within the elite families, female education was deemed acceptable, and at times, may have been carried beyond the elementary level (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 141; Kraemer, 1991, 229). As Kraemer suggests, the early marriage age of aristocratic girls would frequently restrict the opportunity for advanced education, unless the opportunity for further study presented itself within her married life (1991, 229). Despite more limited opportunities, there were highly educated women

throughout Roman society. For instance, Hypatia, a fifth century AD Alexandrian woman, was educated at the museum in Alexandria and noted as an astronomer, mathematician and philosopher. One of her pupils was Synesios of Cyrene, later bishop of Ptolemais in Libya (Snyder, 1989, 113-115). Within Roman ideology, literacy was perceived and presented as a virtue, as can be seen in a portrait of a young woman and her husband from Pompeii (**1**). This painted panel represents the woman holding a stylus and tablets, frequent motifs on funerary reliefs, while her husband holds a scroll. Several well-known aristocratic women such as the two Sulpicias - both of whom were poets - and Julia Domna organised and were members of literary salons (Pomeroy, 1975, 174). It is assumed that literacy was an accomplishment that was held only by a minority of women. However, it is difficult to know how widely literacy was spread among the female population with the limited references to Roman female literacy and female writing. Dyson notes that "...women in towns were involved in a variety of commercial and semi-commercial activities that required a minimum of reading, writing and mathematical skills" (1992, 192). Nevertheless, we can assume that within the realms of literacy, it was the rural poor who were at the largest disadvantage (ibid., 192).

Secondly, a brief word should be said about women's roles in male education. Within the elite family, a son was often educated either by the mother or through her supervision, until he passed puberty. Then, his studies were usually directed by his father, along with the aid of male slaves and teachers. Nevertheless, the mother still played an active role as a counselor to her son and held a great deal of influence. This arrangement is referred to in Tacitus' commentary on his father-in-law, Agricola: "Agricola's mother was Julia Procilla, a paragon of feminine virtue. Brought up under her tender care, he passed his boyhood and youth in the cultivation of all the liberal arts" (Agricola, 4). There is further allusion to her later influence as she directed Agricola away from a focus on philosophy and into the civic and political life (ibid., 4).

FEMALE RELIGIOUS LIFE: PARTICIPATION AND PROSCRIPTION

Another significant facet of Roman cultural life was that of religion. Religion played an important part in women's lives in two ways. Firstly, it can be seen as integral in the Roman construction of gender. Cult practice and belief often interacted with legal and social ideals to define the female role, nature and position within Roman society (Sawyer, 1996, 117). Many pagan Roman cults were aimed at women and their traditional role in

Roman society. "Among the numerous cults developed by the Romans to enlist divine aid for practical purposes were those designed to uphold ideals of female conduct. The Roman genius for organization is reflected in the categorizing of women and their desirable qualities, and in the creation of cults appropriate to the categories" (Pomeroy, 1975, 206). For example, several of these early cults were linked to the goddess Fortuna. The general nature of Fortuna related to fortune and fertility, especially the traditional emphasis on female fecundity. However, different manifestations related to various aspects of female life. Fortuna Virginalis was the patron of young girls as they were coming of age. Fortuna Primigenia was symbolic for mothers and the act of childbirth, though men also found relevance in this cult due to its emphasis on fortune and virility. The cult of Fortuna Muliebris or Womanly Fortune was restricted to respectable *univarae* - women who had known only one man in their life. The celebration of Fortuna Virilis or sexual fortune, held in the male public baths, was probably a ceremony for the less respectable women in Roman society, though Ovid mentions that all Roman women (plebeian?) attended the festivities (Pomeroy, 1975, 206-08; Kraemer, 1992, 55-58; Fantham et al., 1994, 232).

Two early cults emphasising female chastity were also established. Patrician Chastity or Pudicitia Patricia and Plebeian Chastity were worshipped by *univarae* from the aristocratic and lower social orders respectively. The two aspects of the cult of female chastity imply that traditional female virtues found in Roman ideological discourses were thought appropriate for both the elite and lower classes, though the extent to which these virtues were actually adhered to within Roman society is another question entirely (Pomeroy, 1975, 206-208). Another interesting religious celebration aimed at women was that of the cult of Venus, Changer of Hearts (towards virtue) or Verticordia. Valerius Maximus notes that this cult functioned in the turning of women away from promiscuity and towards chastity and marital fidelity (Kraemer, 1992, 57). While the majority of these cults and their ceremonies were introduced before the imperial period, much of our sources on these cults date from the Empire, such as Ovid, Livy and Juvenal. It seems that the motivation behind these cults was often linked to the desire to define appropriate and ideal behaviour within Roman society. For instance, as Kraemer states: "Augustus...was not above using religious cults to reinforce his beliefs about the centrality of childbearing, chastity, and familial bonds for the good of the empire" (ibid., 59). It is thus thought-provoking to question how extensive these cults can be used for evidence of female piety rather than as an aspect of the imperial propaganda on religious and social issues (ibid., 55).

Religion also provided women with the chance to participate in important state religious functions and celebrations, and attain priesthoods within different cults. Various religious dates in the Roman calendar enabled women to take part in ceremonies and celebrations. For instance, the Matralia on June 11, the feast of Mater Matuta, allowed respectable matrons and *univarae* to participate in the worship and rituals. As was seen above, several of the cults were restricted to certain members of female society, depending on such factors as rank or marital status (Pomeroy, 1975, 207-208).

The two cults where women played highly important and official roles were that of Vesta and Ceres. The goddess Vesta, was represented by the hearth and flame and linked to the "continuity of both family and community", which therefore made her worship integral to the preservation of Roman society (Pomeroy, 1975, 210). Six Vestal Virgins, of varying ages and with thirty-year terms of office, were in charge of the cult, tending the hearth and attending to various agricultural and fertility rites. Their chastity was a significant aspect of their priesthood and linked to the fortunes of the Roman state. Therefore, if they committed any kind of sexual act, they could be buried alive in punishment (ibid., 210-211; Sawyer, 1996, 70). Pomeroy notes that "the prosecution of the Vestals is a specific example of the firmly established principle of Greek and Roman thought connecting the virtue of women and the welfare of the state" (1975, 211). Though there might be many regulations on their lives and responsibilities, the Vestal priesthood also provided these women with various privileges and relative independence. Vestal Virgins were automatically free from the traditional power of the *paterfamilias*, were provided with special seats on the imperial podium at the theatre and games, were preceded in the streets by a *lictor* who cleared the way for their progress, and could make wills disposing of their property and wealth as they saw fit (ibid., 213-24). Kraemer refers to Beard's notion that the Vestals' sacredness was derived from the ambiguity of their identity which was defined by the virginity of a maiden, the association with fertility of a matron and many of the rights and privileges attributed to the Roman male citizen (Kraemer, 1992, 83).

The cult of Ceres emphasised the desire for and celebration of agricultural and human fertility, marriage and procreation. While official priests presided over this cult, the later assimilation of Ceres with the Greek Demeter led to the participation of priestesses. These women were the only other female priestesses in an official position within a state cult (Pomeroy, 1975, 214-16). For instance, Eumachia, a woman of high standing in Pompeii, was a *sacerdos* of Ceres (Dyson, 1992, 208). Despite the official positions of women within

the Demeter cult, elements of the celebration of this myth underline the acceptable female roles in Roman society. Sawyer postulates that the story of Persephone's separation from her mother and the requirement that she stay with the god of the underworld for part of the year confirms the societal values surrounding marriage. A young girl's separation from her family and transformation through marriage is reflected in the myth and rituals related to this cult (Sawyer, 1996, 61).

The worship of Isis was open to all types of people in Roman society - with no restrictions based on class, age or gender. It has been postulated that her all-powerful and highly sympathetic aspect, with an emphasis on equality and salvation, may have appealed to the more disenfranchised and often lower status members of Roman society, although worshippers from the upper-classes were also found within her ranks (Pomeroy, 1975, 223-225). Its significance to women has also been noted. The cult of Isis seems to have had two emphases relevant to Roman women: it may have served as an acknowledgment of the "increased autonomy and approval for women" initiated in the Hellenistic period; and "the model of Isis...[was] not only reflective of women's experience and perspective, it also presents a program for the ideal woman that was not merely descriptive, but prescriptive" (Kraemer, 1992, 76-77). At the same time, active female participation was allowed in the Isiac ceremonies, and women might hold the position of basket-bearer or priestess (ibid., 74). Thus, many pagan cults and their surrounding rituals defined the traditional virtues and desirable qualities of Roman women. These emphases often placed ideological limitations on the 'acceptable' life open to women, while also re-iterating the hierarchical structure central to Roman society. However, the pagan cults also provided women with the opportunity to be integral participants within the religious celebrations and a chance to attain power through their formal position in the religious hierarchy.

Though much of our evidence for female religious participation is from the Mediterranean core of the empire, there are several examples of priestesses from the provinces. For example, a sarcophagus, dedicated to Iulia Tyrrama, from Saint-Honorat in Gaul has been interpreted as being that of a priestess of Cybele. The funerary relief depicts various musical instruments such as a lyre and water-organ. A tree and lion , possibly attributes of the cult of Cybele, are also sculpted on one side of the sarcophagus (**2a & 2b**). Another priestess appears on a funerary relief found near Arles. The main panel of the tomb monument depicts a portrait of the priestess, Valeria Urbana, wearing earrings and holding a torch and an olive branch. The inscription describes her as *antistis* or chief priestess (CIL

12.708; **3**). A funerary relief from Nîmes bears portraits of and an inscription to a *flaminica Augustalis*, Licina Flavilla, and a legionary tribune. She was probably a freed slave and priestess of the cult of Augustus (CIL 12.3175; **4**). Finally, an example is also found in Roman Britain. A third century AD altar from Corbridge, decorated with the images of a knife, wreath and ox-head, was dedicated in Greek to Hercules of Tyre by Diodora the priestess (RIB 1129; **5**).

WOMEN AND CHRISTIANITY

Finally, it is essential to explore the ramifications for women of the establishment of Christianity in Roman society. Women of all classes were integral players in the early spread of Christianity, and scholars like Drijvers (1987) and Sawyer (1996) have noted the possibility of a change in status and choice for women within its influence. Like the cult of Isis, Christianity was open to all people, whether old or young, upper or lower class, free or slave, male or female, and its early appeal was influenced by its emphasis on spiritual equality and salvation. Christian belief and practice during the early to mid-first century AD was characterised by some form of sexual equality within the Christian communities. The notion that both men and women could participate in the Christian ministries and liturgical activities is implied in several sections of the Bible (Sawyer, 1996, 101-106). Paul's letter to the Romans ends with an introduction to his friends and colleagues in the work of the Church, including many active women. These include Phoebe, a deaconess in the church of Cenchrea, Junias, a fellow prisoner and apostle, and Tryphena and Tryphosa, women who laboured for the Church's purpose (Romans 16:1; 16:7; 16:12). At the same time, celibacy was praised and encouraged for both men and women, though marriage was also seen as acceptable. The early movement of the Christian church thus saw less of a division between the sexes in their participation and treatment, while also offering an alternative to the traditional domestic life for women (Sawyer, 1996, 106). Kraemer notes that "the negation of sexuality, marriage and childbearing brought with it the possibility of expanded roles for women within the [early] Jesus movement, including substantial participation in the public life of Christian communities. It also effectively freed at least some women from the control of husbands and fathers" (1992, 139).

However, by the mid to late-first century AD, the nature of Christianity underwent a transformation and a familiar hierarchical structure began to emerge. Sawyer proposes that the change from the early egalitarian Christian communities to the later stratified church was due to their perceived circumstances. The early developing religion was characterised by a

messianic belief that the end was near, resulting in a perception that earthly authority was no longer valid. This belief opened the opportunities for women and other marginalised groups to be active and important members in the early faith. However, when it became apparent that the end was not imminent and that Christianity would have to survive within the sometimes hostile Roman world built on traditional power structures, these hierarchies were integrated and developed within the Christian structure (Sawyer, 1996, 146-49). This transformation in belief and practice is reflected in 1 Timothy (2:11-12) where Paul now states that "a woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent." The role of celibacy had also changed. Only women past the age of 60, the 'real widows', were allowed to choose celibacy. Younger women were now encouraged to choose the domestic life, fulfilling their purpose through marriage and procreation, and thus ensuring their salvation. Women were given fewer options for participation, and the possibility of independence from family responsibilities and traditions was limited in the later Christian orthodoxy (Sawyer, 1996, 107-110; 1 Timothy 2:15). Indeed, the 'household codes' of the New Testament conformed to the traditional Roman family ideals of the *pater familias* with their focus on the husband as head of the wife, master over slave, adult over child (Sawyer, 1996, 111).

Interestingly, Drijvers notes that from the mid-fourth century AD, asceticism and celibacy was again being encouraged by the Church. Despite opposition from senatorial men, who viewed the principle of asceticism as a threat to the traditional Roman family and its continuation, a life of celibacy and contemplation was embraced by many elite women (Drijvers, 1987, 244; 252). Perhaps this later re-emphasis on celibacy and asceticism for men and women of all ages was due to the new possibilities opened by Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman empire. The Christian emperors protected those who chose a life devoted to the Christian faith through new legal tenets. In AD 320, Constantine declared that celibate people would not be of a lesser status than married couples, and their rights would be the same. Constantius' law of AD 354 prohibited the rape of sacrosanct maidens and widows and the subsequent use of that rape as a reason for forced marriage. Therefore, the Church's disapproval and discouragement of re-marriage might have influenced family life in later Roman society (ibid., 253-57).

2.5 THE QUESTION OF CLASS AND STATUS: WOMEN IN THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Within this examination of women's lives during the Imperial period, it is also necessary to explore the classes and statuses of women within Roman society and question how these hierarchical categories might have affected them. As Kleiner and Matheson have observed, "while the fundamental human experience was similar for women at all levels of the Roman social pyramid, stark distinctions among classes of women clearly existed. Roman society was at the same time rigidly structured and extremely fluid, and class distinctions profoundly affected women's experience of their world" (1996, 11).

The highly stratified nature of Roman rank is obvious, but there were variations of status within these categories. Status could be influenced by legal definitions such as citizen or non-citizen, slave or free, or by social factors such as power, wealth and family connections (Hope, 1994, 105-108). There was also the distinction made in Roman society between order and status, though these two classifications were often interdependent. Garnsey and Saller interpret the orders as "those social categories defined by the state through statutory or customary rules" (1987, 112). The three 'aristocratic' orders - senatorial, equestrian and the decurial classes - were frequently based upon wealth, high or respectable birth, and perceived high levels of morality. The 'plebian' orders consisted of the bulk of the population - free-born citizens, freed slaves and slaves - and the majority of this order would have been represented by people of the lower classes (ibid., 112-115). Status within the community was obviously influenced by one's order, but was also affected by several other factors such as honour, power, wealth, education, and level of influence amongst one's peers. This status was often displayed by individuals through their contributions to their community such as public works and buildings, entertainments, and the workings of patron-client relationships (ibid., 118-122).

Garnsey and Saller's extensive examination of rank and status is mostly in reference to male members of society with little note of how these social categories may have affected women. Fortunately, recent research is beginning to address the position of women within the hierarchical social system which characterises Roman society. Throughout this chapter, we have already explored the emphasised and perceived roles of women within the elite classes. Traditionally, elite women were seen as important links between aristocratic

families through marriage and reproduction (Treggiari, 1996, 123). Their marriages could be used for political, social or economic gain, and their children could provide a continuation of the familial dynasty. This use of marriage for political and dynastic reasons was especially prolific within the imperial sphere, as can be observed in Augustus' arrangement of his daughter Julia's marriages to Marcellus, Agrippa and Tiberius (Wells, 1992, 58-61; Williams, 1996, 133). Within imperial circles, visual imagery also emphasised this important female role. A *denarius* of 13 BC stresses the role of dynastic succession within Augustus' reign through its portraits of Julia and her sons Gaius and Lucius Caesar. Gaius and Lucius were Augustus' adopted heirs, and the image of Julia underlines Augustus' strong link with them (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 57-58; **6**). While the ideals within the imperial and aristocratic circles focused on marriage and reproduction for women, their position and wealth in society often allowed them greater opportunities for advancement and influence than might be found in the lower echelons of the community. These opportunities will be focused on in Chapter 6.

Our knowledge of working women in the Roman world is limited - they are given cursory attention by the ancient authors and it is often difficult to link material evidence to an individual or a specific gender. However, visual imagery, especially from tomb monuments, can give us more access to women outside the elite classes. Kampen (1981), in her research on working women in Ostia, addresses the visual representations of women at work and the information that we can acquire from them. She notes that these images of working women can tell us the kind of work that some women engaged in - ranging from merchants and vendors to nurses, hairdressers and tavern keepers to doctors. We can also infer that there was some value placed upon this work through its representation, either by the woman herself or the person commemorating her. However, these visual images will not present us with the full range of work available to women, nor give us a statistical proportion of working women within the Roman community. The status value of the work by others will not be apparent from its representation, and usually there will be no indication of the individual motivations behind working. Kampen postulates that women might work through economic necessity in order to support themselves and their families or aid in that support. However, it is possible that women also derived satisfaction and pride from their work, and counted it as an important part of their identity (1981, 29-31).

Though these images give us a small insight into these women's working lives, we have little notion of how other legal and social aspects of Roman society may have affected

them. It is unfortunate that our knowledge of the women and men living in extreme poverty, without access to self-representation and decidedly beneath the gaze of the upper-class male authors, is practically non-existent. Women of the working classes are frequently neglected in ancient texts, and the common negative upper-class attitude to work itself will not reflect its importance to and valuation by the actual workers. Treggiari notes that elite authors like Cicero and Seneca condemned various areas of employment as low and sordid. She notes that revenue-collectors and usurers were despised in Roman society; that wage-earners were perceived only as sellers of labour rather than skill, thus making them similar to common slaves; retailers are only middlemen and deceive their customers through advertising; and a variety of jobs simply gratify the pleasure such as perfumers and even butchers! Occupations that relied on the 'intelligent arts', such as doctors, architects and teachers, were regarded favourably, while farming was still considered the worthiest of professions (Treggiari, 1980, 48-49; see Garnsey, 1980b).

Again, we are faced with the problem of bias. The literature of the period was predominantly written by elite men and it is questionable whether their knowledge of women outside their class was at all extensive or accurate. We can also ask how much these men even attempted to learn about people outside their immediate sphere, and therefore, much of what they record could simply be based upon assumption and conjecture (Treggiari, 1996, 122-123). Inscriptions accompanying the visual images of working women often do not yield a great deal of additional information about these women and their day-to-day lives. However, at least these reliefs and paintings broaden our viewpoint of ancient women, and reveal that their lives are a great deal more diverse than would be assumed based upon the ancient literature. This topic will be more fully addressed in Chapter 6.

Finally, slavery was accorded the lowest legal and social status. Slaves occupied a variety of occupations within Roman households and industry. Treggiari has attempted to outline the range of female private and domestic staff within an urban upper-class house that had a heavy reliance on slave labour. The range of occupations within this type of household is wide, with examples of secretarial posts, toiletry and dress attendants, cloth-workers, doctors and nurses, teachers and entertainers (Treggiari, 1976). A female slave could be freed by her owner or purchase her own freedom later. It is not unusual to see masters freeing their female slaves, and then marrying them. Once a slave was freed, by law he or she would still be tied to the master through a patron-client relationship. However, this did not prevent former slaves from using the skills acquired in their master's household in

the later establishment of their own shops and craft set-ups (Allason-Jones, 1989, 26-27). A slave could not formally marry, though many cohabited and formed long-term partnerships. After manumission, many freed slaves did marry through official channels and often celebrated this bond in visual imagery - thus exhibiting their pride in the achievement of citizen status and the new legitimacy of their family (Hope, 1994, 210-13).

What is interesting within the concept of the Roman class system is that there is some fluidity within the hierarchical structure. Women could not follow the traditional male route to social mobility, that of a political career and military honours. However, women could enhance or change their position in society though other means. Elite women could use their wealth and social position in society to influence the community and people within it, and consequently establish some form of authority. A working woman could at least gain status within her local group through the success of her work or even the success of her family. Wealth was again a social virtue. Some slaves may have attained positions of importance and trust within their households which affected their wealth and status. Slave women could be freed or purchase their freedom, and thus leave behind the lowest status in Roman society. Also, women could gain new rights and independence through the Augustan morality laws and the consequent production of the appropriate number of children - three for citizen women and four for freed (Kampen, 1981, 28-30; see Ch. 2.3). Therefore, while Roman society was rigidly structured and defined by class and status, it was not impossible to strengthen one's position and move, within limits, through that hierarchical social structure.

2.6 PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN

Finally, it is essential that we explore the various Roman perceptions about women that influenced their position and treatment in Roman society. These perceptions, coloured by several assumptions about women, affected the legal and social environment in which women were placed. Women were viewed as physically, intellectually and morally weaker than men, and this conception was reflected in many aspects of Roman society (Clark, 1989, 3).

Within Greco-Roman medical theory, the traditional view of women held that women were anatomically imperfect. Galen, writing his On the Usefulness of the Parts of

the Body during the second century AD, describes the female anatomy as different from the male's as such:

> "...For the parts [the male genitalia] were formed within her when she was still a foetus, but could not because of the defect in the heat emerge and project on the outside, and this, though making the animal itself that was being formed less perfect than one that is complete in all respects, provided no small advantage for the race; for there needs must be a female. Indeed, you ought not to think that our creator would purposefully make half the whole race imperfect and, as it were, mutilated, unless there was to be some great advantage in such a mutilation"
>
> (14.6-7; from Lefkowitz & Fant, 1982, 216)

Galen goes on to state that woman's imperfect genital system, along with her production of imperfect semen, is the direct opposite of the perfect male system. She is therefore ready to receive his perfect genitalia and semen, resulting in the reproduction of the species (ibid., 245). Thus, while woman was acknowledged as an essential component in this act of reproduction, she was also perceived as imperfect and mutilated, rather than simply different. Connected to the medical perception of women, Clark (1989, 4) notes that the "conditions of life for women in the ancient world followed from one major fact and one major assumption." The fact of female reproduction and the perception of its primacy was followed by the assumption that women were incapable of anything but a domestic life. A reference in the Codex Iustinianus (6.40.2) dated to AD 531 asserts that "nature produced women for this very purpose, that they might bear children [for their husbands and the state], and this is their greatest desire." Therefore, women were viewed as unsuited for independence, and thus were in need of male protection and consequently, male control (Clark, 1989, 4). These beliefs influenced the social and legal prescriptions on women's lives throughout the Roman empire.

This viewpoint of women as incapable of taking control of their own lives was also found in the philosophical and legal discourses on the female sex. "Femaleness, by general consent, was [seen as] a disadvantage. It was assumed that females were physically weaker than males, were unlikely to be the intellectual equals of males, and had a more difficult time controlling bodily desires and the onslaughts of emotion" (Clark, 1993, 119). The influential Greco-Roman philosophy often constructed a division between the active male and the passive female, and frequently linked morality to sex (Clark, 1989, 5). For instance, Aristotle believed that women were irrevocably connected to their physical nature which was viewed as inferior to the male physical nature. As the weaker sex, women could not be

as rational nor was their small amount of reason within their control (Hawley, 1994, 74). The Greek philosophical treatises which perceived women as irrational, over-emotional, gullible and often uncontrollable were consequently influential on Roman ideas about the female sex. Seneca considered some women capable of attaining virtue, but only through the rejection of their female nature and weaknesses and by aiming for male traits. However, women who did reach a level of male *virtus* were seen as exceptions (Vidén, 1993, 137-39). This belief in an inherent female weakness, both intellectually and morally, also affected the legal environment. The laws of guardianship and those related to female dowries were based on the idea that women needed protection. In the Novellae of Justinian, this perception was made clear: "We know the weakness of female nature, and we understand very well how easily they are defrauded. We do not allow their dowry to be diminished in any way" (Novellae 97.3; Clark, 1993, 16).

Finally, within Roman ideology, a distinction between virtue and vice was commonly constructed through the female sex. Certain ideals of female behaviour were firmly established within Roman society, such as the ideal of woman as *univara* - as wife to only one man throughout her life; obedience to her husband; chastity and fidelity; piety; and domesticity. These ideals were presented as the model that Roman women should follow in their lives. For instance, Pliny's letter to his wife's aunt about Calpurnia's many virtues illustrates the elite emphasis upon the traditional female ideals. He reports that Calpurnia is thrifty, loving and devoted, a model of *concordia* within their marriage, chaste and emotionally connected to him. Calpurnia's complete devotion to Pliny, his ambitions and tastes is further taken as "a sure indication of her virtue" (Pliny, 4.19; Shelton, 1990).

A great deal of Roman legislation focused upon the ideal of women adhering to these traditional virtues while also addressing the perceived need to control women due to their inherent weaknesses and vices. Thus, Augustus' moral legislation on marriage and the family primarily punished women for transgressing the imposed moral ideals, while assuming that controlling female sexuality was necessary in his efforts to transform the moral climate of imperial Rome (Williams, 1996, 129). At the same time, textual descriptions of female vice were common in Roman satirical literature. Extreme examples of misogynistic references can be found in the works of ancient authors like Juvenal (Satire 6 especially) or Martial. "Satire expresses current topics and prejudices and works as a kind of distorting mirror of common opinions and beliefs...[It] does not tell us what women were really like in the period of composition, but rather what society wanted or did not want them

to be like" (Vidén, 1993, 141). The perceptions of female weaknesses and transgressions found within satire were often exaggerated, but point to the ways in which women were often viewed as susceptible to every vice, such as infidelity and promiscuity, 'unnatural' behaviour, uncontrollable emotions and actions, and deceitfulness.

The often negative perception of women became part of the later Christian orthodoxy and was also frequently found in the words of the Church Fathers during the later Roman period. While women were praised for leading ascetic Christian lives in the terminology of manly virtue, they were also condemned for being the centre of all vice as they led humankind down into sin (Drijvers, 1987, 266-67). Tertullian wrote: "The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. [Woman] *you* are the devil's gateway: *you* are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree: *you* are the deserter of the divine law: *you* are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. *You* destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of *your* desert - that is, death - even the Son of God had to die" (On Female Dress, Ch. 1). The exclusion and limitation of Christian women within the workings of the later Christian Church was further justified by the developing theological ideas that articulated a divinely attributed and valued difference between men and women. This valued differentiation is reflected in the perception of Eve as created for Adam, as secondary to man's status. Adam and man were perceived as constructed within God's image, while Eve was viewed as separate from God's image. The idea that Eve was solely responsible for the fall of humanity also coloured the Christian perception of women. Her sin fell on all women and therefore their redemption was not automatic like man's, but delivered through procreation and controlled behaviour (Sawyer, 1996, 150-154). This viewpoint of the female character is articulated quite clearly in chapter 2 of 1 Timothy: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety" (1 Timothy 2:13-15). The theological interpretation of Eve and notions about the female nature aided in the marginalisation of women within the church and the construction of the female as in opposition to the male (Sawyer, 1996, 155).

Thus, the idea that women were physically and morally weaker led to their distinctive treatment within the Roman empire. Medical texts, philosophical treatises, legal discourses, letters and fiction all combined to construct a representation of woman that required both protection and control. These ideological perceptions of women, ranging from

physical flaws to moral and intellectual debility through to the notions of ideal virtue and transgressing vice, were consequently influential on the social, religious and legal consideration of women in Roman society and also visual imagery (see Chs. 3-6).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has constructed a general picture of the political, legal, social and religious aspects of Roman women's lives. It is in no way meant to be exhaustive as there have been many more detailed books and articles previously written on the position of women in Roman society; nor is it comprehensive due to the limited nature of the evidence and its inherent biases. However, through the exploration of the political and legal environment, potential social opportunities, the significance of religion to female life, the influence of rank and status, and the perceptions of women which influenced their position in society, I have established a background to our study of the female image in Roman art and ideology.

CHAPTER 3

THE FEMALE AS OTHER

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Through an exploration of Roman art from the imperial period, we can observe a general pattern in the representation of women in Roman text and art that expresses an implicitly valued differentiation between male and female. This trend seems to be related to a facet of the gender ideologies of the Roman empire which categorised women as outside the 'norm,' i.e. the male citizen sphere. The construction of female images can thus be related to the equation of women with the concept of the Other. This classificatory device was not confined to women. Foreigners, lower-class citizens, slaves or children were often placed in separate and subordinate categories by the dominant ideology. My aim in this chapter is to outline a theoretical framework for an examination of the concept of the Other in Roman art. I will explore the concept within modern literature, and then concentrate on the expression of Otherness in Greco-Roman textual discourses. This theoretical framework can then be broadly related to the visual language of the Roman imperial period, drawing on examples from throughout the empire. The focus will be on female imagery, but I will briefly consider the similar motivations and usage of this imagery in portrayals of other groups of peoples throughout Roman society.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF OTHERNESS WITHIN CONTEMPORARY THEORETICAL DEBATE

Before addressing the contemporary explorations of Otherness, it is first necessary to define what I propose Otherness to signify. We can find examples of Otherness in cultural contexts where a dominant group defines themselves in contrast to a group perceived as different. For instance, the creation of Otherness can be observed in the relationships between men and women, white and black peoples, colonialists and natives, and the privileged and the lower classes. The dominant group's perception that the Other possesses qualities in direct opposition to their own determines the definition of the Other.

The Other becomes everything that the dominant group is not, and is continually interpreted in relation to that dominant group rather than as individuals (de Beauvoir, 1997, 16-18). This construction yields the often strict dichotomy conceived between the two groups, and their implicit valuation. The conception of the Other as inherently different and often inferior consequently aids in the creation and maintenance of unequal social and political relations between the dominant group and the figures of the Other.

Modern theory has extensively addressed the concept of the Other within various contexts ranging from the general articulation of Otherness through dichotomous portrayals to the manifestation of it within the colonial experience. Jay has expressed the basic idea of Otherness in her A:Not-A model of distinction. Different dichotomous patterns can exist such as that of A and B where the two terms are contraries of one another rather than contradictory, giving them both a positive reality. However, the A:Not-A model implies that only one element will bear the positive reality and the other will contradict that positive quality. Unfortunately, this type of model relates the positive characterisation to only one element, A; the Not-A is often defined by perceived negative qualities (Jay, 1991, 95-96). She further notes the implications for this theoretical framework in the workings of a culture or society. "Those whose understanding of society is ruled by such an ideology find it very hard to conceive of the possibility of alternative forms of social order (third possibilities). Within such thinking, the only alternative to the one order is disorder" (ibid., 104).

Sampson continues the theoretical interpretation of Otherness through a psychological approach. He reiterates the idea that the construction of the Other by the dominant group, or Self, is used in order to define the Self. Through the use of dichotomies and contradictory definitions, the Self becomes everything that the Other is not and everything that the Other can never be (Sampson, 1993, 4-5). As will be seen repeatedly in constructions of Otherness, the Other is consequently never identified as being an individual in his/her own right nor is he/she allowed to occupy a position that is independent of the constructed Self. Negative characterisations such as anonymous collectivity, impulsiveness, irrationality, and excessive emotional states are attributed to figures of the Other (ibid., 13; 46). Sampson also notes three aspects that influence the particular construction of the female as Other. Firstly, woman is often placed in the position of what he describes as the 'absent presence' where her role in the society is vital and thus contributes to her presence in that society. However, as the female role is never developed as important in its own right, woman is also absent. Secondly, the 'universalizing male gaze' results in the interpretation

of women through the male perspective; women's reality may therefore be different from the images and ideas that are constructed around the concept of the female. Finally, Sampson remarks on the problem of the muted group where the Other must communicate in the language of the dominant group (ibid., 6-10). Power relations are integral to the construction of Otherness. The dominant group's identity, needs and desires, and their perceived superiority are established through the construction, and therefore, help to form the basis for the establishment of a hierarchical power structure within the society.

Similar portrayals of Otherness have been analysed by modern scholars regarding the colonial experience. For instance, Memmi identified contrasting characterisations of the colonizer and the colonized based upon his observations of the interaction between native Tunisians and the French colonial power. Within Memmi's analysis, the colonizer created a persona for the colonized: a construction which set up a strictly dichotomous relationship between the two. The colonized were distinguished by negative qualities such as laziness, weakness, deceitfulness, barbarity, impulsiveness, and a lesser humanity, and were thus defined as the complete opposite to the character of the colonizer. This dualistic portrayal created an articulated difference of implied inferiority and superiority between the colonizer and the colonized. Also, those classed as the Other have what Memmi terms 'the mark of the plural' in that they are never acknowledged as individuals, but are viewed as an anonymous collective (Memmi, 1965, 79-85). All members of the colonized bear these negative qualities because they are all representative of the Other. There is also a distinction drawn between the active nature of the colonizer and the passivity of the colonized. Finally, Hartsock's analysis of Memmi's theory highlights the additional association of disorder and chaos with Otherness, which further separates the Other from the marks of humanity (Hartsock, 1990, 160-161).

Memmi notes that three ideological components influenced this "colonial racism": "one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact" (Memmi, 1965, 71). Through this process, the colonized is placed in the category of the Other. Therefore, the differences between the two cultures are implicitly valued to the detriment of the colonized, rather than simply being viewed as examples of diversity. This is coupled with the perception that the notions about the colonized are both natural and universal, thus leaving no room for compromise in their identification as the Other (ibid., 71). The construction of Otherness thus reflects "a way of

dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the center and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities" (Hartsock, 1990, 161).

Said later explored these concepts in his study on modern Orientalism. Within his research, he proposed that the Orient itself has been "one of [the West's]...deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (Said, 1979, 1). He observed that Western culture has constructed its identity, gained strength and implied superiority through its definition of the contrasts between the East and West (ibid., 3). Like Memmi, Said notes a similar construction of Otherness which was based upon a dichotomous relationship between the East and the West. This contrasting identification consistently placed the West on the side of reason and logic, with clear intellectual capabilities, honesty and strength of character. However, the peoples of the East were once more perceived as irrational and illogical, contradictory, dishonest and weak. Said postulated that these classifications were not related to the East itself; rather, they stemmed from the West's preconceptions about the East and the consequent definition of its nature (ibid., 38-40). Said reiterates that this construction of Otherness by the dominant cultural entities could then be used to justify and maintain the unequal power relations between the East and West, while emphasising the 'positional superiority' of the West itself (ibid., 7).

3.3 THE CONCEPT OF THE OTHER IN GRECO-ROMAN IDEOLOGIES

There are parallels between these modern analyses of the Other and the construction of the female as 'Other' in Roman ideology. The qualities attributed to the Other in the colonizer's renderings - such as irrationality, impulsiveness, disorder - are ones that were often ascribed to women in the Roman period. Here the model for distinction was one of sexual difference. These perceived differences - both physical and intellectual - coloured the official power structure of the Roman empire, along with the legal and social environment.

PHILOSOPHICAL RENDERINGS OF THE OTHER

The use of the male-female distinction in the philosophical metaphors of many Greco-Roman philosophers has been clearly influential on ancient and modern thinking. Lloyd traces ideas of the male and female throughout Western philosophy from a grounding in the Greco-Roman dichotomous portrayal of man and woman seen in works from Pythagoras to Augustine. This symbolic system often used a dichotomy that placed Male on

the side of reason with clear and determinate thought processes, and Female with the sphere of the irrational, characterised by a lack of reason, unclear and indeterminate in mind and character (Lloyd, 1993, 3).

The use of dualistic frameworks was a common facet of Greco-Roman philosophy. For instance, Pythagorean cosmology was divided into two basic units: order, which was related to limit or *peras*, and disorder, associated with the unlimited or *apeiron*. Guthrie states that within Pythagorean thinking "Limit is a definite boundary; the Unlimited is indefinite and is therefore in need of Limit. *Apeiron* also may be translated as Infinite, but it is infinite in a negative sense: that is, it is infinitely or indefinitely divisible, and hence weak, rather than the modern 'positive' usage of the term, which is often synonymous with 'powerful'" (1987, 22-23). Pythagorean numerical theory also distinguished between opposites. Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras from c. AD 233-305 records Pythagoras' belief that the world was divided into the opposite powers of the superior Monad which he associated with "light, right, equal, stable, straight" and the inferior Dyad which was related to "darkness, left, unequal, unstable and curved" (ibid., 130).

This dichotomous treatment was clearly articulated in the sixth century BC Pythagorean table of opposites, recorded in Aristotle's Metaphysics (Figure 3.1):

Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Many
Right	Left
Male	Female
Resting	Moving
Straight	Curved
Light	Darkness
Good	Bad
Square	Oblong

Figure 3.1 Pythagorean Table of Opposites (Lovibond, 1994, 89)

I will briefly summarise Lovibond's argument concerning the significance of this table to the Greco-Roman philosophical distinction between the male and the female. Lovibond's analysis of this table explores the equation, through the Pythagorean classifications such as limit/unlimited, of the male with form, order, structure, as bounded and determinate. Female, on the other hand, was seen as formless, without defined character, with no cultural

specificity, a disordered and vague entity. The female is thus understood as a contrast to the male (Lovibond, 1994, 92). This association of the female with formlessness led to a notion that women possessed less of the important 'formal principle' of virtue as part of their personality. Therefore, with this lack, other aspects of her nature became explicable - one could expect "that the female mind should be multiple, unstable (cf. 'resting/moving'), devious (cf. 'straight/curved'), obscure (cf. 'light/dark')...in short, that it should have all the qualities typical of those who have not been fully integrated into the cultural order..." (ibid., 92). Further, Lovibond elaborated upon the numerical associations between male/odd and female/even. She postulates that this numerical and gender relationship derived from the Greek connection of male genitalia to unity and female genitalia to duality, and the consequent privileging of the male contribution to sexual reproduction. This belief in the primacy of the male as the 'real parent' contributed to the Pythagorean notion of how the odd and even integers interacted. For example, odd numbers were seen as more generative because they always asserted themselves when added to even numbers i.e. 1 + 2 = 3 or odd + even = odd (ibid., 91). By placing implicitly valued aspects on each side of the table, connotations of superiority and inferiority could be linked to the opposing aspects and subsequently to notions of male and female (see Lloyd, 1993). This table and Pythagoras' teachings influenced later Greek and Roman thinkers such as Aristotle, Plutarch and Augustine (Guthrie, 1987, 38-42).

These philosophical metaphors of distinction continued in later Greek thought. Plato and Aristotle expressed a dichotomy between Form seen as active, determinate, male; and Matter associated with passivity, indeterminacy, female. Plato also associated masculinity with unity and femininity with plurality (Lloyd, 1993, 4; Lovibond, 1994, 97). Lloyd notes that Plato's Timaeus articulated the notion that reason and order are not integral facets of the female soul. Rather, female souls found their origin in fallen male souls - those masculine souls that were found lacking in reason. Therefore, he believed that the quest for rational knowledge must transcend matter and its conceptual link with the feminine (Lloyd, 1993, 3-5). Additionally, Meskell remarks on the similar distinction of the body from the mind in classical Greek thought. She points out that "if mind and body represented distinct spheres, the corollary divisions of reason and emotion, male and female could easily be situated within this pre-established paradigm" (Meskell, 1996, 2).

This male-female distinction was further expressed in later religious and philosophical treatises of the Roman period. Philo, in his interpretation of Jewish scripture

in the first century AD, created allegories associating the superior mind with the male and the inferior, subordinate sense-perception with the female. In addition, he reiterated the traditional Greek theme of female passivity by aligning the mind/male with activity and the senses/female with passivity (Lloyd, 1993, 23-24; Wegner, 1991). In his text, Allegorical Interpretations of Genesis II, III, Philo explores the nature of the soul with these words:

> "The soul is our road; for as on the roads it is possible to see the distinction of existences, lifeless, living; irrational, rational; good, bad; slave, free; young, or older; male, female; foreign, or native; sickly, healthy; maimed, entire; so in the soul too there are lifeless, incomplete, diseased, enslaved, female and countless other movements full of disabilities; and on the other hand, movements living, entire, male, free, sound, elder, good, genuine..."
>
> (Philo, II.XXIV)

With these words, Philo clearly articulated the perceived distinctions between the male and female within the concept of the soul and intellectual reasoning. Further, Lloyd notes that his allegories which utilised these distinctions constructed strong links between gender and the various aspects perceived in human nature. They also have influenced the continuing connection between man and the spiritual world and woman with the physical or material world (Lloyd, 1993, 24-26).

Seneca, also writing in the first century AD, similarly explored a distinction between male and female. He enumerated several vices as basic to the female nature such as weakness, a lack of emotional and moral control, softness, and the desire for luxury. Seneca declared that all men could aspire to *virtus*, and he admonished them to avoid all feminine vices and characteristics in order to progress towards an excellent moral and intellectual character (Vidén, 1993, 137-38; see Ch. 2). However, when Seneca addressed the possibility of a woman possessing *virtus*, he observed that she would have to separate herself from the negative features of the feminine in order to attain this state of virtue (ibid., 115). This concept is evident in Seneca's consolation for his mother Helvia: "You cannot, therefore, allege your womanhood as an excuse for persistent grief, for your very virtues set you apart; you must be as far removed from woman's tears as from her vices" (Seneca, Moral Essays, 12.16.5). Therefore, by giving up her feminine traits, while retaining the traditional female virtues of piety, fecundity, and chastity, a woman could be praised within the terminology of men (ibid., 131). To Seneca, however, the women who merited such attention were exceptions to the inherent weakness and disorder of the female nature.

Finally, Augustine, writing on Christian belief in the fourth century AD, attempted to progress beyond the prevalent implicit belief that woman possessed a lesser capability for reason by extolling the idea of spiritual equality. Unlike many preceding ancient scholars, he did not perceive the female sex as a corruption or defect of the male sex. However, he still used male-female symbolism in the expression of the divided human nature by connecting the female as a symbol of the mind's practical functions while the male was linked to the mind's contemplative functions. Augustine claimed that only woman's physical difference made her an appropriate symbol for lesser reasoning, and this physical difference and its symbolic connotations made her 'naturally' subordinate to man (Lloyd, 1993, 28-33). However, despite Augustine's attempt to move away from the exclusion of women from the sphere of reason, it is telling that he continued to express the perceived differences within the soul and mind through male/female symbolism.

Within these philosophical discourses, woman is not always perceived as entirely external to the sphere of reason and *virtus*. However, her path to moral success and wisdom is made more difficult than man's with the recurring stipulation that one's quest for rational knowledge must involve the transcendence of the feminine. Man must separate himself from traits which were perceived as external to male nature, while woman must forgo the traits that were seen as inherent within her (Lloyd, 1993, 33; Vidén, 1993, 138). As Philo claimed, "progress is indeed nothing else than the giving up of the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational, incorporeal and more akin to mind and thought" (Questions and Answers on Exodus, 1.8). Thus, woman is constructed as the Other; she could only surmount this perceived obstacle by rejecting the inherent qualities of Otherness within her.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF OTHERNESS IN GRECO-ROMAN TEXTUAL DISCOURSES

Additional literary genres operated with the idea of woman as Other and continued the articulation of a male:female distinction. The construction of Otherness is most apparent in texts dealing with women in powerful positions who were also foreigners or barbarians. The Roman attitude towards monarchy was frequently hostile. A variety of roles with access to absolute power - such as emperor, king or chief, queen, or governor - were judged both positively and negatively by many Roman authors. The different positions were frequently distinguished and implicitly valued through the construction of polarities such as

Roman/barbarian, male/female, long-term/short-term, etc. (Braund, 1996, 3-4). A good ruler was one who possessed self-control, a sense of responsibility towards his/her subjects, a proper education and extensive knowledge in order to benefit his/her domain. Often, foreign rulers were perceived and portrayed as outside the bounds of a 'good ruler' with the typical characteristics of irrationality, impulsiveness, and disorganisation (ibid., 25-27). However, Braund points out that Roman male authors were particularly intrigued and threatened by queens. Their "anxieties about power intersected with anxieties concerning gender and gender-roles" (ibid., 118). Women in powerful positions were stereotyped with the frequent accusations of sexual license, the abuse of the law and their power, and even murder. They were viewed as contrary to all the Roman ideals of womanhood and female roles. Thus, we cannot view their portrayal by the Roman male authors as entirely accurate. These depictions were coloured by the male perception of proper gender roles and their hostility to foreign rulers, especially female ones. At the same time, by the first century AD, the vivid and threatening image of Cleopatra would have influenced future interpretations of female rulers (ibid., 118-119).

Therefore, an obvious example which firmly equates woman with Other is found in the treatment of Cleopatra by the propaganda surrounding the conflict between Octavian and Antony and the later Augustan poets. This topic has been extensively addressed by Hughes-Hallett (1990), Wyke (1992) and Hamer (1993), so I will only briefly outline their arguments here. The propaganda that grew up around Cleopatra focused on her as the enemy both to Rome and to mankind. She was defined as the Other, as an obvious enemy, a possible justification for Octavian's civil war - she as a female and as a foreigner became the uncontrolled foe who had unmanned Antony and threatened war with her actions and extravagances (Hughes-Hallett, 1990, 57-58). Additionally, she was portrayed as a lustful, insatiable alien of a primitive and savage culture. Her connection to the cult of Isis was used to portray both her and Egypt as characterized by disorder, animality, as barbarous and uncivilized. In addition, her forays into the military domain disaffiliated her with the traditional female sphere (Wyke, 1992, 107; 110-111).

Within poetry, Propertius' Elegy III.11, a text concerning the perils of female power, utilises the construct of the Other through its veiled references to Cleopatra and Egypt.

Though neither is mentioned by name, the negative attitude towards them and their consequent base characterisation is apparent. Many of the verbal classifications are typical motifs in the Greco-Roman construction of Otherness.

> ...Ay, what of her who shamed our arms of late
> (Among her very menials *proven whore*),
> Who asked Rome's walls and senate, to her state
> Enslaved, as prize from her lewd paramour?
>
> Injurious Alexandria, *Guile's own land*,
> And Memphis, bloodstained with our woe so oft,
> Where Pompey's triumphs three were sunk in sand!
> No, never, Rome, shall this thy shame be doffed!
> Better on Phlegra's plain they death to have been,
> Or, Pompey, bowed thy neck to thy wife's sire!
> Who comes? *Unchaste Canopus' harlot-queen*,
> Rome's brand from Philip's breed, burnt in with fire!
>
> Against our Jove *Anubis' barking snout*
> She'd set, our Tiber with Nile's threats she'd face,
> With sistrum's twang our Roman trumpet rout,
> And with her poled barge prows Liburnian chase;
> Hang foul gnat-muslins on Tarpeia's rock,
> Mid Marius' arms and statues laws assign!
> The world's high seven-hilled city quailed at shock
> Of war, affrighted by *threats feminine*...
>
> (verses 4-6; my emphasis)

Josephus, writing in the late first century AD, also accused Cleopatra of every crime and vice in his text refuting Apion's references to the Jewish people in a history of Egypt.

> "He further alludes to Cleopatra, the last queen of Alexandria, apparently reproaching *us* for her ungracious treatment of us. He ought, instead, to have set himself to rebuke that woman, who committed every kind of iniquity and crime against her relatives, her devoted husbands, the Romans in general, and their emperors, her benefactors; who slew her innocent sister Arṣinoe in the temple, treacherously assassinated her brother, plundered the country's gods and her ancestors sepulchres; who, owing her throne to the first Caesar, dared to revolt against his son and successor, and, corrupting Antony by sensual passion, made him an enemy to his country and faithless to his friends..."
>
> (Against Apion, 2.56-60)

Despite these charges, the limited evidence from Egypt alludes to Cleopatra's stable governing of her kingdom. She had ended the previous internal strife that was prevalent during her father's reign, and through several deals with neighbouring rulers, the economy

of Egypt was strong and growing (Hughes-Hallett, 1990, 38-39). Additionally, the Alexandrian tradition records her as a scholar and public benefactor (ibid., 95-98). Nevertheless, the majority of our knowledge is derived from Roman sources, and therefore, we must acknowledge the inevitable bias towards Cleopatra within these textual and propagandistic discourses. Through the official and literary viewpoint on her role, Cleopatra was located outside the Roman male norm. The qualities of promiscuity, barbarity and militarism were used in the portrayal of Cleopatra as the Other. Her political significance was lost in these propagandistic discourses as were the ideological similarities between Octavian and Antony. She became the object of this construction of the Other in order to characterize what was basically a civil war as a response to a foreign enemy (Hughes-Hallett, 1990, 57-58; Wyke, 1992, 116). The Roman literary references to Cleopatra painted a picture that suited the need for Rome to define her as a threatening and foreign enemy that needed to be destroyed. She became the invented Other.

Ancient visual images of Cleopatra are extremely limited. This apparent deficit in the visual evidence occurs despite the many possibilities of Cleopatra as a Roman symbol of the defeated East, as a too-powerful woman, as an unnatural symbol of the transgression of male-female boundaries. However, Kampen has identified early images of Omphale as a possible reference to Cleopatra. In myth, Hercules was sold to Omphale, the Lydian queen, in atonement for a murder he committed. Within Bacchic ritual, the two participated in the swapping of clothes. This mythological tale is not an overtly negative story. However, as this tale was taken up by the Augustan poets and playwrights it became a symbol for the debasement of Antony by Cleopatra. In text, Hercules was portrayed as the fool, controlled by the insatiable desires of Omphale. As he lost mastery of himself, he gave up his maleness by taking on the characteristics of the female - he wore luxurious women's garb and worked wool with Omphale's women. Within early imagery, Hercules and Omphale were often represented in their gender-swapping guise with Hercules as subordinate to and even mocked by Omphale (Kampen, 1996c, 235-237). A 1st century AD wall-painting from the House of M. Lucretius in Pompeii showed Hercules half-clothed, in a drunken and uncontrolled state, standing beside the more distant Omphale wearing his lion-skin cloak (7). It is interesting to note that one of the Omphale's breasts is bared which may be viewed as a reference to the threat of the feminine and disorder (see Ferris, 1994; also discussion below). Within the first century AD context of text and imagery, therefore, Omphale became a symbol for the East and its vices, for women who transgressed the boundaries and gained too great a power, and as a result were seen as dangerous - possibly with a direct relation to

the representation of Cleopatra. As Antony was known to associate himself with Hercules, this interpretation of the myth took on even greater significance (Kampen, 1996c, 235). Though this was not a straightforward image of Cleopatra, the treatment of Omphale in early imperial literature and art resulted in the equation of her with Cleopatra and inevitably with the Other.

The treatment of later queens in Roman Britain was also coloured by notions of Otherness, as external to the Roman male 'norm.' For example, Cartimandua was treated in a very hostile manner by Tacitus in both the Annals (12.36; 12.40) and the Histories (3.45). Cartimandua ruled over the large and diverse territory of the Brigantes during the first century AD. She was allied to Rome, and in AD 51, she handed Caratacus, the native rebel leader, over to the Romans. Despite her alliance with the Romans, she was characterised by Tacitus as a negative figure. He attributed the unstable nature of her kingdom to a moral flaw in the queen herself, rather than addressing the inherent complications of ruling the sizable and complex tribe of the Brigantes. All of her actions were judged in a moral light. Thus, Cartimandua was represented as an abuser of power, deceitful, and sexually promiscuous. When she turned Caratacus over to the Romans, Tacitus portrayed her as subservient, disloyal and dishonest, despite Rome's long-held desire to capture Caratacus. Tacitus' account of her replacement of her consort Venutius with his armour-bearer Vellocates was again characterised as faithless, adulterous and treacherous (Braund, 1996, 124-131). He claims that "incensed at her act, and smarting at the ignominious prospect of submitting to the sway of a woman, the enemy - a powerful body of young and picked warriors - invaded her kingdom" (Tacitus, Annals, 12.40). Braund points out that Tacitus' dislike for monarchy, and especially queens, was influential on his treatment of Cartimandua. Certainly, the interaction of gender and power had become an issue that was treated with a great deal of hostility in his account of the events during Cartimandua's rule (Braund, 1996, 128-130).

At first, Tacitus treated his account of Boudica quite differently from his references to Cartimandua (Annals 14.31). Cartimandua is the only female from Roman Britain whom he called a queen, and he seemed to use this term to implicate her in all of the negative qualities that were traditionally attributed to queens. Boudica, on the other hand, was presented as comparable to the ideal Roman matron. Tacitus presented her as an advocate of *libertas* and Roman values in her early struggle against the indignities committed against herself, her family and the Iceni. He viewed the abuse that she suffered as deserving of her

early response. However, his judgment changed as the Boudican revolt developed (Annals 14.32-37). Once the Roman culprits of the injustice against the Iceni had been dealt with and Suetonius Paulinus had taken control of the defense of the province, Tacitus portrayed the situation very differently. Paulinus was seen as a just and able commander, and Boudica's continuing revolt against the Romans was now presented as irrational, out of control and barbarous. Her speech at the last battle and the natives' reaction, again depicted as over-emotional, lacking in reason and frenzied, was contrasted with the rational and controlled Roman response. Boudica and her cause were no longer seen as morally just. At the same time, the speech that Tacitus records emphasised her gender. Again, this was utilised to question the relationship between gender and power (Braund, 1996, 132-139; Tacitus Annals 14.35).

Cassius Dio's portrayal of Boudica was unsympathetic from the very beginning (Roman History 62.1.1-62.12.6). He presented her as a ruling queen, again with all the associated negative qualities. Dio characterised her with manly attributes such as a harsh voice, great stature, and militant and forceful actions. She was also depicted as possessing some form of magical properties, a common accusation against women and queens. His emphasis on her gender was again found in his description of the terrors of the Boudican revolt: "Moreover, all this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman, a fact which caused them the greatest shame" (Braund, 1996, 141-143; Dio, 62.1.1). Thus, Dio's account stressed the boundaries of gender in two ways. Firstly, his description of Boudica in terms of masculinity emphasised that her character was not adhering to the Roman ideals of womanhood, and therefore she could be viewed as a threat, as an unnatural Other. Secondly, his statement concerning the shame brought upon the Romans by their female enemy questioned the female access to power and the effect her power and abuse of it had upon the honour of her male opponents.

Ultimately, the Roman male authors presented these female rulers as contrasting with the rationale, self-control and propriety of the men and Romans that opposed them. They were constructed as the Other through their ever-present opposition with Roman male ideals for womanhood and through their interaction with the Romans in the province. Braund points out that "to seek historical reality behind or beneath these images of powerful women in Britain is largely to miss the point. The characterizations of Tacitus and Dio tell us little about Boudica or Cartimandua, but they speak volumes about these authors' attitudes to women in power...their truths were functions of their broader world-views"

(Braund, 1996, 145-146). The dominant group used their portrayal of the these foreign women as Other in order to define themselves, emphasise the values that they advocated and justify their actions. Therefore, once again, the construction of the Other illuminated the constructor more than the constructed.

It is important to point out that this concept of Otherness was not limited to non-Roman women. This has already been observed in the philosophical renderings of the female as Other where a general distinction between women and men was established. However, we must remember that the interaction of gender, age, status and ethnicity could increase or decrease the degree of Otherness for women and other groups within Roman society. Satirists often leveled their invective against all women - young or old, rich or poor, Roman or foreign. Henderson, in his study of Roman satire, suggests the moulding of Woman as "Not-Man", where her humanity is questionable through its difficulty in being defined within the terms of Male humanity (1989, 51). Women were again characterized by negative qualities, qualities that made them different from and inferior to the Roman male. An obvious example of this is found in Satire 6 of Juvenal which relates the stereotypical characteristics of woman as lustful, promiscuous, frivolous, cruel, and irrational. Juvenal asserted that such negative traits characterised all women. For instance, the following extract from Satire 6 (133-135) expressed the effects of one female vice: "Why tell of love potions and incantations, of poisons brewed and administered to a stepson, or of the grosser crimes to which women are driven by the imperious power of sex? Their sins of lust are the least of all their sins." Therefore, satire used women as a sign of the Other, as outside the male sphere, and even as a force of degradation. Negative connotations were often implicit in these renderings of the female.

At the same time, historical texts like Tacitus' Annals often characterised Roman women in the terminology of Otherness. Tacitus' portraits of imperial women frequently relied upon an extensive description and condemnation of their perceived vices such as a lack of self-control, arrogance, promiscuity, and deceitfulness (Vidén, 1993, 60-61). However, the primary fault of the women he coloured with negative characteristics was that of ambition. He described both Livia and Agrippina the Younger as lustful for power and as attempting to control the reins of imperial power through their sons (see Annals 4.57; 12.65; 13.2; 14.2). Vidén notes that Tacitus continued to cherish the principles of the Republic, and therefore his portraits of the imperial women, and often the men, reflected his distaste for monarchy. At the same time, the imperial women's portrayal as the Other was heightened

by his recognition that they had stepped outside the traditional boundaries of the Roman matron. However, it must also be understood that Roman authors frequently seem to construct these women as the Other not only due to their gender but in order to reflect and illuminate the moral flaws of their male counterparts (Vidén, 1993, 62-64).

Several common threads colour the representation of Otherness in portrayals of both foreign and Roman women, especially when they have crossed the perceived boundary between public and private. One of the main characteristics attributed to these female Others is that of sexual license and promiscuity. Women such as Cleopatra or Cartimandua were portrayed as utilising their sexuality to acquire and abuse their power. Any female access to power frequently led to this assertion. For example, Procopius' Secret History, detailing the reign of Justinian and Theodora, continues the familiar model that connected female power to sexual license. The portrait of Theodora that emerges from Procopius' account depicts her as rapacious, sexually manipulative, and unscrupulous (Allen, 1992, 94-97). Another aspect of their Otherness is reflected in the effect which their power had upon their Roman male counterparts. It was considered a smear upon one's honour to be threatened, controlled or defeated by a woman. An obvious example is found in the account of Antony and Cleopatra where he was portrayed as dependent and 'enslaved' by Cleopatra. Braund points out that "to be enslaved by a woman was a disgrace for a male: that disgrace is a recurrent theme of Greek and Roman literature in general...For both women and slaves were in a sense excluded from Greek and Roman society, in that they were not permitted all the rights and privileges of the citizen male" (Braund, 1996, 123). This concept was also tied to the Roman male view of female power within the imperial sphere. With the power of the Roman state now in the hands of the emperor, there was a perception that women and slaves would have more access to power and control. Thus, emperors who were believed to be dependent upon their inferiors were consequently viewed as 'bad' emperors, and the women and slaves were portrayed in a negative light (ibid., 123). However, we must again question the historical accuracy of these portraits of both men and women as they would have inevitably been coloured by the Roman gender ideologies and the attitudes of the Roman male authors.

Women were not the only figures of the Other within Roman ideologies. Alston points out that we can observe frequent charges of Otherness against other groups (Alston, 1996, 101). For example there was a contrast elucidated between areas outside of the Mediterranean core of the Roman empire and the Mediterranean core itself. Balsdon notes

that Aelius Aristides asserted that the previous dichotomy between Greek and barbarian was no longer tenable as it had been overtaken by the distinction between Roman and non-Roman (Balsdon, 1979, 30). In these comparisons, Romans were represented as smarter, stronger, more courageous and cultured . All foreigners or barbarians were thus measured against the Roman standard (ibid., 60-65). Therefore, the peoples defined by the dominant group were never really judged as individuals, but again were used in the self-definition of Rome.

Webster points out that the asymmetry that characterised the perception of foreign peoples by the Romans is also apparent in the manner in which the Greco-Roman world of dominant and dominated was described by ancient authors and ideologists. The emphasis on inequality between Romans and non-Romans and the consequent assertion of Roman authority were further enhanced by the justifications for their dominance. The claim that the foreign peoples were unable to govern themselves and thus needed Roman governance, like in modern colonialist regimes, was a common rationalisation in the Roman conquest. At the same time, the dissemination of civilisation to the uncivilised natives and boundaries of the Roman empire was another facet of their reasoning. Finally, Greco-Roman mythical schema were related to the native traditions in order to justify and explain the right to conquest of these territories. Various heroes were used to claim areas through their past mythical exploits. For example, the Gallic Celts were said to have stolen the Geryon cattle from Heracles, and after their defeat by Heracles, they consequently forfeited their lands to him. Mythical figures were also depicted as the founders of various races through their sexual exploits. Again, Heracles' amorous encounters with women of the Gallic race made him the forefather of the Gauls (Webster, 1994, 3-8). Webster concludes that "the sexual opposition of male:coloniser, female:colonised embedded in the allegory affirms the power asymmetries structuring the colonial relationship itself" (ibid., 6). Thus, we come full circle to the equation of Otherness with the female and its utilisation in Roman ideological narratives.

Finally, a Roman ambivalence towards acting and the theatre is reflected in the frequent association between actors and Otherness. Edwards notes that the theatre was often viewed as a foreign institution, and many scholars and authors emphasised its origins in the Greek and Etruscan past (Edwards, 1994, 86). Actors and their craft were also equated with the realm of the feminine, further highlighting their potential Otherness. Men playing female roles and the perceived feminine gestures that constituted much acting added to this

perception. The theatre thus undermined the manhood of the actors because their actions were not compatible with the traditional ideal of male *virtus*. At the same time, it could present a threat to the manhood and *virtus* of the male audience (ibid., 86). It is significant that these valued equations between the theatre, acting and Otherness, articulated by the elite male authors, used the classifications of foreign and female to underline the threat of the Other to the Roman male citizen.

3.4 ROMAN IMAGERY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE OTHER

The establishment within the context of various Roman ideologies of the female as Other now leads us to explore the different ways in which this concept may have been visually portrayed. For this purpose, I will mostly focus on the more public, civic and official monuments and representations. Useful examples for exploring the concept of Otherness in Roman female, and even male, imagery are provided by the generalised references to barbarian peoples and captives on triumphal and historical monuments throughout the Roman empire. These representations were a common motif of the Roman victory and conquest of the natives peoples as Rome extended her boundaries.

MALE BARBARIAN FIGURES AS THE OTHER

Male barbarian figures representing the Other and as a symbol in the expression of victory were not only found in Roman imagery. For instance, Greek vase painting frequently portrayed battles between the Greeks and the Persians. The contrast was articulated through their depiction. Vases created around c. 490 BC constructed the opposition through ethnic markers of dress, physiognomy, and weapons. The Persian opponent was an equal foe to the Greek, despite the inevitable Greek victory (8). However, the imagery changed by c. 460 BC. The judgment between the two opponents had now become a moral one, symbolised through their presentation on the vases. The Persians no longer faced their Greek foe as an equal. Rather, they showed their cowardice by fleeing from the enemy and through their expressions and gestures of panic and lack of control (Miller, 1995, 39-40). The Greeks were now presented in the traditional mode of heroic nudes echoing the Greek idea of "male nudity as an index of heroic virility" (ibid., 41). Other representations of the Persians within a domestic context continued to emphasise their Otherness. Here, they were surrounded by women, eunuchs and additional signs of luxury. Weakness, cowardice and effeminacy were underlined by both sets of these images. The

Persians' significance as the Other was defined through their contrast to the manliness of the ideal Greek warrior (ibid., 42-43).

Male barbarian images also seem to be the more frequent mode of depiction of the Other in the context of Roman public and imperial monuments, and can be found in several different guises. Their Otherness stems from their barbarian status, through their role and depiction as active opponents to the Romans, and finally through their inevitable defeat. For instance, there is the use of male barbarians in historical scenes referring to incidents within different campaigns and battles. On the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, an obvious juxtaposition exists between the Roman and barbarian participants in a scene of conquest and clemency (9). In this representation, the emperor on horseback and the upright Roman soldiers contrasted with the two kneeling barbarians who were depicted as begging for mercy in poses of defeat and capitulation (Kleiner, 1992, 292). The Romans were further portrayed as in control and as victors through the composition which places them on a higher spatial plane than the barbarians. In addition, the Romans were depicted as bestowing clemency on the conquered in this scene - it was a positive picture of the Romans with its emphasis on their defeat of the enemy and consequent fair treatment of them. The barbarians are anonymous, not specific characters in the drama, compared to the historical figure of the emperor, but simply representative of the peoples defeated and now ruled by the imperial regime.

Kampen has also noted the use of contrasting movement, pose, expression and gesture to signify the conquered versus the conqueror on Trajan's Column, and her analysis is worth a brief summary. The column's spiraling frieze was designed so that its progression moved upwards and to the right. Within the scenes, the Romans are depicted as marching and fighting predominantly to the right. However, the Dacians often move against the natural flow of the spiral. An exception to this leftward movement by the Dacians is found when they flee to the right from the victorious Romans (10). Kampen postulates that this juxtaposition of contrasting movement by the Romans and Dacians is used in the symbolic system of victory and defeat. At the same time, the actions of the Dacians also signal their inevitable defeat. They are often depicted with terrified and panicked expressions and poses, groveling before their Roman foes, as fallen or dying figures or as already dead. By contrast, the Romans radiate control and organisation through their poses, actions and expressions. Trajan himself is portrayed as a larger figure than both the Roman soldiers and the Dacians, thus highlighting his central importance and status. The Dacian

leader, Decebalus, is the one native figure that was treated somewhat heroically. He too is larger than his fellow Dacians to signify his leadership of their campaigns.

Unfortunately, there are no historical monuments like Trajan's Column or the Arch of Marcus Aurelius from Roman Britain. A monumental arch from the Severan period has been located in London. However, though fragmentary, its decoration seems to concentrate on a variety of Greco-Roman deities. It may have commemorated a specific event in Britain; however, the arch does not seem to have been triumphal in nature, but rather was constructed to fulfill a more civic or religious function (Hill et al., 1980). Despite this lack of monumental evidence, examples of the utilisation of male barbarians as the Other can be found in different contexts. There are several Romano-British funerary reliefs of auxiliary soldiers bearing the image of a cavalry soldier riding down a male barbarian foe. Examples of this type of funerary monument have been found throughout Britain from Cirencester to Corbridge, and the majority of these tombstones have been dated to the first century AD (Hope, 1997, 252-253). An example from Cirencester was found in the Watermoor cemetery area. This tombstone, dated c. AD 45-75, depicts Sextus Valerius Genialis riding over the fallen barbarian (**11**). He spears the fallen foe with his lance as the horse rears over the naked male figure. Imagery of this character, often coupled with a funerary inscription, emphasised several facets of the deceased's life: his participation in military life; his affiliation with a certain unit, here a Thracian one; and his contribution to the Roman victory through the defeat of the enemy (RIB 109). Interestingly, most of these tombstones were for members of the auxiliary forces - forces usually derived from the provinces and thus non-Roman in origin. Therefore, the former Other of the Roman auxiliary cavalryman depicted himself in opposition to the present Other in the form of the fallen barbarian foe (see Hope, 1997, 256).

More elaborate examples of the male barbarian figure as Other can be found in Gaul and Germany. The triumphal arch from Orange portrayed a battle between the Romans and the Gauls where the Gauls were distinguished through their nakedness from the clothed Romans (**12a & 12b**). Here, at least, their nakedness was not that of heroic nudity, but rather underlined the barbarity of the Gauls. The date of this arch is disputed. While the style implies a Severan date, the arch has traditionally been accorded a date in the Tiberian period. Its purpose has been postulated as commemorative of the Roman defeat of the AD 21 revolt of Florus and Sacrovir (King, 1990, 76). Another arch known as the Porte Noire from Besançon depicted various scenes from the Roman conquest (**13**). Again, the date is uncertain, but it is postulated to be from c. AD 166 and in honour of the victories of Marcus

Aurelius in the province. The decoration of this arch not only consisted of combat scenes between the Romans and the barbarians, but scenes of submission and clemency were also depicted. However, while the Romans were contrasted with the barbarian Other through their portrayal, actions and the inevitable defeat of their native foes, monumental imagery also emphasised the early integration of Gaul within the Roman empire. For instance, the triumphal arch from Suse of the Augustan period represented scenes of peace rather than war (14). Here, the images commemorated the signing of a treaty between Rome and the fourteen Gallic tribes of the Alps. Therefore, one representation was of this signing between the major figures of Augustus and Cottius, with various lictors, troops and female personifications of the cities ranged in the background.

In general, the emphasis on the Otherness of the male barbarian foe was prevalent within the imagery from Gaul and Germany. A funerary relief from Nickenich depicted the solitary deceased soldier on one face with his wife and child on another. A third face represented the deceased holding a club and leading two male barbarians by a chain around their necks (15). Thus, their Otherness was emphasised through their obviously subordinate position to the deceased, and his role in the Roman military victories in the province was highlighted through the presence of the barbarians. At the same time, the Roman male and his family with their potential for social reproduction contrasted with the captured barbarians and their loss of autonomy and future family (see Kampen, 1991, 253). Another relief from Neumagen, possibly of funerary or commemorative context, utilised the imagery of both male and female barbarians to refer to the Roman victories over the Germans. This relief depicted male barbarians with arms bound and a very disheveled female captive who seems to hold one hand up to her mouth in horror (16).

MALE BARBARIANS AS GENERALISED SYMBOLS OF ROMAN VICTORY

An even more general use of barbarian male figures is seen in images that use unspecified male figures as trophy-like symbols of the defeat of the enemy. Monumental representations of male barbarians as trophies referring to the Roman conquest are a common mode of expression on victory monuments throughout the empire. For example, the Trajanic Trophy of Adamklissi carried 26 carved crenelations depicting a bound male prisoner standing next to a tree (17). These images did not allude to a specific moment in a battle nor the normal course of a military campaign. Rather, they utilised the generalised figure of a male barbarian captive to commemorate and emphasis the Roman victory over the native population (Ferris, 1997, 6-8). Examples of this type of generalised victory are

also found in both Gaul and Germany. The fragmentary frieze from a probable triumphal monument from Saint-Remy-de-Provence (Glanum), dated to the first century AD, presented a captive barbarian, kneeling, nude and with his arms bound behind his back amongst the various spoils and trophies of the Roman victory (**18**). A more distinct example is seen in the mutilated statue of a bound male captive that decorated a fountain, also from Saint-Remy-de-Provence (**19**). Additionally, the late Augustan triumphal arch at Saint-Remy-de-Provence depicted both male and female native captives situated in front of weapons and trophies (**20**). This type of imagery might also be found within religious or even domestic contexts. A very weathered cylindrical altar found in Périgueux was decorated with the representations of Victory standing between two male barbarians, bound and nude. Various trophies were also depicted, further underlining the emphasis on the Roman victory (**21**). Finally, a late second to early third century AD mosaic from Amiens presents a barbarian in a much more ambiguous light. This mosaic bore several motifs, including an Eros with garlands and a theatre mask. In one panel, a bacchante leads what has been identified as a 'vanquished Indian' (**22**). The intended meaning of this mosaic is unclear; it could refer to a religious 'conquest' by the Dionysiac cult, a mythological tale or perhaps it simply used the figure of the barbarian Other as an interesting motif (Stern, 1957, 62).

The number of Romano-British monuments bearing this type of representation is more limited. Two examples from Britain exhibit the more active representations that are paralleled on the aforementioned images from the cavalry tombstones. For instance, the distance slab from the Antonine Wall at Summerston Farm, dated to AD 142-143, depicted Victory crowning a cavalryman who rides down two male captive barbarians. Another naked and bound male captive was portrayed on the panel to the right of the inscription (**23**). Another distance slab of the same period, found on the line of the Antonine Wall at Bridgeness, again represented a cavalryman riding down four naked barbarian warriors in various postures of defeat. One native foe attempts to raise his shield in defense; another has already been speared in the back; the third is decapitated; and the final warrior sits in defeat, with his chin placed on his hand. Flanking the central inscription on the right side is a sacrificial scene of the *souvetaurilia* or ritual cleansing. This relief thus commemorated the Second Legion Augusta's active participation in the defeat of the enemy and their piety to their gods (**24**). Ferris claims that these two images placed the barbarians in a more humiliating position, which gave the Roman's enemies no dignity or worth (1994, 26; 29-30). The two other distance slabs that bear images of male barbarians utilised their representation in a more generalised way. The Hutcheson Hill slab, again from the Antonine

Wall and of the same period, represented either Victory or Britannia crowning a Roman soldier's standard. Flanking this central panel, two kneeling, bound and nude male captives - here treated more as trophies - further allude to the Roman victory (25). Finally, another probable distance slab from the Antonine Wall at Hag Knowe combined the image of a bound barbarian captive with the mythological figure of a Triton. Here, we can again view this barbarian figure as a trophy of the Roman victories in Britain (26).

The imagery of male barbarians - both from the more active scenes of battle and combat and the generalised figures as trophies - were significant on two levels. Firstly, their utilisation on monuments ranging from imperial commemorative pieces, military commemorative panels and tombstones would have expressed the notion of the defeat of the enemy. Essentially, these male barbarian figures were symbols of the Roman victory and conquest. However, perhaps more importantly, male barbarians were used in the self-definition of the Roman empire and its various members. These examples from Gaul, Germany and Britain were utilised to express the concept of Otherness and the difference between these Others and the dominant Roman group and individuals. Barbarian figures were easily identified through their actions and contrasting representation as members of society classified outside the Roman male citizen sphere. Their status as the barbarian enemy in battle and conquest scenes emphasised their difference and Otherness from the Romans. In addition, when these barbarian foes were depicted as captives and trophies, the superiority of the Romans was further underlined as their victories over and capture of the native warriors were commemorated. The various juxtapositions between Romanness and Otherness thus enhanced the identity of the Roman; even when - in the case of the auxiliary soldier's tombstones - they would have once been categorised as the Other themselves.

FEMALE BARBARIANS AS THE OTHER

The imagery of the female as Other also had its predecessors in Greek art. Reeder points out that Athenian society classified their women as Other through their exclusion from the rights of a citizen and the restrictions placed upon her role and position in contrast to that of the Greek male (Reeder, 1995a, 25). By being classified as outside the 'norm' of the male citizen sphere, women can represent the Other even when depicted in their traditional roles of wife or mother. However, while many Greek vases expressed the imagery of the Greek matron, some depicted the *hetairai* and all aspects of their flamboyant lifestyle (27). These types of images can be seen as another form of Otherness. These women were portrayed as engaged in activities that no respectable woman would participate

in and they were often represented as bold and naked. These extremes of behaviour constructed their Otherness and made them both appalling and fascinating to their Greek audience (ibid., 27). However, the more typical symbol of Otherness was constructed in the imagery of the Amazons, as women outside the bounds of traditional and acceptable society. They not only were a sign for the female as Other, but they were also utilised in imagery to allude to different groups as external to the Greek world. For instance, the west front of the Parthenon represented the mythological tale of the battle between the Greeks and the Amazons. On another level, this imagery was also a sign for the Greek defeat of the Persians in 480-479 BC. The stereotype of the Persian or Oriental as effeminate, as a lover of luxury, as ultimately weak and inevitably defeated made the Amazons an appropriate symbol for the Greek's eastern enemy. At the same time, the perceptions of women as uncontrollable and undisciplined could also be attributed to the Persians through the allusion of the Amazons. Castriota notes that "this feminized conception of the barbarian served to underscore the intemperate nature ascribed to the Persians" (Castriota, 1995, 32; **28a & 28b**).

Female barbarian images, though not as common on the Roman imperial monuments, can also be found. Unfortunately, there are no known examples of female barbarian imagery from Roman Britain, so I will concentrate on images taken from a variety of media from Gaul, Germany and other provinces. It is interesting to note that while most female images on triumphal and historical reliefs are deities or personifications such as Victory, barbarian female captives are the more common representations of mortal women (Kampen, 1991, 218). I suggest that the use of female barbarians in these contexts makes an even more powerful statement of Otherness than that of male barbarians. These female figures become doubly the Other as the viewer notes both their femaleness and barbarian status - two categories explicitly outside the Roman male citizen sphere. At the same time, the preconceptions and attitudes towards women aided in the construction of Otherness in these female images.

As with the imagery of male barbarians, specific acts of war that affected native women might be portrayed. For example, the column of Marcus Aurelius depicted a probable common consequence of the imperial conquest of the provinces - the claiming of native women by the Roman soldiers (**29**). A scene from Trajan's Column also presented a female figure as outside the traditional Roman boundaries in two ways (**30**). Firstly, her status as both a woman and a Dacian constructed her identity of Otherness. However, it is

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perhaps her actions that most condemn her to this definition of inferiority. The Dacian woman beseechingly holds up a male child towards the emperor and Roman soldiers in a probable bid for mercy. This action was viewed by Roman male authors as a servile and disgraceful act. As Currie notes, "Pliny in his *Panegyricus* had explicitly condemned a wheedling display of the child's body by Roman parents attempting to gain special favour from the emperor" (1996, 159). Therefore, this action, combined with the ethnicity and gender of the Dacian woman highlighted her as different to the traditional and ideal characterisation of what it was to be Roman. At the same time, the frequent position of women and their consequent portrayal also emphasised their difference from the Roman 'norm.' Kampen contends that many reliefs from Trajan's Column placed women, and also children, on the edges of the scenes, thus further stressing their position on the boundaries of society. Women and children were often portrayed as situated at the edge of a Roman camp, or at the fringes of a town or fortress. Their position on the periphery of these scenes, which often focused primarily on the male activities, served as a useful contrast between Roman and native, male and female. "They provide the edges against which Roman manliness can be defined...They indicate the inside of their own world and define its entirety by their association with their men, children and the landscapes and buildings of their world. Yet they also stand at the borders or edges of scenes and meanings to indicate the boundaries of normative conduct and geography" (Kampen, 1995, 63-64). Despite the continuing female image as a sign of the community, she also signified the liminality of her gender through her positions on the margin.

Kampen also analyses an unusual scene from Trajan's Column which is worth mentioning for its relative singularity. This relief constructed the female as Other in a very unusual manner. Most other examples rely upon the defeated barbarian community for their images with the emphasis on the affects of war upon the native women and men, the barbarian captives, and the female as representative of the collective community or province. However, a particular relief from Trajan's Column actively established the female as Other by unequivocally presenting her actions as outside all tradition and bounds of society. This isolated scene depicted a group of women beating and burning three naked and bound men in a landscape of hills and one small building **(31)**. This incident was situated between the portrayal of Trajan's generosity to his Roman troops and his departure, and the consequent clemency shown to a group of natives (Kampen, 1995, 59-60). At first, this scene's significance is uncertain. The rank and ethnicity of the women and men in the torture scene were not clear. The bound and naked men remind us of previous portrayals of male

barbarians, and their vulnerability and unheroic qualities probably preclude them from being identified as Roman soldiers. Possibly, the women were representative of Dacian or frontier women who were punishing native collaborators or enemies (ibid., 54-57). What is important about this scene, however, is its situation between the two scenes of Trajan's benevolence, and the femaleness of the main characters in the torture scene. Their violent and extreme actions, along with their female gender, inevitably connected them to concepts of Otherness. The contrast between their violence and Trajan's 'beneficence' aided in the definition of the Romans as it re-emphasised the manliness, goodness, status and Romaness of Trajan and his soldiers versus the femaleness, cruelty and disorder, and contrasting ethnicity of the torturing women. Additionally, these women's actions heavily contrast with the typical treatment of women in scenes of conquest. Traditionally, women were portrayed as affected by the times of war, as fleeing or attacked, as objects (ibid., 64-65). Here, however, they were subjects and that is very rare. Yet again, this utilisation of contrast between the normal behaviour of native women, though also seen as the Other, and the active and violent nature of the torturers emphasised the equation of female with Otherness.

A more common facet of imperial imagery was the use of female representations to represent the defeated community. The Grand Camée de France, an imperial presentation piece possibly from the Tiberian or Claudian period, is decorated with representations focusing on the Julio-Claudian family members - both deified and living. In addition, the bottom register depicted images of various barbarians in poses described as despairing and mournful. The central area of the bottom register is dominated by the figure of a native woman holding a child (Kleiner, 1992, 151; **32**). Kampen suggests that the juxtaposition on this piece between the barbarian women and children below and the proposed Livia in the middle panel yields an interesting insight. She postulates that these different images created a contrast between the two communities where survival was not only on the individual level, but also through the family. Thus, Livia's presence implied the dynastic continuity of the imperial line, while the defeated barbarian woman and child symbolized the defeat of the native community not only as an abstract, but also in reality with the implied control of the native sexuality and fertility (Kampen, 1991, 235). From Gaul, there are several displays of the female barbarian as a symbol of the defeated native community. The remains of a monumental tomb from the Beaune area in Lyonnaise has yielded fragmentary decoration of weapons, armour, and various captives. The figure of the seated native woman holding a child again signified the defeat of the native community (**33**). A fragment from Mainz in Germany yields a seated female German captive. The clothes that this German woman

wears are interesting. While many of the female captives from other reliefs have worn the traditional long dress, this figure wears a tight-fitting diagonally striped body covering, very like the Amazon garb seen on Greek vases (**34**). This exotic dress further underlined her difference. Finally, a second century AD sculpted head was found near a temple area at Avenches, present-day Switzerland (**35**). This female head does not adhere to the classical ideals of portraiture or divine representations; her heavy features, unkept hair and downturned gaze are not reminiscent of any sculpted Roman matrons or goddesses. However, the realism of this piece seems less like that of a portrait, and more likely to be a facet of the depiction of the native female as Other. Her seemingly mournful expression would fit in well with the previous portrayals of captive barbarian women.

Another common motif is found on the sarcophagus of one of Marcus Aurelius' generals where female barbarian captives were again used as a depiction of the barbarian Other (**36a & 36b**). The most important feature of this sarcophagus is the crowded and active combat scene between the Romans and barbarians. However, this scene is bounded on each side by the figures of two male and female captives. Their expressions are ones of dejection and submission; there is no hope of victory in their faces. Their Otherness is thus defined through their presentation as captives, their position on the margins of the active central scene, their ethnicity and finally their gender. It is also interesting to note that one woman is depicted with a bared breast - often viewed as a sign of both vulnerability or the threat of violence and disorder (Ferris, 1994, 27).

It is worth further exploring the concept and significance of the bared breast because it is a frequent motif in the depiction of the female as Other. Beth Cohen observes that the exposure of the breast was an early symbol of difference and a signifier of the status and nature of the woman herself. Her study of Athenian art focuses on the various ways in which the female breast could be 'divested of clothes'. Respectable women in Greek art were always fully clothed with four exceptions: the necessity of breast-revealing clothes such as through athleticism or breast-feeding a child; purposeful breast baring as in moments of supplication or divine rape; and accidental breast-baring through divine rape or being caught up in the particular moment while dancing or participating in similar activities. However, the broadest and earliest context for the exposure of the breast was through physical violence towards the woman (B. Cohen, 1997, 77-79). This type of nakedness is especially seen in the depictions of the Amazons on two levels. Firstly, the bared breast was part of their mythology that constructed them as different, as connected to Otherness.

Secondly, the exposure of the breast also signaled the inevitable defeat of the Amazon Other by a Greek warrior. B. Cohen notes that often when the victory between the two opponents was not yet clear, the breast remained hidden; in defeat, the breast was invariably laid bare. She thus sees the single bared breast as "an intentional symbol of violent defeat" (ibid., 74). We can thus view the bared breast of the female barbarians explored above in this light. It was not only a visible symbol of Otherness through its display, but especially within scenes of active conquest, it also became a symbol of the violence within defeat which resulted in its exposure.

Warner, in reference to Froma Zeitlin's analysis of Clytemnestra's baring of her breast to her son Orestes, maintains that the exposed breast presents the viewer with often contradicting meanings which further enhance the female association with the Other. This contradiction is not only posed by the displayed breast, but also by the woman herself. The image of the breast, and the female, are often associated with notions of abundance and fertility which contributes to the continuity of a community. However, the display of the breast also can be related to "the potential disruption of that group by its [and women's] free exercise" (Warner, 1996, 282-283). Ferris underlines this idea when he states that "this ambiguity can...be reflected in the image of the bared breast, at once comforting and yet at the same time potentially threatening in its depiction of otherness" (Ferris, 1994, 27). It is therefore important to remember the various connotations associated with the exposure of the female breast. This motif's symbolism relates to many of the definitions of Otherness we have already explored. The bared breast's connection to internal and external chaos and disorder, violent defeat, and groups, such as the Amazons, which were viewed as outside the bounds of society, makes it an appropriate and frequent aspect in the construction of Otherness. Also, its exposure simply underlines the most obvious feature of Otherness: being female.

However, bared breasts are not always an overt symbol of Otherness within Roman imagery. Their significance is dependent on context. Venus is often depicted nude and with her breasts exposed. This can be seen in the mosaic from Low Ham depicting the Aeneid story of Aeneas and Dido (37). Nude portrayals of Venus seem to signify her importance as the goddess of love, rather than as a marker of Otherness. Roman matrons might also be represented in the nude. For instance, the portrait of the empress Marcia Furnilla, from the Flavian period, associates her with Venus through her nakedness and her pose (38). This nakedness and her exposed breasts are not related to the concept of Otherness, but rather

associate Marcia Furnilla with the virtues of beauty and fertility, and with the goddess Venus herself. This type of role-playing, where both Roman men and women appropriated the attributes or virtues of various deities in order to enhance their identity and significance, was a common trend (Kleiner, 1992, 178; see Chapter 6). Therefore, Otherness could be denoted by the bared breast in imagery where the context demanded a further distinction to be made between male and female, Roman and barbarian. However, the bared breast could also be used within representations of the respectable Roman matron, as in the portrait of Marcia Furnilla, in order to associate the female with virtues and underline her significance within the divine or familial context.

WOMEN AND THE ALLEGORICAL OTHER: THE FEMALE FIGURE AS PROVINCE

An exploration of female representation through allegorical figures presents us with another example of the female as Other. Here, however, the images are illustrative of the collective Other - as the conquered province. This was a very common motif found on a variety of media from temples to coins to triumphal monuments. It is interesting to observe that within the representation of a female allegorical province degrees of Otherness could be depicted. Toynbee, in her study of Hadrianic imagery, notes that the principal coin depictions of the provinces represented, "in a descending scale, the various degrees of pacification and Romanisation achieved by the various countries and peoples of the Empire" (1934, 6). While I have not fully utilised Toynbee's classification system, it has been influential to my analysis. We can observe a hierarchy of Otherness in the examples below. It is also apparent that the different levels of depiction were influenced by the various circumstances and imperial motivations behind their representation such as a specific historical event or the desire to commemorate a military victory.

The highest degree of Otherness seems to be represented through images of violence. For example, one of the most interesting examples of a female figure as province is found in the Aphrodisias relief of Claudius and Britannia (39). This first century AD sculptural panel celebrates Claudius' conquest of Britain. Claudius, heroically nude, stands over the struggling Britannia, one arm raised to strike her as he forces her to the ground (Erim, 1982, 279-280). The figure of Britannia was symbolic of the conquered province itself, and additionally the victory of the Roman male over the female Other. One of Britannia's breasts is bared, and thus we must remember the various connotations of this symbol. Its allusion to vulnerability, violent defeat and internal or external disorder further

underlined the Otherness of the female figure (Ferris, 1994, 27). The emphases on her difference - her femaleness, her position below Claudius, her disarranged clothing and hair, her struggle versus his composure - results in the equation of the female figure with the Other, as a figure that is outside the male sphere and therefore is subordinate and must be controlled by it. A similar motif of violence is seen on a *sestertius* dating to c. AD 105 which commemorated the Dacian War (40). Again, the female province is forced powerfully to the ground by a male figure. However, rather than the emperor, she is struggling against the allegorical representation of the Danube. Thus, the male river of her homeland is symbolically depicted as turning to the aid of the Romans in the conquest of the female Dacia (Toynbee, 1934, 75). The significance of the male river turning against the female province is underlined when we note the implication behind the idea of river itself. Rivers were seen as important boundaries and their crossing could be accompanied with sacrifices and prayers. Placing human control on rivers was also viewed as meaningful (Braund, 1996, 15-19). Thus, the image of the Danube struggling against Dacia herself emphasised the inevitable Roman victory and enhanced the Roman identity. It is important to again highlight the notion that these images of women were doubly representative of the Other - both through their barbarian status and their femaleness.

Less extreme, but continuing the emphasis on conquest, are the examples of the female provinces as captives or as submissive to the ruling power. Some Flavian coins allude to the suppression of the Jewish revolt through the image of the conquered and bound Judaea seated beneath a palm tree and the accompanying legend of IUDAEA (Toynbee, 1934, 118; **41**). An interesting contrast in treatment can be found in a specific portrayal of Britannia on coins during a period of unrest in Roman Britain. Carausius usurped control of Roman Britain in AD 286. A coin of that date thus bears the image of Britannia welcoming Carausius - here she stands equally beside him and grasps him by the hand - as a symbol of concord and harmony and accompanied by the legend EXP. or EXPECTATE VENI (ibid., 64; **42**). The Carausian coin is quite different from the coins minted after the re-conquest by Constantius Chlorus. For example, the Arras medallion of AD 296 shows the emperor being greeted at the gates of London by the female personification of Londinium herself - here in a more submissive kneeling posture (ibid., 64-65; **43**). While most visual personifications are depicted as the sex that is signified through the grammatical gender of their name, Londinium is a masculine name depicted in the female form. The submissive province was perhaps considered to be more appropriately depicted through the female form despite her masculine name (see Ch. 5 on grammatical gender and personification).

It is sometimes difficult to tell if a female barbarian figure was supposed to represent the captive province or simply a female captive. A frieze fragment from La Comminges in Aquitaine illustrates this point. Espérandieu identified the disheveled woman sitting amongst the trophies and nearby bound male captive as the captive province (Espérandieu, 1908, 2.869; 44). However, the image is ambiguous because this type of representation has been used for both female captives and allegorical depictions of the province. Nevertheless, certain types of portrayal seem to definitely represent the female province. These unequivocal images depicted the interaction between emperor and province. For instance, fragmentary remains from a sculptural group found at Chiragan presented the surviving feet of a larger central figure, presumably the emperor, flanked by a kneeling woman to one side and a half-naked woman kneeling to the opposite side (45). These female figures alluded to the conquest of two provinces and their still subordinate status to the central Roman figure and world. Finally, a third century AD statue fragment from Langres presents the figure of the emperor standing to the side of a kneeling and imploring female captive. His left hand grasps her by the hair in a gesture of violence, and one of her breasts is bared. Again, this female figure presumably was representative of the subordinate captive province (46) .

A third category of Otherness can be observed. This type of representation was articulated especially well in Hadrianic imagery. In general, the images of female provinces on Hadrianic coins and sculpture were not treated in the perceived negative light of violence and submission found in the preceding examples. Toynbee notes that this reflects a new attitude towards the empire, best exemplified in Hadrian's grand tour which embraced the provinces as integral facets of the empire. His concept of the provinces as contributing and important members of a now-peaceful empire is represented in various Hadrianic images (Toynbee, 1934, 1-3). Many of the Hadrianic provinces were represented still in native dress and bearing native attributes; thus their difference is still emphasised. However, compared to the earlier scenes of violence and subjection, these images were depicted in a more contented and peaceful light, while their native resources and contributions were presented as fundamental to the success of the empire. For example, a *denarius* referring to Asia portrayed her holding a pruning hook and a rudder, with one foot on the prow of a ship. These attributes referred to the maritime and agricultural importance of Asia (ibid., 50;47). The female provinces were also depicted as supporting the empire and its boundaries. Hadrian's coin of Britannia, wearing her "national" costume and bearing a shield and weapons, perhaps referred to his defensive policy in Roman Britain. The province was here

portrayed as the 'provincia vigil' as she took part in her own defense (Grant, 1958, 54-55; 48).

However, Hadrian's imperial concept regarding the provinces was best seen in the relief panels from the Temple of the Divine Hadrian in Rome, dedicated by Antoninus Pius in AD 145. Toynbee notes that "Hadrian's policy of peace, friendship and consolidation had won security for the Imperial frontiers; and this may well have been the aspect of his work that Pius deemed most worthy of commemoration" (1934, 157). The support and continuation of this imperial policy by Pius is implicit in his utilisation of the Hadrianic-inspired imagery related to the provinces. Again, the provinces' differences are stressed, but here they are depicted as important features that underlined the provinces' significance to the empire. There are twenty reliefs known from this site. All of the provinces are depicted as ideal or allegorical female figures, often wearing native dress and carrying their national arms. Their hair is treated in a more 'realistic' manner. Each figure's hair is worn in its native style and frequently loose, rather than in the traditional Greco-Roman contrived coiffures (ibid., 156). For instance, Mauretania's hair is composed of thick 'corkscrew curls,' and her attribute of the *vexillum* is mirrored on the Hadrianic *adventus* coins for this province (ibid., 158; 49). Hispania was possibly represented in the ideal female figure wearing an intricately carved breast-plate (50). The breast-plate may have referred to the famed Spanish metal-work. However, this figure's identity is uncertain, as other elements of her representation, such as the *braccae*, imply an Eastern origin (ibid., 157-158).

Finally, the images that least bring to mind any negative concepts of Otherness are found in the fully Greco-Roman representations of the provinces. Again, these are commonly found on coins, and Toynbee notes that they appear in two types. Both female types wear Greco-Roman dress and often the traditional hairstyle. However, one is a reclining figure and the second is standing, either with or without military arms (Toynbee, 1934, 6). For example, the *adventui Aug. Britanniae* type of Hadrian's coinage depicted Britannia in the conventional Greco-Roman dress of the *chiton* and *himation*, greeting the arrival of the emperor (ibid., 57; 51). Another example can be found in the Hutcheson Hill distance slab referred to earlier (see 25). If the female figure crowning the soldier's standard is identified as Britannia, then she has become fully integrated into the Roman world and its victory over the natives of Britain. A final interesting example in this category is found on the Gemma Augustae (52). This cameo has been identified as commemorating various military victories of the early Principate, c. 15 AD. I will focus on the bottom register, with

its imagery of victory and vanquished barbarians. To the left, a trophy is raised by soldiers and freed slaves over the figures of a bound male barbarian and grieving female barbarian. To the right, an auxiliary soldier pulls a barbarian woman by the hair, while a male barbarian kneels in supplication before another warrior. However, this warrior is a woman, in armour and short chiton with her hair wrapped up in a scarf. Kleiner notes that this female warrior has been identified as a Thracian or Balkan auxiliary or the personification of Spain. If she is the former, it is quite extraordinary to find an auxiliary soldier depicted as a woman. However, if she represents Hispania, as a symbol of the forces from other provinces used by Tiberius in his German campaigns, then she is a fully integrated figure like Britannia above. Here, the province Hispania was participating in the subjugation of other provincial foes, thus becoming an important member of the Roman 'civilising' forces (Kleiner, 1992, 70-71). Therefore, as can be seen from the different examples, the various representations of Otherness could be influenced by the motivations behind the portrayal. These portrayals and their motivations ranged from the extreme scenes of violence and subjugation in reference to conquest through to the more traditional Greco-Roman allegorical figures symbolic of the integrated and productive empire.

SLAVES AND OTHERNESS

Before concluding, I would like to briefly address the depiction of Otherness observed in the imagery of slaves. Again, what is important in these representations is the emphasis on the difference perceived in slavery and the way that slaves might have been used in the self-definition of the central group or individual. Slaves were frequently used in the distinction between master and servant, free and enslaved. They were distinguished through their actions, their position in relation to the central figure and often through their stature and representation. For instance, a fragmentary funerary relief from Vernègues depicted two seated heroic-size women, facing each other and clasping hands, with two diminutive female slaves at their sides (53). The smaller size of the slaves compared to the heroic portrayal of the two central women highlighted their opposition as free and not-free. A similar treatment is found on a tombstone from Andernach in Germany (54). Here, a man in military clothing is presented with two smaller figures to his sides. However, a hierarchy of representation was presented as the slightly smaller male figure to his right was his son and the smallest male figure holding a gamebag to his left was his slave. Inscribed beneath the figure of the slave were the words *Fuscus servus* (CIL, 13.7684). From Aquitaine and of unknown provenance, we have a funerary relief which portrayed a male diner participating in the funerary feast (55). In this instance, the female slave was again of much smaller size

but also depicted as nude, thus further emphasising her radical difference from her deceased male master. Britain has also yielded such images. For instance, a tombstone from Chester presented a bust of the male deceased flanked by two smaller and half-naked slave attendants (56). Another example from South Shields, dated to the third century AD, depicted the deceased man reclining on a couch with a small slave standing before him with a wine-jar (57). Finally, there are two important aspects to remember in our examination of the imagery of slave figures as the Other. Firstly, the knowledge of their position as Other was expressed in the manner in which freedmen and women frequently depicted themselves on their own funerary reliefs after they were manumitted. Freed slaves were often commemorated as a family or through the appropriation of the symbols of more privileged members of Roman society. By utilising these symbols, freedmen and women presented themselves as different than their former selves, as having access to at least some of the advantages of 'normal' Roman society such as marriage (see Hope, 1994; Hope, 1997). Secondly, we must acknowledge that it was of course possible that, as with the auxiliary cavalry tombstones, the former Other of a freed slave might have consequently utilised the figure of a slave as Other in their own later self-definition.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

Within the outlined framework, I therefore suggest that the concept of the Other is a useful analytical tool in our examination of female, and also native, portrayals. The concept leads us to a questioning of the ideological component which influenced the motivations and usage of Roman art of the imperial period. What is prevalent in all of the images is the articulation of a difference between either male and female, Roman and barbarian, free and slave, and even a combination of these facets.

The primary distinction, however, was articulated through the images of female and male, barbarian and Roman, and these are the oppositions which I will focus on in my discussion. Whether female or barbarian male, these characters of the Other are represented as outside the Roman male 'norm,' and thus outside the Roman sphere. This trend reflects the interaction of gender, ethnicity and status in the construction of identity within ideological discourses. Women and natives were often utilised comparably in the visual language to represent the concept of the Other, and the ideology behind their portrayal was similar. We have already seen the prevalent articulation of difference through the male-female distinctions. As was explored previously, the Romans also negatively categorised

peoples outside of the Roman sphere in much the same way i.e. through a valued contrast between Roman and non-Roman. Balsdon notes that Pliny the Elder wrote in his Natural History that the Greeks were the originators of every degenerate practice (Balsdon, 1979, 35). Other peoples throughout the empire suffered the same negative characterisations, often in an effort to express a perceived difference which was implicitly valued. For instance, the British were viewed as barely civilised by the Romans and Cicero termed the Jews and Syrians as 'born slaves' (ibid., 64-67).

Many of the representations detailed here are characterized by their anonymity - very rarely is a specific native or woman represented. An obvious exception is found on Trajan's Column where the Dacian leader Decebalus nobly commits suicide rather than be captured alive by the Romans (**58**). As he collapses to the ground before the Roman soldiers, his Otherness and vulnerability are important facets of his representation (Kampen, 1995, 63). Additionally, Toynbee has postulated the presence of Vercingetorix on coins of Julius Caesar that commemorated his Gallic victories. A *denarius* of L. Hostilius Saserna, c. 48 BC, depicted the probable portrait head of Vercingetorix against a Gallic shield (**59**). Thus, one of the most famous members of the Gallic opposition was used in the representation of Gaul's domination by Rome (Toynbee, 1934, 81). However, in general the female and native images seen are generalised, non-specific characters symbolising the non-Male or the non-Roman, as symbols of the defeated community or province. The many depictions of Roman soldiers are also anonymous in the sense that they are not representative of individual known members of the imperial army. However, their identity is more solid and fundamental than that of the women and barbarians within the various representations. The Romans' identity is constructed through two important facets that make them different from the figures of the Other. For one thing, their status as soldiers in the emperor's army enhances their position within the visual representations. Most importantly, however, the identity of the Romans is constructed through the presence of the female or barbarian Other. The contrast between the two groups is important - the Other is everything that the Roman is not and therefore the Romans' position is emphasised and enhanced.

In addition, it is interesting to note the seemingly almost deliberate non-use of Cleopatra as a symbol. Some native leaders were represented in Roman imagery as we saw in the previous section. However, while there was great potential within the representation of Cleopatra as a marker for the legitimacy of Augustus' victory - as both a defeated enemy and through the dischargement of woman from her transgression into the male sphere - she

does not seem to appear on any imperial imagery. Wyke theorises that she was not utilised in the imagery due to her negative connotations for Rome. Her absence is partly due to the difficulties of translating this militant and powerful woman within the Roman traditional viewpoint to the role of a vanquished foe. A female opponent was awkward and even demeaning to the Romans, just as a vanquished opponent was more easily dealt with as an anonymous figure rather than within a specific characterisation (Wyke, 1992, 126). Despite her obvious Otherness as a woman and a foreigner, she was not viewed as an appropriate or honourable symbol of Roman triumph. The extreme Otherness of Cleopatra seems to have made her too powerful a figure to portray in such a way.

Central to all of the representations of Otherness is their utilisation in the self-definition, both visually and ideologically, of the dominant group or individual. Though there might be degrees of Otherness and a variety of subtle levels of Otherness within one figure, their primary importance was the manner in which their presence enhanced the identity of the more central figure(s). They were all that the Roman or the male or the free citizen was not. However, it must be emphasised that the female, above all the various categories, expressed Otherness most strongly. This is due to one important facet of her representation and position. While the barbarian male could become a Roman citizen and a slave could become free, a woman could never become a man. Her Otherness was a permanent state. No matter how important her role to the continuance of the family and society, no matter how powerful or wealthy she became, there was no escaping her gender and its association with Otherness. Because she was female, she was always the Other.

The concept of the Other seems to be a pervading theme within the textual evidence of the Roman imperial period. It also seems to have been an influential force in the construction and use of images within the visual language on imperial monuments and representations. The association between women or natives and the Other, while not necessarily always a conscious devaluation, placed these two groups outside the Roman male citizen norm of the Roman world with implications of inferiority, disorder and consequently the need for control and civilising. These images both reflected and aided in the creation of the ideological climate, by expressing the perceptions and preoccupations held by the dominant group (Lloyd, 1993, 108). This was an ideological climate where that dominant group of elite citizen men classified various types of peoples into positions that clearly differentiated those people from themselves. However, it is important to understand that not all images of women and natives were used as an expression of the Other. Their

meaning is, of course, dependent on context and motivation. However, we can view the types of images detailed here and their usage as examples of both sexual and political imperialism - where the expression of power by the dominant group within Roman society resulted in the creation of an image of the Other, represented by the groups classified as outside the perceived norm. This expression of power reflects an attempt by the dominant group to define and underline social identities and roles through visual imagery. This framework of the Other, therefore, can furnish us with a starting point in our study of both female and male imagery which aids us in our questioning of art and gender constructs within their social, political and cultural context.

CHAPTER 4

FEMALE IMAGERY AND THE NATURE:CULTURE DICHOTOMY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Otherness, and its relation to the female, has many facets. One aspect - the proposed binary opposition between nature-woman and culture-man - has been extensively explored in anthropological and social theory. This chapter will establish a framework for the examination of the nature-culture dichotomy as a further aspect of woman's equation with the Other. I will first survey the relevant background theory related to the nature-culture dichotomy, and also examine the recent critiques of the use of dualisms in contemporary scholarship. The next section will investigate recent research on the concept of nature-culture within ancient Greek society, before moving on to an exploration of its relevance for the Roman imperial period. Finally, I will apply the theoretical background on nature-culture to an analysis of various female representations in Roman art.

4.2 ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY ON NATURE:CULTURE

The binary opposition of nature-culture has been utilised within the analysis of various Western and non-Western societies of both the present and the past. This opposition has been viewed as a classificatory device found in the frequent differentiation between male and female. However, it cannot simply be accepted as a given of human society; we must first explore the reasons why the nature-culture dichotomy has been considered a useful category of analysis and also its manifestations in the construction of gender.

One of the more influential essays on the relation between woman-nature and man-culture is found in the 1974 article by Sherry Ortner titled "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?". Ortner questions the possible universal subordination of women throughout

society and history. She asks how this subordination, varying in intensity and expression, would be articulated and what could account for its manifestation in a society. She connects the subordination of women within a society to their perceived inferior valuation in relation to men. The variety of data which can point to an interpretation of women's perceived inferiority is then evaluated:

> "(1) elements of cultural ideology and informants' statements that *explicitly* devalue women, according them, their roles, their tasks, their products, and their social milieux less prestige than are accorded men and the male correlates; (2) symbolic devices, such as the attribution of defilement, which may be interpreted as *implicitly* making a statement of inferior valuation; and (3) social-structural arrangements that exclude women from participation in or contact with some realm in which the highest powers of the society are felt to reside."
>
> (Ortner, 1974, 69)

These societal elements which lead to the perception of women as inferior and their consequent subordination are explained by her postulation that in cultural systems women are often associated with or utilised as a symbol for something which society devalues. Ortner proposes that nature is an element which is universally differentiated from men and society, consequently devalued and frequently linked to women (ibid., 71-72).

Ortner notes that woman is associated with nature or used as a symbol for it, rather than explicitly being seen *as* nature. Rather, woman is often perceived as closer to nature than man. Three elements of female life have facilitated woman's association with nature. Firstly, the female physiology and bodily functions can be easily equated with nature. Many of the aspects of her biology - such as ovulation or lactation - are more concerned with the creation and survival of a child, rather than the woman herself. Women are thus seen as directly creating life through reproduction, while men create through artificial means such as cultural, political and social activities. "Because of woman's greater bodily involvement with the natural functions surrounding reproduction, she is seen as more a part of nature than man is. Yet in part because of her consciousness and participation in human social dialogue, she is recognized as a participant in culture. Thus she appears as something intermediate between culture and nature, lower on the scale of transcendence than man" (Ortner, 1974, 74-76). Woman's fertility is also frequently correlated with nature's fertility and abundance, further associating her with the concept of nature. The second facet of her connection with

nature is stressed through the social roles she bears which often seem closer to nature. The frequent primacy of the female in childcare and her consequent common association with children further links women to nature. This is due not only to the usual separation between the domestic sphere and male action in the public realm, but also through the recurrent association of children with unsocialised nature. Thus, women are more easily viewed as closer to nature simply through their relationship to the domestic realm and the children within it. Also, while women are often seen as integral to the socialisation of children as they grow up, it is not uncommon for boys, at a certain age, to be transferred to the care of adult males in order to complete their transition into culture and its workings (ibid., 77-80). Thirdly, woman's mental structure and her relationships with others - often characterised as being "immanent and embedded in things as given" or unmediated - are perceived as more "like nature" (ibid., 81-82). The common identification of woman with irrationality, uncontrolled emotions and psychic disorder might also contribute to her relation to nature. This association between female psychology and irrationality is one facet of Otherness which was addressed in Chapter 3.

What is thought-provoking about the various elements that place women in a closer relationship with nature is the cyclicity of their effects and interpretations. They become self-perpetuating. As Ardener claims, society's perception of women and their biological, social and psychic qualities will influence the roles given to and interpretations of women. This perception will also affect the utilisation of the female as a symbol, and how women are related to others within the society. She points out "that perceptions of the *nature* of women affect the shape of the *categories* assigned to them, which in turn reflect back upon and reinforce or remould perceptions of the *nature* of women, in a continuing process" (Ardener, 1978b, 9). Therefore, in many societies it can be difficult for the female to break free from the framework of her identification with nature. In general terms, men are frequently at the pinnacle of the hierarchy, influencing social perceptions of women and men and how these perceptions are expressed. Thus, in the practice of the valuation of sexual difference, women have more often been equated with non-humanity or nature (Warner, 1996, 281). Ardener notes that "because their [men's] model for *mankind* is based on that for *man*, their opposites, *women* and *non-mankind* (the wild), tend to be ambiguously placed" (1975, 14). Griffin (1982, 276) goes on to relate this difference between nature-woman and culture-man to the distinction between the Other (women, minority groups, etc.) and the Self (white, anglicised men).

Rosaldo reiterates Ortner's observation of the link between women and nature when she states that "in cultural systems we find a recurrent opposition: between man, who in the last analysis stands for culture, and woman, who (defined through symbols that stress her biological and sexual functions) stands for nature, and often disorder" (1974, 31). She also views the female association with nature as related to their biological and social identities. This relation results in the definition of women through their biological characteristics, sexual functions or ties to men i.e. as mother, daughter, wife, whore, or nun/celibate (ibid., 30-31). At the same time, women are often connected to the more 'natural' or 'grubby' aspects of community life such as birth, death, cooking, feeding or mourning. Because women are frequently confined to the types of roles which are consequently associated with nature, they are not viewed as integral facets within the social order. However, men are commonly defined by their participation in 'socially elaborated institutions' or elements of 'culture.' (ibid., 30-31). The traditional distinction in many societies between the domestic and the public spheres only reinforces the relation of woman-nature and man-culture. Women are seemingly confined to the domestic realm through their physical and emotional investment in reproduction and child-rearing, and consequently society often narrowly perceives her as only capable of those roles. Men, as active participants in the public realm, reproduce and contribute to society through their culturising activities within politics, the military or social life (ibid., 23-24).

However, despite the frequent association between women and nature and its consequent valuation, we cannot always assume that the connection was viewed as negative. Ortner points out that woman's potential intermediacy between nature and culture or her position closer to nature might place her in a mediating role between the two. Woman could be responsible for the transformation of raw nature to culture such as in her role in the socialisation of children. However, this intermediacy can also contribute to what Ortner terms "greater social ambiguity"; she is on the periphery or margins and thus easily polarised between the states of ideal and transgression (1974, 84-85). She goes on to state that:

> "if it [woman's place in relation to nature and culture] is viewed simply as a *middle* position on a scale from culture down to nature, then it is still seen as lower than culture and thus accounts for the pan-cultural assumption that woman is lower than man in the order of things. If it is read as a *mediating* element in the culture-nature relationship, then it may account in part for the cultural tendency not merely to devalue woman but to circumscribe and restrict her functions, since culture must maintain control over its (pragmatic and symbolic) mechanisms for the conversion of nature into culture. And if it is read as an *ambiguous* status between culture and nature, it may

> help account for the fact that, in specific cultural ideologies and symbolizations, woman can occasionally be aligned with culture, and in any event is often assigned polarized and contradictory meanings within a single symbolic system."
>
> (ibid., 86-87)

This idea is an important point to remember in the analysis of female representation during the Roman period. There is inevitably a variety of meanings in literary and visual images of women and their association with nature. Thus, we cannot simply view them as negative, but rather we must attempt to examine them in their social context and address the plurality of meanings and interpretations which can be observed, along with their multiple uses within the society.

CRITIQUES OF BINARY OPPOSITIONS

With this background, it is necessary to address the various contemporary critiques that have been developed concerning dichotomies. Feminist scholars have identified several dichotomies which were frequently used in past research on women such as work-family, public-private and nature-culture. In general, their critiques have focused on the ways in which these perceived dichotomies have been used by scholars in the study of both modern and past societies. All too often, these binary oppositions have been accepted by the researcher as natural and universal, and consequently valued within a hierarchical system to the detriment of women. This has resulted in women being regarded as unworthy of further "scholarly, political or theoretical interest and inquiry" (Bock, 1991, 2). Bock also notes that the use of these types of dualisms may lead to a narrow viewpoint of women's history as scholars utilise them to confirm women's perceived inferiority and their confinement to traditional stereotypes. This could prevent scholars from looking beyond female biology and their preconception of their roles and activities, and thus overlook the variety of dimensions in women's lives throughout time and space (ibid., 3). MacCormack attests that within society "the link between nature and women is not a 'given'. Gender and its attributes are not pure biology. The meanings attributed to male and female are as arbitrary as are the meanings attributed to nature and culture" (1990, 18).

Feminist scholars note that a further difficulty with the distinctions made between work-family, public-private and culture-nature is that they are all gender-linked dichotomies. In other words, these three dualisms are seen as a fixed division between male and female

with very little possibility of each sex sharing the characteristics attributed to the divisions (Bock, 1991, 16). "Whenever they are used for describing gender relations, they do not refer so much to separate, autonomous, independent, equivalent dual spheres, as to relations of hierarchy: hierarchies of spheres, meanings, values, of inferiority and superiority, of subordination and power..." (ibid., 6).

Finally, recent scholarship has emphasised that binary oppositions are not universals which can be applied uncritically to any culture of the past or present. Rather, they have been based in Western thought, history and experience. MacCormack further points out that while binary contrasts can exist, their manifestation will vary depending on their cultural and social context (1990, 5; Offen et al., 1991, xxxiii). Binary oppositions can be observed within a variety of situations, but we must go one step further by attempting to place their presence within the social and cultural context of the society studied. At the same time, they must constantly be questioned so that their application is utilised in a manner specific to their particular situation. As the editors of Writing Women's History state, "some historians are beginning to confront and to deconstruct the earlier representations of their past, recognising the basis of these dualities to lie in a masculinist epistemology. They argue that dichotomies, opposites, contradictions, the whole inheritance of a binary vision, may be unnecessarily confining: the temptations of dualism should be constantly analysed and where appropriate discarded" (Offen et al., 1991b, xxxv). Thus, sections 4.3 and 4.4 will address the relevance of the nature-culture dichotomy in the Greco-Roman period, while 4.5 will focus upon its application to Roman art of the imperial period.

4.3 THE NATURE-CULTURE DICHOTOMY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

THE CLASSICAL CONCEPTION OF NATURE-CULTURE

Glacken claims that the dichotomy between man and nature is found throughout Western thought. His book Traces on the Rhodian Shore follows the conception of nature and culture from ancient Greece and Rome through to the eighteenth century (Glacken, 1967). He notes that a variety of attitudes have developed which articulate the relationship between humankind and nature. These have included the idea that the earth was created by a divine presience for human needs; that man's divine mission from God has been to bring

order to the natural forces; and also that the environment influences the physical and mental make-up and roles of humans (ibid., viii).

The classical period itself was characterised by several belief-systems concerning nature and humans. In general, the classical perception of nature was developed within an anthropocentric model, where nature was created for man and his purposes and its supposed harmony and abundance was man's to utilise and explore. There was an early emphasis on the desirability of a balanced and ordered natural world. Central to these ideas was the suitability of both animals and humans to survive in this world. Drawing on the works of Plato and Aristotle, Glacken states that though man was created, like animals, within the natural system, he was also set apart from nature with the social skills and gifts which allowed him to dominate and utilise nature. The Stoic perspective echoed the idea that man was hierarchically superior to nature (Glacken, 1967, 45-52). However, a contrasting viewpoint can be derived from Epicurean philosophy. Epicurean thinkers emphasised the creation of the world as a development of natural processes. Nature was seen as her own creator, separate from and unheeding of humankind's needs. The earth and the natural forces often seemed both hostile and violent towards man, and thus humankind must continually struggle with it to survive and utilise her potential abundance (ibid., 65-69). Coupled with this notion was the ancient conception that many areas of nature, such as the uninhabited wilderness or the unexplored seas, were remnants of the pre-Creation chaos and disorder. Man's domination of these areas could thus be seen as a re-creation of them, as he became an 'orderer of nature' (ibid., 117).

Many of these attitudes towards nature, developed in Greek philosophy, were also expressed during the Hellenistic and Roman period. During the Hellenistic period, the modern conception of nature was in its infancy as the new urban growth influenced a more clearly articulated distinction between city and country, culture and nature (Glacken, 1967, 23-25). The Roman era saw the continuance of this dichotomy. Many writers and poets, such as Columella and Horace, emphasised rural life with the perceived positive qualities of humility, virtue, simplicity and the quiet, contemplative life. However, urbanism was still a prevalent trend, and many viewed the cities as a "superior creation of man" over the forces of nature and the wilderness (ibid., 31-33). At the same time, both the Stoic and Epicurean perspectives on nature and man's place in it were reiterated in Cicero's De natura deorum (ibid., 51-74).

Cosgrove further explores the classical distinction between nature and culture through the perceived interaction between myth and landscape (1993). "Myths may both shape and be shaped by landscapes, not only those localised and specific landscapes visible on the ground, but equally by archetypal landscapes imaginatively constituted from human experiences in the material world and represented in spoken and written words, poetry, painting, theatre..." (ibid., 281-282). He notes a distinction between two ways of being - the Apollonian and the Dionysian, which are distinguished in terms of nature and psychic structure. The Apollonian state is characterised by thought or *logos*, rationality and objectivity, and a harmonious and ordered environment and mindset. It is also related to the male-gendered term *animus*. The Dionysian way of being is related to the image of vegetation and the organic, fertile growth and the cycle of the seasons. A Dionysian state is also associated with the wild and the sublime, unpredictability, and the non-rational mystical union of humans and nature. The female-gendered term *anima* is connected to this state of mind and being (ibid., 287-288).

This distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian states is then linked with the dichotomy expressed between nature and culture. A hierarchy seems to be established with the progression from nature to culture. "Both in time and space the progress of social life and its corresponding landscapes are seen to move from the organic, wild and unformed towards the inorganic, controlled and ordered as ever-greater human intervention reweaves the Gaian veil" (Cosgrove, 1993, 290-291). This development can be seen in figure 4.1 below:

CULTURE		SPACE	SOCIETY	GENDER	BODY	CULTURE
↑	**City**	Forum	Ruler	Male	Head	↑
↑	**Garden**	Private house/ Villa garden	Citizen	Female	Heart	↑
↑	**Wilder-ness**	Countryside	Peasant/ Artisan	Animal	Loins	↑
NATURE						NATURE

Figure 4.1 Nature/Culture homologies in life...in the classical tradition (adapted from Cosgrove, 1993, 295)

Within this model, the female is lower than the male on the scale between culture and nature. We should note that the female seems to occupy the middle ground, almost as a mediating presence (the garden) between the city of culture and the wilderness of nature (see section 4.1). This notion can also be seen in Figure 4.2.

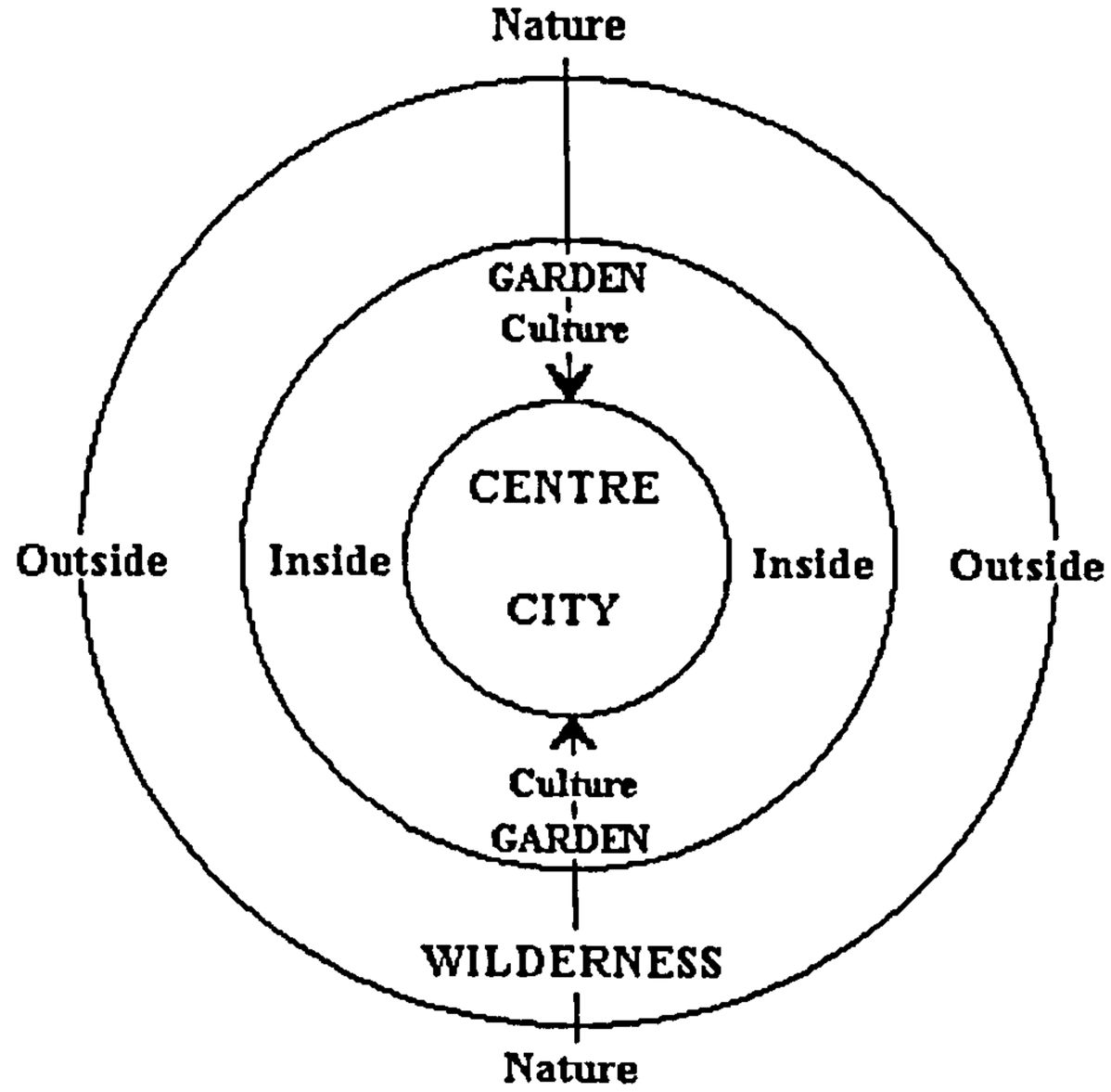

Figure 4.2 Mythical geography of nature/culture and landscape in the classical tradition (Cosgrove, 1993, 294)

Cosgrove points out that "the realm of Culture belongs to the city, above all to its central space, conventionally occupied by the forum, the theatre of power, rhetoric and political discourse" (1993, 293). In Greco-Roman society, this area is traditionally the realm of the male citizen, and an exclusionary space. Women were not permitted to participate in public life within the official political and social structure of the Greek or Roman worlds, and thus were also excluded from the symbol of 'culture'.

It is also important to note Cosgrove's association between woman and the wilderness and their relation to the Apollonian and Dionysian states discussed above. "Wilderness itself may be gendered female, the place of *anima* which requires the male Apollonian *animus* to bring forth the marriage of a middle landscape. Each landscape type takes much of its meaning from its contextual relations to others in the hierarchy/cycle" (Cosgrove, 1993, 297). This statement seems to imply that the female-nature-wilderness is

transformed into the safer middle landscape of the garden through the intervention of the male-culture-city. It also highlights the significance of the comparison of the elements to each other, and how the character of each shapes and defines the identity of the other. In other words, as with the Other and the Self, culture is enhanced and demarcated by the boundaries of nature.

NATURE AND WOMAN IN GREEK CULTURE

Reeder observes that within Greek myth, ritual, literature and art women are often portrayed as closer to nature. Unmarried maidens were perceived as an untamed force with marriage as their route to domestication and socialisation within Greek society. For instance, before marriage, girls were often referred to as 'fillies' because they were viewed as wild and free. Marriage was perceived as a taming ritual. Indeed, the Greek verb for 'to marry' comprises, within its root *damar*, to domesticate or tame. A woman's marriage marked her transition from nature to culture, from the untamed world to the civilised one (Reeder, 1995a, 27-28).

Maidens were also often depicted as prey to be pursued by the male, captured and finally mastered by him (Reeder, 1995b, 300). "Courtship was viewed as a literal pursuit, even a combat, and the process, culminating in sexual intercourse, transformed a wild animal-woman into a domesticated wife" (ibid., 340). The myth of Thetis and Peleus clearly expressed this idea. Zeus ordered Thetis, a goddess, to marry the mortal Peleus. Thetis resists the match by transforming herself into various animals - a lion, a dolphin and a snake - while wrestling with Peleus (60). However, his persistence eventually pays off, she succumbs to him, and their union produces the hero Achilles (ibid., 340).

On one level, women's equation with animals and as prey was seen as an affirmation: her feral aspect was an important aspect of her appeal, but it was also accorded a negative value (Reeder, 1995b, 300). The negativity of the image was related to the possibility of female nature as a threat to male culture. Though marriage might externally mark a passage from nature to culture, women were traditionally perceived as irrational, as external to male society and thus capable of bringing disorder to it. Women were often seen as "incapable of remaining socialized to the male-made and male-centered institutions of settled community life" (ibid., 300). They were thus seen as a potential threat to the cultural order created by the Greek male. Reeder questions this hostility towards women's perceived animal nature:

> "Why the metaphor of women as animals was colored by an underlying apprehension and hostility is an age-old question. It is often argued that the polarization of the genders is a proven social strategy, because young boys can be more effectively persuaded to embrace behavior prescribed for manhood if qualities considered its antithesis are ascribed to women. It has also been pointed out that subversion has always been feared from those who have no vested interest in maintaining the status quo, and certainly women living in Greek culture had only a minimal direct stake in the social system."
>
> (1995b, 300)

Therefore, male identity was again defined through a valued and hierarchical comparison to the Greek perception of women.

At the same time, within the realms of Greek myth, many female characters prove the Greek fear that women are not totally free of their animal nature, and can consequently become a force of chaos and disorder. Reeder points out the various forms that these threatening women could take:

> "Some of these females are of semi-bestial form and destroy men by means of their words or their gaze (Siren, Gorgons). Others have access to superhuman powers of sorcery (Circe) or are goddesses who ultimately emasculate their mortal male lovers (Eos). Others...reject any contact with men at all (Amazons) or resort to the violent murder of a man when rejected or offended (the Thracian Women). Perhaps the most frightening women appear to embrace conventional mores but suddenly, and ostensibly without reason, abandon home and domestic life to kill men and even their own children (Maenads)."
>
> (1995b, 373)

A fascination with women and her closeness to nature is evident from the many representations of these women which were repeatedly found in the literary sources and in visual imagery.

Many of the monstrous creatures who threaten Greek heroes are female, and they are often characterised by facets of disorder, violence and nature. With this representation through the female form, Warner notes the significance of the breast in relation to women's connection to nature (see discussion in Ch. 3). The exposure of the breast, often found in images of the Maenads and the Amazons, the Sphinx and the Sirens, can also represent a link between the female and nature. The breast alludes to nature and its abundance, while also emphasising the wildness of the state of nakedness and nature itself (Warner, 1996,

281). Therefore, the link between woman and nature was expressed in Greek culture through myth and representation, through social values and hierarchy.

Du Bois further explores the connection between the female and nature in her analysis of the various Greek metaphors for sexual reproduction. She observes that early Greek culture emphasised the connection between the female body and reproduction with the earth and its abundance. This early culture seemed to conceive of the earth as a self-sufficient and reproductive entity, as the female Gaia (du Bois, 1988, 28; 57). For example, within myth and religious ritual, this analogy between the female body and the earth was expressed in the story of Demeter and her daughter Kore. This myth explained the cycle of the seasons, and how the power of the female earth was withheld during the sterile winter months as a result of Kore's abduction (ibid., 52).

This early conception of the autonomous and self-sufficient female earth was later transformed with the utilisation of agricultural metaphors to express the workings of sexual reproduction. The metaphor was expressed through the words for field and furrow to describe the female sexual organs. Man became the active element within this analogy, as he ploughed the female field and sowed the seeds during sexual reproduction. His action was necessary to the future production of the crop/children (du Bois, 1988, 28). The symbolism of the plough and the field/furrow was one of the most common allegories for sexual reproduction. Du Bois (ibid., 72) notes the example of Sophocles' Antigone which clearly expresses this concept in the dialogue between Ismene and Creon concerning Antigone's proposed death:

> ISMENE: You could not take her - kill your own son's bride?
> CREON: Oh, there are other fields for him to plough.
>
> (Sophocles, Antigone, 568-569)

Du Bois asserts that this transformation from the fertile female earth to the male agricultural analogies is significant. She connects the shift with the social changes taking place during the fifth century BC such as the greater emphasis on female purity and the consequent increase in tangible constraints on women's lives, along with the increasing importance of marriage alliances between the elite families in classical Greece. Thus, the autonomous, creative, full and productive female earth was changed to one that needed male cultivation, ploughing and input in order to reproduce. She became a passive entity. "In a

transformed social world, the earth/body metaphor was reinscribed and transformed as well" (du Bois, 1988, 67-68). Within the myth cycles, a change was also apparent as we find the appropriation of reproduction by men through the stories of male primacy in reproduction such as the birth of Athena from Zeus' head (see Hesiod, Theogony) and autochthony myths i.e. the sowing of stones that became men (C. E. Schultze, pers. comm.). Du Bois notes that these stories express a "reverence and awe for earth and woman and evidence of desire to bypass the female, to appropriate her powers and to represent the male as self-sufficient" (ibid., 57-58).

Finally, it is important to reiterate the significance of this agricultural metaphor for human sexual reproduction. As du Bois states, "the metaphor is not simply one among many; it has a privileged status...in the representations of women in Greek culture. The transformation of the fertile earth, the naming of the woman as a furrow, is an important reinscription of the inherited paradigm, a reduction of her potential, a mastering of her fertility. She is no longer the parthenogenetic source of all nurturance, but property, marked and bounded, ordered by cultivation" (1988, 72). Thus, woman is again connected to nature. However, her strength in this identity is quickly curtailed through the male analogy of cultivation, as she is ordered and controlled by male culture.

4.4 WOMEN AND NATURE IN ROMAN LITERATURE AND MYTH

An association between women and nature can also be perceived in the literature, mythology and art of the Roman period. I will first address the equations between women and nature within myth and literature. The common link between women and fertility or abundance seems to have formed a basis for the association of women with agricultural metaphors. At the same time, the Roman perception of women as closer to nature influenced the treatment of women in the literary sources and mythological tales. After examining the manifestation of the correlation between women and nature within the literary sources, section 4.5 will analyse the concept of woman-nature in Roman art. This analysis will be devoted to an in-depth examination of various visual images that can be linked with notions of nature, how they are presented in Roman visual imagery, and their significance within the social and cultural context of the period.

Similarities can be observed between Roman metaphorical treatment of the male and female sexual organs and for sexual intercourse and the Greek analogies. Various terms were used to describe the male sexual organ. While a fundamental obscenity for the penis was *mentula*, several metaphors were also utilised by Roman authors and in Roman graffiti and humour. For instance, the penis was referred to as a variety of sharp or pointed instruments such as **caraculum* or stake; as a weapon - the most common reference for the male sexual organ - such as *sicula* or *arma*; as a miscellany of household objects such as the *rutabulum* or poker/rake; and botanical metaphors such as *caulis* or cabbage stalk (Adams, 1982, 9-26).

However, parallel to the Greek examples, Roman metaphors for the male sexual organ also consisted of references to agricultural or rustic implements such as the term *vomer* or ploughshare and *falx* or sickle. Adams notes that these types of analogies between the penis and agricultural tools reflects the long rural history of the Roman communities (Adams, 1982, 24-25). It is important to observe that the female genitalia were again correlated with fields or furrow in agricultural metaphors. Adams states that "the frequency (in Latin and other languages) of the metaphor of the field, garden, meadow, etc. applied to the female pudenda reflects in part the external appearance of the organ, and in part the association felt between the fertility of the field and that of females. The metaphor complements the verbal metaphors of sowing and ploughing used of the male role in sexual intercourse" (ibid., 82-83). This analogy between male ploughing and sowing of the female field is very common (ibid., 154-155), and can be related to du Bois' analysis summarised in section 4.3. Again, male cultivation was necessary, and the female field lies fallow without male input.

Women were also related to various animals in literary satire. For example, Horace draws a connection between choosing a female partner and buying a horse. He lists the parts of a horse and a scantily-clad woman which must be checked before either is chosen. Richlin notes that "the analogy between women and horses...smacks of invective; the reduction of women to physical parts or animals reinforces the narrator's control over them...Lack of power turns the powerless into chattel, objects of possession or violence" (1983, 176-77). It is therefore possible that by equating woman with an animal in such a way, the author asserts his cultural control over the female and nature.

Richlin further observes that some Roman authors focused on female sexuality, and utilised animal references in their description of female physical characteristics. Literary sources might describe female lust as an animal instinct which further associates women with notions of nature and its forces (Richlin, 1983, 206). Many of the references are to the more 'exotic' animals which are characterised by strangeness or "unusual shapes and sizes" such as elephants or octopi. Frequently, a connection was drawn between the woman's sexual organs and animal orifices such as the mouth or anus. These analogies were often utilised when the male protagonist was sexually rejecting the woman through satire. This utilisation of such strong terminology seems to imply a disgust and fear of female genitalia and sexuality (Richlin, 1984, 70-71). These types of metaphors are also utilised when the woman has solicited the man. This assertion of herself and her desires is viewed as a transgression of the traditional boundaries of virtuous female behaviour, and the man reasserts his superiority and control by claiming that it is his choice whether he accepts or rejects her proposal (ibid., 75). However, old women elicit the strongest responses of rejection, fear or disgust from the male protagonist, and the animal terminology is frequently used in satirical passages on this subject. Richlin states that it is possible that the extraordinary actions of the woman or the solicitation of sex by an old woman, sometimes resulting in the woman's equation with some kind of bizarre animal, could reflect the Roman perception that "inappropriate behaviour removes women from humanity" (ibid., 76-77). Her actions and her sex can be seen as external to the 'normal' workings of culture, and therefore her relation to animals, as creatures of nature, places her in the inferior position and in need of control by the man.

De Luce notes that myths also emphasise a distinction between male-culture and female-nature. Within the Greco-Roman world, the ancient literary sources and male authors generally agree that the realm of public speaking is restricted to the citizen male. Connected to this trend, de Luce examines Ovid's Metamorphoses, specifically the rape stories about Io, Callisto, Philomena and Procne, and points out that within these stories, a loss of speech and the ability to communicate was associated with the loss of humanity by these women. For example, Io can no longer communicate after Jupiter transforms her into a cow. Thus, de Luce perceives an equation between the proscription of women from public speaking and their loss of speech in myth (de Luce, 1993, 310). "Language use is specific to the human species; men use language and are therefore human. Much of the non-human world is silent (that is, does not use language); woman are [supposed to be] silent; therefore women are not human. Moreover, men as users of language are associated with culture and

civilisation, while silent women are associated with the absence of culture, with nature" (ibid., 310). This equation of women with nature is thus further underlined when the mythological female characters lose their humanity and their speech at the same time.

While the references to nature-culture in Roman scholarship are limited, the more developed Greek theoretical framework in section 4.3 gives us a background for exploration of the Roman material. It seems from my initial investigation that the expression of the nature-culture dichotomy did exist within the Roman period, though perhaps at a lesser intensity than during the Greek. Roman thought and literature did seem to place nature and culture within a hierarchical structure, and often emphasised humankind's superiority and need for mastery over the natural forces. Based on the Latin terminology, it also seems that there was a continuation of the Greek agricultural conceptions for the female and male genitalia and the act of sexual intercourse. This, too, could express a desire to place some form of control over female fertility and sexuality through the connection of woman to the earth in need of male cultivation. While this is not an explicit equation between woman and nature, I believe that the frequent association between woman and earth, and the consequent assertion of man's active role in their bounty, is significant. At the same time, the common utilisation of animal metaphors to describe women and their sexual organs also seems to imply a Roman perception of woman's closeness to nature. Both "unmarried [and married women]...are consistently referred to as fields to be cultivated, ploughed, sown, animals to be broken in, mounted, domesticated. Women, especially in their premarital state, are part of nature, part of the wild, which men must 'cultivate'" (Versnel, 1996, 199). Therefore, this background is meant to be an introduction to the different ways that women could be viewed and identified as closer to nature within the Roman period.

4.5 NATURE AND CULTURE IN ROMAN VISUAL IMAGERY

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the expression of the dichotomy between woman-nature and man-culture in the Roman visual imagery. The association of woman and nature can be observed in a variety of different forms. The female form can be used to represent aspects of nature such as the Seasons, concepts related to nature such as fertility, or monstrous creatures whose form or character were connected to the disorder and chaos often attributed to the natural world. At the same time, the juxtaposition of female figures representing nature with male figures often implied a male correlation with culture and

order. Finally, visual imagery that focused upon male interaction with nature also emphasised man's control and superiority over the natural world. I will concentrate on several different Roman representations which were derived from Greek myth such as Medusa or the Gorgon, the Seasons, Orpheus and the beasts, Bellerophon and the chimaera; and from everyday life such as portrayals of hunting. While there are other images within Roman art which demonstrate an association between woman-nature and man-culture, I have chosen the ones above due to their prevalence in Roman visual representation and the useful sources available on their representation and significance.

I will first address the Greco-Roman usage of female monster figures in myth and art. Stafford notes that the extremes of evil are often personified by the female form in Greek thought (1998a, 31). Padel, in her analysis of Greek tragedy and thought, observes that many of the daemonic dangers to man were portrayed as female because "the tragic thought-world was biased to expect forces that threatened human life to be mainly female" (1992, 161). She also remarks upon the frequency of these female monsters to be represented as plural. For instance, there were three Gorgons, three Sirens, three Furies and three Harpies (ibid., 161). This common representation of monsters in Greco-Roman myth and literature as female must be significant. I suggest that the utilisation of the female form in the representation of the monstrous and the extreme was associated with the female relation to nature. At the beginning of this chapter, I commented on woman's connection to nature as another element in the construction of women as Other. The portrayal of female monsters to be fought and controlled by the Greek and Roman heroes re-emphasised the potential difference to be found in women and their closeness to nature and its unpredictability. The female-nature correlation differentiates women from men by associating them with disorder, chaos, and uncontrollable forces. While her fertility was positively related to the fertility and abundance of the earth, her reproductive power was also perceived as a threat. At the same time, the common multiplicity of these monstrous women such as the three Gorgons recalls the 'anonymous collectivity' that has been viewed as a facet of Otherness. Therefore, these perceived ideological elements of the female nature could easily be utilised in the construction of female monsters who represented the uncontrollable forces of nature, of death and destruction, of the unknown.

Before continuing on the theme of female monsters, it is worth noting that male monstrous figures are also found in Greco-Roman literature and imagery. These include well-known characters such as the Minotaur, Polyphemus the Cyclops, the Giants and the

Centaurs along with the less notorious Geryon, Argos, Antaeus and Cacus. Like some female monsters, several of these figures share animal elements i.e. the Minotaur was part-bull, the Giants had snake-legs, and the Centaurs had the body of a horse and torso of a man (see Hammond and Scullard, 1970). Despite their association with nature, individual male monstrous figures might act outside Nature. For instance, Chiron, one of the Centaurs, was renowned for his cultural contributions. He was an intelligent member of their race, a practicer of medicine and other arts, who educated several heroes such as Achilles, Aesculapius and Jason (ibid., 220). Also, most male monsters do not seem to have the same visible presence in Roman art as their female equivalents.

However, there were numerous female monsters encountered by male heroes in Greco-Roman myth. These include such creatures as the Gorgons, the Sphinx, the Sirens, Scylla, Charybdis, the Furies, and the Harpies. These female monsters were first encountered in Greek myth and art. However, the continuing popularity of several of these mythological figures is evident from Roman literature and visual imagery. For instance, Scylla and Charybdis were notable threats to Jason and the Argonauts and Odysseus in Greek myth, but were also still present to be confronted by Aeneas in Virgil's Aeneid. In Book Three, Aeneas asks the seer Helenus about the dangers he will encounter on the way to Italy. Helenus answers with much advice, and states that on the journey there is a certain strait that must be navigated carefully:

> Scylla guards the right shore, insatiable Charybdis
> The left. Three times a day the latter, down in the depths of
> A whirlpool gulps whole tons of wave into her maw,
> Then spews them up again, flailing the heavens with spray.
> But Scylla lurks unseen in a cavernous lair, from which
> She pushes out her lips to drag ships on to the rocks.
> Her upper part is human -- a girl's beautiful body
> Down to her privates; below, she is a weird sea-monster
> With a dolphin's tail and a belly of wolverine sort. It's advisable
> To fetch a long compass, although it protracts the voyage, and sail
> Right round the Sicilian cape of Pachynum, a southernmost mark,
> Rather than to set eyes on that freakish Scylla within
> Her cavern vast or the rocks where her sea-blue hounds are baying.
>
> (Virgil, Aeneid, 3.420-432)

With this description, I observe two noteworthy points. First, I suggest that it is significant that these monsters are female due to the threat they represent to Aeneas and his companions on their journey. Aeneas is traveling to Italy in order to found Roman culture, but must

avoid these female monstrous figures who can prevent his mission from being successful. At the same time, I believe that it is even more relevant that these female figures are symbolic of the natural hazards of the particular strait; the female form is utilised in the characterisation of a force of nature that is threatening to the male journey. Second, Scylla's description is thought-provoking. Her upper-half is a woman, but her lower half, including her sexual organs, is that of an animal. Virgil likens her privates to a wolverine, and other mythological references note her barking dog-skirt or loins (Graves, 1958, 310). This characterisation is reminiscent of the poetical references to female genitalia as exotic and unusual animals. Therefore, with these elements in their representation, Scylla and Charybdis are associated with the forces of nature, with disorder and monstrousness. On some level, women were implicated in this negative connection between the female and nature.

Roman visual imagery is coloured by the appearance of several of these monstrous female figures. A representation of a Harpy has been postulated on a metope fragment from Chester (61). Wright and Richmond note that the Harpy was either an allusion to death itself or as its messenger (1955, 52)). However, without further knowledge of the context of this piece and a more concrete identification of the relief itself, it is impossible to interpret its full significance. We do know that the Harpies were half-female, half-bird creatures that were reputed to be carriers of pestilence, which ties in with their interpretation as figures of death (Morford and Lenardon, 1991, 128). Virgil describes them in great detail:

> No viler monstrosity than they, no pest more atrocious
> Did ever the wrath of god conjure up out of hell's swamp.
> Bird-bodied, girl-faced things they are; abominable
> Their droppings, their hands are talons, their faces haggard with
> hunger
> Insatiable...
> ...Then by the winding shore
> Seated on makeshift benches, we are most richly feasting.
> But, the next moment, we hear a hoarse vibration of wingbeats --
> The Harpies are on us, horribly swooping down from the mountains.
> They tear the banquet to pieces, filthying all with their bestial
> Touch. Hideous the sounds, nauseous the stench about us...
>
> (Virgil, Aeneid, 3.213-227)

These words establish their female form and association with bestial destruction and chaos. However, our knowledge of their mythology sheds no further light on the Chester relief. This is the only claimed representation of the Harpy in sculptural form that I know of from Britain and Gaul, and therefore, all that can be acknowledged is that an awareness of the

creatures' mythological existence in Roman provincial culture is apparent through her representation, though her precise significance and context are lost.

A more common monster image on Roman visual media is that of the Sphinx. The Sphinx was a creature in the form of a half-woman, half-lion. Early references described a creature who carried off boys and youths. She was also an integral element in the myth of Oedipus and as the riddler of Thebes, who killed those who could not answer her riddle (Hammond and Scullard, 1970, 1009). Her representation was a common motif in the north-west provinces, and is frequently found on funerary monuments. In Britain, the sphinx is depicted on tomb monuments five times. At least two examples focus upon the central motif of a cavalryman riding over a barbarian foe, and place the image of the sphinx at the top of the monument (**62 & 63**). A funerary relief from the western cemetery at Colchester bears the representation of a sphinx clutching a human head between her paws, along with a pile of human bones. This Sphinx bears a double-row of breasts (**64**). Here, this has been interpreted as representative of the victorious attack of death on human life (Huskinson, 1994, 30). Gaul and Germany yield more examples than Roman Britain: sixteen images of the sphinx from funerary monuments and seven from unknown contexts (based upon the prevalence of this image on funerary art, I would hypothesise that the latter were also of funerary origin). A funerary relief from Mainz, Germany bears the image of a young man between two horses, seemingly in reference to his possible association with a cavalry corps. The image of the sphinx, though barely visible in the plate, is again set above the main relief (**65**). The depiction of the active combat between two gladiators is found on a funerary relief from Cologne, dated to the imperial period before the Flavians. Again, a sphinx and griffon are set on the periphery of the main scene (**66**). It becomes apparent from these examples that the primary association of the sphinx in Roman Britain and Gaul seems to have been funerary. The sphinx's mythology as a bringer of death seems a powerful influence on the funerary association, though like many monsters in funerary contexts she took on apotropaic qualities (Hammond and Scullard, 1970, 1009). At the same time, we must remember Rosaldo's postulation that woman's perceived closeness to nature was partially derived from her frequent association with the rituals and necessities of death (Rosaldo, 1974, 31).

THE GORGON: THE NEUTRALISATION OF A POWERFUL FORCE OF NATURE

The mythological background to Medusa and the Gorgons is quite detailed and varied. One myth reports that after the beautiful mortal Medusa lay with Poseidon in the temple of Athena, she was turned into a monster bearing wings, huge fangs, serpent locks and

a protruding tongue. She then lived in the desert of Libya with the two other Gorgons. Despite Medusa's monstrous guise, she was mortal while the other two Gorgons were immortal (Graves, 1958, 127; 239). Polydectes set Perseus the task of retrieving Medusa's head in order to use its lithifying gaze in the destruction of a sea-monster. With Athena's help, he kills Medusa by decapitating her, and from her neck were born Pegasus and Chrysaor. As Perseus carried Medusa's head back to Polydectes, he dripped some of her blood onto the desert floor and a brood of venomous serpents was produced. Finally, he uses Medusa's gaze to turn his rivals and the sea-monster to stone, thus saving the maiden Andromeda and securing her hand in marriage (Graves, 1958, 240-241; Morford and Lenardon, 1991, 128-129; Reeder, 1995b, 410). Medusa's power is also emphasised in the story that Aesculapius and Athena both secured a phial of her blood; the former to save lives and the latter to destroy them (Graves, 1958, 174-175).

This compelling myth identifies a very powerful force in the figure of Medusa; one whose power was not diminished by her death as is evident in Perseus' use of her gaze in the destruction of the sea-monster. As a result, an extensive theoretical background has surrounded the study of Medusa's significance. Several different scholars have suggestions for her origins and importance. Howes notes the prevalent theme of Medusa's connection to nature. There is a zoological facet of the Gorgon/Medusa which is apparent from her physical manifestation. She postulates that the form she takes reflected the ancient fear of animals. Her animalistic features found on Greek vase representations could have been inspired by lions or apes. The Greeks "gave expression to their fears, and by the act of expressing, conquered these fears, which in this case were specifically of beasts of prey" (Howes, 1954, 209; 212). Her serpent hair is thus a compelling element of her characterisation. Snakes were viewed quite ambiguously in Greek thought. On one level, snakes were perceived as messengers or omens and linked with prophecy. They were also associated with Aesculapius and thus with healing (Padel, 1992, 145-146). At the same time, serpents were often judged negatively. Their poison was seen as emanating from their

fangs, tongue and eyes, and a fear of serpents is a frequent occurrence in Greek literature. This fear of snakes is articulated in Greek tragedy, where the snake was depicted as a mode of death. Padel notes the perception that "snakes (a normal part of Athenian domestic life) are a greedy, nonhuman, potentially draining force within a human structure. They are an image of threat to a city, to a head of house, or to mind and soul" (ibid., 123). She also asserts that snakes represented an intermediary between the earth above and the chthonic forces found below the earth (ibid., 146). Therefore, this particular aspect - her snaky hair - of the Gorgon/Medusa's portrayal could also elicit fear and repulsion, and remind the viewer of her closeness to nature and death.

In addition, Howes summarises her relation to any number of natural or physical phenomena such as the terrors of the sea, ocean waves, volcanic eruptions, or violent storms. Her gaping mouth in early visual imagery implied the aural element of howling or roaring, and could allude to the noise which would be derived from these powerful and violent natural forces (Howes, 1954, 210-211). Frothingham reiterates these ideas when he observes that past scholars have identified the Gorgon/Medusa as a storm demon of thunder and lightning, again emphasising her aural aspect in the representation (Frothingham, 1911, 350). These interpretations highlight the fear that these natural creatures and events inspired in humankind.

Other readings of the Gorgon/Medusa also emphasise the fear and terror her presence creates in those who encounter her. Frontisi-Ducroux states that "the [Greek] texts are explicit on the meaning of Gorgo: she is absolute horror, the incarnation of the most frightening aspects of the supernatural, the shadows, and the void of death" (1989, 159). She goes on to assert that this horrifying visage and gaze of the Gorgon is reflected in the face and eyes of the warrior or hero in battle fury. With this distortion of his features into those of the monstrous Gorgon, the warrior brings fear and death to his enemies (ibid., 157). Vernant continues with the theme of death as an important facet of the Gorgon/Medusa's meaning, and explores the significance of her femaleness. He describes the Gorgon/Medusa mask as such: "In its fearful aspect, as a power of terror expressing the unspeakable and unthinkable - that which is radically 'other' - death is a feminine figure who takes on its horror: the monstrous face of Gorgo, whose unbearable gaze transforms men into stone" (Vernant, 1991, 95). Vernant further notes that while there are male figures of death in Greek mythology such as Thanatos, representative of the 'beautiful death' which comes at the end of a heroic life, the female figures of death such as the Gorgon epitomize the horror

and repulsiveness of death (ibid., 96-97). There are ambiguities, of course, in the female figures who bring death, such as the pain and pleasure provided by the Sirens, but the implicit contrast between male and female images of death is fairly clear.

Finally, the mythological tales of the Gorgon/Medusa emphasise death, a death which she brings to those who look upon her. Vernant explains: "Gorgo and her two sisters carry death in their eyes. Their look kills...If the sight of these monsters is unbearable, it is because by the mixture in their faces of human, bestial and mineral elements, they embody the figure of chaos, the return to the formless and indistinct, and the confusion of primordial Night: the face itself of death, of that death which has no visage" (1991, 144). An interesting point observed by several of the theorists about the Gorgon/Medusa is the nature of her affect on humans. In none of the mythological tales, nor in visual imagery, is the gaze of Medusa seen to affect women (see Howes, 1954; Reeder, 1995b; Vernant, 1991). Rather, it is the female's powerful look, her terrifying aspect, that destroys man. As Howes states, "...all men who look on her are rendered impotent, turned to stone in the poetic language of myth. The development is logical. The generalised, primitive fear of animals is converted by an urban society into a more intimate fear, in the guise of a Gorgon who renders a man frigid as stone and unmans him..." (1954, 221).

However, the Gorgon/Medusa is also related to fertility and the positive aspects of nature. Frothingham equates her not with fear, evil or death; rather, he sees her as primarily a nature goddess. He connects her to the Earth Mother or Mistress of the Beasts and the associated fertility and bounty which were implicit in these identifications. He also notes the frequent association of the Gorgon/Medusa with Apollo on coinage, e.g. fourth century BC coinage of Sicily. While this coupling has been interpreted as the contrasting figures of good/Apollo and evil/Medusa, Frothingham views their role as complementary to one another and related to the nourishing aspects of the sun's power (1911, 349-357). Frothingham also suggests that her frequent association with funerary monuments does not represent suffering and death, but her common vegetal aspect and coupling with Eros, the dove of fertility, Victories, and cornucopiae made her a symbol of renewal and victory over the forces of death (1915, 22).

What is common to all of these various interpretations is the link between the Gorgon/Medusa and the elements of nature. Her connection with the bestial is especially apparent in the Greek perceptions and portrayals of her. This connection with animals,

physical phenomena and the power of death over human life emphasises the fear and power behind the representation of the Gorgon/Medusa. At the same time, the possibility of positive aspects within her visual imagery, detailed by Frothingham, also explores her relation to nature and its power. While embracing the possibilities of both negative and positive aspects of this figure, we can observe that these facets of her characterisation seem to lead us back to the relation of woman to nature. Women are associated with nature both in reference to their fertility and reproductive capabilities and also through the fear of the perceived disorder and chaos which both women and nature can create for human society. Both of these elements are expressed in the mythology, representation, and utilisation of the Gorgon/Medusa image. At the same time, her Otherness is emphasised through the combination of the human and the bestial (Pratt, 1994, 24).

Before addressing the Roman manifestation of the Gorgon/Medusa, it is worth noting the image's development during the Greek period. There were three forms in which the Gorgon/Medusa was presented in Greek art: 1) the head of Medusa or Gorgoneion; 2) the full figure of Medusa presented either alone, with the other two Gorgons, or within the Perseus myth cycle; and 3) as a decoration on the aegis of Athena (Frothingham, 1911, 350). Many scholars postulate that at first only Medusa's head was depicted, with the body and the myth to explain her perceived decapitation added later (see Howes, 1954; Reeder, 1995b; Ulansey, 1989, 31). However, by the seventh century BC, the full-figure of the Gorgon/ Medusa was commonly depicted, and shortly after this date the Corinthian vase type became the standard design (Ulansey, 1989, 31; 67). The Greek representation of the Gorgon/Medusa, within her portrayal as a full-figure, was an active character. She is not static, but often moves towards either side of the vase. Though she may move to the side, her upper torso and face are presented frontally. Possibly this type of presentation brought the full-force of her power to the viewer of the image as she stared out from the vase or sculpture with her lithifying eyes, gaping mouth and serpent locks (see Vernant, 1991, 112). She might also be presented during various stages of the Perseus myth cycle e.g. her actual decapitation or Perseus bearing her head. The representation of the Gorgon/Medusa in both the Greek and Roman period was not limited to vase paintings, and her visage might be found on a variety of media from funerary sculpture to architectural decoration to everyday objects.

However, there was a change in her portrayal during the Roman period. No longer was Medusa depicted as an active, alive figure; rather, her representation was limited to her

head or the gorgoneion. At the same time, the bestial and extreme elements of her portrayal were neglected. In general, she no longer bore the grotesque bulging eyes and gaping mouth. The rendering of the Gorgon was now that of "the beautiful and tragic Medusa of downcast gaze" (Howes, 1954, 221). In general, the Gorgon/Medusa was now presented either as a stylised head; as the gorgoneion on Minerva's, an emperor's or a soldier's breastplate; or within the Perseus myth cycle.

There are numerous examples from Roman Britain, Gaul and Germany (see Appendix 1, Table 1). Indeed, both Roman Britain and Gaul/Germany have a fairly high occurrence of this motif: Britain has 22 examples and Gaul/Germany has 52. However, the contexts for these examples vary with more Medusa representations on mosaics from Roman Britain (14) than Gaul (3), and more funerary representations from Gaul/Germany (22) than Roman Britain (2). Within the context of funerary art, the Gorgon/Medusa head was often depicted both alone and as one motif among a number of symbols. For instance, a sarcophagus found at Arles bears the image of a young Medusa head on both sides of the front relief (68). There are several interpretations for this utilisation of the Gorgon symbol within this context. Her visage could be seen as an apotropaic device, like the figure of the Sphinx. At the same time, her presence on a funerary relief could refer to her association with death - either as the bringer of death or within Frothingham's scheme, as a symbol of the abundance of life and the transcendence of death. Another sarcophagus from Novezan bears the large winged head of the Medusa on each lateral face (69). An example from Aquitaine in Gaul bears the Gorgon heads with another common funerary motif, the Seasons. This second century AD sarcophagus is decorated with a portrait of the deceased young person flanked by two Cupids. There are also images of Cupids playing, Medusa heads and four Cupids portraying the Seasons (70). As Medusa was often associated with the forces of nature, this juxtaposition of her visage with the image of the Seasons is an appropriate one (see the next section for more detail on the Seasons). The symbolism of the cyclicity of the Seasons implicit in these motifs of nature could possibly refer to the cyclicity of life moving from birth through maturity to death.

The motif of the Gorgon/Medusa is also found within the religious context of Roman art. Four examples of the Gorgon/Medusa head in sculptural form have been found in religious contexts from a provenance local to Vienne. Two of these reliefs couple the image of the Gorgon/Medusa head with the oracle tripod sacred to Apollo and also the Apollonian python. Both are probably derived from first century AD friezes of a possible

temple to Apollo (71). This juxtaposition of symbols reminds us of Frothingham's observation about the pairing of Apollo and Medusa on coins (Frothingham, 1911, 351-52). Medusa's utilisation on these reliefs, possibly associated with the prophetic powers of Apollo, is thus an interesting one alluding to the supernatural forces that govern the Apollo oracle. Another example of the Gorgon head in a religious setting is the pediment relief from the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath (72). However, the Gorgon head here is male, with flowing stylised beard and staring eyes. This merging between the classical idea of the female Gorgon and a male Celtic water deity is appropriate to the context in which it is found. Both the Gorgon and the Celtic water deity were associated with thermal, healing springs and thus could be easily combined with each retaining aspects of their representation (see Pratt, 1994, 39; Vernant, 1991, 132). At the same time, this powerful aspect of nature - the healing springs of Sulis Minerva - could easily be assimilated with the Gorgon/water deity and their relation to nature.

Despite these various examples, however, I suggest that the more intriguing utilisation of the Medusa representation is found on mosaic pavements. I will first address the forms that this imagery took in Roman Britain and Gaul (see Appendix 1, Table 2). All but one of the examples from Gaul and Roman Britain are limited to the stylised head of the Gorgon/Medusa. The one exception from Brading is a representation of one aspect of the Perseus myth cycle - the image of Perseus showing the decapitated head of Medusa to Andromeda in a pool of water. Of the fourteen Medusa representations on mosaic pavements from Roman Britain, four of those couple her image with that of the female Seasons (Bignor, Brading, Cirencester/Dyer Street and York/Toft Green) and one with that of the male Winds (Halstock). Thus, the already mentioned juxtaposition of the Gorgon/Medusa with other representations of nature was continued in the context of domestic decoration. At the same time, the majority of the Romano-British representations of the stylised Medusa head were placed in the central panel of the mosaic. For instance, the Bignor mosaic from Room 33 bears the central image of the Medusa surrounded by the female Season busts (73). The pavement from Brading which depicts the scene of Perseus and Andromeda with the Gorgon's head is from Room 12, an audience chamber. This image is one panel among several mythological scenes again surrounding a possible central representation of the Medusa head (74a & 74b). Only one of the three mosaic portrayals of the Gorgon/Medusa from Gaul is coupled with the image of the Seasons. This mosaic, from a *triclinium* of a house from Saint-Romain-en-Gal, again depicts the Medusa as central with the Seasons flanking her (75).

What significance can the Medusa image hold within the domestic and social context of the Roman house and villa? Before answering this question, we must examine the development of the Roman villa and its decoration in Roman Italy and the western provinces. The imperial period was characterised by an increasing social differentiation between groups such as the Emperor and imperial family, the senatorial classes, the municipal elite and the lower classes. By the late Roman period, the hierarchical state of these social and power relationships was even more pronounced. The internal integration of the empire itself was decreasing which lead to the development of regional power networks where the rich land and villa owner was of central importance (Slofstra, 1995, 83; 88). For instance, the later Roman period in Britain saw a great deal of social transformation as the rise of inflation, debasement of the silver coinage and the state's need for increased revenue influenced the development of a rigidly ordered society where the division between rich and poor became even more conspicuous (S. Scott, 1995, 114-15). Within this system of increasing social and power differentiation, the Roman house and villa was utilised for public functions and as a setting for the playing out of power relationships. The master or mistress of the house met and entertained a variety of people within the villa such as friends, peers and clients. Slofstra notes that several rooms within the villa and house were designed to accommodate these functions (Slofstra, 1995, 80). Axial plans developed with the most important public rooms often placed on the main axis of the villa or house. Architectural and decorative embellishment was utilised to emphasise and accentuate these rooms and signify their importance (ibid., 79-80). At the same time, as the urban centres declined, the domestic context, especially villas, became the primary means of status display for the elite classes. In order to impress and awe both friends and clients, audience chambers, triclinia and baths were built or enhanced with mosaic and sculptural decoration. These tangible symbols of affluence and status could also be utilised in the self-definition and glorification of the villa owner (Ellis, 1988; S. Scott, 1995, 115-117).

The unequal and hierarchical patron-client relationships seen in Roman Italy were also a characteristic of the Roman western provinces. As Slofstra notes, Caesar commented on the Gallic development of patron-client relationships in his Gallic Wars, which would have facilitated the connection between Gallic patronage and the Roman societal patronage system (Slofstra, 1995, 87). Though, the villa system in the Roman West developed later than in Italy, by the end of the late first century AD, the western provincial elites began emulating and developing Roman villas with their emphasis on axial plans and highly

embellished reception and public rooms (ibid., 83). Thus, the development of the villa system and the functions of its public rooms could also have been utilised by the provincial elites in order to highlight and ritualise the power relationships between the various groups in provincial society (ibid., 81-83).

Therefore, the mosaic decoration of these houses and villas formed one aspect of the need to advertise one's status and power within Roman society. Within this context, the Gorgon/Medusa image and significance could be utilised within the decorative scheme to emphasise the position of the owner within the Roman world and the local community. Frontisi-Ducroux states that the common usage of the symbol of the Gorgon head was often based upon her apotropaic qualities where "she keeps away malevolent powers, turning the menace into protection, inverting her own maleficent power, for the benefit of the owner of the object that carries her effigy, turning it versus potential enemies" (1989, 159). This quality has also been noted by Henig in his observation that the symbol of the Medusa head was a life-giving force that drew evil away from the individual (1984, 179). Two Medusa images from Roman Britain were located in rooms from the bath suites of the villas - Room 56, the *apodyterium*, at Bignor and a bath room at Spoonley Wood. The apotropaic identity of the Gorgon/Medusa head was particularly appropriate to these rooms, where bathers were believed to be vulnerable to the evil eye and thus an emblem that averted that evil would have been welcomed. The image's apotropaic qualities and the desire to keep evil away from the wearer might also be evident in its presence on medallions (76).

However, another facet in the meaning behind the representation of the Gorgon/Medusa is possible. I propose that the relation of the Gorgon/Medusa to the forces of nature and a desire to control that potential disorder was implicit in the portrayal and utilisation of the Gorgon image within the social context of domestic architecture and decoration. The nature of Medusa's representation is significant. All of the representations from Britain and Gaul are depicted simply as the stylised head, with the one exception of the figural scene from Brading showing Medusa as already decapitated. Through this imagery and the prevalent motif of decapitation, Medusa's power has already been neutralised and destroyed. Her power as a force of Nature is diminished as we note that her destruction by culture is already complete. The figure of Medusa is never depicted as a whole or active figure within these representations, and thus she cannot control or utilise the powerful force of her gaze. Rather, that power has been appropriated either by the cultural vehicle or the male protagonist of Perseus. At the same time, the utilisation of Medusa as an apotropaic

symbol and by attributing her with life-giving powers, a less-threatening role is emphasised over her traditional mythology as a destructive and powerful entity. As she develops from the fearsome Gorgon into this more benign figure, culture effectively triumphs over nature.

There are three important implications in the various interpretations of the Medusa image, its representation and utilisation. Firstly, the equation of the Gorgon/Medusa with nature can be utilised to emphasise the male or culture's potential control over the natural forces. By representing her as simply a stylised head or as already decapitated, her autonomy and her ability to use the lithifying gaze have been lost. Rather, the male hero and by implication, the owner of the house or villa, has appropriated the power of the Medusa and her gaze. The hero and man have defeated nature and turned its power back onto itself, whether it be through the use of its apotropaic qualities or simply as a sign of man's control over his environment. Secondly, it is important to note that the majority of the areas which bear the Medusa image were the public rooms of a house or villa - audience chambers or reception rooms, *triclinia* and even the bath suites. By placing this image within these important rooms, rooms that were central to the construction of the owner's public identity and status, the owner equates him/herself with these appropriated powers of nature. This implicit equation between the conquering hero or culture over this female power of nature is thus underlined to friends and clients through this potent symbol. Finally, as has been noted by past scholars, the horror and fear of this figure is also neutralised through its utilisation. Frontisi-Ducroux notes that through its frequent portrayal the inner fears and demons possibly related to the terror which death and nature held could be faced and overcome (1989, 159). Finally, the power of the image and its meaning were lessened through its common utilisation on mosaics, sculpture and everyday objects. The Gorgon/Medusa's frequent representation aided in the transformation of a fearful and powerful sign into one that was almost banal (see Vernant, 1991, 149).

THE SEASONS: EMBLEMS OF THE CYCLE OF LIFE

Another female image representative of nature, abundance and the cycle of life is found in the motif of the Seasons. Graves notes that the Horae or Seasons were the daughters of Zeus and Themis in Greek myth. They were also the nurses for Hera, thus emphasising Hera's role as a goddess of the calendar year (Graves, 1958, 49-53). This symbol takes different forms and is found in a variety of contexts (see Appendix 2, Table 3). In general, it seems that on mosaics from both Britain and Gaul, female busts dominate as the symbols for the four Seasons - Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. From Britain, 16 mosaic

pavements bear female Seasons, while the Gallic mosaic database has 11 examples of the female Seasons (see Appendix 2, Table 4 for form and architectural context). The eight Seasons of unidentified sex from Roman Gaul are also likely to have been represented by the female form based upon the generally observed pattern where more mosaic Seasons are female than male, though they might also be a combination of both sexes. Within the scheme of mosaic decoration, the Seasons are most often presented in bust form, though variations do exist such as the full-length female figures mounted on different animals from Littlecote Park or the Cupids in the guise of Seasons from Saint-Romaine-en-Gal. Generally, the figures of the Seasons are presented in a specific order with Winter more commonly forming the beginning of the annual cycle and the figures of Spring, Summer and Autumn following in a revolving sequence (Ling, 1983, 17-18). Finally, the Seasons might bear a variety of attributes in order to identify them individually: Winter most often carried a dead branch and wore a hood, Spring held flowers or birds, Summer held flowers or harvesting tools and Autumn was often seen with a pruning knife, grapes or a rake (S. Scott, 1993, 287-91).

While the Seasons were sometimes presented on their own, they were more often paired with other central figures and designs such as Medusa, Bacchus, Apollo/Sol, Orpheus or myth scenes (again see Table 4). It is worth examining several examples from Britain and Gaul. The mosaic pavement from Thruxton bears the image of Bacchus reclining on a small leopard with the female busts of the Seasons in the four surrounding spandrels (77). Bacchus was often paired with the Seasons in visual imagery and thought, and during the Hellenistic period, Bacchus was viewed as the mythological leader of the Seasons (S. Scott, 1993, 289). Thus, the design of the Thruxton mosaic emphasises the central panel and his image as important through the positioning of the Seasons around him. This mosaic was found in the *triclinium* or possible audience room of this basilica-style villa. Its architectural context and design thus combine to make implicit Bacchus' significance to the diners and his control over the Seasons and the annual cycle (ibid., 302). Parrish notes that the frequent association of the Seasons with dining areas "suggests that the major reason for representing the Seasons in such rooms is that...[they] were emblems of prosperity, i.e., of the natural abundance which made the feast possible. In another sense, the Seasons, as agents of bounty and good fortune, may have symbolised the proprietor's personal wealth, which he would have proudly displayed to his guests in the form of a sumptuous banquet" (1977, 153-54). Therefore, the Seasons' association with fertility and abundance could be appropriated by the owner of the villa or house to emphasis his/her bounty and status. In mosaics which

juxtaposed the Seasons with the figure of Bacchus, as at Thruxton, the owner could further associate him/herself with Bacchus' control and position of superiority over the natural forces represented through the four frequently female busts. Lastly, we should be aware that all four examples from Roman Britain that coupled the Seasons with Bacchus have been attributed to the *triclinia* - Chedworth, Cirencester/Dyer Street, Pitney and Thruxton. Unfortunately, it is difficult to discern if the same pattern was also true for Gaul as the rooms have not been certainly identified for the two Bacchus and Seasons mosaics.

Seasonal imagery is also clearly linked with the rural and agricultural worlds in a mosaic from Saint-Romain-en-Gal. This mosaic, from the first quarter of the third century AD, detailed the various activities associated with the rural life. The agricultural activities in the panels of genre scenes ranged from sowing the beans, working the millstone, weaving baskets, picking and harvesting apples and grapes, plowing and sowing and gathering and pressing olives. Religious rituals connected to the success of rural life were also depicted such as sacrifices to the Lares and Taranis and a possible scene of the festival of death. This mosaic also bears the images of the four Seasons, three of whom are depicted as Cupids while Winter is represented by an old woman **(78a, 78b & 78c)**. The juxtaposition of the Seasons with these genre scenes of rural activities is an appropriate one since the success and bounty of these activities was dependent on the annual cycle of the Seasons. Also, the utilisation of an old woman as a symbol of Winter was common when the Seasons were of mixed sex. The metaphor is clear with the implication of sterility in both older women and the winter months. From Britain and Gaul, this is the only mosaic that depicts the coupling of the Seasons with agricultural panels. However, this type of design is found in other areas of the Roman empire. For instance, the Mosaic of Dominus Iulius from Carthage was based upon this theme, though the Seasons were not personified in the traditional format on this pavement. Instead, the *domina* and *dominus* receive the produce of the various seasons from their attendants in each corner of the pavement while the center was devoted to a representation of the villa estate itself. The *domina*, seated at the top of the mosaic, is given the produce of winter such as olives and ducks. A pastoral and lamb scene represents summer to her right. Below left, the *domina* is given the spring-time gifts in her rose-garden and the *dominus*, seated in the vineyard, is met with offerings of grapes and waterfowl for autumn **(79)**.

Mosaics also combined the imagery of the Seasons with scenes from the circus. For instance, the audience chamber from Rudston bears a central panel of a victorious charioteer

surrounded by the female busts of the Seasons (80). Some scholars have postulated an association between the central figure of a charioteer with the sun-god Sol. Chariot race scenes and charioteers have been viewed as a connection to the "scholarly metaphor of the circus as a microcosm of the universe" (Ling, 1983, 18). Hanfmann notes that some ancient scholars were familiar with and often embraced this cosmic allegory within the guise of the circus. He states that "such a theory fitted well with the late antique trend toward regarding earthly institutions as a reflection of, or a symbol for the solar system of the universe" (Hanfmann, 1951, 160). He further asserts that this symbolism could be depicted in two ways: the Seasons represented as charioteers which signified the celestial circus and the movement of time, or through the image of a charioteer accompanied by the personified Seasons or seasonal references which implied the existence of a higher universal order (ibid., 161). Within the scheme of the central charioteer with surrounding female Seasons represented in the fourth century AD Rudston mosaic, the idea of the central figure as controlling nature and its annual cycle is one interpretation. The owner of the villa might have also associated him/herself with the figure of the victorious charioteer, and the implication of man's governance over nature and his environment (S. Scott, 1993, 302).

A further link was formed between Apollo/Sol and the Seasons. A third century AD mosaic from Paisy-Cosdon coupled the figure of Apollo or Sol driving a chariot with the possible representations of the Seasons. Unfortunately, this mosaic is lost and cannot be illustrated (Darmon and Lavagne, 1977, 143-148). A third century AD pavement from Sens depicts the central figure of Sol Invictus in control of plunging horses. The female Seasons are arranged around the central panel, thus emphasising their relationship with Sol Invictus and his control over the natural order of life (81). Hanfmann notes that, during Hellenistic and probably the Roman period, Apollo was believed to be an ordering force in the progress of the Seasons. In addition, Helios was focused upon as the supreme divine power in the later Roman empire and viewed as the creator of the Seasons (Hanfmann, 1951, 151-153). Therefore, the association between Helios, Apollo/Sol and the Seasons was an appropriate one. Another possible example of Apollo with the Seasons is located on the mosaic pavement of the separate apsed audience hall of Littlecote Park (82). The identity of the central male figure has been debated with a postulated identification of both Apollo/Sol or Orpheus. He is surrounded by the four images of the Seasons as the goddesses Ceres, Persephone, Venus and Leda mounted on various animals - a hind, a panther, a cow and a goat (Jesnick, 1997, 96). The central figure holds a lyre which is an attribute of both Apollo and Orpheus. It has thus been theorised that the central male figure is Orpheus,

representative here as a priest of Apollo (S. Scott, 1995, 112). However, despite the uncertainty of his identity, the significance in this mosaic is again found in the design which places the Seasons in the surrounding panels radiating from the central medallion and figure, thus emphasising his influence on the fertility and annual cycle of life. Again, this association could have been implicitly connected to the owner of the villa through the design's prominent position in this important and public space. The owner of the villa would have met his/her clients in this audience hall, and the juxtaposition of his/her presence with the mosaic representation would have underlined his/her status and significance in Roman society. Through an implicit association between the central figure who presides over the Seasons and man or 'culture', the possibility of controlling nature and the environment, here expressed through female imagery, was represented.

The Seasons motif was also found in contexts other than the domestic. Within Britain and Gaul, they were depicted in sculptural form as architectural decoration, funerary imagery and representations of unknown context. For instance, the architectural facade from a building in the precinct of the Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath was decorated with small rectangular panels which depicted Cupids in the guise of the Seasons, while niches below held four seated figures that might have also represented the Seasons. However, only one survives and it is much mutilated, making the sex and identity difficult to discern (Cunliffe and Fulford, 1982, 6-8; 83). Another architectural monument that was decorated with images of the four Seasons was the Mars Gate from Reims (84). This triumphal arch carried the images of a variety of mythological figures, female dancers, rural genre scenes, and Victories. There was also the representation of a seated woman holding a cornucopia flanked by four Cupids. These figures are interpreted as the central female Year with the four Cupids as representative of the Seasons. Unfortunately, we must rely on a drawing of this relief, and therefore, the image is quite unclear.

The Seasons are also found on funerary monuments. Hanfmann notes that the majority of Seasons themes on sarcophagi are found in and around Rome (Hanfmann, 1951, 16). However, there are a few examples from Gaul. It is interesting to note that of the eight funerary reliefs of the Seasons, six of these are represented through the male form, usually as Genii or Cupids. This is in contrast to the predominance of the female Seasons on mosaics. However, there is no easy explanation for this contrast. Hanfmann asserts that "the Latin word for Seasons, *tempora*, which is neuter, suggested nothing about their sex...," and thus their representation in both male and female form might be indiscriminate (ibid.,

172-73). He further notes, however, that the change from female Seasons to primarily male and Cupid/Genii representations, at least in the funerary context, seems to have developed during the Hadrianic period (ibid., 172). A sarcophagus of unknown provenance and of the second century AD bears the imagery of two Cupids flanking the portrait of a young person of indeterminate sex. It was also decorated with Gorgon heads, Cupids playing and the figures of the four Cupid Seasons (see **70**). The Cupid Seasons are again seen on the fragmentary reliefs from a funerary monument found in the walls of Narbonne. Each Cupid Season bears his traditional seasonal attributes, while the remaining fragments carry the imagery of lush vegetation, fruits and animals (**85a & 85b**). The implication of the Seasons within the funerary context could refer to the Greek and Roman practice of bringing the fruits of the seasons as a sacrifice to the tomb and thus the Seasons iconography was appropriate. It could also signify a general reference to time and the eternal cycle of life (ibid., 185-88).

Finally, I would like to briefly note that other female personifications of the elements and bounty of nature were present in Roman visual imagery. Representations of Abundantia, Tellus, Providentia and other singular allusions to fecundity and the fertility of life were found in the female form from mosaics to religious contexts to architectural decoration. However, these representations will be addressed in Chapter 5.

THE MALE ASSOCIATION WITH CULTURE

We have seen the ways in which the female form was associated with the natural forces through images such as Medusa and the Seasons. There was often an implication within these representations and their common juxtaposition with male figures of a differentiation between the elements of nature and culture and the control of the latter over the former. However, male imagery also could be more clearly linked with ideas of culture and civilisation. Therefore, we will briefly explore these male figures correlated with culture, and the ways in which they marked a distinction between nature and culture.

ORPHEUS AND THE TAMING OF NATURE

One example is found in the figure of Orpheus who was often connected to culture through his mythology, representation and utilisation. There are several mythic traditions and stories associated with Orpheus. The most well-known and most frequently represented tale concerns his power to 'tame' nature through his music. It was believed that the music

which Orpheus played on his lyre could bring all the elements of nature under his sway - the animals and birds, the trees and the rocks (Graf, 1990, 80). This ability to 'charm' nature and bring it under his control was reflected in the story of Orpheus' travels with Jason and the Argonauts where he uses his music to overcome the Sirens; indeed, the Sirens were reputed to commit suicide when their music could not outcharm Orpheus' lyrical voice and playing (ibid., 95; Graves, 1958, 607). Jesnick asserts that Orpheus' singing "represented Apollonian reason overpowering dark, Dionysian irrationality...[His] song had the power of ordering, of forming the rational from the chaotic, the incidental effect of which was the pacification of Nature and men" (Jesnick, 1997, 26).

Another story revolves around the death of his wife and Orpheus' attempt to win her back from Hades through his music. Graf notes that the significance of this theme was in "the power of music which could bridge the gap between mortality and immortality..." (Graf, 1990, 84). Despite the ultimate failure of Orpheus to bring his wife out of Hades, his ability to overcome death through his music points to a further cultural power over the ultimate force of nature - death. It is ironic that, in the myth of his death, Orpheus is destroyed by the Maenads or Thracian women, driven to madness, wildness and disorder, through his rejection of them or their worship of Dionysus (ibid., 85-86). Reeder observes the meaning of Maenad as "mad or raving woman" and connects her position on the exterior of society and civilisation with nature (Reeder, 1995b, 381). Thus, the participation of these women or nature in Orpheus' death and the destruction of this symbol of culture is an interesting one. Jesnick notes that "his brutal murder is a contrast of reason and fury; the song was the music of the spheres, the women represented the inhuman forces of the depths, personified as feminine. The precious civilisation, which Orpheus represents, is always in danger from outside, untamed forces" (Jesnick, 1997, 34).

However, the most common representation of Orpheus in Roman art focused on his power over the animals and elements of nature through his music. In Roman Britain and Gaul, Orpheus is most frequently found on mosaic decoration, though there are two possible examples of his imagery on reliefs from Gaul (see Appendix 3, Table 5). As the two sculptural examples with images of Orpheus are rather uncertain, I will concentrate on the representation of Orpheus in mosaics. The Romano-British depiction of Orpheus and the beasts was often presented through a concentric circular design where Orpheus occupied the central inner ring and the animals were ranged around him in the outer rings. The Orpheus mosaic from Room 1 at Woodchester placed Orpheus on the border of the inner ring and the

this mosaic is non-existent and simply a conflation of features from Barton Farm and Woodchester (Jesnick, 1997, 146). However, it is attested in several sources on Romano-British mosaics, and thus is worthy of examination. This fourth century AD mosaic allegedly depicted Orpheus in a central medallion with the surrounding animals. Orpheus is accompanied by a strange figure with two curling fish-tails as legs and feet (89). Beeson has identified this figure as Scylla based upon her representation and attributes. He notes that she holds a possible oar, as a reference to her role as a destroyer of ships, and that her central limb is probably a misinterpretation of her famed dog-apron and not another fish-tail (Beeson, 1990a, 20-22). Her presence in this mosaic again seems to lend emphasis to Orpheus' power over nature and its elements. He is not only capable of controlling the beasts of the wild and the natural cycle of the Seasons, but is also master of this terrifying female monster.

HUNTING AND THE AMPHITHEATRE

Hunt scenes can also be seen as expressions of the victory of culture over nature as the hunters 'tame the savage beast' through their physical skill and bravery (S. Scott, 1995, 108). Dunbabin notes that the Antonine development of hunting scenes was introduced in Italy and spread outward through the provinces. While the scenes depicted outside Italy were often more limited than those of the centre of the empire, these portrayals reflected an interest in the upper-class male activities and their significance - both as an expression of wealth and status and possibly in reference to man's control over the elements of nature (Dunbabin, 1978, 46). Dunbabin further states that "hunting is regarded as the field in which man's *virtus* was tested, or as an allegory of man's fight against strong and hostile forces" (ibid., 63).

Both of these interpretations can be observed in the hunt scenes from Gaul and Roman Britain. The straightforward portrayal of facets of the chase are found in several examples. For instance, a detailed fourth century AD mosaic from Lillebonne depicted the various stages of a hunt. The separate panels represent the sacrifice to Diana to ensure success, the hunters leaving on their horses and with their servants and hounds, the actual chase on horseback and the final stag hunt. These scenes are situated around the central panel of a god and nymph (90). A mosaic found at Saint-Emilion from the Villa du Palat of the fifth century AD simply depicts the hunters and the different prey that they might encounter in a typical hunt (91). Room 1, in which this mosaic was found, has been

identified as the reception room, and thus the allusion to the wealth, courage and victory of the owner over nature through this depiction aided in the assertion of his/her social position. In Britain, a mosaic from East Coker portrayed the results of a successful hunt as two huntsmen carry a dead stag between them on a pole while their hunting dog observes (92). Another example is found in the mosaic from the audience chamber at Frampton villa. Both elements of the hunt are alluded to in this representation. The central medallion has been reconstructed as Bellerophon fighting the chimaera, with the implication of man's victory over the powerful forces arrayed against him from both the natural and supernatural worlds. Two separate panels depict a mortal huntsman hunting a deer and leopard respectively (93). Though the leopard would not be an animal indigenous to Britain, it was not uncommon for hunt scenes to depict animals unusual for the natural environment, especially fierce ones, in a conceivable attempt to further enhance the *virtus* and courage of the hunter.

Amphitheatre scenes can also be explored in the above light. Depictions of gladiatorial matches and *bestiarii* with their wild animal opponents were common motifs on mosaics, sculpture, paintings and everyday objects such as pottery and glass cups. The recognisable motivation of the desire and need to advertise one's munificence and wealth within the community is attributed to these representations (Wiedemann, 1992, 15). This is most obvious in the third century AD Mosaic of Magerius from Smirat, North Africa. This mosaic depicted two elements of a day of games at the amphitheatre. On the edges of the mosaic pavement, four named *venatores* fight and defeat four named leopards. A boy holding a platter filled with money-bags is in the centre of the mosaic along with an inscription referring to the act of munificence by Magerius in providing these games for the community (94). A similar reference is possible on a funerary relief from Neumagen. The relief depicts a man in the traditional pose of a *bestiarius*, though no animal is depicted. However, the fragmentary epitaph to a *sevir* suggests the possibility that the gladiatorial imagery could have been an allusion to the Roman official's munificence (95). Finally, a link between the hunting scenes in the preceding sections and the importance of the amphitheatre can be seen in the hunt scenes from the Piazza Armerina in Sicily. "On the Great Hunt, the central subject to which all the various episodes are subordinate is the capture and transportation of animals for the amphitheatre, and this justifies the exotic and variegated nature of the quarry and the setting" (Dunbabin, 1978, 54; 96).

However, these types of representations could have another significance. As Wiedemann asserts, "within their mansions, too, both the rich and the not-so-rich needed to

be reminded of the power of nature, and reassured that they ultimately dominated that nature" (Wiedemann, 1992, 66). Thus, both the hunting scenes and the amphitheatre scenes of *bestiarii* and beasts could fulfill this possible function. A mosaic from Reims of the Antonine/Severan period portrayed the amphitheatre animals which might be encountered during the games, along with the actual fights between the *bestiarius* and the animals (97). Another engaging example is found in the audience chamber of House 1 at Rudston. The central medallion contains the image of Venus being surprised at her bath by a triton, while the panels surrounding her bear the representations of animals, *bestiarii* and the implements of the amphitheatre hunt (98). Johnston interprets these men of the amphitheatre as savage and uncivilised due to their 'less-than-perfect' representation. He asserts that these 'sub-human' figures were representative of the uncivilised and disordered regions of the earth, rather than simply the portrayal of mortal hunters in the amphitheatre (Johnston, 1987, 12-13). He further notes that Venus' presence could allude to her role as patroness of the amphitheatre or as a symbol of the victory over destructive forces (ibid., 14-15). However, I suggest that this mosaic is a straightforward representation of the pursuits of the amphitheatre. Its presence in the audience chamber of the villa lends further meaning to its symbolism - as a motif of the status and wealth of the owner. I do not deny that this mosaic could also represent a reference to man's victory over the forces of the natural world, but I suggest that this is portrayed through the traditional juxtaposition of man and beast rather than through the quality of the images of the human hunters.

The use of hunt tableaux as an allegory for the struggle between humans and the natural and supernatural forces is also conceivable for hunting scenes found in other contexts besides mosaics. It is worth noting that scenes of the hunt and amphitheatre, with their emphasis of the struggle between man and nature, might also be found on everyday objects such as glass or pottery vessels (99 & 100). Also, hunt scenes on funerary monuments could allude to the victory of the soul over death - the ultimate force of nature; or again, the representation could simply refer to the interests and pursuits in life which the deceased might have had. For instance, a sarcophagus of a child, from Ajaccio on Corsica, bears scenes of a hunt in a forest (101). It is more likely that the representation refers to the victory of the soul over death since the child probably had no chance in life to participate in such an adult activity. As far as I know, there are no examples of this type of scene from Roman Britain. However, Gaul has nineteen funerary reliefs bearing the image of the hunt. A tombstone from Châlons-sur-Marne portrayed the deceased man on horseback pursuing a stag while to his left a servant or hunt-beater stands with a horn (102). Again, there is no

way to be certain of the intention and significance behind the utilisation of these representations. However, we can hypothesise that their meaning was influenced both by the desire to depict one's interests and status, and also the need to assert one's dominance over nature and the death that it could bring.

WHEN WOMAN REPRESENTS CULTURE AND MAN SYMBOLISES NATURE

As was noted in the early sections of this chapter, the relation of woman to nature is often an ambiguous one (see Ortner, 1974). Therefore, within cultural systems which associate woman with nature, the female form may also be utilised as a symbol of culture. I will briefly explore this idea through an analysis of the representations of the Muses. The Muses, though not especially common on monuments or mosaics from Roman Britain and Gaul, were nevertheless a frequent artistic motif throughout the Roman empire. Nine Muses were born of the union of Zeus and the Titaness Mnemosyne (Memory). These patronesses of learning and the arts were associated with various activities: Calliope with epic poetry; Clio with history and lyre playing; Euterpe with lyric poetry, tragedy and the flute; Melpomene with tragedy and the lyre; Terpsichore with choral dancing and the flute; Erato with love poetry, hymns to the gods and the lyre; Polyhymnia with sacred music and dancing; Urania with astronomy; and Thalia with comedy (Morford & Lenardon, 1991, 88). The Muses appear four times in Roman Britain. The best example of their representation is found on the Brantingham mosaic bearing the busts of nine women with nimbuses encircling their heads **(103)**. The original interpretation of these nine panels was that they represented Tyches. However, none of these female figures wear a discernible mural crown, and their number makes it more likely that they were representative of the Muses (Ling, 1991). The wall-painting of this room seems to have depicted similar images of these female figures. The room in which this mosaic and wall decoration was situated has been identified as an audience chamber. Therefore, the cultural reference made with the figures of the nine Muses is appropriate as it advertises the perceived learning and status of the owner, an indicator of his/her position in the social hierarchy of the local Roman community. The motif of the Muses is quite a common one in North Africa with at least thirteen examples known; some bearing the Muses on their own and others pairing them with Apollo, poets, etc. A third century AD mosaic from Sousse in North Africa makes the connection between the Muses and culture even more clear. Here, Clio and Melpomene flank the seated figure of Virgil holding a scroll copy of his Aeneid **(104)**. This allusion to culture could also be found in other contexts. For example, Espérandieu identified a fragment of unknown

provenance from Germany as a possible funerary relief with the Muse holding a theatre mask (1918, 348; **105**).

Male images associated with nature are also known. One of the more common motifs was the Winds. In Roman Britain, the image of the Winds is most frequently found on mosaics, with a total of eleven possible examples (see Appendix 4, Table 6). The *triclinium* at Frampton bears the central medallion of Bacchus and surrounding panels of Mars, Neptune, Apollo and Jupiter. Each corner panel carries the image of a male Wind depicted holding conch shells and with wings sprouting from their hair **(106)**. If we remember the frequent link between Bacchus and the Seasons, it is not surprising that he was also paired with these personifications of natural forces. This juxtaposition of the central Bacchic figure or scene with the surrounding Winds is also found at East Coker, Fifehead Neville and Pitney. The Winds are also portrayed in sculptural form. A tombstone from York of the late first-beginning of the second century AD bears the common funerary motif of a head of a Wind, in reference to the action of the Winds' influence on the soul (Tufi, 1983, 52; **107**).

Though it is not a common motif in Roman Britain and Gaul, the centaur is another reference to nature through the male form. Within Greek mythology, only two centaurs - Chiron and Photus - were believed to be lawful and just; the rest of the centaurs were represented as disorderly, chaotic, uncontrollable and wild. The Centaurs are examples of nature at its worst, as unpredictable and destructive. The wild aspect of nature is apparent in their hybrid form of human male and equine, and thus their connection to nature is clear (Kirk, 1970, 152-160). Du Bois notes that "as liminal beings, half-horse, half-men, they [Centaurs] tested the boundaries between man and beast, between nature and culture" (1982, 32). Greek art often depicted the Centaurs within the well-known myth of the Lapith wedding, where they drank too much and tried to steal and rape the Lapith maidens. Thus, the emphasis in these representations was on the destructive aspect of their character and their close association with wild nature. Some Roman examples are more benign in their representation. For instance, a mosaic from Saint-Columbe from the end of the second century AD simply depicts the Centaur alone, rather than in the process of wreaking devastation on human culture. The panel bearing the Centaur was accompanied by images of Venus with Cupids, the Seasons, Cupid on a panther and chariot race scenes **(108a & 108b)**.

Despite these ambiguities in the allusion to nature and culture through the female and male form, it is important to understand that the majority of images representative of nature employ the female form. The female figure is utilised in the conception of the forces of nature that are hostile to man (Scylla), as representative of the fearful aspects of nature and death (the Gorgon), or as an appropriate symbol for the cycle and abundance of life and in an attempt to assert human dominance over that nature (the Seasons). However, ambiguities do exist and imply that aspects of both the male and female could sometimes be utilised as symbols of both nature and culture.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has attempted to articulate the distinction created between woman-nature and man-culture in Greco-Roman society and its manifestation in the visual imagery of the period. We must first acknowledge the difficulties inherent in the utilisation of dichotomies in the study of any period, and that any analysis which uses dualisms lends itself to critique. However, I suggest that binary oppositions were a fundamental facet of the Greco-Roman perception of the world around them. The often valued differentiation between male and female was prevalent, and the manifestation of this differentiation took a variety of forms. The construction of the female as Other has already been observed and analysed. The distinction between woman-nature and man-culture was a further facet of this construction. Thus, the creation of a relationship between women and nature contributed to the Roman construction of Otherness and women's place in that construction.

As was observed in Chapter 3, the construction of female as Other was utilised as a factor in the self-definition of the Roman citizen male. We can view the association between woman and nature as a further tool in this self-definition. For instance, the agricultural metaphors that related woman to nature placed the male in the position of culture and thus defined the Roman male as an essential actor in both biological and cultural reproduction. At the same time, the ideological association between woman and nature again placed the Roman citizen male in a hierarchically superior position. Visual images could also function within the articulation of the nature:culture dichotomy, and as an instrument in self-definition. This is especially apparent in the images found on mosaics within the domestic context. The images were utilised in the articulation of a distinction between woman and man, nature and culture, and this distinction was an essential facet in the self-glorification

and advertisement of the status and prestige of the owner of the villa or urban house. The desire to assert one's authority and control over the environment and community is apparent in the architectural and decorative elaboration of the elite villas and town-houses. Images such as the Medusa could underline the power and status of the owner by both appropriating and neutralising the powers of nature. In addition, the association between the owner and cultural forces such as Orpheus could be utilised to emphasise his/her social position.

The visual representations which correlated women with nature were not simply constructed as another facet of Otherness. Of course, the perceived connection between the two could be and sometimes functioned as an assertion of the distinction between culture and women/nature e.g. the example of the visual imagery of the Gorgon. The postulated link between women and nature was utilised as a way to mark a perceived difference between women and men, and this difference was valued on a hierarchical scale. Utilising the female form to symbolise the natural forces resulted in the creation of a more benign presence for Nature. This in turn underlined the perception that humankind was higher in the structural hierarchy over nature. However, we must also acknowledge that the female importance in biological reproduction was a probable contributing factor in the choice of the female form to represent nature and for the traditional metaphorical association between women's fertility with the abundance of the earth. The most important point to be derived from this chapter is again the ambiguity of visual imagery within the social context of the Roman period. The female figure as nature expressed a plurality of meanings and was utilised in a variety of contexts. Thus, while her equation with nature was one way to mark difference between men and women and also to express the dominance of culture over nature, it could also have been an acknowledgment of the female centrality to and power within the all-important social reproduction of Roman provincial society.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the equation between women and nature seems to have continued throughout Western history, though I will only briefly touch upon this point here (see Bordo, 1996; Merchant, 1989; Warner, 1996 for more detail). Different conceptions of nature, frequently coloured by perceptions of the female and vice versa, can be observed. For instance, scholars during the early Judaeo-Christian period viewed nature as a wilderness which had to be overcome and even tamed - a metaphor for the climb towards a perfect religious life. This echoes the early Christian sentiments which emphasised the need to transcend the feminine in order to attain spirituality and reason (Merchant, 1989, 131; see Ch. 2 and 3). Merchant notes that two prevalent historical views

of nature have focused on a nurturing mother earth who graces humankind with her bounty in contrast to the disorder, violence and chaos of a female Nature which must be fought for access to her abundance and resources. "Both [of these images] were identified with the female sex and were projections of human perceptions onto the external world" (Merchant, 1989, 2). However, it seems most thought-provoking to end with a more modern image of female Nature found in an extract from Murder in Mesopotamia by Agatha Christie. This text utilised the figure of Hercule Poirot to establish the relationship between the female and nature:

> "Poirot broke off suddenly and addressed the young man in a personal, highly confidential manner.
>
> '*Mon ami*, let this be a lesson to you. You are a man. Behave, then, like a man! It is against Nature for a man to grovel. Women and Nature have almost exactly the same reactions! Remember it is better to take the largest plate within reach and fling it at a woman's head than it is to wriggle like a worm whenever she looks at you!"
>
> (Christie, 1936, 174-175)

CHAPTER 5

PERSONIFICATION AND THE FEMALE FORM

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 3 and 4 addressed the ideological construction of woman in relation to Otherness and nature. This chapter and the following one will focus upon another facet of the ideological construction of femaleness: the association between women and ideals. I will first examine the background to Greco-Roman personification and allegory within the realms of literature, mythology, religion and art. However, I will focus specifically on the 'allegory of the female form' in the visual representation of personifications (Warner, 1996). The various manifestations of abstract concepts through female imagery will be explored, as will the reasons behind the incarnation of personifications in the female form.

5.2 PERSONIFICATION AND ALLEGORY

Stafford, in her thesis on personification in Greek thought, defines personification as "an anthropomorphic representation of any non-human thing", mostly of abstract ideas, "indicating a quality, a state of being, an emotion" (1998a, 18-19). Thus, an intangible concept acquires a physical form and description through literary presence and visual imagery. Stafford further notes that there were two different types of Greek personification. One type is exemplified by the figure of Aphrodite as representative of 'love personified' in reference to Aphrodite's traditional sphere of influence; while the second type is exhibited in the figure of Hygeia to refer to 'health personified' as she depicts Health in anthropomorphic form (ibid., 16-17).

Personification is an essential element in the construction of allegory in Greco-Roman thought. Hinks asserts that "it is the mark of an allegory that its *dramatis personae* are abstract concepts: they have no separate existence or legend, such as the characters of myth enjoy; and as a rule they are created *ad hoc*, to suit a particular situation" (1976, 16-17). Allegory was constructed through two different methods in ancient thought and

rhetoric. The first, creative narration, consisted of a "chain of metaphors by which an abstract intellectual concept could be made accessible to the concrete imagination" (ibid., 4). Analytical interpretation, however, was a "technique of extracting the metaphysical notions implicity in a complex of imagery" (ibid., 4). This last technique seems to be essential to the understanding of personification in visual imagery. The allegorical intention behind the creation of personification influenced the form which the symbol took in the literary or visual portrayal. A simple allegory might consist of a single figure with attributes, while complex imagery might rely upon the interaction of various personified abstractions in order to yield the final allegory. For instance, the Seasons could represent both types of allegory. A single figure with appropriate attributes might represent a certain Season, while the presence of all four Seasonal figures symbolised the annual cycle of life and fertility. Hinks notes that another type of allegorical personification was constructed when a mythical or historical person or event was further strengthened through the presence of anthropomorphic personified psychological abstracts e.g. a hero with his personified virtues (1976, 13-16).

The classical tradition which constructed personified abstractions within literature, visual imagery, thought and religion influenced their utilisation in later periods within the Western world. Despite the classical connection between personified abstracts and the Greco-Roman deities, personfication was also found in Christian allegory. For example, Yates describes a fresco by Andrea da Firenze from the chapter house of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. This painting depicts the allegorical representation of the 'Wisdom of Thomas Aquinas'. Thomas Aquinas is the central figure flanked by the flying figures of the cardinal and theological virtues and the seated saints and patriarchs of the Christian church. In the lower panel there are female figures representing Aquinas' wide-ranging knowledge of the seven liberal arts and the seven theological disciplines. Seated in front of these female personifications were portrayals of the famous male participants in each art or discipline (Yates, 1966, 7-80; 109). This juxtaposition of the female personification with the male actor is an interesting one. Though the female form was deemed an appropriate vessel for the symbolism of the abstract concepts, I believe that it is significant that the mortal figures who represented the actual practice of these concepts were male. Though the female form might be considered a suitable symbol for the abstract concepts and ideals to be aspired to, the actual practice of these concepts was perceived as restricted to the male sphere. This notion is further addressed in section 5.5.

One of the most well-known references to personification and allegory from the later western tradition is found in Cesare Ripa's Iconologia, written in the late 1500s. This book is a basic catalogue of personifications and allegorical figures to be found in baroque and rococo imagery, both visual and textual. Ripa detailed the various personified figures with their attributes, origins, and visual manifestation (ix-x). Stafford notes that Ripa seems to have started a trend where a whole genre of such 'handbooks' of personifications arose in order to aid the artists in 'getting it right' in their representation of these figures (Stafford, pers. comm.). Ripa's sources for these figures and their representation were derived from classical authors, Biblical influence, and texts from the Middle Ages (Ripa, Iconologia, ix-x). It is interesting to examine a few examples with their descriptions. The figure of Lewdness was depicted through a scantily clad young woman who fondles and caresses a blindfolded Cupid (ibid., 70). Chastity was portrayed through the figure of a young woman all in white carrying a sieve. This sieve is a reference to the classical legend of the Vestal Virgin Tuccia, who proved her chastity by carrying water from the Tiber to the Temple of Vesta in a sieve without spilling a drop. The significance being that both the sieve and the woman were whole vessels (ibid., 48; Warner, 1996, 242). Male personifications were also detailed, such as Intelligence, Treason and Society.

5.3 PERSONIFICATION IN GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE

The Greco-Roman world of personification was both intangible and tangible. Some abstract concepts were barely present within the literature and rarely visible in the art; others were imbued with specific functions, descriptions and characteristics. Some personified abstracts such as Tyche or Fortuna were worshipped and had cult status within Greek and Roman society (Hinks, 1976, 110-111). However, it is difficult to discern just how real these personifications might have seemed within the Greco-Roman world. Padel observes that while the abstract concept might be labelled on a Greek vase or within a text, the perception of this figure by the viewer or reader is unknown (1992, 157-158). Stafford notes in her study of Greek personification that "the absence of specific discussion of personification in the modern technical sense in the majority of ancient texts, despite the wide occurrence of the phenomenon, would suggest that there was no distinct concept in ancient thought. It might even seem that incarnations of abstractions and inanimate things were not generally recognised as distinct from any other kind of imaginary people, or from people who were real, but intangible because dead and buried" (Stafford, 1998a, 18).

Therefore, personifications, while not always as substantial as the Greco-Roman deities and heroes, could have been viewed as aspects of a similar sphere - as potential forces within the lives of the Greek and Roman people. Shapiro, with reference to personification and allegory in Greek thought, states that "the Greeks and Romans, who felt themselves surrounded by countless divine and supernatural powers, naturally made things and ideas into gods, durable and individualised divinities who might take their place in the great pantheon" (1993, 12). Padel sees this as a product of the Greek 'urge' to externalise their feelings and emotions, resulting in the personification or daemonisation of the psychological and metaphysical aspects of the human condition (1992, 157). However, in general, the personality and manifestations of these abstract conceptions were never as concrete and developed as those of the Greco-Roman deities and heroes.

A variety of different types of abstractions and personifications can be found within Greek and Roman thought. These include the personification of physical conditions, social goods, ethical and moral qualities, metaphysical ideas, geographical features, natural phenomena, products of the earth, types of individuals, collective groups, and social enjoyments (Shapiro, 1993, 26). Literary personifications could fulfill several functions. They could be active participants within the tale, metaphorical or allegorical significance could be invoked through their presence or they could be referred to as descriptions on images of art within the text (ibid., 18). Within Greek thought and literature, personifications that appear in the epics of Homer and the plays of the classical playwrights were also used simply as impersonal nouns. This is also true in later Roman texts. Discerning the difference between the noun and personification is often a case of reading between the lines and examining the sentence structure within which they were placed. For example, personification of an abstract is implied through the use of a verb or adjective which described some form of human action, feeling or status (Stafford, 1998a, 20). There are other ways to determine if an abstract is being used simply as a noun or as an active and tangibly-imagined personification. Classical authors often described the kinship system between the traditional deities of the Greek pantheon and the personifications. This genealogical link established the more substantial nature of these figures as personified abstractions (ibid., 21). For instance, in Hesiod's poem The Theogony, Memory and Zeus are the parents of the Muses, while appropriately Strife is the mother of children such as Toil, Famine, Oblivion, Murders and Lawlessness (Hesiod, Theogony, 915-917; 226-232). Also, any link between the personification and an established cult or with statements which confer the concept of deity upon the personified figure suggests that the abstract was

perceived, at least by some readers, as more than a noun (Shapiro, 1993, 14; Stafford, 1998a, 21).

The manifestation, both within textual description and visual imagery, of the various personifications was often dependent upon the meaning of the abstract concept and their function. Thus, some figures were described or represented in a manner appropriate to their significance. For instance, in Book II of Ovid's Metamorphoses, the poet describes Minerva's encounter with Envy:

> When the warlike maiden goddess came to the cave, she stood without, for she might not enter that foul abode, and beat upon the door with end of spear. The battered doors flew open; and there, sitting within, was Envy, eating snakes' flesh, the proper food of her venom. At the horrid site the goddess turned away her eyes. But that other rose heavily from the ground, leaving the snakes' carcasses half consumed, and came forward with sluggish step. When she saw the goddess, glorious in form and armour, she groaned aloud and shaped her countenance to match the goddess' sigh. Pallor o'erspreads her face and her whole body seems to shrivel up. Her eyes are all awry, her teeth are foul with mould; green, poisonous gall o'erflows her breast, and venom drips down from her tongue. She never smiles, save at the sight of another's troubles; she never sleeps, disturbed with wakeful cares; unwelcome to her is the sight of men's success, and with the sight she pines away; she gnaws and is gnawed, herself her own punishment.
>
> (Ovid, 2.764-782)

Personifications might also be recognised by their various attributes e.g. Fortuna often holds a cornucopia and rudder while standing or placing one foot on a globe. However, identification through attributes is problematic due to the prevalence of different personified abstractions sharing the same or similar attributes. Also, their representation and attributes are often not consistent making their identification even more difficult. These attributes might also change over time and in different contexts or places. Shapiro also notes that "...in the majority of cases, personifications are clearly less individualized than other divinities and mythological characters, hence less easily recognizable on the basis of iconographic detail" (1993, 15). Therefore, while literature may make clear the personifications within the story through their naming and vivid description, visual representation is frequently less reliable. Indeed, the fifth and fourth century BC Greek vases labelled the personifications depicted because most only acquired their distinguishable attributes in the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Stafford, pers. comm). Unfortunately, Roman visual personifications are also frequently difficult to identify. Many Roman

personifications were simply portrayed through an idealised figure with few, shared or even no attributes.

Finally, I would like to address the deification of abstract concepts during the Roman period. Axtell asserts that we must search for external evidence of worship in order to determine whether a personification has been deified. These could include evidence for public worship through the existence of temples, priests and festivals dedicated to the personified abstract; shrines and altars dedicated to the personification which can indicate both public and personal worship; and the reference in formulae to the personification coupled with words which imply a concept of deity such as *sacrum, deus* or *dea* (Axtell, 1907, 7-8). An interesting passage from Cicero's De Legibus, dating from the second half of the first century BC, discusses the religious laws he feels appropriate to an ideal state. He asserts that the only personified abstractions that should be deified are the virtues and desirable conditions:

> It is a good thing also that *Intellect, Piety, Virtue and Good Faith should be arbitrarily deified*; and in Rome temples have been dedicated by the State to all these qualities, the purpose being that those who possess them (and all good men do) should believe that the gods themselves are established within their own souls. For that was a bad thing which was done at Athens on the advice of Epimenides the Cretan, when after the crime of Cylon had been expiated, they established a temple to Disgrace and Insolence; for it is proper to deifiy the virtues *but not the vices*. The ancient altar to Fever on the Palatine and the one to Bad Fortune on the Esquiline as well as all other abominations of that character must be done away with. But if we must invent names for gods, we ought rather to choose such titles as Vica Pota, derived from Victory and Power, and Stata, from the idea of standing firm, and such epithets as those of the Strengthener and the Invincible, which are given to Jupiter; also the names of things which we should desire, such as Safety, Honour, Wealth, and Victory. And since the mind is encouraged by the anticipation of good things, Calatinus was right in deifying Hope also. We may also have as gods Fortune, or the Fortune of This Day, for that applies to every day, or Fortune the Provident, that she may help us, or Chance Fortune, which refers particularly to the uncertainty of future events, or First-born Fortune, our companion from birth.
>
> (Cicero, De Legibus, 2.11.28)

Axtell's study on the deification of abstract concepts explores evidence from literary texts and inscriptions from both the Republic and the Empire (Axtell, 1907). One important aspect that he addresses is the question of the origins of deified abstractions during the

Roman period. He views their origins as arising from a combination of elements: the deification of abstractions was a fundamental aspect of Roman thought and religion while the process of deification was also derived from the frequent association of personifications with the major classical deities. While some deified abstractions might have arisen from the simple worship of a few more concrete aspects within Roman thought, others might have begun as an additional quality of a deity which eventually became worshipped separately e.g. Jupiter Liber (ibid., 59-64). The early Republican period saw the establishment and evolution of state cults to various abstractions such as Fortuna, Concordia, Salus, Victoria, Virtus, and Bonus Eventus, reflecting a desire to promote public moral virtues (ibid., 11-30; Liebeschuetz, 1979, 51). Thus, "to dedicate a temple to an abstract deity was of course to make a public affirmation of the importance of that particular quality. But if cult has any meaning the worship implied that a supernatural power was interested in a particular kind of behaviour, and would help to make it prevail among its worshippers" (ibid., 52).

During the late Republic, the deification of abstract concepts tapered off, but the trend was re-developed during the imperial period. As the figure of the emperor came to be perceived as divine at his death, the juxtaposition of the deified abstractions with the figure of the emperor could be used as a kind of flattery (Axtell, 1907, 32). Axtell asserts that "not only were the old deities specialized and restricted to the performance of this function of flattery..., but new deifications were frequently made as often as any quality of the emperor, or any desirable condition pertaining to his house or reign, seemed particularly prominent" (ibid., 32). Hinks notes that abstractions such as Clementia, Indulgentia and Providentia became associated with the imperial cult (Hinks, 1976, 110). However, the positive evidence for cult worship of the deified abstractions during imperial times, while present, was more limited than that found in the earlier Republican period.

Textual evidence for deified abstractions is often problematic due to the confusion between an impersonal noun, a simple personification and a deified abstraction. Different authors presented varying viewpoints on these abstractions and their qualities of deity (Axtell, 1907, 67-68). Axtell notes that allusions to personfications are found as early as the third century BC in the works of Plautus. However, his varied utilisation of abstractions in etymological punning, as characters in his plays and sometimes with reference to their deification makes it difficult to discern their full significance during this period. Varro's texts were the first instances where the deification of these concepts was straightforwardly addressed. He, and later Cicero, takes pains to separate the deified abstractions from the

pantheon of the major deities. They might be regarded as genuine divine entities, but were often still less tangible and active than the major gods and goddesses (ibid., 69-74). The imperial period saw even less scholarly attention from the ancient authors. Virgil seems to have continued the Greek tradition in his utilisation of personifications with references seen in the Aeneid. However, he draws little association between these abstractions and the Roman religious system. The deified abstractions were also regarded with scepticism by some Roman authors. Tacitus mentions their frequent employment in the flattery of the emperor which probably influenced and enhanced the sceptical reactions by many ancient authors. It is also worth noting that the presence of a deified quality within a literary text does not necessarily reflect its prominence within Roman religious worship. Liebeschuetz observes that Silius Italicus' poem Punica describes the importance of Fides or Faith in Roman minds and the Roman world. However, within religion, Fides was a minor cult with whose authority was quite restricted (Liebeschuetz, 1979, 176-179).

The expansion of Christianity in the late empire revealed two reactions to these personifications. The Christian emperors were often tolerant of the utilisation of personified abstract concepts because they were mainly virtues and thus could easily be allied with God (ibid., 77-84). Indeed, some Christian scholars utilised these abstractions for inspiration and emulation, and in order to aid in the development of one's spiritual soul (Warner, 1996, 82). However, the Church Fathers often criticised the deification of abstractions. Axtell asserts that "in their attack upon the old Roman religion the early Christian writers...selected the deified abstractions for attack as one of the weak points of the system. All urge the charge that was brought out by Cotta in Cicero's De natura deorum..., that these were mental notions without substance or life, masquerading as divine entities" (1907, 85).

Axtell also explores the epigraphic evidence for the worship of personifications. Inscriptions reveal the possibility of both personal and public worship of a variety of deified abstractions. This worship could range from popular interest manifested in shrines and feasts, priests and guilds, or simply a personal interest in dedicating to the personification due to singular reasons (Axtell, 1907, 86). For instance, the mosaic from Room 10 of Woodchester, a postulated reception room, bears the images of satyrs and maenads, Cupids, and a possible central figure of Bacchus. Henig and Soffe assert that "domestic cult is represented by the admonition on...[this pavement] to 'worship Bonus Eventus duly'" (1993, 2; 110). One of the more important deified abstracts during the Empire was Salus, the goddess of welfare and health (Axtell, 1907, 13). A dedication to Salus has been found on

an altar from Caerleon, dated to the early third century AD. The imagery on this altar was of a possible female bust with broad shoulders. No attributes were discernible, and thus the identification of the figure as Salus herself is uncertain (Brewer, 1986, 6-7; 111).

Despite their deification and prevalence in Roman culture, many of the Roman personifications seem to have had limited character, unlike their Greek counterparts whose descriptions and personalities were sometimes elaborated with their own myths and legends (Axtell, 1907, 59-60). Personifications were often viewed as "transparent projections of mental concepts without saga or personality, and were excluded from the rank of the chief gods, since their presence and potency were not so strongly felt" (ibid., 86). The majority of personifications were perceived as mere qualities which contrasted with the often more human treatment of the classical pantheon. The literary distinction between the very human actions and personalities of the classical divinities and the deified abstractions was frequently made clear. This is also reflected in the frequent utilisation of these abstractions as deified qualities of particular people or as cognomina of other divinities (ibid., 86-91). This lack of individuality was often reflected in the manner of their portrayal in visual imagery where some personifications were almost interchangeable and shared many of the same attributes. While they were acknowledged as qualities to aspire to and hope for, and often deified in the process, the majority of personifications never gained the more concrete character nor the significance of the major Roman divinities.

5.4 PERSONIFICATION AND THE FEMALE FORM

It is necessary to explore the predominant characteristic of Greco-Roman personification: the representation of abstract concepts in the female form. In the third and fourth chapters of this thesis, I analysed the association of the female with Otherness and with nature in Roman society and visual imagery. This equation of woman with the outside or the margins of culture, with its emphasis on her carnality, irrationality, weakness and her need to transcend her nature, seems to leave little room for woman to be associated with ideals or virtue. However, this is the thought-provoking paradox with which we are now faced. Despite the ideological construction of the female as Other, as external to culture, the female form is also clearly linked with the personification of ideal abstract concepts in both Roman text and imagery. Stafford notes that, within Greek thought, literature and imagery, most personifications are depicted as female, especially the abstracts which are regarded as

positive or 'good things' such as prosperity (Stafford, 1998b, 43). This is also true for the personification of abstractions during the Roman period. Padel states that "if we take the personifications seriously, we must take their predominant femaleness seriously too" (1992, 160). So how can we explain this irony?

GRAMMATICAL GENDER AND PERSONIFICATION

I would like to first note that my background is not in linguistics. Therefore, I have relied upon other scholars in order to summarise the relevant points of discussion on this topic. This section is fairly brief; the topic of grammatical gender and personification is quite a large one and cannot be fully addressed here, though I have attempted to draw out the major and most pertinent material. Many scholars explain the representation of abstractions in male or female form through the linguistic structure of Greek and Latin. In general, many Greek and Latin abstract nouns are gendered feminine, and with very few exceptions, these abstractions are represented through the female form in both text and art (see Shapiro, 1993 for Greek personification). This connection between grammatical gender and representation was emphasised in the 'natural gender theory' of the nineteenth century which claimed that "grammatical gender reflects biological sex" (Stafford, 1998b, 46). Thus, the personifications of abstract concepts such as virtue (*arete* in Greek, *virtus* in Latin) were depicted as female, in accordance with the feminine gender of the abstract nouns. Other abstract concepts associated with virtue, knowledge, and spirituality were also predominantly feminine in grammatical and representative gender. This trend was continued in languages that are related to Greek and Latin (Warner, 1996, 64). However, Warner, in reference to the work of the linguistic historian Meillet, notes that grammatical gender is illogical and often incoherent; the association between certain nouns with the masculine or feminine gender is frequently unclear (ibid., 66). Thus, the idea of grammatical gender as an influence on the representation of abstract concepts is simply a starting point for our analysis of personfication through the female form.

It is useful, therefore, to explore other facets of grammatical gender and personification. Warner notes that the utilisation of gender for abstract nouns leads to their perception as animate and their consequent anthropomorphic representation in both text and image. Secondly, Greek and Latin feminine nouns are more often nouns of action, rather than agent nouns. Warner uses the following triad from Latin as an example: *ago* (to act), *actor* (actor - masculine), and *actio* (action - feminine). Of course, exceptions exist, but the pattern is fairly consistent. Finally, feminine forms of agent words are frequently based on

the original masculine nouns such as *dominus* and *domina*. Thus, the feminine versions are often perceived as subordinate (Warner, 1996, 67-68). Warner sums up the patterns by asserting that "feminine gender is animate, it was named by grammarians after the biological maternal role of female animals, it depends for its verbal formation on the masculine, and it often describes effects of actions" (ibid., 68).

Warner further observes that, within personification, "congruity with the female character was hardly ever adduced. Rather, the oddness of language's alignments provoked comment" (Warner, 1996, 64). She asserts that the representation of aspirational conceptions like justice or ideals related to the soul through female personifications was frequently a source of unease. The equation between these abstractions and the female form was often questionable in the Greco-Roman societies which advocated the political and cultural exclusion of women and the common belief, based on Aristotle, that women were simply defective males (ibid., 64). Indeed, as Warner notes, some ancient scholars attempted to rationalise this perceived irreconcilable pairing. Philo, during the first century AD, wrote: "How, pray, can Wisdom, the daughter of God, be rightly spoken of as a father? Is it because while Wisdom's name is feminine, her nature is manly? As indeed all the virtues have women's titles, but powers and activities of consummate men. For that which comes after God, even though it were chiefest of all other things, occupies a second place, and therefore was termed feminine to express its contrast with the Maker of the Universe who is masculine....For pre-eminence always pertains to the masculine, and the feminine always comes short of and is lesser than it" (On Flight and Finding, 51). This rather contrived explanation implies that the possession of these abstracts by men and their derivation from God made them secondary to the primary position of God and man, and consequently determined their grammatical gender and representation in the inferior female form. As the ideal concepts were ultimately utilised and controlled by the male, they were subordinated to his superior nature. However, Philo's explanation seems illogical because one would think that the derivation of these concepts from the male Maker of the Universe would imbue them not with inferiority but with an aspect of ascendancy. Nevertheless, it does reveal the lengths to which some ancient scholars would go in order to explain away the connection of the female with the abstractions of ideals.

We must also acknowledge the problem of 'the chicken and the egg.' Within language development, scholars are uncertain whether the female personification was developed from the grammatical gender of the abstract noun or vice versa. Padel describes

the argument over priority between language and myth/personification during the nineteenth century. She points out that the opinions on this subject were variable. She quotes Usener as postulating: "The first creation of the word must have been inspired by some idea of a living, personal being...The feminine adjective only became an abstraction after it had denoted a female personage" (Usener, 1948 from Padel, 1992, 160). In contrast, other scholars suggested that the image derived from the abstraction (Padel, 1992, 160). However, the question of which came first is perhaps not the important point. Rather, it is significant that the expression of abstract concepts and ideals was predominantly through the female form, and probably both language and the visual and textual image influenced each other. Padel asserts that "...languages evolve where people with specific ideas - about femaleness, and about femaleness in relation to other things - are speaking them. Language both influences and is influenced by the culture that uses it. Either the Greeks, or some other dimly defined culture we cannot get back to, attributed animate multiple femininity to abstract conditions of mind and body" (ibid., 161). This trend seems to have continued in the development of Latin and other Indo-European languages.

Finally, Stafford notes Yaguello's research on the association between grammatical gender and symbolism. Yaguello questions whether the use of feminine and masculine gender in language was simply a random, nominal classification or whether it was derived from perceptions of the female and the male. Ultimately, however, it does not really matter whether gender determined the symbol or the symbol determined the grammatical gender. An ideological construction of gender, on some level, must be present within the associations (Stafford, 1998b, 46). We cannot uncritically associate linguistic gender, the personification of abstract conceptions in the female form and the perceptions and social roles of men and women in Roman society. As Warner notes, the laws of grammatical gender do not present us with a straightforward explanation for the manifestation of social practice within a culture (1996, 69). Nevertheless, we can assume that perceptions of the male and female were both influenced by and influential on the language and the representation of the abstract concepts.

5.5 THE PARADOX OF FEMALE PERSONIFICATION

> *"Often the recognition of a difference between the symbolic order, inhabited by ideal, allegorical figures, and the actual order, of judges, statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, inventors, depends on the unlikelihood of women practicing the concepts they represent."*
>
> (Warner, 1996, xx)

The first aspect of female personification which requires examination is the relationship between women and the abstractions that were represented in the female form. There are two dichotomous aspects of this relationship to consider. Firstly, many female personification seem easily related to the Roman aspirations and ideals associated with women, though language might also be a factor in their representation. With the heavy emphasis on female chastity within Roman societal ideology, it is no surprise that Pudicitia is personified in the female form. In addition, the three Fates or Parcae are represented in the female form. These female personifications had a more concrete role in mythology than figures like Pudicitia or Abundantia, with allusions to their affect on human lives. In his index to Ovid's Metamorphoses, Miller describes the Fates as three sisters who were the "arbiters of human destiny" (Miller, 1968, 479). The representation of their influence upon human life is described in the metaphor of spinning and thread. For instance, the three Fates were present at the birth of Meleager: "There was a billet of wood which, when the daughter of Thestius lay in childbirth, the three sisters threw into the fire and, spinning the threads of life with firm-pressed thumb, they sang: 'An equal span of life we give to thee and to this wood, O babe new-born" (Ovid, VIII. 452-457). Each sister had her own role in human life. Lachesis was known as the apportioner because she drew off the thread and thus provided the destiny of humans from their birth; Clotho was the spinner and she held the distaff and spun out the thread of human life; and Atropos, known as the inflexible, cut the thread short and thus ended life (Radice, 1973, 116; Howatson, 1989, 232).

This portrayal of the Parcae as the spinners out of fate and life is also seen in visual representations. A third century AD sarcophagus from Aliscamps, Arles, depicted various mythological figures along with the three Parcae at their tasks on the right side of the relief. Lachesis prepares a horoscope, Clotho spins the course of human life and Atropos writes human destiny (**112**). Another example is postulated on a sarcophagus from Koenigshoffen which was dedicated to G(...) Florentina. The inscription panel was flanked by two female Fates - one holds up a distaff and has her other hand held up in the gesture of a spinner,

while the other Fate separates a ball of wool (CIL 13.11633; **113a & 113b**). The noun Parcae is feminine in Latin, and probably in some way influenced the consequent representation of the Fates in female form. However, I also find it thought-provoking that human creation, life and death was conceived through the metaphor of spinning and cloth-work, traditionally the province of women. Possibly the common ideal for women of a life of domesticity and as workers of wool was also a compelling factor in the representation and gender of the personifications of the Fates.

Several personifications popular during the Roman imperial period parallel the earlier observed association between women and fertility, abundance and bounty. Republican and imperial cults and representations were created to such abstractions as Spes, with abundance or 'hope' (continuance?) of the imperial house as possible meanings; Annona, as the goddess of plenty and the grain supply; Fecunditas, or fecundity; Abundantia, or abundance; and of course, the Seasons addressed in Chapter 4 (Axtell, 1907). Abundantia was one of the most frequently occurring personifications in Roman art. There are at least seventy-nine sculptural examples from Gaul and Germany, and two from Britain. However, because Abundantia shared attributes such as the cornucopia with both Fortuna and the Mother-goddesses, the identification of this personification is not always certain. In general, the representation of Abundantia was of a seated or standing female figure holding a cornucopia overflowing with fruits and flowers. She might also carry a loaf of bread, small cake or *patera* filled with fruits **(114-116)**. While the majority of examples were probably dedications to Abundantia, the contexts of her representation were varied. For instance, a sarcophagus of unknown provenance from Gallia Belgica depicted the scene of a marriage ceremony with several figures in attendance. From left to right, we see the figure of Abundance holding aloft a filled cornucopia; three young men and women bearing offerings; a sacrificial scene; a flute-player; and the future husband and wife performing the *dextrarum iunctio* in the presence of Juno and Cupid **(117)**. In this scene, Abundantia probably referred to the fertility to be hoped for in marriage, despite the funerary context of the relief itself. Abundantia might also be found within the domestic context. A mosaic from the audience room at Winterton villa has been tentatively postulated as portraying a bust of Abundantia bearing a cornucopia filled with fruits. However, this figure has also been identified as Venus or Ceres **(118)**.

Other personifications relating to fertility and the earth's bounty are found in the representations of Earth or Tellus. One of the most well-known examples of this figure is

from the Ara Pacis in Rome. The south-east panel of this monument depicted the female figure of Tellus or Italia holding two infants on her lap. She is surrounded by various animals and lush floral growth, and flanked by the female personifications of the breezes which blow over both land and sea (119). The message of fertility for both agricultural produce and social reproduction is outlined with this sculptural relief, with the implication that this new security and opportunity to reap the bounty of peace was due to Augustus' regime (Kleiner, 1992, 96). Examples of this type of personification were also found in the provinces. A sarcophagus of the third century AD from Bordeaux was decorated with a variety of mythological figures and scenes. While scenes from the myth of Endymion and Selene dominate the composition, the half-reclining female Earth was depicted below the goddess' horses. Earth, with one breast bared possibly as a marker of fertility, is surrounded by several animals and holds a full cornucopia (120). Earth/Tellus also appears on mosaics. Two examples are known from Roman Britain. The mosaic from the triclinium of Newton St. Loe depicted a central Orpheus, and a threshold panel bearing an image of a diademed woman which has been identified as Tellus (121). Another example has been proposed on the audience chamber mosaic at Whatley. This fragmentary mosaic panel portrayed a female bust that has variously been described as wearing a mural crown, carrying a cornucopia or holding two corn ears (122). Thus, the identification of this figure as Tellus is not certain, though the attributes of the cornucopia or corn ears implies an association with fertility and abundance that would be appropriate for a personification of the Earth. Further afield, a more certain example is found from Bath E, dated to AD 305-350, in Antioch. This pavement consisted of nine panels bearing various figures. The figure of Earth/Ge is coupled with the female personifications of Aroura or Arable Land and Lakedaimonia (123).

We should also note a factor that is explicit in Warner's above quote: that the Roman abstractions which were represented through the feminine gender in language and image were often not concepts attributed to Roman women or the female sex in general. The personification of v*irtus* is a good example of this point. The feminine-gendered word *virtus* has a variety of meanings ranging from manliness and manhood or "the sum of all the corporeal and mental excellences of a man"; goodness and virtue; excellence and worth; and valour (Lewis and Short, 1966). Axtell further asserts that the Republican cult of Virtus referred to courage in battle, and that Bellona, goddess of war, was often associated with Virtus as her companion or attendant. Virtus was also correlated with the personification of Valour (Axtell, 1907, 25). Silius Italicus describes the path to and high qualities of Virtue through Virtue's remarks to Pleasure: "For neither the wrath of heaven nor the attacks of

enemies are as destructive as you, Pleasure, are on your own once you have wormed yourself into minds. Drunkenness is your ugly companion, and so is Luxury, and Disgraces always flutters around you with black wings. My attendants are Honour and Praise, Renown and Glory with joyful countenance...my household is pure; my dwelling is set on a lofty hill, and it is reached by a steep path" (Punica, 15.95; Liebeschuetz, 1979, 176-177).

With the association between *virtus* and male virtue and inner worth, therefore, the personification of this abstract in feminine form is an intriguing paradox. Warner states that the allegory of the female form was often distinguished from the norm of womanhood and the association of femaleness through the representation of manly dress or appropriate attributes which underlined her relation with manliness. While Warner's statement is mainly in reference to more modern personifications, it seems to be equally applicable to the example of Roman Virtus and Valour. The representation of Virtus as an armed maiden is possibly influenced by the images and significance of Athena/Minerva. This goddess is portrayed as semi-masculine in appearance with her armour and weapons, and within her mythology she is always eager to do battle and rejects women for masculine society. The legitimacy of male authority was also associated with Athena/Minerva and her mythology (Warner, 1996, 124). Thus, the construction of Virtus as a personification of manliness and courage in battle within the same visual mode as Athena/Minerva is reasonable. Her armour and weapons fortify the weaker female body. As the portrayal of the female as warrior obscures both her womanly body and the traditional female nature, the female form is transformed into an appropriate vehicle for the representation of virtues and ideals. As Warner claims, she becomes impermeable to both her inner nature and outside forces (ibid., 250-251).

The figure of Virtus is found on at least four sculptural reliefs from Britain, Gaul and Germany. These reliefs were derived from a variety of contexts. A distance slab of the 6th Legion from Braidfield and dated to c. AD 142-143 depicts two Victories bearing the central inscription and flanked by the figures of Mars and Valour. Valour bears a *vexillum* inscribed with the words *Vir(tus) Aug(usti)* and a sheathed sword (**124**). One of her breasts is bared, perhaps in reference to the Amazon warriors and their courage in battle. Here, however, I would suggest that the reference to the Amazons through the bared breast was not meant to signify Otherness; rather, the emphasis was probably on their reputation as warriors alone. Another example is found on an altar from Bocklemündt (**125**). Again, the female Valour is depicted with one breast bare. She also wears a helmet on her head and

holds a lance and sword. The inscription is dedicated to *Dea Virtus* by the trader Fatalis in order to fulfill a vow (CIL 13, 8299). The last two examples which depict the personification of Virtus or Valour are found on sarcophagi. One from unknown provenance in Narbonnaise and dated to the late empire is decorated with the scene of a lion hunt with hunters both on horseback and on foot. Behind the central rider, representative of the deceased, stands a female figure wearing a helmet, long tunic with belt and holding a weapon. This figure has been postulated as an allegory for courage, and can easily be associated with the personification of manliness and worth depicted through Virtus/Valour (126). The final example is from Reims, the possible sarcophagus of the consul Flavius Jovin (127). The principal face of this sarcophagus again bears the scene of a lion hunt. While the central hunter on horseback spears the lion, we see the armed figure of Virtus/Valour standing behind him. She wears a helmet, and carries a large oval shield and a sword. Once more, this female warrior is depicted in the mode of the Amazons, with one breast bared. Warner notes that the personification of Virtus was often depicted with the male figures of the deceased on sarcophagi and funerary reliefs as a symbol of their inner goodness. Within the context of hunt scenes, the female figure of Virtus/Valour further enhances the male actors victory over nature or death. Warner asserts that the inherent weakness of women makes the victory represented by the female armed figure all the greater because it has been achieved through the transcendance of the female's perceived natural debilities (Warner, 1995, 149-150).

Other personified abstracts are attested in both the Republic and Empire which were represented in the female form while not being overtly associated with the female nature or women themselves. For instance, there were Republican state cults to abstractions such as Mens, the giver of intelligence or Pollentia, physical strength. As we saw in the second and third chapter, women were often perceived as both physically and mentally inferior to men. Thus the female association with intelligence and physical strength through the construction of personifications is thought-provoking. The imperial state cult to Disciplina was also represented through the female form despite the cult's relevance to the army and its association with military discipline (Axtell, 1907, 35). Another abstraction personified by the female form was Iustitia or Justice. As Warner states in reference to the later Medieval and Renaissance periods: "Justice is not spoken of as a woman, nor does she speak as woman in medieval moralites or appear in the semblance of one above City Hall in New York or the Old Bailey in London because women were thought to be just, anymore than they were considered capable of dispensing justice" (Warner, 1996, xix). We have observed

that a great deal of the literature from the Roman imperial period characterised women as outside the boundaries of culture, as proponents of every possible vice and as creatures inferior to the Roman citizen male (see Chs. 2, 3 and 4). This trend is coupled with the paradox observed above: where the female form was frequently utilised in the representation of concepts that were frequently not perceived as integral to women nor as part of their inherent nature.

Before further exploring the rationales behind the representation of the many female abstractions, I will address the female personifications utilised to depict the civilised world and the city. The female figure of Oikoumene, representative of the inhabited earth as a whole, was frequently coupled with the portrayal of the emperor. For instance, the Gemma Augustea consists of two tiers of decoration. The upper level bears the historical figures of Augustus, Tiberius and possibly Germanicus along with several deities and personifications such as Tellus. Augustus is seated towards the center of the cameo, and behind him, Oikoumene holds the *corona civica* above his head. She wears the mural crown in order to symbolise the cities throughout the empire and the civilised world itself. The lower register depicts captive barbarians and the raising of a trophy to proclaim the Roman victory (Kleiner, 1992, 71; see **52**). Though there have been many theories on the historical allusions to military victory on the cameo, it is the upper register's portrayal of Augustus and Oikoumene that interests me. Kleiner notes that this upper register and its imagery "celebrates Augustus's dominion over the civilized world...The Augustan peace, which ensured tranquillity and abundance [Tellus], was built on its military victories as well as on the personal charisma of Jupiter's representative on earth, a man whose legacy included his successor Tiberius and other members of his dynasty, like Germanicus" (ibid., 71). Hinks further states that this juxtaposition of Oikoumene with the emperor, both here and in other representations, yields a powerful message: "The identity of civilization with the imperial rule could hardly be expressed more pregnantly" (Hinks, 1976, 76). Again, the female representation of the civilised world is interesting due to the frequent association of the Roman male citizen with the civilising aspects and the exclusion of women from the political and military sphere which dominated Roman society.

I would also like to examine the figure of Tyche, a frequent motif in Roman imagery. Hinks outlines the three stages of representation of the Greek *polis* or Roman city: (1) a guardian deity or eponymous hero/founder who has personality, legend and cult status; (2) an allegorical figure bearing appropriate attributes, often the recipient of an official cult

but rarely with an independent existence in mythology; and (3) the *tyche* or fortune of a place or city (Hinks, 1976, 67). The first category will not be addressed here. The Greek Tyche, as a patron deity of cities within the religious sphere, was increasingly emphasised during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Matheson notes that "...her divine nature was the result of a complex evolution from idea to personification to goddess that took place mainly in the fourth century BC and the Hellenistic period" (Matheson, 1994, 19). Despite her prominence in Hellenistic and Roman imagery, however, it is important to realise that like many personified abstracts, Tyche had very little presence or individuality in the mythological world. Tyche was perceived as the goddess of fortune and chance and also as a protecting deity over a city or place. The force which she could exert on human lives was often unpredictable, and thus offerings to this deity were frequently made in order to ensure good fortune (ibid., 19). A quote from Polybius summarises her influence on fate and her unpredictability: "But nevertheless this Fortune [Tyche], who never compacts with life, who always defeats our reckoning by some novel stroke; she who ever demonstrates her power by foiling our expectations, now also, as it seems to me, makes it clear to all men, by endowing the Macedonians with the whole wealth of Persia, that she has but lent them those blessings, until she decides to deal differently with them" (Histories, 29.21.3-7).

During the Roman period, Tyche was frequently conflated with the Roman goddess Fortuna. The similar nature of Tyche and Fortuna can be seen in a comparison between Polybius' quote above on Tyche and the following one on Fortuna: "For Fortune is quite capable of dashing reasonable expectations by unexpectable blows; and if she ever helps anyone and throws her weight into her balance, she will again, as if she repented of it, turn the scale against him and in a moment mar all he has achieved" (Histories, 29.22.2-3). Tyche might also be linked with other deities and take on their traits. For instance, at Dura Europos we see Tyche connected with Nemesis - both could bring evil to human lives, though Nemesis' evil was often earned by the recipient while Tyche's was derived through chance (Matheson, 1994, 25). Thus, Tyche could symbolise several things: fortune, chance, and patron deity and protector of both individuals and the city itself.

The iconography of Tyche was based upon the famous image of the Tyche of Antioch by Eutychides. This female figure sits on a rock, symbolic of Mount Silpios, while rising below her feet is a male figure, representative of the Orontes River (Broucke, 1994, 39; 128). Tyche was also depicted wearing the turreted walls of the mural crown upon her head and holding a cornucopia. Several images of Tyche survive from Britain and Gaul.

She might be depicted as the protector deity associated with a specific city or simply in the more general sense, as a goddess of chance and protection. Espérandieu catalogues several tutelary female figures who have been postulated as the personifications of specific cities. For instance, a female bust wearing the high walls of the mural crown has been identified as the personification of Marseille (**129**). Another fine example, with the city walls modeled in some detail, is possibly the personification of Lutèce (**130**). Other images of Tyche might bear references to their locale in order to enhance their identity. The personification of Seurre was portrayed wearing the traditional mural crown and holding a *patera* filled with fruit. To her left, a small boat above an overturned urn is depicted beside a trident. Thus, these maritime references allude to the city's location near the river Saône (**131**). One image draws upon the attributes of Fortuna, thus underlining Tyche's conflation with this deity during the Roman period. This standing female figure is wearing the mural crown and holding a cornucopia, and has been proposed as the protector deity of Vienne. To her right side, the fragmentary remains of some type of long attribute, possibly a rudder, is seen (**132**). Despite the identification of many of these images with specific cities, it must be understood that without attributes explicitly linked to the identified locale, it is difficult to know whether the Tyche figure was a general reference or a personified city protector. This can also be seen in the figure of Tyche which has been postulated in the domestic setting of a town-house from Silchester. A mosaic from Building 2 in Insula 14 bears the image of a female bust wearing a mural crown (**133**). There is no way of knowing if this figure refers to the city of Silchester itself or as a personal *tyche* who might be looked to for fortune and luck by the house-owner.

Religious reference is also made to the tutelary goddess or Tyche. An altar from Bordeaux bears the seated image of the goddess, again with mural crown and a cornucopia. She is flanked by a possible dog and a bull. The dedication is [*Tut(elae)*] *Aug(ustae)*. (CIL 13.587; **134**). Another altar, quite weathered and fragmentary and also from Bordeaux, placed the protector goddess above the inscription and between a man standing near an altar and another man with a bull. One side of the altar bears the image of a boar, while the other depicts a horned god leaning on an overturned urn flowing with water and holding an anchor. The altar, dated to AD 237, was dedicated *Deae Tutel(a)e Bou(r)dig(alae)* by Marcus Aurelius Lunaris, and reference was made to the province of *Britannia inferior* and the city of York. The images on this altar have been identified as the tutelary goddess of Bordeaux, with the horned god as representative of the river Garonne or the inner gate of Bordeaux and the boar as symbolic of York (Espérandieu, 1925, 207; **135**). Finally, a relief

from Birrens depicts Brigantia, the tutelary goddess of the Brigantes. The variety of attributes that she bears have been associated with other deities and personifications. "The spear, shield, and gorgon-medallion are appropriate to Minerva, goddess of war, while the wings imply a degree of identification with Victory, and the globe and omphalos-stone are attributes of Juno Caelestis. The turreted crown suggests a role as protectoress of her tribe, or of a major city" (Keppie and Arnold, 1984, 12-13; **136**).

What might the connection be between the concept of *tyche* and the female form? There are a variety of possibilities. Both Tyche and Tutela are feminine-gendered nouns in Greek and Latin respectively, and this factor could have influenced the representation of these personifications. It is again intriguing that the figure of woman was utilised as a symbol of the city, especially since the Greco-Roman city was perceived as primarily the province of the male citizen. Metzler addresses the significance of the female Tyche and the attribute of her mural crown in the art of the Near East and Greece. He notes that the female form of Tyche might be linked to the concept of the "union of the city with its god or ruler" (Metzler, 1994, 79). He further suggests an etymological and ritual identification between the city and the womb, thus suggestive of a possible influence on the predominantly female iconography of Tyche. However, the question of the mural crown is still uncertain. On one level, the reference to the city walls themselves is obvious. This emblem of the city walls serves to reinforce the female figure much as the armour of Virtus or Valour might (ibid., 79; Warner, 1995, 259). Metzler explores the significance of the mural crown with walls as a boundary:

> "For the Latin *orbis* and *urbs* appear...to belong, via the etymologically related *urva* = furrow, to the Greek *horos/*forfos* = boundary. The plowing of the city-enclosing furrow consecrates the newly founded site, and the city walls themselves are also sacrosanct. The good fortune granted by Gad/Genius and city goddess/Tyche is thus similarly the result of a rite of passage - from outside to inside the city, and hence to a protected, blessed, cosmic totality - that manifests itself in the circumscription of a boundary."
>
> (1994, 81)

This analysis by Metzler reminds me of the earlier connection between man who creates through the act of furrowing the natural earth or woman (see chapter 4). The male creation of the furrow which encloses the city establishes its sanctity. We can thus see a link between perceptions of the male and female and the establishment and representation of the city in the form of the Tyche. At the same time, woman's essential part in the social and actual

reproduction of Roman society, though it might be perceived as passive, could influence the representation of figures like Tyche and Oikoumene in the female form.

Finally, it is worth briefly re-mentioning the frequent conflation between Fortuna and Tyche/Tutela. Though I have not explored the figure of Fortuna herself, an interesting assertion by Galen on the representation of Fortuna reminds us of the earlier quote by Polybios on Tyche. Galen states in his Exhortation to Medicine 2.2 that "...the ancients, wishing to make Fortune's wickedness manifest, were not satisfied with painting and sculpting her merely in the form of a woman (though this is sufficient sign of folly) but also gave her a rudder to have in her hand, placed under her feet a rolling pedestal and deprived her of her eyes; demonstrating through all these things the uncertainty of fortune" (extracted from Stafford, 1998a, 1.2). Thus, Galen seems to lend an explanation to the female form of Fortuna, and perhaps through her common relation to Tyche, we can also theorise a link between this explanation and Tyche.

The dichotomy in the representation of personifications and their relation with perceptions of the feminine, which was observed near the beginning of this section and alluded to in our examination of Tyche, is difficult to explain adequately. On the one hand, several female personifications seem to have been associated easily with the ideals which were placed upon Roman women such as fertility, domesticity, or chastity. Nevertheless, many of the personifications which were represented by the female form seem to have very little relevance to Roman perceptions of womanhood. How can this paradox be interpreted? On one level, the dichotomy implies that language might have been the common factor which influenced the representation of the abstract concepts. However, because the section on grammatical gender elucidates the uncertainties surrounding the association between language and personification, it is necessary to explore other motivations behind the representation of abstractions by the female form.

Stafford, in her analysis of Greek personification, asserts that the 'low profile' of women in Greek society might have influenced the suitability of the female form for the representation of abstract concepts (Stafford, 1998a, 36). Can the same be said of Roman women and their consequent utilisation as the incarnation of abstracts? Women in Roman society led less restricted lives than their Greek, particularly Athenian, counterparts. Women were a frequent subject of legal tenets and various ancient authors, and many women played a fairly public role in the imperial family and elite classes. Thus, the perception of women

having a low profile in Roman society is questionable. However, despite these factors, there is perhaps another element in the perception of women which made them appropriate vehicles for personification. Warner notes that there is a fundamental difference between the male and female form in the modern construction of allegory and personification. Her analysis may aid us in our examination of personification in Roman art and text. She asserts that "the female form tends to be perceived as generic and universal, with symbolic overtones; the male as individual, even when it is being used to express a generalized idea" (Warner, 1996, 12). Warner then utilises the example of the Statue of Liberty as a character in modern allegory which conforms to her observed relation between female and the generic/universal. The figure of the Statue of Liberty simply stands for freedom without possessing any individuality or personality of her own; she is a universal marker of liberty to all cultural categories.

> "Men are individual, they appear to be in command of their own characters and their own identity...and they do not include women in their symbolic embrace...But the female form does not refer to particular women, does not describe women as a group, and often does not even presume to evoke their natures. We can all live inside...Liberty's skin, they stand for us regardless of sex, yet we cannot identify them as characters...Liberty is not representing her own freedom. She herself is caught by the differences, between the ideal and the general, the fantasy figure and the collective prototype, which seem to hold through the semantics of feminine and masculine gender in rhetoric and imagery, with very few exceptions."
>
> (Warner, 1996, 12-13)

What relevance does Warner's analysis hold for the female representation of abstract concepts in Roman imagery? In general, the female personifications in Roman art are also lacking in personality, and seem to be non-individual characters utilised to symbolise universal concepts and ideals. While some, like Fortuna or Tyche, are found extensively in literature and visual imagery and were objects of cult worship, they rarely have any mythology of their own. However, we must acknowledge that though there are fewer male personifications in Roman texts and imagery, these male figures do not possess a great deal of individuality. For instance, though Somnus was depicted in the male form, Roman mythology did not cede an abundance of personality or mythological exploits to this male figure (see Ovid, Metamorphoses XI.593ff). Therefore, we again return to the possibility that grammatical gender was a major influence on the personification of abstracts in anthropomorphic form.

Nevertheless, there are a couple of additional factors that might have had an impact on personification. Stafford states that:

> "[Greek] literary and artistic tradition did indeed perpetuate a female iconography for personified 'good things', but this iconography has its roots in attitudes towards the feminine. In a male-dominated society, extremes of both good and evil tend to be represented in female form, as 'the other'; further, it is noticeable that all the personified 'good things' we have seen are either handsome youths or beautiful young women of marriageable age. Is it too fanciful to suggest that they are so represented because both abstract and image are indeed objects of men's desire?"
>
> (1998a, 35-36)

We can agree that women also seem to represent the extremes of good and evil in Roman ideology and imagery. Despite the ancient authors' persistence in condemning Roman women, there is a parallel admonition for women to aspire to certain virtues and ideals (see Ch. 6). Therefore, the association of the female form through personification with these idealised concepts is not an inappropriate one. Stafford further asserts that "psychologically their desirable form conveys the desirability of the abstract values they embody" (Stafford, 1998a, 36). This representation of virtue and ideals through the female form thus was influenced by perceptions of women and also by the need for people to appear and act in a certain idealised manner (Warner, 1996, 37). Warner further notes that immaterial concepts have been placed upon the figure of woman, and thus women and the female form "bear the burden of...[male] dreams" (ibid., 239). Thus, the female form might have been perceived as an appropriate vehicle for the manifestation of ideals through the desire for people in Roman society to adhere to ideals and through the need for these abstractions to be presented in a desirable form.

Finally, I suggest that there is one more potential factor in the personification of abstractions through the female form. This possibility is quite contrary to many of the above explanations, though it might illuminate the paradox of personifications such as Virtus. The "art of memory", which was initiated in the Greek period, might give us an insight into the Greco-Roman creation of anthropomorphic personifications. It was developed in order to aid one's memory during rhetorical debate and speechmaking, and later was utilised in the Medieval and Renaissance periods for sermons and religious teaching. The technique addressed the problem of remembering things and words in the correct order. The basic premise behind this 'art of memory' is as follows. One would create a location or several loci in one's mind, such as columnar spaces or a house filled with rooms. Next, images

would be formulated for what one needs to remember - either as things or word for word. Each image is then placed throughout the mental space, and as one goes to each space in an orderly manner, one can retrieve the words and images. The speech should thus be remembered easily and in correct sequence (Yates, 1966, xi; 7-9).

This technique was first 'invented' or at least codified around 450-400 BC, and attributed to Simonides (Yates, 1996, 30). Knowledge and presumably utilisation of this technique continued into the Roman period and is found in the Ad Herennium, dated to c. 86-82 BC. This textbook on rhetoric, wrongly attributed to Cicero, had a section on the use of the art of memory. The section on memory draws on the earlier Greek sources, and addresses the concepts of natural and artificial memory. It focuses on the development of artificial memory as described above in order to aid in rhetorical debate. The metaphor of 'inner writing' is utilised to describe the process of creating the series of loci and images and using them like wax tablets in order to aid one's memory. Every aspect must be addressed in the construction of these loci and images with details of the lighting, size of rooms, distance apart, contents etc. given. At the same time, the loci should not be too similar or they will soon run together and prevent retrieval in one's memory (ibid., 4-7).

However, the creation of the images themselves is of particular interest to our exploration of personification and gender. Yates notes that the images should not be ordinary as they too would soon merge in one's imagination. The more uncommon and exaggerated the image, the easier it was to remember. The images could be for things (*res*) such as ideas, arguments, subjects or for words (*verba*) (Yates, 1966, 8-10). The Ad Herennium emphasised the importance of creating unusual and striking images:

> "When we see in everyday life things that are petty, ordinary, and banal, we generally fail to remember them, because the mind is not being stirred by anything novel or marvelous. But if we see or hear something exceptionally base, dishonourable, extraordinary, great, unbelievable, or laughable, that we are likely to remember a long time. ...Nor could this be so for any other reason than that ordinary things easily slip from the memory while the striking and novel stay longer in the mind...We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest to memory. And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct

> to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily."
>
> ([Cicero], III.XXII)

The implication behind this characterisation of the technique is that the images created were often in human form. The images "are deposited in memory with images of gods and men...Here we may perhaps see in an archaically simple form those human figures representing 'things' which eventually developed into the *imagines agentes*" (Yates, 1966, 30). Yates later questions whether these notions might have influenced art (ibid., 91). I suggest that the concept of the art of memory and the creation of mental images could have been influential on the development of personifications. If the purpose of the technique was to construct striking images in order to remember the concepts and words, then the female form was an effective vehicle. The figure of an Amazon-like woman, with bared breast and bearing weapons, was certainly an exceptional and extraordinary sight, especially when utilised in order to signify the concept of manliness or the inner *virtus* of the Roman male. There is no way to be certain whether the notion of the art of memory and its techniques were influential on the development of personifications, nor their representation or grammatical gender. However, it is a compelling thought when we read the words of the Ad Herennium to compare its instructions on creating striking images with both the concepts which seem far removed from perceptions of female nature and the representations of ideal concepts through the female form.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has established an outline of the use and manifestation of allegory and personification in Roman thought and imagery. Personification was a prevalent aspect of Roman religion, literature and art. The personified abstracts played roles within the epics and plays of the periods, as objects of cult worship and visual symbols of the concepts aspired to by Roman society. While personifications were manifested in both the male and female form, the female form was the most common mode of expression for these abstractions. Unfortunately, there is no unequivocal explanation for the expression of these personifications in their various forms. It could be based on grammatical gender; as Philo claimed, on women's secondary status; on the Roman societal pressure for women to adhere to ideals; or on the common association between women and non-individuality. The

desirability of the concepts and the desirability of the female or young male form could also be a factor in the representation of personifications. A further possibility is found in the technique of the art of memory which demands that concepts and words be signified through extraordinary and memorable images.

While we cannot establish a definitive reason for the predominant association between personification and the female form, there are important aspects of the representation of abstracts which can be derived from our analysis. Firstly, as was noted earlier, these personifications are relatively passive figures. Few of them possess an active or extensive mythology or any form of individuality in comparison to the pantheon of major Greco-Roman deities. Though some like the Parcae or Tyche were viewed as being influential on the lives of humans, many of the personified abstracts were simply symbolic of concepts to aspire to or of importance in Roman society. While Abundantia might be depicted within an altar relief, she is more symbolic of the desire for abundance and bounty. This is in contrast to a figure like Ceres, who represents fertility and bounty, but presents us with an active mythology and presence within the Roman thought world.

These personifications, like the figure of the Other, often performed a role in the self-identification of individuals. This was especially common in imperial portraits and representations where personifications were used almost like attributes to the imperial personage and in order to enhance his/her image. This can be seen in the Tellus relief of the Ara Pacis Augustae and the Gemma Augustea, both described earlier. It is also evident in imagery on monuments to the lesser mortals of the Roman empire. For instance, we observed the juxtaposition of Virtus with the central hunters on the sarcophagi from Gaul in section 5.5. Here, Virtus was again an element in the self-identification of the deceased, a symbol used to describe his inner worth and courage, his manliness and possession of the all-important *virtus*. In chapter six, we shall see the continuing usage of the personified abstracts as the attributes of mortals.

Finally, the female form of the personifications reinforces the traditional association between women and ideal behaviour and character which will be further explored in chapter 6. The construction of female as Other and the negative light cast upon women by many Roman authors reveals a paradox when we note the frequent association between the female and ideals. The personifications of abstract ideals in the female form, though the reasons behind the female incarnation might be various, does seem to imply that perceptions of the

female and her ideal or traditional roles in Roman society were influential on the representation of the abstractions. At the same time, we must acknowledge that the ideological construction behind the manifestation of these abstract ideals will have also influenced the way women were perceived and the various roles expected of them, while advertising the social norms expected of all members of Roman society.

CHAPTER 6

FEMALE IMAGERY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF IDEALS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

With Chapter 5, we explored the association between the female form and the personification of abstract concepts in Roman literature and art. One facet of the ideological construction of femaleness in Roman thought is found in the utilisation of female imagery as representative of ideals important to the social reproduction of Roman society and the significance placed upon ideals in the lives of Roman women. Images of women associated with traditional virtues can be found on a variety of monuments such as public or historical reliefs, tombstones, coins and even domestic decoration. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the construction of ideals within the visual and textual imagery of the Roman world. I shall first examine the variety of virtues which were advocated for and represented through women. Past research, focusing upon the observed tension between the ideals created for women by Roman society and the potential for women to act outside those boundaries, will also be addressed. It is important to understand the way in which these traditional virtues and ideals were created within the ideology and imagery of the Roman imperial period, and how they might have functioned. The last section of this chapter will attempt to move beyond a cataloguing of textual and visual images of female virtue. When examined more closely, female representation often presents a more ambiguous, and consequently more varied, vision of Roman women. There are instances, both within the visual and textual evidence, which lead us to question our previous conceptions of women in the Roman world which have been based on the foundation of ideals. I suggest that by examining individual constructions of self, we can be granted a more diversified picture of women - one that breaks the boundaries which are perceived through the stereotypes and ideals that are often conveyed within the material.

6.2 THE EXPRESSION OF IDEALS IN ROMAN IMAGERY

TEXTUAL AND EPIGRAPHIC IDEALISATION

The ideals which were advocated for Roman women were continually emphasised in the texts of the elite male authors. Vidén observes that Tacitus used certain recurring terms, descriptive of both virtue and vice, in his descriptions of upper-class women. References denoting the stereotypical virtues which were emphasised for the ideal Roman woman included chastity, fecundity, fidelity, a noble birth, and a lack of political ambition (Vidén, 1993, 61-62). These ideals were considered to be essential character traits in the traditional Roman matron. Pliny's letters reveal the desire for women to adhere to the traditional ideals. His correspondence with various friends and peers often revealed what was considered to be ideal female behaviour and character, and seem to be designed as exempla from which others could learn (ibid., 91-92; Shelton, 1990). A letter to Neratius Priscus expresses Pliny's distress over his friend Fannia's illness. He notes that her many virtues such as a sense of duty, purity, loyalty, nobility and integrity make the grief at her illness and possible death all the greater. He ends his letter with this observation: "Will there be anyone now who we can hold up as a model to our wives, from whose courage even our own sex can take example, and whom we can admire as much as the heroines of history while she is still in our midst?" (Pliny, VII.XIX). Martial expresses the importance of the virtue of fecundity and the ideal of the *univara* in his reference to a Romano-British woman: "Though Claudia Rufina has sprung from the woad-stained Britons, how she possesses the feelings of the Latin race! What grace of form has she! Mothers of Italy may deem her Roman, those of Attica their own. May the gods bless her in that she, a fertile wife, has borne children to her constant spouse, in that she hopes, though youthful still, for sons - and daughters-in-law. So may it please the Gods above she should joy in one mate along, and joy ever in three sons!" (Martial, Epigrams , XI.53).

The emphasis on female ideals was also found in the Roman epigraphic evidence. Funerary inscriptions are a useful source for the praise of female virtue. A first century BC eulogy for Murdia by her son acknowledged the traditional virtues desired for all women:

> "...For these reasons praise for all good women is simple and similar, since their native goodness and the trust they have maintained do not require a diversity of words. Sufficient is the fact that they have all done the same good deeds with the fine reputation they deserve, and since it is hard to find new forms of praise for a woman, since their

> lives fluctuate with less diversity, by necessity we pay tribute to values they hold in common, so that nothing may be lost from fair precepts and harm what remains.
>
> Still, my dearest mother deserved greater praise than all others, since in modesty, propriety, chastity, obedience, wool-working, industry, and loyalty she was on an equal level with other good women, nor did she take second place to any woman in virtue, work and wisdom in times of danger..."
>
> (CIL 6.10230; Lefkowitz & Fant, 1982, 135-136)

This inscription lists the virtues of the Roman matron, while stating that the praise for all women should be the same in its focus on these virtues and ideals. Other funerary inscriptions from Britain and Gaul continue this trend, though many simply use standardised formulaic epithets such as *dulcissima filia* or *coniuxi karissima* which focused on what was seen as worthy of praise by the commemorator (see Hope, 1994, 75). For instance, a late Roman marble sarcophagus from London bearing a portrait bust of the deceased refers quite vaguely to her virtues: "Gaius Etruscus (set this up) to his dearest Atia? for her merits" (RIB 20). Another example from Chester and dated to the third century AD praises Cocceia Irene: "To Cocceia Irene, his most chaste and pure wife, (who) lived 30 years and a month, Gaius Valerius Justus, record-clerk of the 20th Legion, set this up" (RIB 507). A sarcophagus from Arles of the late empire depicted a woman with a *volumen* or book/papyrus roll and the bust of a young girl. The inscription, flanked by two Cupids, celebrated Hydria Tertulla as *clarissima femina* or most distinguished woman and *coniunx amantissima* or most loving wife, while Axiae Aeliana was praised as *filia dulcissima* or sweet daughter by Terentius Museus (CIL 12.675; **137**).

Honorific inscriptions might also celebrate the private virtues of a woman while marking her public beneficence to her community. This type of commemoration is frequently found in the epigraphic evidence from the Greek East where there was little separation between private virtues and public honours (Forbis, 1990, 496). For example, an inscription dated to the first century AD from Lycia commemorated Lalla, a wealthy priestess and magistrate, in the language of private virtue rather than simply focusing on her obvious public role:

> "The people of Arneae and vicinity, to Lalla daughter of Timarchus son of Diotimus, their fellow citizen, wife of Diotimus son of Vassus; priestess of the Emperor's cult and gymnasiarch out of her own resources, honoured five times, chaste, cultivated, devoted to her husband and a model of all virtue, surpassing in every respect. She

> has glorified her ancestor's virtues with the example of her own character. [Erected] in recognition of her virtue and good will."
>
> (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, 157)

Italian honorary inscriptions do not follow this trend, and seem to maintain some form of separation between private virtue and public honour. Rather than using words which praised the private virtues of women, the Italian inscriptions tend to utilise the same epithets for both male and female benefactors - *munificentia*, *liberalitas*, *beneficia*, *merita* - to commemorate financial contributions within the community (Forbis, 1990, 496-500).

These literary texts, epitaphs and inscriptions construct an ideal image of the traditional Roman matron, and therefore do not give us a true insight into the character, interests or day-to-day life of Roman women (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 200). At the same time, we do not know how many of the epithets concerning the female virtues were reflective of the woman commemorated rather than simply utilised in the standard treatment of funerary idealisation. As Lattimore asserts, "it is...impossible to determine just what proportion of these decorous sayings express conviction, but at least we can conclude that they outline an ideal, and that this ideal concedes considerable importance to the position of women in the household...and the success of the family is as dependent in large measure on their qualities" (Lattimore, 1942, 280). Thus, the idealisation of the relationship between the woman and her family or community was an essential aspect in the traditional desire for and emphasis on concord, social reproduction and even munificence.

Men could also be defined through ideals. For instance, the association between men and *virtus* was very important in Roman literature, imagery and society (see Ch. 5). Pliny also notes the various virtues of a young man whom he recommends as a husband to Junius Mauricus for his niece. He suggests Minicius Acilianus for several reasons: the young man's affection and respect for Pliny, his acceptable and noble family, his modesty, his energetic nature and promising political career, his appealing physiognomy and his economic position (Pliny, I.XIV). Formulaic epithets might also be used in the epitaphs of men. For instance, a London funerary monument was dedicated to Flavius Agricola from Albia Faustina as her *coniunx incomparabilis* or peerless husband (RIB 11). A tombstone from the Avignon area commemorated Valloni as the 'best brother' or *frater optimus* of Quartina (CIL 12.4003). Therefore, while men were also expected to adhere to certain ideals, it is important to note that many of these virtues revolved around his character and actions within the public sphere, rather than the private virtues advocated for women.

VIRTUES IN ROMAN VISUAL IMAGERY

Kleiner and Matheson note that "the ideal of Roman womanhood was closely tied to a woman's role in the family. As wife and mother, she embodied the virtues valued by Roman society - beauty, modesty, chastity, fidelity - and the image[s] of women...[are] designed to reflect these virtues" (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 13). We can examine a variety of female representations in order discern the manifestation of ideals in visual imagery. A funerary monument from the early Augustan period dedicated to the family of Lucius Vibius Felix is a good example (138). The portrait of Lucius Vibius Felix is that of an aged *paterfamilias*, where the dignity of aged experience is emphasised in an idealised way. His wife, Vecilia Hilara, raises her hand to her chin in a gesture symbolic of her association with the personification of Pudicitia or chastity. Her modesty was also emphasised through the veil covering her head, while the raised hand reveals the ring on her finger, alluding to the marriage bond (Koortbojian, 1996, 219-220). The importance of the marriage bond and concord during marriage was also emphasised through the motif of the *dextrarum iunctio*. The representation of the married couple clasping hands was significant as a reference to the affection within the marriage and its success and legitimacy (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 200). A tombstone from Bramswell Hill near Elmswell depicts the very weathered remains of a couple who seem to be performing the *dextrarum iunctio* (139). A funerary relief of unknown provenance in Belgica also portrayed the frontal figures of a man and woman clasping hands (140). Another example from Sens is composed with the man on the right, holding a coffer and clasping hands with the woman on the left. To further emphasise the affection between the couple, her left arm is placed around his shoulders (141). Some artefacts simply presented the motif of clasped hands in order to allude to the marriage bond and harmony within marriage. For instance, a tombstone dedicated to Iulia Domestica from Metz/Horgne-au-Sablon and an intaglio from Eastcheap, London displayed this motif (142-143). Finally, another example is found in a funerary monument from Horbourg in Germany. In this relief, a woman holds a spindle and roll of wool in one hand, while she clasps the hand of the woman standing next to her (144). Therefore, the motif of the clasped hands could also be used simply as a symbol of the affection and closeness between two people.

The virtue of domesticity was often signified through the reference to and representation of spinning or weaving and their implements. The working of wool was viewed as a symbol of female fidelity, chastity and duty (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 157).

This ideal is seen on a tombstone from Rome, of the first century BC, which underlines a woman's domestic virtue through her epitaph: "Here lies Amymone wife of Marcus best and most beautiful, worker in wool, pious, chaste, thrifty, faithful, a stayer-at-home" (ILS 8402.L; Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 17). At the same time, the utilisation of the motif of balls of wool, spindles, distaffs and weaving combs was extremely common in the representation of women on funerary monuments. There are several examples of this motif on the funerary reliefs from Britain and Gaul. A fragmentary sepulchral relief from Carlisle and dated to the second or third century AD shows the upper torso of a woman. She wears a tunic, mantle and necklace and holds a bird in her right hand and a spindle and distaff in her left **(145)**. A more complete example is found in the South Shields funerary relief dedicated to Regina and dated to the second half of the second century AD. Regina is seated on a wicker-work chair in a niche. She holds a spindle and distaff with her left hand, while a basket filled with skeins of wool is placed beside her left foot. With her right hand, she opens a coffer that sits to her right side **(146)**. A funerary relief from Chester for a soldier and his wife depicted the woman holding a distaff and weaver's comb, and emphasised her virtue through the dedication to her husband from 'his most dutiful wife' **(147)**. A stele from the area around Beaune displayed the portrait bust of a woman holding a spindle **(148)**. Another tombstone from Beaune, dedicated to Censorina, again depicted the woman clearly holding the spindle in her right hand and a distaff in her left **(149)**. Finally, a tombstone from Dorylaion in Phrygia, dated to the late second to early third century AD, explicitly contrasted the different roles and ideals perceived for men and women through its visual language. Here we see a funerary stone for both husband and wife that displays the traditional aspects of their respective spheres: for the man, scrolls and tablets, tools or work materials; for the woman, a mirror, a wool basket and spindle and distaff (Fantham et al., 1994, 370; see Waelkens, 1977; **150**).

The virtues of beauty and fertility might be expressed through the association of the woman with the goddess Venus. D'Ambra notes that tomb reliefs and statues which conflated the portrait head of the deceased matron with the youthful and full body of Venus were developing by the beginning of the first century AD. The pose utilised was also reminiscent of other Venus statues. This connection between the Roman matron and Venus constructed beauty and voluptuousness as an indicator of virtue and reproductive capability (D'Ambra, 1996, 219-221) D'Ambra further points out that "the Roman cults of Venus encouraged feminine virtue by offering women the inspirational model of the divine bride, along with a regimen to cultivate beauty and sexual appeal and participation in rites that

harnessed their sexuality to the goals of the family and the state" (ibid., 221). The full-length portrait of Marcia Furnilla, found in a possibly Flavian villa near Lake Albano, combined the body form of the Capitoline Venus and the older and almost plain face of the woman herself (Kleiner, 1992, 177-178; see **38**). Her pose with one hand covering her breast and the other over her genitalia seems to reflect the virtue of modesty, while also expressing beauty and fertility. It is also notable that in these portraits the woman was usually depicted in her prime, rather than her age at death, thus re-emphasising the importance of female reproductive capability (D'Ambra, 1996, 224). While this trend of conflation between mortal and divine beings was initiated by the imperial family, it was also emulated by other classes, especially in the funerary portraiture of freed slaves (ibid., 222-223). Another well-known example of this type of representation is found in the funerary relief of Ulpia Epigone (**151**). This relief emphasised two different types of virtue. First, her pose and portrayal as Venus underlined her beauty and sexuality as indicators of desirability and fertility, while the companion dog and wool basket referred to the ideals of fidelity, trust, charity and domestic virtue (D'Ambra, 1993, 107-110).

Women might be associated with other deities in order to make the connection between the woman and her virtues or an aspect of her character. Again, this trend was emulated from the imperial conflation of empress and goddess. An example is found in the tomb of Claudia Semne, found along the Via Appia and dated to the first half of the second century AD. This large mausoleum was enhanced with an inscription that listed her virtues as well as portraits of Claudia Semne in the guises of Venus, Spes or Hope and Fortuna (Matheson, 1996, 182; **152**). Matheson also notes funerary portraits which assimilate young girls with Diana - an appropriate conflation with Diana's identification as the virgin huntress. A link might also be established between unmarried maidens and the figure of Persephone (ibid., 189-190). Another popular divine figure which was associated with portraiture was the goddess Ceres. One example of this conflation is found in a portrait bust from Lyon. The context of this bust is unknown - it could have been funerary, honorific or situated within the domestic context. This portrait depicts a young woman crowned with corn and wearing a decorated cuirass, thus possibly assimilating this young woman with the virtues exemplified by Ceres and Minerva (Espérandieu, 1925, 273-274; **153**). This type of conflation in Roman imagery seems to have been utilised in order to express virtues valued by Roman society and as another facet in the representation of the woman's ideal or perceived character.

Finally, reference to the ideal of beauty can perhaps be seen in the frequent representation of women in toilette scenes or with toiletry implements. On tombstones, women were frequently depicted in the act of adornment or holding various beauty tools such as combs, mirrors, perfume phials, and even powder puffs. A funerary relief from Chester portrayed a richly coiffured woman holding a comb and mirror. To her side stands a smaller-scale maidservant with a toilet-box or tray (**154**). From Neumagen, we have a mausoleum decorated with a variety of reliefs such as a man and woman clasping hands with a child standing between them; a hunt scene; a man consulting some tablets while addressing his tenant farmers; and a funerary banquet scene. One face also bears the image of a woman seated in a wicker-work chair with four maidservants helping her with her toilette. One holds a large mirror for her mistress to look in, while another arranges her hair (**155**).

Other reliefs simply represent the woman bearing the implements of adornment. A funerary relief from Bordeaux, dedicated to Summinia, portrayed the portrait of a young woman holding a *mappa* in front of her chest, while she raises her other hand towards her face with what appears to be a powder-puff (**156**). The tombstone of Iulia Maximilla from Poitiers presents the reflected image of a female face in the incised mirror beside the inscription (**157**). A funerary relief found near Vanvey-sur-Ource in Lyonnaise depicted a young girl holding a mirror aloft in one hand and the fragmentary remains of a coffer in the other (**158**). Finally, a tombstone from Mainz yields the main body of the stone to the inscription. However, above this inscription is a panel bearing the motifs of a double-mirror, comb and two perfume flagons (**159**). We should note three important points. Firstly, many of the toilette scenes are present on mausoleums consisting of a variety of reliefs dealing with the life of the family, and therefore are probably utilised to symbolise both the traditional virtue of beauty for the woman and the wealth of the woman or family which allowed the leisurely life implicit in these toilette scenes. Secondly, the images of women holding toilet implements are not so straightforward. While the virtue of beauty is probably the main emphasis of these images, it is also possible that the motifs of adornment were indicative of the occupation of the woman commemorated i.e. she could have been a maid-servant herself (Wyke, 1994, 141-142). Unfortunately, without an inscription which states the woman's role it is impossible to be certain of this last point. Finally, it is worth briefly noting Wyke's assessment of the ideology and iconography of adornment. Wyke asserts that while proper grooming was seen as a necessary act of one's civilised status, negative associations were often attached to women's bodily adornment. Her need for adornment was perceived as a time-wasting activity, as external to and thus unconcerned with the

central civic life of the Roman world, as an act to enhance one's sexuality, and as a frivolous act. Indeed, the reflection of a woman in the mirror underlined that she was not a male citizen, but rather the object of his gaze. This idea of the body and adornment was also utilised as a route to defining gender boundaries and of differentiating between the male and the female (ibid., 135-137). While the virtue of beauty might have been emphasised through the toilette scenes and motifs, perhaps there was an underlying negative association between women and acts or articles of adornment.

Men were also commemorated for virtues, though Roman monuments expressing a range of ideals for women are much more numerous. For instance, the grave altar to Titus Statilius Aper and Orcivia Anthis, dated to the Hadrianic period, alludes to his *virtus* (160). His occupation as a *mensor aeificiorum* or building inspector was indicated through the inscription and the strong box with papyrus rolls of building plans situated to his left. At his feet, a dead boar was depicted. This boar was a pun on his name of Aper and also re-emphasised the inscribed epigram reference to Meleager also found on the monument. He was thus symbolically associated with Meleager through the imagery and epigram. In turn, Meleager was utilised as a common reference or symbol of *virtus* throughout the second and third century AD. Titus Statilius Aper's *virtus* was expressed through the text and imagery of this monument, while the reference to Meleager was also viewed as a marker of the victory of life after death (Koortbojian, 1996, 229-231; see Ch. 5).

FEMALE IMAGERY AND PUBLIC IDEALS

Ideals which were important to the public domain and the imperial regime could also be expressed through female imagery. Kampen notes that "in expressing especially those values of the Roman state that were traditionally in the cultural construct of Woman - fecundity, prosperity, continuity - the female members of the Roman imperial family could become symbols for Woman as well as for particular political issues as they remained within the bounds of a conservative gender ideology" (Kampen, 1991, 242). For instance, with the transition from Republic to Empire, we see the development of the use of female members of the Imperial family and their representation to transmit legitimacy to the rules of various emperors. The connection of male power with legitimacy through women manifested itself in marriages to create legitimate heirs and link male rulers to previously accepted emperors (Fantham et al., 1994, 311). The extreme importance of legitimacy of rule can be observed in the example of Septimus Severus. In AD 195, Severus adopted Marcus Aurelius as his divine father in order to lend authority to his early reign and gain some form of stability for

his rule. This, in turn, aided in Severus' creation of a family dynasty by linking his regime to the earlier and accepted Antonine dynasty (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 72). As can be noted from the example of previous emperors, adoption was viewed as a reasonable way to produce heirs and continue the family line. With Severus' example it also became a way to create a family line.

This emphasis on dynastic lines and legitimacy within the political sphere was therefore often reflected in the visual representation of women utilised during the imperial period. For example, the Ara Pacis bore the representations of the women and children of Augustus' family **(161)**. Within this imagery, the security which would now result from dynastic reproduction and hereditary succession was explicit (Fantham et al., 1994, 295-296). This emphasis on reproduction through familial imagery was also used in a propagandistic way as it was aimed at other members of Roman society, especially the aristocratic families. Therefore, as Kleiner asserts, "women and children are included in the historical scenes of this state monument for the first time because for Augustus they were symbols both of his dynastic ambitions - he wanted one of his two male grandchildren to succeed him - and because of his social and moral legislation which encouraged marriage and childbirth among the Augustan aristocracy" (Kleiner, 1987, 545). Caligula used the representation of his sisters to emphasise dynastic continuity. During Caligula's reign, several portraits of his sisters Agrippina, Drusilla and Julia Livilla were disseminated throughout the empire **(162)**. Their political significance, thus influencing the usage of their representations, was their role as 'bearers of bloodlines' - their ability to bear Julian children (Wood, 1995, 457-459). A final example is found in the representations of Faustina the Younger, wife of Marcus Aurelius. Her image was found on coins in order to symbolise the legitimacy and future of Marcus Aurelius' dynastic line. She bore him thirteen children with Commodus as the male heir, and her reproductive success was celebrated with the issue of a new numismatic portrait type with each birth. Eight of these portrait types have survived in sculptural form (Kleiner & Matheson, 1996, 71; Fittschen, 1996, 44). For instance, a portrait bust of Faustina the Younger from Béziers was found with several other imperial portraits **(163)**.

Female representations were also significant factors in the expression of "the programmatic concerns of the state and the emperor" (Kampen, 1991, 242; see also d'Ambra, 1993c on the Domitianic frieze of the Forum Transitorium). Again, with the Ara Pacis and other Augustan imagery, we can observe a desire to present a changed and

harmonious world thus contrasting with the instability and chaos of the late Republican period. The family dynasty implicit in the depictions of Augustan women contrasted with the previous civil strife where various Roman military and political leaders clashed with one another for the authority in Rome. These images instead emphasised the security which was established through a hereditary imperial regime. Thus, the empire and its one-man rule was legitimated and glorified through representations of the female reproductive line and by situational contrast (Fantham et al., 1994, 295; Zanker, 1990, 122-123). The Tellus relief from the Ara Pacis further emphasised the new fecundity and benefits of the imperial transition (see Ch. 5). This seated female figure, surrounded by children, animals and lush vegetation, highlighted the symbolic reference to the fertility and reproduction perceived as possible with the new Augustan reign (Zanker, 1990, 172-175; see **119**).

Other imperial representations of women were utilised as symbols of concepts important to the emperor's regime. Various ideals to aspire to might be portrayed through the conflation of the woman with a personified abstraction or goddess. For instance, three Tiberian *dupondii* linked Livia with the personifications of Salus Augusta or health, Iustitia or justice and Pietas or piety (**164**). A Caligulan coin of AD 37-38 bears the images of Agrippina, Drusilla and Julia Livilla holding the attributes of Securitas, Concordia and Fortuna respectively. These associations were constructed with reference to the perceived continued prosperity and harmony of both dynasty and empire made possible through the female members of the imperial family (Wood, 1995, 461; **165**). The associations between the sisters and their respective personifications also referred to specific desired ideals. Agrippina the Younger as Securitas alluded to her reproductive potential which could aid the stability of succession and thus of the empire. Drusilla's Concordia referred to the concord present between the imperial family members, thus adding to the security of the realm; while Julia's Fortuna symbolised the imperial regime as a bringer of good harvest and fortune to the Roman people (Kleiner and Matheson, 1996, 65). Despite these positive associations, Drusilla was dead by AD 38 and her two sisters were banished for their alleged role in a plot to overthrow Caligula (ibid., 61). Finally, Julia Domna was correlated with the personification of Abundantia on a Severan medallion. She is associated with abundance through the cornucopia she holds in one arm and the statue of the goddess that she carries in her outstretched hand "The implication is that Julia, who is designated in the accompanying legend as Julia Augusta, is...doubly abundant. In fact, it is her fertility that has provided the empire with the two male heirs who will fulfill the Severan destiny" (Kleiner, 1992, 326; **166**).

An inscription from Carvoran has been interpreted as a conflation between the goddess Virgo Caelestia and Julia Domna:

> The Virgin in her heavenly place rides upon the Lion; bearer of corn, inventor of law, founder of cities, by whose gifts it is man's good lot to know the gods: therefore she is the Mother of the gods, Peace, Virtue, Ceres, the Syrian Goddess, weighing life and laws in her balance. Syria has sent the constellation seen in the heavens to Libya to be worshipped: thence have we all learned. Thus has understood, led by thy godhead, Marcus Caecilius Donatianus, serving as tribune in the post of prefect by the Emperor's gift.
>
> (RIB 1791)

This inscription panel from the fort was presented in ten iambic senarii and was dedicated to Virgo Caelestis. However, it honoured Julia Domna, who was conflated with Virgo Caelestis on coins of Septimus Severus. This inscription probably accompanied a statue of Julia Domna bearing the attributes and character of Virgo Caelestia - corn ear wreath, a balance, and standing on a lion (Collingwood and Wright, 1965, 558). Another conceivable example of the conflation of an empress with a deity can be found in a fragmentary statue from Well in Yorkshire. This representation of a robed woman with one bared breast and holding a wreath has been postulated as a deified empress. However, the identity is uncertain and other possibilities include Venus, Dea Roma or even Britannia (Turnbull, 1982, 324-325; 167).

Again, male members of the imperial family might also be assimilated with deities in order the enhance their image and personal ideology. One of the best known examples of this type of representation is seen in the half-length portrait of Commodus as Hercules, found in the Villa Palombara on the Esquiline hill (168). This piece, dated to AD 191-192, depicted Commodus bare-chested with the lion-skin cloak pulled over his head and holding a club and the apples of the Hesperides. The bust is supported by an Amazonian shield and two cornucopiae flanked by one kneeling Amazon to the left and presumably a second to the right. Kleiner notes that this bust was probably displayed in a public place, and was a good example "of the practice of Roman emperors of combining persona and politics in art" (Kleiner,1992, 277). The conflation of Commodus with Hercules enhanced his image through its reference to *virtus* and immortality, while the Amazons kneeling below the bust and the cornucopiae can be viewed as a marker of the triumph of Commodus and the Romans over the barbarians and the resulting prosperity (ibid., 277). A representation of

Commodus conflated with Hercules is also known from Roman Britain. This bronze statue is presumed to have come from the area of Hadrian's Wall, and is dated to c. AD 191-192 (169). It combined the attributes of Hercules - club, lion-skin cloak - and the gladiator - the gladiator's tunic and broad belt - while his bare feet are typical of representations of divine figures. With Commodus' frequent association of himself with Hercules towards the end of AD 191, the identification of this statue with Commodus is reasonable. However, it is uncertain whether the piece was brought into Britain during the Roman period, or was a later import or even a forgery (Coulston and Phillips, 1988, 77-78).

Female imagery on historical reliefs might also be utilised to convey the desired ideals of the imperial regime. For instance, Julia Domna played an important role in several scenes on the Arch of Leptis Magna from the Severan period. In one scene she is present in the representation of Severus in royal accord with his sons (170). This image of familial and marital concord is perceived as a reflection of the prosperity and peace secured by Severus throughout the empire (Kampen, 1991, 231). Kampen notes that "the program of the arch centers on the reconciliation of public and private worlds, on harmonious relationships among family members, among dynastic past, present and future, and among the various parts of the Roman universe. Julia Domna's presence is essential to the explication of this program, more essential than respecting the dominant traditions that usually excluded imperial women from historical relief sculpture" (ibid., 240). Thus, with these examples, we can observe how images of imperial women on public monuments and coins were coloured by the needs of the male elite and the state. As Fischler states, the female public persona was "moulded into an image that would benefit the regime" (Fischler, 1994, 129).

6.3 THE DISTORTION BETWEEN IDEAL AND PRACTICE

Approaching female representation from the standpoint of the construction of social and political ideals yields some important questions. Implicit in this approach is the questioning of how these ideals functioned. Fischler addresses this question in reference to the imperial women from the Augustan to Neronian period. She suggests a model where the dominant group within Roman society created an ideology which defined members of its society in certain ways and consequently placed them within a stratified hierarchy. This hierarchy was then replicated in the construction of images of male and female, citizen and non-citizen, free and slave. The constructed ideology and visual and textual imagery could be used to "describe and justify power relationships" within Roman society (Fischler, 1994,

115-116). Fischler further asserts that the images and social constructs which were developed were "always derived from relationships between those who hold power within a clearly-defined area of society and those who do not...A primary example of such social structuring can be seen in the way in which gender is defined and represented: images of gender reinforce and explain the power-relationship between men and women" (ibid., 115).

The Roman ideologies and imagery tended to emphasise the traditional ideals which were advocated for Roman women such as fidelity, fecundity, chastity, or domesticity and also the concepts which could be represented through women such as concord or dynastic legitimacy and succession. These were acceptable images of women within Roman textual and visual discourse. However, Fischler postulates that a tension was created between these ideals of female behaviour and representation and the women who were seen to transgress those boundaries. While the Roman male ruling order sought to exclude peoples classified as outsiders, including women, from official power, there was the obvious complication that many imperial women were often perceived as having a great deal of influence on an unofficial level. This was, in turn, viewed as a possible route to female manipulation of male imperial power (Fischler, 1994, 116). Saxonhouse questions the way in which women were addressed and interpreted when they had crossed the perceived public/private boundary. They were often described and understood as 'bad' women and consequently met with violent condemnations and dismissal (Saxonhouse, 1992, 4-5). She notes that this public/private paradigm influenced the representation of women who attempted to cross its confines. Women who made an appearance on the public stage, especially within the Roman imperial sphere, were thus frequently depicted as transgressors or exceptions, and defined through a dangerous sexuality and ambition (ibid., 6-7). This definition of female transgressors can be found in Tacitus' portraits of imperial women where the most prominent negative aspect of a female character is her desire and pursuit of power (Vidén, 1993, 62; see Ch. 2).

A tension has thus been perceived between the poles of ideal private virtue and the access to public power in the practice of day-to-day life. This tension between ideal and practice resulted in a need by the male elite to construct an ideal, but restricted, image of woman. For instance, historical reliefs and portraiture can be seen to forge female images in order to fulfill a specific purpose both to benefit the state and reconcile the tension created by Roman tradition and ideology and the potential of imperial women (Fischler, 1994, 127-130). At the same time, a tension is also found between the ideal Roman matron outside the

imperial sphere and the 'wicked' women frequently described in the texts of the Roman authors e.g. Juvenal's 6th Satire (ibid., 117-120; see Ch. 2). Again, we cannot know if these portraits of supposed 'bad' women were reflective of reality or real women; however, they do give us an insight into the expectations and fears about Roman women that were held by the male members of Roman society. Perceptions about women influenced their representation as the Other and in relation to nature (see Chs. 3-4), but like the imperial women, the perceived potential threat of women could have also resulted in the construction of an ideal within ideology and imagery. Thus, the tension between ideal and practice could also be seen to influence various aspects of female imagery outside the imperial sphere such as on honorary inscriptions, commemorative statues and funerary monuments where traditional ideals were emphasised.

Despite the possibilities of the above outlined approach, there are problematic assumptions and restrictions inherent within it. Firstly, there is the difficulty of determining how these ideal images measured up to the 'day-to-day' lives of 'real' women. The evidence itself presents obvious limitations. Most apparent, and thus worth mentioning again, is that of the bias in the textual and even visual sources used in our interpretation of Roman women. The majority of our textual sources were created by Roman men, especially the male elite, and we are therefore 'seeing' women, as ideals and transgressors, through male eyes. At the same time, the images created by artists and craftspeople were often commissioned by the elite classes, and thus frequently address their concerns and values. Often the motivations behind the construction of female textual and visual representations were based upon the male author or ruler's needs and desires. The images of women which are consequently preserved are often limited to stereotypes and archetypes, with very little reference to the diversity that must have been present in women's lives and situations. For instance, despite the fact that Julia Domna led a very cosmopolitan life and was in a powerful and influential position within the imperial regime, the images of Julia Domna linked her primarily with the ideal of dynastic reproduction and family life (Kampen, 1991, 242). Another problem stems from the elite bias of our sources, where so much of our data was constructed by and for the elite classes of the Roman empire. Therefore, we are getting a very restricted view of the character of the elite women themselves and especially of the possibilities open to women outside of these aristocratic circles. Thus, we must question the motivations and examine the context of these textual and visual representations of Roman imperial and ordinary women in order to gain a more complete picture of their lives, rather than simply relying on these textual and visual portraits.

Another problem is again found in the scarcity of sources which can be traced to female hands and minds, thus adding to the prevalence of male bias within our evidence. "Much of what remains was preserved because men in late antiquity and the Middle Ages felt it to have enduring value. It is thus both logical and poignant that we should have so little of what women wrote" (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 1). For instance, Snyder notes that although Giles Ménage alluded to at least sixty-five female philosophers in his reference to the third century AD work of Diogenes Laertius, very little of these women's words and thoughts come down to us (1989, 100-101). Both negative discrimination against female works and positive selection of male works in the structural system of textual survival during the ancient and medieval periods could thus account for the scarcity of female authors. At the same time, however, it is also useful to acknowledge that what survives could frequently reflect random selection, where what is preserved is based upon the situation and the interest in the work at a specific time.

Finally, I would also like to re-emphasise the dilemma found in the alarming prevalence of modern bias which can affect our perceptions of ancient women. Snyder cites interpretations of Sulpicia's poetry as a case of modern bias. Sulpicia, active during the Augustan period, worked under the patronage of Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvirus. She wrote elegies on the common and contemporary subjects of infidelity, the separation of lovers, and illness. Snyder has interpreted her poetry, though only six elegies survive, as exhibiting an eloquence that used the language and structure of Roman poetry with accomplishment. Some modern critics have tended to belittle Sulpicia and her work as amateurish and too emotional, as the creator of poetry which took very little thought, and even as being too feminine. These criticisms seem to reflect a distinctive male bias towards an ancient female poet rather than a genuine critical analysis of the actual merits of the poems themselves. Snyder points out that Sulpicia's themes echoed those found in the poems and elegies of the more highly-regarded male authors. She also notes that Sulpicia was writing within the masculine language of the period which makes her accomplishment that much more extraordinary (Snyder, 1989, 129-135). A similar observation of modern male bias has been noted by Funari. He uses the example of CIL 4.6755, a poem about love by a female author. Various critics have claimed that it was actually a badly-remembered copy of a more famous work by an unnamed male poet. The mistakes within the text are claimed to be the misrememberings of the female copyist rather than the idiosyncrasies of her own expression and language. "At the root of the concept of male authorship of the

poem, there is an unwritten assumption that *women would not be able to compose a poem like this*" (Funari, 1996, 4-5). Thus, the possibilities of women stepping outside the traditional boundaries of ideal Roman society might be ignored through a reliance on modern preconceptions of their roles and activities.

6.4 QUESTIONING THE MATERIAL: THE NUANCES OF FEMALE LIFE

> Stranger, I have little to say: stop and read.
> This is the unbeautiful tomb of a beautiful woman.
> Her parents called her Claudia by name.
> She loved her husband with her heart.
> She bore two children: one of these
> she leaves on the earth, the other she buries under the earth.
> Her speech was delightful, her gait graceful.
> She kept house, she made wool. I have finished. Go.
>
> (CIL 6.15346; Treggiari, 1996, 116)

This epitaph from a tomb of the Republican period sums up our pre-conceived notion of Roman women. All the traditional virtues and ideals are enumerated - fidelity, duty, fertility, chastity, domesticity. The words parallels the many textual and visual images, often mirrored in modern analyses of Roman women, which limit the woman to her virtues. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the many distinctive shades found within the representation of Roman women. We must acknowledge and examine the diversity of female lives which could be found throughout the Roman empire, rather than simply relying on the stereotypes and archetypes presented to us by the ancient authors and monuments. While Roman textual and visual imagery may be generally examined in order to explore the belief systems, values, ideals and fears promoted and held by the ruling order of Roman society, perhaps we need to turn to instances of the individual to find a window into the nuances of female life. This idea is not only applicable to Roman society and its imagery. We need only look to the realm of advertising in modern-day society to find a striking parallel. Daily we are presented with Vogue models and glamorous movie stars, with TV housewives and mothers who lead us in the quest for a clean house and a happy family. However, our experience of individual women has a much wider range - from doctors to teachers to construction workers and engineers, moving beyond what our modern archetypes would lead us to expect. Can the same be said of the Roman representation of women?

Mauer claims that "the main value of gender studies, and specifically *feminist* gender studies,...is its focus on people - the individuals and *agents* who actively construct their world" (Mauer, 1991, 415). A similar focus on the individual is being initiated in contemporary archaeological interpretation. Therefore, I would like to address some of these instances of individual 'reality' within the Roman world, and assess their significance in our reconstruction of Roman women. We have examples of individual women from various contexts and backgrounds which reveal the diversity within women's lives during the Roman period. Looking beyond the ideals and stereotypes which were expressed in the texts and visual images is therefore necessary in order to gain a more complete picture of female life.

IMPERIAL WOMEN

In section 6.2 and 6.3, we explored the ideals that were advocated for women through the representation of female members of the imperial family members and the roles that were accepted for them within the imperial sphere. However, women of the imperial household frequently played a more prominent and public role than was traditionally allocated to them in the ancient literature and ideologies of gender where the stipulation of female modesty and domesticity prevailed. Imperial women often acted as patronesses to various groups within Roman society and even politics. Livia played an important role as patron and mediator, a role essential to the character of any public figure. She spoke for and protected the *ordo matronarum* and *ordo equester* (Purcell, 1986, 87). Purcell notes that "Livia thus played a vital part in the network which bound the *ordines* of Roman society to the narrow elite around Augustus at the top; in the final analysis, her representation of these groups was approved lest some adversary of the system should attempt to win political kudos by addressing himself to this constituency" (ibid., 87). Thus, Livia's participation in patronage can be viewed as important to the success of the imperial regime. She also played the role of mediator, both within and outside the imperial family. This can be observed in her intercession with Augustus on behalf of the conspirator Cinna Magnus. She also interceded on behalf of foreign cities, was responsible for the well-being of hostage children, and regularly received embassies and petitions addressed to her (ibid., 87-88). In essence, her foray into the public world of Roman society emphasised her importance in the maintenance of the emperor's rule as she "became a guarantrix and instrument of the Augustan peace" (ibid., 88).

Imperial women might also be patrons of the arts and frequent benefactors of the Roman community. Though her role as a benefactor has frequently been neglected in modern scholarship, Livia also contributed to the refurbishment of Augustan Rome (Kleiner, 1996, 30). Kleiner asserts that "since these commissions were sometimes closely intertwined with Augustus's political and moral objectives, an examination of them is invaluable in gaining a better understanding of the critical part female members of the imperial circle played in the formation and enactment of the emperor's programs" (ibid., 28). Commissions by imperial women, especially Livia and Octavia, included such public monuments as porticoes i.e the Porticus Octaviae which included a library, a curia and *schola(e)*. Imperial women also commissioned temples. For instance, Livia sponsored and dedicated the Shrine to Concordia, an appropriate commission for the symbolism of imperial and familial concord. This shrine was dedicated on June 11th, a date that seems to be tied to the significance of women and family life through the festival of the Matralia and the dedications of other temples such as the Temple to Mater Matuta and the Temple of Fortuna Virgo. Thus, through this commission and the resulting shrine, Livia could be associated with the ideal Roman matron and utilised as an example to other Roman women (ibid., 32). Other temples associated with women and the family - through the celebration of *pudicitia* or dedicated to goddesses worshipped strictly by *univarae* - were sponsored by Livia. These temples include the Temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana, the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris, and the shrines dedicated to the Pudicitia Patricia and the Pudicitia Plebeia (ibid., 33).

ELITE WOMEN AS PATRONS AND BENEFACTORS

Roman aristocratic women also acted as mediators and patrons within their community. Marshall notes the example of Junia Theodora of Corinth who utilised her influence within the province to gain gubernatorial favour for various Lycians and to help Lycian exiles (Marshall, 1975, 123). Nicols' study of female participation in civic patronage in the western empire addresses the incidence of formal patronage of communities by women. He examined epigraphic evidence for approximately 1200 individuals between 50 BC-AD 327, and found only 21 women as formal municipal patrons. Within his study, he further notes that women as formal civic patrons seem to have been limited to central Italy and North Africa (Nicols, 1989, 118-120). A late second-early third century AD inscription from Utica, North Africa honoured Accius Iulianus Asclepianus, consul and curator of Utica, and his wife and two daughters as the 'perpetual patrons' of the community (Fantham et al., 1994, 363). As was noted in Chapter 2, there is an example of a female patron from Gaul in the community of Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux - that of Antistia Pia Quintilla

(Goudineau, 1979). Free-born women and freed female slaves might also be patrons of *collegia*. MacMullen observes that from Italy and the western provinces approximately one-tenth of all *collegia* patrons were women (MacMullen, 1980, 211). For instance, a woman named Claudia was titled the 'mother of the brotherhood of fullers' (Fantham et al., 1994, 366).

Women were also recognised as benefactors of their communities (see Ch. 2). During the third century AD, a woman called Tation was responsible for the building of a hall and court enclosure within the local synagogue out of her own money (Fantham et al., 1994, 362). Attia Sacrata was recorded as restoring a *proscaenium* at Mirebeau in Germany during the late second to early third century AD (Raepsaet-Charlier, 1987, 133). Domitia Vettilla was responsible for the construction of a temple dedicated to Mars in Emerita (ibid., 295). An anonymous female donor was honoured at Vaison in Gaul during the first century AD as perpetual *flaminica* and as the benefactor of the community through her restoration of an unnamed building in Vaison (ibid., 668). There are also many instances of women holding important religious office and even the titles of various magistracies (see Ch. 2). Raepsaet-Charlier's study of the prosopography of senatorial women reveals several examples of women in religious positions. For instance, [A]ppia [...] was honoured as *flaminica divae Augustae* in the community of Albingaunum during the Flavian or Trajanic period (Raepsaet-Charlier, 1987, 98). Iunia Lepida was active as a priestess of Athena Polias (ibid., 404). Examples of priestesses from Britain and Gaul were seen in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 also addressed the question of women holding positions of authority within their communities, and therefore I will not go into this topic in detail again. However, it is important to acknowledge that women in the Greek East were frequently awarded magistracies, and thus some form of authority and significance within their communities must be assumed. MacMullen notes that "their real position is indicated by someone boasting in a public notice that he is 'husband to a Lyciarch,' that is, the presiding officer of the Lycian provincial congress. His deference is highly instructive" (MacMullen, 1986, 437). Marshall asserts that female influence and prestige was probably not dependent upon these positions themselves nor the power associated with them. Rather, their influence and authority was derived from their wealth and status, with the civic position simply as an "outward token" of these factors (Marshall, 1975, 125).

WOMEN AT WORK

The range of roles that women held in Roman society is more diverse than the traditional picture gained from the textual sources and visual images which frequently emphasised virtues and ideal behaviour. It is thus interesting to examine the women outside the imperial family and aristocratic classes, and explore the ways in which their lives might have differed from the ideals presented within the ancient evidence. Kampen's study of Roman working women in Ostia examines the variety of occupations that women held, the status derived from these positions and the ways in which working women were represented both visually and textually (Kampen, 1981). She notes that "the Roman work images of the imperial period follow two distinct paths: one makes work, literally conceived, the primary subject, whereas the other subordinates work to myth, entertainment or politics. The literal scene focuses on work for its own sake and communicates information directly, through the use of actions and apparatus whose meaning is self-evident" (Kampen, 1981, 82). I will primarily concentrate on textual and visual references to female workers, and explore working as a factor in the construction of identity. However, it is necessary to point out that male work images still dominate the data-base of examples from Britain and Gaul, and also from art throughout the empire. Therefore, I will also briefly address some of the male images of occupations in order to gain an idea of the diversity that might also be found in male lives.

Through a further examination of the literary, epigraphic and visual evidence we can see various examples of images from the non-elite classes which record both male and female lives as consisting of something other than the traditional virtues and archetypes. It is worth going into a great deal of detail in this section in order to clearly elucidate the many possibilities found within the working classes which are not immediately clear from the literary sources. One facet of their lives might consist of estate management. For example, we have a letter from a woman in Oxyrhynchus of the second century AD detailing the management of a farm. The text is not explicit in attributing the actual running of the farm to the woman herself, but it does demonstrate that she was intimately familiar with the workings of the estate:

> Ptolema to her brother Antas, greetings. All the fields are in good condition. The southern irrigated field of the 17 *arura* has been sold for grazing of cattle. Your cattle have eaten an *arura* and have gone to Pansoue. All the land there is being used for grazing. The west side of the vegetable garden is being used for grass-cutting. We have

> sold grass in allotments for 112 drachmas, except for the 6 eastern irrigated fields. Grass is selling very cheap, through Vetrianus three *arurae* were sold at 130 drachmas for grass, and also through him three at 68 drachmas for grazing sheep. Longinus and Sarapion and everyone at home sends their greeting. Vibius has gone to Psenuris to sell the grain. All your family is well. Farewell. Mecheir 30.
>
> (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 203-204)

Female agricultural workers are also alluded to in a few visual images. A woman milling grain is found on a mosaic panel from Saint-Romaine-en-Gal, along with representations of other rural activities (171). A relief from Mainz depicts a man winnowing wheat while a woman carries a loaded basket on her shoulders (172). This funerary relief was dedicated to a merchant or trader, and thus the working scenes are in reference to his business and trade, with the identity of the workers as unimportant and simply as an attribute to the merchant's character. A contrast in interpretation is seen in the funerary reliefs of a man and a woman bearing similar attributes. The relief from Rully portrays a man holding a goblet and a bunch of grapes. The second relief, from Chauviré, depicts a woman holding a bunch of grapes and a purse, presumably for money (173-174). Lantier has interpreted the first relief as a funerary monument for a male wine-grower, while the second relief bears no such interpretation despite the similar iconography. I would be hesitant to identify either of these reliefs as representative of a wine-growing profession because the iconography of grapes or fruit on tombstones is fairly common. However, as both utilise similar attributes, it seems biased to identify the man as a wine-grower and not the woman. Another woman carrying a basket filled with grapes on one shoulder is seen in the fragmentary funerary relief from an unknown provenance in Gallia Belgica (175). Again, this relief was probably one of several which decorated a larger mausoleum.

Evidence for female vendors and merchants is also present in Roman texts and visual imagery. For instance, the epitaph from a funerary monument in Rome commemorates a female vendor:

> To the gods of the dead. To Abudia Megiste, freedwoman of Marcus, most kindly, Marcus Abudius Luminaris, her patron and husband, built [this tomb] for the well-deserving dealer in grains and vegetables from the middle staircase, and for himself and for his freedmen and freedwomen and descendants and for Marcus Abudius Saturninus his son, of the senior body of the Esquiline tribe. He lived 8 years.
>
> (CIL 6.9683; Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, 170)

Female vendors of purple dye (CIL 6.9846; CIL 6.9848), resin (CIL 6.9855), fish (CIL 6.9801), bottles (CIL 6.9488), ointments (CIL 6.10006; CIL 6.33928; CIL 10.1965), and beans or seeds (CIL 3.153; CIL 14.2850) are also known in the epigraphic evidence. A shop sign or decoration from Ostia bears the image of a female vendor of poultry and produce. She stands behind the counter and displays her range of wares: snails, rabbits, monkeys, vegetables and chickens (**176**). A relief from the area around Soulosse carries the representation of a woman standing beside a cart filled with merchandise. She holds a folding ruler in her right hand and touches her wares with her left. This image is probably of an itinerant female merchant (**177**). Another tombstone from Soulosse depicts a man and woman standing beside each other, with a counter situated between them. The man rests a balance on the counter while the woman holds a purse and coffer (**178**). The iconography of this piece implies that both worked together and shared the burden of their occupation, presumably one of selling some type of good. The presence of both sexes as vendors within a scene is also found on a fragmentary block relief from Saintes. This relief, along with several others, is postulated to come from the same edifice, either of a market or baths complex. The relief portrays a man holding a strainer and a woman holding a set of scales of which one of the trays is loaded with merchandise (**179**). Another woman holding a set of scales, a common motif of vending and merchant representations, is found on a relief from Bordeaux. The woman stands behind her counter, and also holds a mirror in her left hand (**180**). Thus, the symbols of two different ideals were combined in this relief: her identity as a merchant and the status that work gave her with the traditional virtue of beauty. From Til-Châtel, we have a detailed relief of two male vendors. This scene represents a wine-merchant standing behind high counter and holding a measure for the wine. A bearded customer stands before the counter and holds a vessel in his hands. Several vessels hang above the vendor. To the right of this scene is another stall for a butcher (**181**). One of the more interesting reliefs from Gaul is dated to the second century AD and was found re-used as building material in the walls of Narbonne. This relief portrays a male apple seller who carries a basket of apples suspended around his neck. The inscription represents the cry of the merchant to his female customers: *[M]al[a]; mylieres (=mulieres), mylieres meae!* (Espérandieu, 1907, 390; CIL 12.4514; **182**).

The occupation of butcher is alluded to on several reliefs from Gaul. A tombstone of a male butcher found near Nuits portrays a standing man holding a large knife in one hand and the head of either a cow or sheep resting in the other (**183**). Another funerary relief from Dijon represents two men, possibly butchers, at work on the hanging carcass of a bull

(184). Women might also be found in the role of butcher. A funerary relief found in Alléan and commemorating Lupulae depicts the half-figure of an old woman holding a pointed tool, possibly a knife, and another object that resembles a sausage. She has therefore been identified by Espérandieu as a pork butcher (Espérandieu, 1908, 358; 185).

A fragmentary sculpture from Neumagen portrayed a boat filled with barrels and rowed by several men. At the back of the boat, the bearded male head situated behind the last barrel has been identified as the probable patron of the barge and presumably its cargo (186). From Narbonne, we have a tombstone bearing the image of a fishing boat with one sail. At the back of the boat is the larger-than-life head of a veiled woman which Espérandieu has identified as the protecting deity of the boat (Espérandieu, 1907, 422;187). I see no reason why this head might not represent the female patron or owner of this fishing vessel. Larger scale does not always indicate the representation of a deity as we saw in Chapter 3. Also, female ship-owners are known from the Roman period. Sijpesteijn notes a receipt signed by a female owner of a ship, Usia Ptolemais, dated to c. AD 225, though the fragmentary state of the papyrus makes the date uncertain (Sijpesteijn, 1987, 141). Will points out a relief from Pompeii on the tomb of Naevoleia Tyche which depicts a scene of ships where one again bears the image of a woman in the stern. This figure has been interpreted as Fortuna in the past. However, this shipping scene may be representative of Naevoleia Tyche's shipping interests, with the female image as another portrait of herself or as making a pun on her name through this possible figure of Fortuna (Will, 1979, 42;188). Therefore, I suggest that we must at least entertain the possibility that a woman in such a context is not automatically a deity, but perhaps representative of the person whose interest in the boat depicted is the most significant.

Female artisans are not as well-known in the textual and visual evidence. Kampen notes that when women are depicted participating in some form of craftwork, the background to the scene is frequently allegorical or mythological (Kampen, 1993, 125-126). However, men are frequently mentioned and depicted as artisans. There are several examples from both Britain and Gaul. For instance, we have an inscription from Bath which records the offering to the Suleviae by Sulimus, a sculptor (RIB 151). Another dedication found at Colchester recorded the fulfillment of a vow to the god Silvanus Callirius from Cintusmus, a coppersmith (RIB 194). A tombstone of a soldier from Chester depicted a fragmentary male figure with a variety of mason's tools incised at his feet (189). Another possible Romano-British example depicting an artisan is found on a relief from York bearing

the representation of a blacksmith. Though this image could also be a depiction of Vulcan, the stone was found near a Roman road and small cemetery, thus making a funerary interpretation more probable. (**190**). From Gaul, we have a diversity of occupations and crafts depicted. Some reliefs rely simply on the motifs of the tools of the craft itself. Such a relief is found in the postulated shop-sign of a stoneworker bearing the images of mason's level, two chisels and another tool (**191**). A second century AD funerary relief from Bordeaux portrays a male sculptor at work with his chisel and hammer, while the inscription identifies him as a *sculptor* (CIL 13.643; **192**). A relief from the area around Sens depicts the fulling craft. In the upper register, a man cuts a piece of cloth with a large pair of shears, while below a fuller stands in the fulling vat. This piece was probably the tombstone of a clothmaker (**193**).

Though women are much more rarely represented in representations of craftwork, there are a few images known from throughout the empire. A very weathered, and thus not illustrated, tombstone found in the ramparts of Narbonne bears the image of two blacksmiths at work. Espérandieu notes that a man brandishes his hammer over a piece of iron and the anvil, while a woman works the bellows of the forge (Espérandieu, 1907, 429). It is thus possible that male craftsman utilised either female apprentices or members of their own family in their shops, though these women are rarely represented. Women might also be craftspeople in their own right. A relief from Ostia and dated to the second century AD bears the image of a seated female shoemaker holding up a shoe or foot-form (**194**). A sarcophagus from Rome of the first half of the third century AD shows a female garland-maker at work under a tree (**195**). Within the written evidence, we have references to women as professional textile and garment workers, though many of these seem to be slaves or very low-paid occupations for free women (Kampen, 1981, 121-123). Kampen states that the rarity of women represented in craftwork could have several reasons. The evidence itself might simply be lost or women apprentices and relatives might have worked in craft workshops but without a direct acknowledgment of their position in this field. If these women did not reach a level of independence or stature within their craft, then the record of their participation in the work through epigraphic or visual evidence would have been limited (ibid., 125-126). She also postulates that the smaller number of female representations within this field might indicate that being an artisan did not confer any real measure of status on women, and thus they and their commemorators might continue to rely on the symbolism of the traditional virtues (Kampen, 1993, 126).

Women were also found in the respectable profession of medicine. Jackson notes that Galen made reference to female doctors, though he stated that these women frequently treated 'female' diseases. Women often practiced as midwives and were considered quite knowledgeable and capable within the medical field (Jackson, 1988, 86-87). There are several epigraphic references to female doctors, and also allusions within the literary sources. For instance, an epitaph from a funerary monument in Pergamum of the second century AD combined a celebration of domestic virtue and public occupation in its glorification of the deceased:

> Farewell, lady Panthia, from your husband. After your departure, I keep up my lasting grief from your cruel death. Hera, goddess of marriage, never saw such a wife: your beauty, your wisdom, your chastity. You bore me children completely like myself; you cared for your bridegroom and your children; you guided straight the rudder of life in our home and raised high our common fame in healing - though you were a woman you were not behind me in skill...
>
> (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 265)

A humorous epigram from Martial also alludes to the presence of women in the medical profession:

> Lydia told her aged husband that she was hysterical, and regrets that intercourse is necessary for her; yet with tears and groans she says her health is not worth the sacrifice, and declares she would rather choose to die. Her lord bids her live and not desert the bloom of her years, and he permits to be done what he cannot do himself. Immediately men doctors come in, and lady doctors depart, and her feet are hoisted. Oh, what stringent treatment!
>
> (Martial, Epigrams, 11.71)

There are three inscriptions attesting to female doctors from Gaul. All are classified simply as *medica* with no specialty mentioned. Flavia Hedone is recorded from the first century AD in Nîmes. Metilia is honored by a donation from the decurions in Lyon during the first-second century AD. A funerary relief from Metz commemorates an unknown female doctor through both inscription and a portrait of the woman holding a coffer (Rémy, 1984, 151; 196). Finally, reference to the profession of midwifery can be seen in reliefs that depict women in what seems to be the typical crouching birthing posture. A Hadrianic or Antonine relief from Tomb 100 in Ostia bears the image of a midwife aiding a woman giving birth (197). A very weathered relief from the area near Bliecastel shows a nude woman crouching in what could be the birthing posture, though an interpretation of this piece is uncertain (198). Espérandieu has also identified a relief from Soulosse as a woman giving birth and of

possible funerary context (199). With these last two reliefs, it is not certain that they are in reference to the profession of midwifery nor giving birth, and thus we must acknowledge that they might commemorate the manner of death for the woman or even something entirely different.

Women often occupied the positions of personal service within a household or community such as dressers, hairdressers, general attendants, masseuses, spinners and weavers, clothes-menders, readers or even teachers, secretaries or scribes. Many of these women would have been slaves in private or domestic service (see Treggiari, 1975; Treggiari, 1976). A second century AD tombstone from Bordeaux depicts the portrait bust of a young woman and the inscription records her as Nemetogena, an *ancilla publica* or public maidservant (200). We must also remember the higher-status toilette scenes found on many grand mausoleums that will give us an idea of the variety of jobs a female personal attendant might perform for her mistress. Nurses and wet-nurses might also be found in many households. The cemetery of St. Severin in Cologne yielded the tombstone of Severina, dated to AD 275-300. She is identified as *nutrix* within the inscription (201). Other service positions could include waitressing which is known from a few reliefs. For example, a relief from Tomb 90 along the Isola Sacra of Ostia and dated to AD 270-280 depicts a harbour scene with a waitress serving customers in a harbour-front tavern (202).

Female entertainers were also known from the Roman period. An epitaph from Rome records the memory of Licinia, a freedwoman, lutenist and attendant within a family (CIL 6.10158; extracted from Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 219). From Philadelphia in Egypt, we have the textual contract in letter-form for a troupe of castanet dancers. This text is dated to AD 206 and addressed to Isidora the castanet-dancer. It sets out the terms of work such as the days required and the payment to be rendered (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 217). The commemoration of an actress from Aquileia eloquently records her accomplishments:

> In the past she won resounding fame in many towns and many cities for her various accomplishments in plays, mimes, and choruses, and (often) dances. But she did not die on the stage, this tenth Muse.
>
> To Bassilla the actress Heracleides the skilled speaker and biographer, set up this stone. Even though she is dead, she will have the same honour she had in life, when she made her body 'die' on the floor of the stage. This is what her fellow actors are saying to her: 'Bassilla farewell, no one lives forever.'

(Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, 171)

Another actress has been identified from Roman Britain. A graffiti text from a pottery sherd found in Leicester links the actress Verecunda with Lucius, a gladiator (Allason-Jones, 1989, 170). Female gladiators have also been alluded to in the textual and visual sources. Wiedemann notes that an *editor* from Ostia boasted that he had been the first ever to introduce women into the fighting grounds (Wiedemann, 1992, 10). Suetonius' Lives of the Caesars (8.4) records that Domitian put on a variety of gladiatorial shows for the masses, including ones that featured women gladiators. A carved relief from Halicarnassus depicted two armed women in combat and states that 'Amazon and Achillia were set free' (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1992, 213-214; **203**). Espérandieu identifies the decoration on an altar from Rabastens as depicting a chariot-race where one of the participants was female, though this is not entirely clear from the illustration **(204)**.

Women might also participate in the finer arts such as painting. Pliny the Elder records the example of the female artist Iaia of Cyzicus whose paintings and ivory engravings were as in demand and more expensive than the most famous contemporary male artists (Natural History 35.40). Also, many female writers such as Sulpicia, Agrippina the Younger (her unpreserved memoirs), and Christian writers like Faltonia Betitia Proba, Eudocia Augusta, Egeria and Perpetua are mentioned in Snyder's summary on ancient women and literature (see Snyder, 1989).

There are also a few examples of working women in more unusual occupations. For instance, Sijepesteijn informs us of a papyrus receipt for the payment of tax on the registry of catoecic land. What is interesting is that the tax-collector was female:

> Year 27 of Aurelius Commodus Antoninus Caesar the Lord, Pharmuthi 13. The tax on 1 (+?) aroura has been paid to Sarapias, Sarapion's daughter, previously farmer of the tax on catoecic registry for the Oxyrhynchite and other nomes, through her agent Ammonios by Tetoeus Freedwoman of Panechotes of Aphrodisium in the Small Oasis...
>
> (Sijepesteijn, 1985, 72)

Another example is found in the decoration on a gambling-house wall from Pompeii which records Faustilla the usurer or pawn-broker making short-term loans (MacMullen, 1980, 210).

What is striking about these visual and textual examples is the diversity which can be seen in women's lives, and the often personal desire by themselves and others to record more than their domestic virtues and traditional roles within the family life of Roman society (Kampen, 1981, 131-136). Of course, we cannot use these examples uncritically as illustrations of real Roman life. It is important to acknowledge that these images in themselves are ideals created by the patrons of the monuments. Like the records of traditional virtues, these images are also coloured by what the patron of a particular representation wanted us to know. These portrayals will thus give us an insight into their lives, but in no way will they tell us what their lived realities were. However, Kampen aptly summarises an interesting point when she states that "these inscriptions [and reliefs] testify to a value structure different from that of the jurists and literary men, yet as full of the need for self-identification and self-congratulation" as the more well-known monuments of men (ibid., 129).

At the same time, we have to acknowledge the limited number of female representations that cross the boundaries of the traditional ideals of Roman gender ideologies. Kampen asserts that "the contrast with the enormous range and number of men's work images...is...astonishing, and it indicates that either far fewer women than men worked outside the home or, and this alternative need not exclude the former, there was some resistance to showing women at work" (Kampen, 1981, 100). She postulates that one of the reasons why women were less represented could be due to the desire of many elite patrons of the arts to retain the ideological position of women in the domestic sphere within the art they commissioned (Kampen, 1993, 129). At the same time, it is a distinct possibility that women, at least within the lower classes, worked as apprentices or especially as female relatives of craftspeople. However, there might have been a continued desire to utilise the traditional motifs of virtue within their representations (Kampen, 1981, 130-135; Kampen, 1993). Where visual images of working women exist we can assume a level of pride in their work and that it was regarded as a facet of their identity, similar to the motivations assumed for male representations of the same genre. It is also relevant to note that many of the women who did work and made their living through an occupation that would have been integral to their character were probably from the classes which could not often afford to record their accomplishments through text or imagery (Kampen, 1993, 129). It is also noticeable that only two women are recorded in occupations in Roman Britain: Diadora the

priestess and Verecunda the actress. However, as Allason-Jones points out and thus must be remembered for Britain and throughout the Roman empire:

> "In Britain the complete silence about the female workforce is likely to give a completely erroneous impression of town life. The number of craftsmen who have left their names is very small compared to the thousands who must have existed, so the lack of inscriptions [and representations] of female workers may not be so surprising. At the lower end of the social scale funerary inscriptions may have been more commonly of wood than stone, and it is also conceivable that the names recorded on artefacts are those of the factory owners rather than the individual workers, male or female. The only two career women in Britain who are known by name are Verecunda, the actress, and Diadora, the priestess, but between these two extremes there must have been multitudes of midwives, wet-nurses, bath attendants, agricultural workers and craftswomen."
>
> (Allason-Jones, 1989, 80)

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has raised several points on the construction of identity within the gender ideologies of the Roman empire. The ideology of virtue was heavily emphasised in the textual and visual construction of images of Roman women. These ideals, ranging from chastity, fidelity, domesticity and beauty, were utilised in the definition of Roman women, as a way of creating boundaries within which women's behaviour and roles were approved by the dominant group within Roman society. This ideology of virtue complements the manifestation of personified ideals and abstractions in the female form, but also contrasts with the gender ideology which constructed women as outside the 'norms' and bounds of accepted society (see Chs. 3-5). It is also interesting to note that ideals and female imagery were again frequently utilised in the self-definition of others. While the virtues depicted referred to the women themselves, they were also constructed as a facet of the patron, commemorator or even the Empire's identity. Therefore, we must acknowledge that frequently these images might tell us more about the commemorators than the commemorated, and like images of the Other or of personifications, ideals and women could be another facet in the process of self-identification.

These traditonal virtues of the Roman matron were advocated throughout Roman society, and textual and visual representations of women consequently reflected this

emphasis. However, we must acknowledge the other possibilities open to women. Despite the proscriptions against women in public life, we have examples of female patrons and benefactors, magistrates and mediators and we have seen that women might participate in a variety of occupations and activities. This would not have been clear if we had not moved beyond the words of the elite male authors and the traditional representations of women on tombstones, historical reliefs and domestic decoration.

We should also question the monuments themselves and their applicability in a study of the ideal and 'real' lives of Roman women. There is a potential problem in using the range of monuments uncritically. The images within these monuments and texts were often very constructed, geared towards a specific meaning and context. They become a gloss on life, what Meskell terms 'cultural currency,' that highlights or advocates a certain lifestyle which is not necessarily reflective of what was going on day-to-day with real people (Meskell, pers. comm.). The built-in intertia of these monuments as they survive beyond their moment of construction into different time periods and contexts does not mesh with the notion that people are constantly changing, shifting focus, moving forward or even backwards, forever in flux. Therefore, there is a timegap between the static imagery and the dynamic changes possibly occuring in people's lives. We are thus once again led to the question of what these images can tell us. Perhaps this is where the distortion between the ideal and the real becomes the most apparent. We must acknowledge that the monuments themselves will only present us with imagery which reflects what their authors want to project at that particular moment or how they want to be remembered for posterity, while also possibly yielding an insight into the character of the society in which they lived. With this understanding, we can establish a more nuanced understanding of the imagery itself.

In conclusion, I am led to question the monumentality of our assumptions elucidated within this chapter. First, by focusing on the idea of the ideal and the real in Roman visual and textual imagery, there is an assumption that these were clear-cut categories which could be easily defined and identified within the evidence. Our analysis makes this assumption uncertain as we observe the different ways in which the various ideals, both traditional and not-so-traditional, were utilised by different groups of people. The lines between these two areas are not so perceptible. Ideal images and real lives often intertwine to create a more integrated, though far from complete, picture of women in Roman society. In addition, the ideals do not always fit so easily into a power-based model that views images solely as

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has elucidated several facets of the Roman ideologies of gender and their expression in visual imagery from the imperial period. I have examined the visual symbols which were influenced by and reproduced perceptions of women and men within Roman society, and the roles these visual symbols played in both the mediation and creation of Roman gender ideologies. My focus upon two distinct aspects of Roman gender ideologies - the association between the female and Otherness or Nature, and the representation of women within the expression of abstract concepts and ideals - has led us to several questions: How can we explain the paradox of female representation which placed women both on the margins of society and in its centre? What was the influence of ideology on the visual imagery? Do they tell us anything about Roman women? How might these symbols have been utilised within provincial society? I shall now draw the threads of the previous chapters together to illuminate some of the answers and to indicate topics for further study.

7.2 INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF ROMAN SOCIETY: THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Du Bois' study on Greek imagery notes that Greek women were perceived as integral to Greek society through their role in marriage and reproduction. However, they were also perceived as external threats to the continuance of society. Thus, their representation as different from the Greek citizen male, as the Other, frequently placed them outside of that society, leading to the perception of women as a potential threat to the fabric of Greek society (du Bois, 1982, 71). The Greek concept of women as Other also linked women with barbarians and animals, thus further emphasising woman as an external threat to the male structure of culture. Du Bois asserts that "barbarians and animals are clearly 'other'; females are clearly defined as such through analogy with them. The contradictions of the marriage/culture metaphor are thus revealed with great intensity. Men exchange

women, therefore men make culture, yet they cannot do so without women, who are by this definition of culture-as-exchange excluded from civilization. Women are both inside and outside culture" (ibid., 68).

A similar notion is applicable to the ideological construction and visual representation of women within Roman society. Women were also considered important and integral to the social reproduction of Roman society. The texts emphasise the traditional female ideals and virtues such as fidelity, fecundity, chastity, piety, modesty and domesticity (Chs. 2 and 6). These virtues were deemed essential to both familial and social harmony. While the texts were primarily consumed by the elites, the visual imagery re-emphasised these ideals within a broader context. The representation of traditional virtues remained a common facet within the visual metaphor of a person's identity, for both the elite and non-elite classes. The epigraphic evidence recorded in traditional formulae the desire for women and men to at least be perceived as adhering to the ideal. Imperial monuments carried images of imperial women as representative of dynastic continuity and security, marital and imperial concord, while imagery and text from funerary monuments highlighted the ideals of male *virtus*, wealth, domestic harmony and beauty. Furthermore, the worship of personified virtues highlighted the importance of these positive concepts within Roman society. At the same time, women often defined themselves or were defined by their commemorators through ideals which were not solely confined to the matron's traditional virtues. This can be seen in the imagery which defined a person through their working life, a concept and ideal alien to the elite classes. However, the predominance of textual and visual representations of female ideals and the prevalence of personified virtues in the female form signifies the association of women with the 'inside' of Roman culture - the reproduction of society and the familial and imperial harmony necessary for the continuation of the Empire.

Through her association with Otherness and Nature, Roman women were also implicated in the analogy between the female and barbarians and animals. Their relation to the Other, as outside the bounds of society and culture resulted in the female form being considered an appropriate vehicle for the articulation of difference both within text and art. Despite her importance to Roman society, woman was still distinguished from the Roman citizen male and thus could be utilised as a symbol of the socially peripheral. However, her association with Nature is more ambiguous. Elements of both the inside and the outside of Roman culture reside in this imagery. The female closeness to nature can be viewed as both a facet of the importance of her fertility and reproduction for Roman society and as another

aspect of her difference from the Roman male. Thus, the female symbols of Nature could be utilised in two ways: her association with fertility and abundance could symbolise the positive aspects of nature and culture's control over its bounty, while her relation to the more frightening aspects of Nature (i.e. Medusa) could be controlled through the appropriation of the power within these symbols in order to express culture's dominance of nature.

7.3 SELF-DEFINITION AND DIFFERENCE

This leads us to the next question concerning the relevance of these images to our knowledge of Roman women. One factor within female imagery has been evident in each of the four topics of this thesis. Each chapter has noted that the female imagery - associating women with Otherness or Nature, personification or ideals - frequently divulges more information about the patrons or commemorators than about the women themselves. Indeed, many of the female representations studied have been integral to the self-definition or self-identification of others. The female figures of the Other were essential to the articulation of a difference between the Roman citizen male and the barbarian or female Other. This use of difference in self-definition was an important facet of the representation of the hierarchy of Roman culture and the superiority of the Romans over other groups. The female form was considered an appropriate symbol for this notion because the female most obviously elucidates the concept of difference from the male citizen. The association between women and Nature was another facet in this self-definition. With this imagery, the concept of cultural and status difference was often expressed, especially through the mosaic representations of Medusa and the Seasons (Ch. 4). The desire by villa and house-owners to communicate their place within the social hierarchy often involved an articulation of distinction between female symbols of nature and male cultural figures or activities.

In addition, the personification of abstract concepts in the female form was often utilised as a symbol for the manifestation of individual virtues and ideals, especially within the imperial sphere. For instance, representations of imperial women, through their association with personifications, were utilised to convey concepts such as *concordia*, dynastic succession and continuity, peace and plenty. This mode of visual expression was a frequent feature of imperial ideology and imagery which aided in the self-definition of the emperor and his regime. Within art and inscription, we also often observe a connection between women and traditional ideals. This female association with ideals and virtues could be an integral facet in the identity of the commemorator as the woman's virtue reflected

favourably back upon him/her. The information gleaned from these images is seldom straightforward. We cannot uncritically draw parallels between female representation and female lives. Some textual and visual representations will reveal more about individual women. Chapter 6 gave examples of public benefactions and roles of elite women and images of working women. However, we must acknowledge that these representations are still presenting an idealised version of that woman's life with a focus upon what was considered significant or conferred some form of status within her and the commemorator's community.

7.4 GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND REPRESENTATION WITHIN PROVINCIAL SOCIETY

Finally, I will address the tension within this thesis between the evidence from the Mediterranean core and the examples drawn from Roman Britain and Gaul. This study of female imagery has explored the general ideological background to concepts of femaleness within Roman art. However, we need to question the extent to which these ideological classifications were applicable to visual representations from outside the Mediterranean core of the Empire. Can the same ideological framework be employed with reference to provincial art? We do see similar motifs of the female as Other or expressing her association with nature, while the traditional ideals were frequently found on representations of women within the funerary context. There is thus the possibility that the images which were derived from Greek predecessors and Roman imperial imagery might have been emulated without much change of motivation or meaning within provincial imagery. At the same time, the concept of *bricolage* might be relevant to the utilisation of these motifs and images in provincial art. Terrenato notes that the manifestations of this concept resembles a *collage*: "a complex patchwork made up of elements of various age and provenance: some of them are new, but many others are old objects, refunctionalized in new forms and made to serve new purposes within a new context" (1998, 23). In other words, the motifs derived from the imperial imagery of Otherness and the expression of status or hierarchy, along with the Roman elite ideals and their representation, could have been combined with elements from provincial ideology within an image or artistic medium. While the motifs might be similar to those developed within the Mediterranean core, we must acknowledge that there would have been potentially different meanings and viewings within the provincial context and from different viewers, and distinctions in meaning might also arise through the passage of time.

One difficulty with this tension between the Mediterranean and provincial imagery and ideology is the limited evidence for provincial women themselves. It is difficult to assess whether the ideological concepts concerning women are relevant because we have limited direct knowledge about women in the provinces. We can demonstrate that there was a general Roman ideological background which established women as on both the inside and outside of Roman society, and that manifestations of this ideology can be found in provincial contexts (see section 7.2). The representation of Otherness through female imagery, and also male barbarians, can be observed on monuments which were imperially-sponsored or related to military contexts. For example, in Britain, every monument which used the motif of defeated or captive barbarians was derived from military contexts e.g. the distance slabs along the Antonine Wall (Hag Knowe, Bridgeness, Summerston Farm, Hutcheson Hill) or made reference to a soldier's military career i.e. the cavalry tombstones with fallen barbarian foe. From Gaul, we see a similar pattern. The representations of combat or interactions between the Romans and barbarians are found on several triumphal monuments (Saint-Remy (Glanum), Orange, Porte Noire). Triumphal monuments also yielded the majority of the representations of male and female captives or barbarian trophies. The tombstones that utilised barbarian imagery, male or female, were those of veterans or soldiers. Also, the representation of woman as province is found in examples from Gaul (Chiragan, Langres), and the contrast between Roman and barbarian province was firmly established through their representation (see Pls. 45-46). Thus, the provincial imagery of Otherness is confined to contexts related to the military sphere, and thus directly influenced by motivations from the imperial core of the Empire.

The exploration of the association between woman and nature in provincial contexts is more ambiguous. We do see the utilisation of motifs which seem to equate women with concepts of the wild and nature such as Medusa or the Seasons, while male figures of culture seem to be popular in both Britain and Gaul i.e. Orpheus or hunt imagery. However, this might not be expressing a conscious distinction between nature and culture, but simply the appropriation of the images for the glorification of the villa or house-owner. The imagery of Medusa or Orpheus would thus be utilised because of the power which they communicated through their representation: the appropriation of Medusa's powerful gaze and wildness or Orpheus' control over nature. These images, associated with the dichotomous concepts of nature and culture through their mythology and representation, were significant through their employment in the expression and maintenance of social relationships and hierarchy,

without consciously drawing upon the notions of distinction between Nature and Culture articulated in the Greco-Roman textual discourses.

Finally, we must question the application of ideals to provincial society. Roman personifications are also found on provincial representations such as the figures of Abundantia, Virtus or Tyche. At the same time, it seems that the utilisation of motifs and representations expressing traditional ideals and virtues, for both women and men, was also a prevalent trend on provincial funerary monuments. Were these associations between women and ideal concepts emulations of Roman motifs and ideology and an acceptance of the expectation for women to be represented at least as acting within the bounds of traditional ideal behaviour? Or is it again possible that while the ideals might have been embraced on one level, a different interpretation and motivation might be applied to the provincial viewer or patron? Again, this is a difficult question to assess due to the limited nature of our evidence and knowledge concerning the lives of provincial women. However, while there does seem to be a desire to utilise the traditional modes of expression of ideals, we can also observe a trend where other ideals are expressed by individuals within Roman provincial society.

7.5 IDEAS FOR FURTHER WORK

Despite the difficulties in a study of women, female imagery and ideology, I believe that the topic has great potential for further research. While my thesis has addressed the general articulation of ideological concepts of the female within Roman art, it would be worth making a more detailed study of provincial art and ideology, with a specific focus upon the evidence for the provincial social and cultural climate. By firmly establishing a connection between image and context, I could then determine whether context i.e. funerary, domestic, public, historical had a discernible influence on the ways in which women and men are represented on provincial art. A comparison of the urban and rural contexts would also establish a possible determining factor in representation. Another important topic can be found in the exploration of female and male representations on other types of material culture such as pottery, glass or metal-work. The opportunity to examine these often more 'mundane' objects could illuminate the expression of gender ideologies within the sphere of society unable to commission the larger works such as sculpture and mosaics. I suggest that an analysis of the visual imagery from the provinces through the more focused exploration of context and material could elucidate the nature of provincial imagery even more clearly.

I also suggest that the type of study I have established within this thesis could be applied more specifically to art from the Empire's Mediterranean core. It would be thought-provoking to explore the possible examples of Otherness, the Nature:Culture dichotomy and personifications and ideals and the ways in which they are manifested on monuments from Italy. Were there regional and local variations on these themes? What are the possibilites for different interpretations and expressions of the ideology and imagery within Rome itself? Finally, areas such as North Africa, Asia Minor or Egypt, with their pre-Roman artistic traditions, could also be a fruitful area of study. An analysis of the ways in which the Roman imagery was affected by the pre-Roman cultural climate and how representation changed through Roman influence will further elucidate the relationship between Roman core and province within the creation and mediation of ideology through imagery.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This thesis sets us on a new course for the study of representations and perceptions of women within Roman society. I have established the general theoretical background for a novel interpretation of Roman images of women by examining the ideological influences, motivations and utilisations behind the imagery. The focus upon the paradoxical representation of women within Roman art – their placement on both the inside and the boundaries of culture, illuminates their paradoxical position within Roman society itself. It also becomes clear that female representation is not straightforward, and thus often becomes a mode of expression for the identity and ideals of other members of Roman society. Finally, the difficulty in examining the relationship between Roman ideology and provincial representation is noted. While definitive answers to our questioning of the tension between the Mediterranean and provincial evidence were not always forthcoming, this study provides us with a starting point for the exploration of the imagery and what it divulges about the creators and viewers themselves, both within the Mediterranean core and the Roman provinces.

Therefore, this approach has enabled us to obtain a more nuanced viewpoint of Roman art and its relation to Roman society which moves beyond the traditional art historical interpretations of the past. However, it also elucidates the plurality of meanings in both art and gender relations further indicating that there is a plurality of interpretations and possibilities still to be discovered.

ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Rainey, Anne. 1973. *Mosaics in Roman Britain*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin, 1863 -
CSIR 1.1	Phillips, E. J. 1977. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Corbridge, Hadrian's Wall East of the North Tyne*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.2	Cunliffe, B. W. and Fulford, M. G. 1988. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Bath and the Rest of Wessex*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.3	Tufi, Sergio Rinaldi. 1983. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Yorkshire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.4	Keppie, L. J. F. and Arnold, Beverly, J. 1984. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Scotland*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.5	Brewer, Richard J. 1986. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Wales*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.6	Coulston, J. C. and Phillips, E. J. 1988. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Carlisle, Hadrian's Wall west of the North Tyne*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.7	Henig, Martin. 1993. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Cotswold Region with Devon and Cornwall*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
CSIR 1.8	Huskinson, Janet. 1994. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani: Eastern England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
Esp. 1-15	Espérandieu, Émile. 1907-1938. *Recueil Général des Bas-Reliefs, Statues et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine*, Vols. 1-11, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale
	Lantier, Raymond. 1947-1966. *Recueil Général des Bas-Reliefs, Sculptures et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine*, Vols. 12-15, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France
ES	Scott, Eleanor. 1993. *A Gazeteer of Roman Villas in Britain*, Leicester: Leicester Archaeology Monographs 1
GS 1957	Stern, Henri. 1957. *Recueil Général des Mosaïques de la Gaule*, 1.1, Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique

GS 1977	Darmon, Jean-Pierre and Lavagne, Henri. 1977. *Recueil Général des Mosaïques de la Gaule*, 2.3, Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique
GS 1981	Lancha, Janine. 1981. *Recueil Général des Mosaïques de la Gaule*, 3.2, Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique
GS 1994	Darmon, Jean-Pierre and Lavagne, Henri. 1977. *Recueil Général des Mosaïques de la Gaule*, 2.5, Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique
ILS	Dessau, H. 1892-1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 3 vols., Berlin
PW	Witts, Pat. 1994. *Images in Romano-British Mosaics: Iconography and Context*, Milton Keynes, Open University: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis
RIB	Collingwood, R. G. and Wright, R. P. 1965. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Volume 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press
W & R	Wright, R. P. and Richmond, I. A. 1955. *Catalogue of the Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester*, Chester and North Wales Archaeological Society

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