

LIVIA THE POISONER: GENESIS
OF AN HISTORICAL MYTH

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Livia the poisoner: Genesis of an historical myth

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University of California, Irvine, 1994

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
IRVINE

Livia the Poisoner: Genesis of an Historical Myth
DISSERTATION
submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in Classics

by

Cristina G. Calhoon

Dissertation Committee:

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1993

To
Ken and Martha
For their support, love and patience
all these years

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ABSTRACT

Livia the Poisoner: Genesis of an Historical Myth

by

Cristina G. Calhoon

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

University of California, Irvine, 1994

Professor Richard I. Frank, Chair

This dissertation examines the ambiguity with which Roman literary tradition has invested the figure of Livia, portrayed both as the embodiment of the virtues of the ancient Roman matron and as the prototype of the unscrupulous and power-hungry female. The portrayal by certain Roman historians (Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio Cassius and Velleius) of Livia as gravis in rem publicam mater, gravis domui Caesarum noverca, is re-evaluated in light of archeological and numismatical evidence. Special attention is given to the role of literary stereotypes, both positive and negative, of politically ambitious women, as well as to the narrative patterns of episodes in Tacitus' Annales, Livy's history, and the work of Dio Cassius.

The material of this study is divided into two parts. The first examines the historical Livia in the context of the evolution of the Augustan principate, with particular attention to the creation of her public role through the conferment of special honors and the emergence of her cult.

Part Two investigates the image of Livia presented by historiographers. A preliminary discussion of the ideological function of the "ideal" matron, and of that of her opposite, the woman who seeks public recognition for her political capacities, provide the background necessary to examine the different elements of Livia's literary image. The figure of Lucretia is examined vis-à-vis her opposites, Rome's Etruscan queens, who present striking similarities to Tacitus' Livia and to her granddaughter Agrippina, mother of Nero. Also discussed are the figures of brilliant and energetic women who rejected traditional tenets of conduct and were perceived as a threat to Rome's political order. These observations are combined in the final chapter, where the figure of Livia is examined through a discussion of figures (e.g. the step-mother, the witch), certain of whose characteristics converge in the literary portrayal of "Livia the poisoner."

Introduction

The figure of Livia preserved by Roman literary tradition is fraught with ambiguity: on the one hand, she embodies the virtues that made the women of ancient Rome exemplary, to the point that even her most virulent detractors could not help acknowledging her chastity, prudence, wisdom, and loyalty to her husband;¹ on the other, she is often portrayed as calculating, unscrupulous and power-thirsty, seeking relentlessly to obtain absolute power by making her son, Tiberius, the sole ruler of Rome.²

Much in these characterizations betrays the ideological bent of their various authors so that, while it is indeed possible that Livia was extremely ambitious (she was, after all, a true-blue Roman aristocrat within a tradition familiar with ambitious and strong-willed matrons), the charge that she used intrigue and even assassination to clear Tiberius' path to power has never been substantiated. Tacitus and Dio alone, among the ancient sources, report Livia's alleged crimes; these stories probably had their origin in the circle of Agrippina the Elder and may have been perpetuated via the memoirs of her daughter, Agrippina the Younger.³ Livia also shared Tiberius' unpopularity; virulent personal attacks against female relatives of political rivals had been a feature of political rhetoric in Republican times, but the tradition had not died with the Republic. As Tiberius' regime grew increasingly oppressive,

some regarded Livia as the only restraining influence on her son's worst tendencies, while others made her ultimately responsible for his tyranny.

The ambivalence that characterizes Livia's literary portrayal mirrors a complex set of relations between the public and private sphere, as well as those between family and community, male and female. Although Roman women were excluded from public life and expected to devote their lives to caring for their children and running the household, they were nevertheless essential to the continuation of Rome's patriarchal social and political structure. Chastity was for a woman the equivalent of courage for a man, since both guaranteed the survival of the family line and of the state.⁴ Conversely, a woman's sexual promiscuity disrupted the family and, metaphorically, the state. Women actively involved in politics were perceived as having abandoned their proper familial role to invade male territory, hence their depiction as unnatural, immoral and depraved.⁵

Despite this polarization, aristocratic Roman women exerted considerable political influence in socially acceptable forms: as mothers of influential sons and as patrons and benefactresses, modelled on the "super-mother role" of the elite. This "First Lady" figure offered women a "compensatory ideal" to strive for, but was not immune from distrust or attacks if those who embodied it were thought to wield real power. During the Principate, the wives of

"good" rulers won distinction as patrons of communities, dispensers of food and charities to the lower classes, particularly women and children. Livia was the first of these "super mothers": she was exalted by Augustan propaganda as a chaste spouse and mother, promoter of married life and child-rearing.⁶

Yet in attempting a study of Livia's character and of her impact on the history and tradition of Rome, it is impossible to avoid reckoning with the body of tales, rumors and anecdotes that followed her both during her lifetime and through subsequent generations--stories which collectively constitute the historical "myth" of Livia. This myth has successfully resisted the erosion of time, and it bears primary responsibility for the persistence of the image of Livia the poisoner, "a harsh mother to the state, a harsh stepmother to the house of the Caesars" (gravis in rem publicam mater, gravis domui Caesarum noverca).⁷

The aim of this study is to show how historians and moralists appropriated Livia's historical persona and molded it into a prototype of a Roman "First Lady"--a figure that combines a select few of her traits with those of some of her successors, as well as of female tyrants from literary tradition. Distrust of ambitious women merged with a hatred of monarchy--regarded by senatorial historians as a form of government unworthy of free men--and produced the Tacitean Livia, poisoning stepmother of the dynasty.

The material of this study has been divided into two parts: Part One (chapters One through Four) examines the historical Livia in the context of the evolution of the Augustan principate, with particular emphasis on the creation of her public persona through the bestowal of special honors and the emergence of her cult. Chapter One deals with Livia's marriages and with the supporting role she played with Octavia in Augustus' propaganda preceding Actium. Their public role as models of Roman womanhood in contrast with Cleopatra's foreign vices was stressed by the grant of inviolability (sacrosanctitas), religious protection against physical and verbal offences similar to that enjoyed by the tribunes of the people. Chapter Two examines Livia's position in the period from 27 to 2 B.C., a crucial time for the establishment of Augustus' regime. Although valued by her husband as his most trusted collaborator and honored on important monuments of the regime, Livia had to share the spotlight with her stepdaughter Julia, mother of Augustus' successors, while coping with the personal and political crisis created by Tiberius' departure for Rhodes. These years witness the emergence of her cult in Rome in the guise of the cult of her Juno, companion to Augustus' Genius. Chapter Three examines the period from A.D. 4 to 14 with regard to Livia's increasing importance as mother of Augustus' successor after the deaths of Gaius and Lucius. Her iconographical

representation in these years stresses her association with Ceres-Demeter, divine manifestation of the idea of bountiful motherhood. This connection is undermined, however, by rumors making her responsible for the deaths of Tiberius' rivals and of Augustus himself. Chapter Four discusses Livia's position as Augusta and her function in the Tiberian principate. Also examined are her relations with Tiberius, Germanicus and Agrippina, with a final assessment of her career.

Part Two (chapters Five through Seven) deals with the image of Livia presented by historiographers. For this purpose it is necessary to examine first the ideological function of the "ideal" matron and compare it with its opposite, the woman who seeks public recognition of her political capacities. In several instances this type of woman departs from the stereotype of the immoral and unnatural virago. However, even when her qualities of intellectual brilliance, courage, determination and wifely devotion are recognized, she is nonetheless perceived as a threat to social stability and often thought to harbor revolutionary designs or to fraternize with revolutionaries. Chapter Five discusses the importance of female chastity as a vital factor in the ideology of the Roman state, particular attention being devoted to the emblematic figure of Lucretia and to her opposites, the women of the Tarquinian dynasty, who present striking similarities with

the literary figures of Livia and Agrippina the Younger. Chapter Six examines the perception of women as a threat to the Roman patriarchal state, working to subvert it by means of an "alliance" with perverted and dispossessed men. The ties between immorality and the use of poison as metaphors for subversion are examined in the context of the Bacchanalian scandal, the Catilinarian conspiracy and murderous matrons. Chapter Seven applies the observations made in the two preceding chapters to the myth of Livia the poisoner through a discussion of related figures. The ambivalent (that is, excessively ambitious) mother, the step-mother and the witch are females exhibiting socially and politically deviant behavior; elements of their representation, combined with the stereotypes of moral deviance examined in chapters Five and Six, converge in the literary portrayal of Livia the poisoner.

Notes to Introduction

1. Positive assessments: Tac. Ann. 5.1; Dio 55.14-22; Vell. Pat. 2.75.2, 2.130.5; Sen. Cons. Ad Marciam 2-4.4, De Clem. 1.9.6.
2. Negative assessments: Tac. Ann. 1.5, 1.6, 1.10; Dio 56.30.2, 56.31.1, 56.47.1, 57.3.6, 57.12.2-4, 57.18.6.
3. G. A. Harrer, "Tacitus and Tiberius," AJP (1920), pp. 57-68 on the tradition hostile to Tiberius; M. P. Charlesworth, "Tiberius and the Death of Augustus," AJP (1923), pp. 154-55, and C. Questa, "La Morte di Augusto secondo Cassio Dione," La Parola del Passato 54 (1959), pp. 41-53, especially p. 52 n. 30 on Agrippina's hand in perpetuating the rumors.
4. Livy 10.23.8 on the equivalence of women's chastity and men's courage. Cf. also T. E. V. Pearce, "The Role of the Wife as Custos in Ancient Rome," Eranos 72 (1974), pp. 16-33, R. Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs (Urbana 1942), p. 277; S. Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford 1991), pp. 206, 220, 243, 375 on lanificium and chastity.
5. Sall. B. C. 25.2-4 on Sempronia; Dio 50.24-28, Horace Odes 1.37, Prop. 3.11 on Cleopatra; Cic. Pro Cae. 23.57 on Clodia, Phil. 2.3 on Fulvia; Appian B. C. 4.32, Dio 49.10.4, Vell. Pat. 2.74.3 on Fulvia; Livy 1.41, 1.46-48 on Tullia.
6. S. Dixon, "The Enduring Theme: Domineering Dowagers and Scheming Concubines," in Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York 1992), pp. 207-225, esp. pp. 212-219.
7. Tac. Ann. 1.10.

Chapter One

The Roman Matron and the Eastern Queen

This chapter traces the beginnings of Livia's career, examining briefly her patrician background, family relations and first marriage during the troubled years of the Civil War. As a member of the Drusi by paternal adoption and of the Claudii by birth, Livia had ancestral ties with two of the most powerful, eminent and controversial gentes of the Roman nobility. As such she inherited a position in the old ruling class of the aristocratic Republic. Her marriage to the triumvir Octavian, leader of the "popular" party, was an important step toward the final reunion of Roman society which was achieved by her husband. During the years from 38 to 31 B.C. Livia made her first forays into the public sphere, together with her sister-in-law Octavia, as the embodiment of Roman womanhood vis-à-vis Cleopatra's threatening femaleness. The grants of financial independence and inviolability, conferred on the two women by the Senate to enhance and protect their status as icons--although couched in the traditional imagery of the tribunate and of Vestal priesthood--were a bold innovation. They constituted the legal foundation of Livia's subsequent public role, from which her ultimate dignity as Augusta would develop.

1. A Roman Patrician

Livia Drusilla was born on January 28, 58 B.C., the daughter of Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus and of Alfidia of Fundi. On her father's side she belonged to two leading families of the nobility, the patrician Claudii and the plebeian Livii Drusi. Her mother, on the other hand, does not seem to have belonged to a senatorial family.¹

Although plebeian in origin, the Drusi were connected with members of the gentes maiores through adoption and marriage. They had distinguished themselves as patrons of the Senate and had opposed Caius Gracchus' designs, while some of the Claudii had supported his brother Tiberius, son-in-law and political ally of Appius Claudius Pulcher, consul in 143 B.C. This alliance seems to contradict the stereotypical characterization of the Claudii as ultra-conservatives chronically hostile to the commoners. The myth of Claudian arrogance and hatred of commoners has been recently questioned by T. P. Wiseman, who contends that while the hostile portrait may have suited some members of the Claudii, it was not representative of the whole gens.²

The reputation of the Claudian women was similarly mixed. A Claudia earned the dubious distinction of being the first woman tried for treason for casting aspersions on the crowds at the games. Another, Claudia Quinta, was instrumental in bringing the Phrygian Great Mother to Rome in 204 B.C. and became an example of chastity. The memory

of her deed was kept alive by theatrical representations during the festival of the Megalensia. Yet another, a Vestal, helped her father to celebrate an unauthorized triumph, riding in his chariot and protecting him by her presence. Cicero mentions her action as an admirable example of pietas toward her father, if not toward the state.³

These contradictory traditions concerning the Claudii, male and female, combined with moralistic and misogynistic rhetorical topoi, were to contribute to the historical myths concerning Livia and Tiberius that emerged subsequently.

2. Livia's First Marriage

In 43 B.C. Livia was given in marriage to Tiberius Claudius Nero, a relative. The bridegroom was older than she and had already established himself as a politician. He was on friendly terms with Cicero, who would have accepted him as a son-in-law had not Tullia already been betrothed to Dolabella. Despite the fact that most of Tiberius Nero's career had been under Caesar's auspices, he sided with the liberators at Caesar's death, proposing special honors for the assassins.⁴

In 43 he married, apparently for the first and only time, the young Livia. She was his equal in rank, and her family was similarly linked to the liberators. As a follower of the senatorial party, Livia's father had been proscribed in 43 and had joined the republican army in Greece, where he committed suicide after the defeat at

Philippi. In the same year (42 B.C.) young Livia experienced the death of her father and the birth of her first son, Tiberius.⁵

Livia's husband had been nominated praetor the year before, but at the expiration of his term he refused to give up the charge and joined Antony's side in the Perusine War, stirred up by Fulvia on behalf of her absent husband. At the fall of Perusia, Nero escaped to Campania, where he tried unsuccessfully to provoke a rebellion among peasants and slaves. Failing that, he fled with wife and child first to Sicily, then to Greece to join Antony's forces. Sparta offered the little family rest and shelter, because the Spartans were traditionally clients of the Claudii and were believed to be the ancestors of the Sabine people, from whom the Claudii originated.⁶

Not much is known of Livia up to this point; the accounts that Velleius, Dio and Suetonius give of the flight unanimously stress her strength and courage in enduring trials and tribulations. When the family finally returned to Rome in 39 B.C., Livia was expecting her second child. Shortly thereafter, she met Octavian, who fell in love with her and persuaded her husband to divorce her. Livia's feelings on this event are an enigma; nothing is known about her relations with Tiberius Nero, except that she did her duty as a true Roman wife, bearing him two children and following him loyally into exile. It is dubious whether it

was at all necessary for her and the child to follow Nero; although a few women did go into exile in those years, it was a matter of personal choice in solidarity with their husbands, rather than because their own lives were in danger. The presence of a small child made the flight much more risky, for which reason it may be possible to attribute this decision to Livia. Following the example of other wives, she may have prevailed upon her husband to let her join him. On the other hand, she was later known to be compliant (uxor facilis), so that the family's flight may have been prompted by her husband's decision.⁷ In any case, one may speculate that the first-hand experience of the tragedy of the civil war and of the dangers of exile--along with the inherited political savvy of the Drusi and the Claudii--must have played an important role in her assent to marrying one of the two most powerful men in Rome.

3. Livia's Second Marriage: The Banquet of the Gods

On January 17th, 38 B.C., Octavian married Livia: it was his third marriage and her second. Tiberius Claudius Nero gave the bride away after a hasty divorce in spite of her advanced pregnancy. Octavian, on his part, had divorced his wife Scribonia on the day of his only child's birth. Three months after this wedding, Livia's second son, Drusus, was born in the house of Octavian and immediately sent to his father's home.⁸

Simultaneous with Octavian's divorce from Scribonia was

his request to Tiberius Nero for his permission to marry Livia. In view of Livia's advanced pregnancy, Octavian took special care to follow the proper procedure, consulting the pontifices on the legality of the arrangement. In Tacitus' version, however, Livia is abducta on account of her beauty (cupidine formae), with the implication that Octavian had acted like a stereotypically lustful tyrant. The beautiful victim of such hateful violence was, however, not at all recalcitrant; on the contrary, she may even have assented to it (incertum an invitam). Tacitus uses a stock situation in ancient historiography (lustful tyrants persecuting respectable women and virgins, usually to the tyrant's own ruin), with a sardonic twist--Livia is no noble heroine, but a conniving adulteress.⁹ Tacitus is alone in this; according to M. Flory, the other main sources (Suetonius, Velleius, Dio) agree on Octavian's request to Nero, using expressions that indicate the prospective bridegroom's preoccupation with propriety (as much as the circumstances would allow), and the cordial relations between the two men. In particular, the expressions referring to Nero's role indicate the consent of a father to a daughter's marriage. Flory interprets them as a suggestion that Tiberius Nero's consent was essential because Livia was possibly in manu, since this old-fashioned form of marriage may have suited an aristocrat like him. Such marriages, however, had become increasingly rare: Livia may have been just a filiafamilias.

As S. Treggiari states, divorce could apparently be initiated even by a filiafamilias without paternal consent. The father (or else any relative having moral authority in the family) or a guardian could subsequently approve a new betrothal.¹⁰ The presence of the father, or of the authority figure who took his place, was not necessary, and his participation in the rituals at the wedding ceremony therefore indicated approval.

Thus, the request for Nero's consent, his participation in the ceremony, and Octavian's enquiry to the pontifices were not the behavior of a tyrant mortifying his victim and scoffing at social conventions, but just the opposite. Octavian wanted to avoid a scandal, as far as possible, and maintain cordial relations with Tiberius Nero, in order to gain respectability and support against Sextus Pompeius. As for Tiberius Nero, he may have seen this marriage almost as a personal revenge on Sextus (a relative of the jilted Scribonia), for his lack of respect towards Nero in Sicily.¹¹

Despite their ability to inspire slanderous gossip, marriages of this type were not uncommon in Rome; there had been precedents, more or less recent. In 83 B.C., Caecilia Metella, Sulla's wife, brought about the divorce of her pregnant daughter Aemilia in order to marry her to young Pompey, a necessary ally to Sulla. For the occasion, Pompey had quickly discarded his wife Antistia; the alliance,

however, did not outlast Aemilia's death during childbirth shortly after. More recently, Octavian's sister Octavia had married Antony while still expecting a child from her deceased husband Marcellus.¹² Thus, marriages such as Livia's were not a novelty among the elite, where factional politics often determined connubial alliances.

Nevertheless, the scandalmongers in Antony's service quickly seized the opportunity, casting doubts on the paternity of Livia's child (hence Octavian's enquiry to the pontifices). Lampoons began to circulate about lucky pairs who begot children in three months, as a reply to Octavian's fuss over Antony's relationship with Cleopatra.¹³

There was more ammunition for Antony's partisans. The scandalous banquet of the gods, held during a famine caused by Sextus' grain embargo, recurred around the time of the marriage and may even have been Octavian and Livia's wedding party. The theme of the mime enacted for the occasion was nova divorum adulteria, in which Octavian--disguised as his tutelary god Apollo--committed some unheard-of adultery, hence impius. Flory speculates that Livia, the bride, may have appeared as Juno, and Tiberius Nero as Jupiter; the adultery may refer to Apollo stealing Juno from Jupiter. There were recent precedents for this type of activity, as there had been for Octavian's marriage: Antony and Cleopatra's divine and Dionysiac masquerades and Sextus Pompeius' Neptunian impersonations, in 42 and 41 B.C.

Octavian's banquet was probably a parody of his rivals' divinizing postures.¹⁴

An amphoriskos in the museum of St. Petersburg, recently studied by F. Ghedini, lends some support to Flory's argument. The scenes that grace this artifact were, until recently, believed to represent a generic allegory of love: Apollo and Diana appear surrounded by a flock of playful Erotes, or Cupids, who direct their flight toward an enthroned Venus, beckoning to Apollo. Walking toward the goddess is a girl carrying a pitcher of water, followed by a Cupid bearing a torch. The attraction between Venus and Apollo is an entirely new theme, not attested in mythology and scarcely represented in Italic religions, except in the Etruscan. The Venus represented here is a stately, dignified Roman divinity (possibly Venus Genetrix), not her seductive and frivolous Hellenistic counterpart. The implied erotic tension between Venus and Apollo is strengthened by the flight of the Cupids and by the girl carrying the pitcher, possibly for purification before a marriage, suggested by the Cupid with the torch. A marriage between Venus and Apollo is suggested here, under the auspices of Diana Lucina, protectress of marriage and birth. In my opinion, the occasion for which this artifact was commissioned must have been either Octavian's marriage to Livia or the expected birth of their child (referred to by the presence of Diana Lucina). The nova divorum adulteria

object of lampoons may therefore refer to the unusual marriage of Apollo/Octavian and Venus/Livia represented on this vase. The theme of the artwork has elements in common with an event, related by Dio, at Octavian's wedding banquet, where impertinent little delicia seem to impersonate the likewise mischievous Erotes of the vase. Thus the amphoriskos is not only of artistic interest, but also as an indication of Octavian's own early divinizing posturing in competition with his rivals'. Unlike his rivals, Octavian quickly abandoned such posturing in favor of a dignified Roman persona, as his conflict with Antony grew deeper. The assimilation of Livia and Venus Genetrix was also reserved for later times.¹⁵

Politics undoubtedly played an important part in the union of Octavian and Livia (discussed below), but not entirely, since the marriage lasted for fifty years. When Tacitus acidly remarks, with characteristic innuendo, that Octavian had taken for himself Nero's wife incertum an invitam, the comment may have been oddly appropriate: both Livia and Octavian were in their prime, she hardly 20 and Octavian 25, and both had previously married older spouses for political reasons. Tiberius Claudius Nero had already had a political career while the aristocratic Scribonia, Octavian's jilted wife, was overripe and had neither patience nor understanding for Octavian's escapades. Octavian was sickly, not as dashing as his rival Antony, but

rather handsome and with an established reputation as a womanizer. Livia must have been attractive, judging by archeological and literary evidence, even if both are reliable only to a certain extent: portraits were idealized, and literary references, especially those in biased historical narratives such as Tacitus', followed a theme familiar in the tradition of the tyrant, that of the beauty of the victim.¹⁶

Her personality seemed perfectly in tune with his: Tacitus' remark cum artibus mariti . . . bene composita is accurate to some extent, in that both could exert the utmost control over their own feelings, and knew how to control others as well. As a complement to Augustus' lack of affectation, Livia showed extreme courtesy and graciousness --perhaps more than snobs like Tacitus would consider acceptable--and was known for being accommodating. Her facilitas, evident in the equanimity with which she treated even the most blatant of Octavian's escapades could, however, be interpreted as overindulgence. On the other hand, adultery in Rome was, like divorce, politically expedient; Octavian's excuse for his many affairs was state security, i.e., a tactic for uncovering the conspiracies of his enemies. Livia's indulgence may have had a similar purpose, i.e., to enable her to achieve her own ends by diverting his attention. She was also loyal and irreproachably chaste. By these means she gained his

enduring affection; for fifty years she held an exalted position both in his house and in the country.

Octavian was partial to women, yet never before had he acted in such "unseemly haste"; this haste, which raised eyebrows even in Rome's jaded atmosphere, was not motivated by a tyrant's lust and desire for immediate gratification, as Tacitus' comments suggest, but rather by an appraisal of his own situation on the eve of the war against Sextus Pompeius.¹⁷

4. Political consequences

Of the three warlords active in these years, Antony was the most popular, Octavian the least. Expropriations in Italy to obtain rewards for veterans had alienated part of the propertied classes, both in Rome and in Italy. Octavian's name was still associated with the proscriptions, as well as support for arming the proletariat. His associates were mostly novi homines of little distinction, provincials whose families had not yet seen a consulship, or adventurers enriched by more or less shady business. Antony was known for his flamboyance, but also for his bravery in battle; he was a skilled military man, and had attracted the more reputable elements of the propertied classes. Sextus Pompeius was also widely popular in Rome, despite his responsibility for the naval blockade that was starving the city. An adventurer rather than a true leader, his army consisted to a great extent of freed slaves, and his

admirals were freedmen. In retrospect, he was judged more as a pirate than as a legitimate contender for power.¹⁸

Given the above, Octavian needed to raise support for his enterprise against Sextus; Livia made her providential appearance at the appropriate moment. Her family was most ancient and distinguished, a blue-blood on account of her Claudian lineage, reinforced by the oligarchic tradition of the Drusi. With this marriage Octavian hoped to obtain love and support on the domestic front, respectability and influential backing in the political arena. According to M. Levi, the marriage marked the culmination of a period in which Octavian reconsidered his position toward those representatives of the old aristocracy that had not joined either one of his rivals. This reevaluation can be detected in Octavian's new policy of compromise with his former adversaries, which balanced and integrated the traditional and conservative claims of the republican-Pompeian aristocracy with the more radical program of his adoptive father in favor of the armed and provincial masses.¹⁹

Yet, despite Octavian's gamble, aristocratic backers remained a minority; they were "conspicuous for their rarity," as Syme points out. Only slowly did the new marriage alliance begin to attract ambitious aristocrats: Appius Claudius Pulcher, one of Livia's relatives and consul of that year, Valerius Messalla Corvinus and Paullus Aemilius Lepidus. Before 36 B.C. Octavian's aristocratic

supporters remained quite isolated, with the majority of the aristocracy still divided between Sextus Pompeius and Antony. Even after Sextus' death in 36 B.C. only a few of his adherents, rather unremarkable ones, passed to Octavian. The most noteworthy of this group--and only on account of his family name--was Marcus Tullius Cicero, son of the orator, who for obvious reasons could not join sides with his father's executioner; his presence in Octavian's party had great symbolic value. The rest of Sextus' army transferred itself to Antony, who found himself at the head of a coalition consisting of followers of Sextus, the last Catonians, and the last surviving assassins of Caesar, with the addition of Domitius Ahenobarbus. The latter, an independent admiral with his own fleet, was perhaps the most significant figure after Antony himself, since he was the son of Caesar's enemy and of Portia, sister of Cato.²⁰

To a casual viewer, the Antonian side would seem the true representative of the Republican cause, given its vast array of old aristocratic names, with all the power of tradition behind it. In reality, as Syme suggests, such a display presented few real advantages and some big problems. In the atmosphere brought about by the upheavals of the last decades the criteria of worth had shifted as radically as the balance of power, so that now distinguished family traditions ranked below enterprise, talent and vigor. Antony's backing lacked cohesiveness, held together as it

was by family ties and personal loyalties rather than sharing a common program or cause. The fallacy of such alliance eventually manifested itself in a flurry of desertions to Octavian's side on the eve of Actium, apparently--and conveniently--motivated by Cleopatra's influence on Antony (discussed below).²¹

5. The Wife Of The Triumvir: First Public Honors

In 36 B.C., after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius and the dismissal of Lepidus, the Senate granted Octavian the tribunician sacrosanctity, a golden statue in the Forum with an inscription commemorating the restoration of peace on land and sea, the right to sit with the tribunes, and a house on the Palatine to replace the one he had devoted to Apollo when it was struck by thunderbolt. On this occasion he was probably also granted the privilege to dine and hold banquets with his family in the Temple of Concordia, one of the many honors which he subsequently extended to Antony as well.²²

To gain momentum over his partner and rival, Octavian initiated a campaign to pacify and strengthen the north-eastern border of Italy, which had been infiltrated by raids of Illyrian tribes. The success of this enterprise, as well as the victory against Pompeius, brought more adherents to his party from all classes. In 35 B.C., in the wake of his successes, special honors were accorded to Livia and Octavia, presumably as wives of the triumvirs: the honor

accorded them was sacrosanctity, the right to be portrayed in statues and the release from tutelage.²³

The concession of these privileges is notable because it marks the beginning of an increasingly public role for the women related to the rulers of Rome, something that Livia, more than Octavia, exploited artfully in agreement with her husband's policies. In particular, the character of the grant of sacrosanctity needs to be examined in some detail, in order to assess and define the novelty of Livia's and Octavia's position in the new order.

Most studies on Livia tend to minimize these early recognitions, either for scarcity of sources or--in the case of sacrosanctity--on account of its ambiguous nature. Despite its importance in Livia's political career, the issue of sacrosanctity has attracted little attention in the past, remote as well as more recent. Of the ancient sources, only Dio Cassius reports the conferment of this grant; of the more modern scholars, some merely report the information without comment, while others hold conflicting views on the subject.²⁴

Although more attention has been focused on the title of Augusta and its implications, the grant of early privileges on the part of the Senate at Octavian's request should be regarded as equally important as the later, more glamorous, developments. A chronological examination of the first honors in the frame of Octavian's policy indicates his step-

by-step approach in the creation of a "First Family" to represent the entire commonwealth, as a response to the demands of the political situation of the moment, rather than as the culmination of a pre-ordained plan.²⁵

First of all, these initial honors were a recognition of the fact that the functions of Livia and Octavia, presumably as wives of the Triumvirs, were not just familial in character, but overlapped with public roles. In Rome domestic virtue was not exclusively private, as it was in Greece, for instance, but had a very public purpose; it was the foundation of the family and, to a larger extent, of the state. Wives, mothers and sisters had always played an important, though mostly unofficial, role in the politics of the past from the very beginning, as means to alliances, teachers of family pride and traditions, symbols for liberation movements, peace-makers. Lucretia and Verginia may have been legendary, but the offences to their honor were emblematic of the injustices suffered by the community and became the rallying point for the overthrow of tyrannies. The Sabine women and the mother of Coriolanus averted potentially divisive conflicts; Octavia had followed the tradition by marrying Antony and attempting to mediate between her husband and her brother. Even after the end of her marriage she was a highly valued pawn for Octavian in his propaganda against Cleopatra. Livia too had followed tradition by supplying a link--at this stage still tenuous--

between the Triumvir and the aristocracy, bringing the distinction of her ancient family to support his cause.

A further element that contributes to the importance of these grants is their personal character; they were conferred on Livia and Octavia not only as wives of the rulers, but also, more significantly, as chief representatives of Roman womanhood. As such, they are in sharp contrast with another privilege received in this period as wives, that of dining in the temple of Concordia. As stated by Dio: "Octavian . . . set up statues [of Antony] in the Temple of Concordia, and gave him the privilege to have banquets there with wife and children, just as once had been voted for himself" (καὶ ὁ Καῖσαρ . . . τῷ Ἀντωνίῳ . . . εἰκόνας ἐν τῷ Ὁμονοεῖῳ ἐστήσε, τὸ τε ἐξουσίαν σὺν τε τῇ γυναικὶ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ἐστῆσαι ἐνταῦθα ἔχειν ἔδωκεν, ὡπερ ποτὲ καὶ αὐτῷ ἐψηφίστο). Neither Livia nor Octavia is mentioned by name, but they are grouped with the children as beneficiaries of this privilege, even if the honor is meant primarily for their husbands.²⁶

The Temple of Concordia, which had been one of the official meeting places for the Senate since 63 B.C., had been built by Camillus in 367 B.C. as a reminder of the blessings of political harmony in the community. After the Gracchan agitations it had been restored in 121 B.C. to celebrate the return to stability. The permission to dine in such a place, given not just to the triumvirs but to

their families as well, indicates that at this point the harmony of the state was closely identified with that between the families of the two arbiters of power. The wives therefore are not individualized, as the emphasis here stresses the function of the triumvirs as patresfamilias. Volkmann states that Octavian's purpose in extending his own privilege to his absent brother-in-law was to draw attention to the neglect suffered by Antony's (legitimate) Roman family on account of his (illegitimate) Egyptian one. The inclusion of wife and children is therefore meant to stress those familial and civic obligations which Antony had totally rejected.²⁷

With the privileges of 35 B.C., on the other hand, Octavian meant to draw attention to Livia and Octavia as ideal representatives of Roman womanhood. These privileges constitute the kernel of most of the subsequent distinctions offered to Livia in the course of her life.

5. 1. Sacrosanctitas: Tribunicia or Vestal?

The sacrosanctity granted to Livia and Octavia is qualified as tribunician (ἐκ τοῦ ὀμοίου τοῖς δημάρχοις); the attribute of a male function to an honor bestowed on women seems a patent contradiction of those ancient Roman mores that Octavian wanted to appear to champion. For this reason Willrich claimed that Livia's and Octavia's sacrosanctity could not be tribunician, but rather that it was modeled on the prerogative of the Vestals. His hypothesis, followed by

Sandels and Hohl, seemed viable in the context of the other honors voted in the packet, especially the freedom from tutelage, which had been sanctioned by the Twelve Tables for the Vestals alone. Thus, for Willrich, the hierarchy of female public figures in Rome had the Vestals on top, Livia immediately below and Octavia below Livia. Strack and Bauman instead have argued persuasively to the contrary, Strack pointing out that the Vestals were not sacrosanctae but only sanctae, since the existing instances of sacrosanctus in that period referred to the potestas of the tribunes of the people or to other plebeian magistratures.²⁴

Before discussing the nature of these grants any further, it seems necessary to attempt a definition of the terms sanctus and sacrosanctus to see in what respect they differ. Sanctitas and the adjective sanctus derive from the verb sancire, "to guarantee". When modifying words like fides, foedus, iusiurandum, coniugium, the adjective means "solidly established, observed, respected," and as such overlaps with sacer, "sacred", because a pact is guaranteed by a ritual act. Applied to people, it defines kings and magistrates of patrician origin. That which is guaranteed by religion is respectable, venerable, noble, and morally perfect; in this case, sanctity overlaps to some extent with chastity and innocence. Castus refers originally to a person who has been instructed in ritual and who regularly

practices ritual abstinences to render more effective the rites he or she performs, hence somebody pure in body and, by Augustan times, in spirit. Consequently, anybody who lives by norms of absolute integrity is "consecrated to, belonging to the divinity." In this respect the adjective sanctae fully defines the Vestal Virgins, who belong to the goddess because castae, i.e., they practice ritual abstinence from sex for religious or magical purposes, and who gain respect and veneration on this account. Their ritual purity protects them against offences, because their offenders pay with their life. Sancta, as synonym of casta, can in certain cases also be applied to a matron, who, although not ritually a virgin, preserves her mind and body untainted by corruption, moral as well as physical."

The tribunes of the people were occasionally defined as sancti, but their religious status was of a different type. Since they did not possess imperium, an attribute of kings and of patrician magistrates--identified by the use of fasces, lictors, insignia and the right to auspices--the tribunes' security rested on an oath, sworn by the people, that made them inviolable. The tribunes were not originally magistrates and their privileges were conferred religione rather than lege. As representatives of Rome's plebeian community, which had organized as a social group at the time of the first secession, the tribunes were sacrosancti because they benefited from a religious guarantee (sancti)

on account of their being sacri. Sacer in this case refers to the religious aspect of the tribunate in opposition to the legalistic power of the magistrates. Alternatively, they were also made sancti by a sacrum, that is, an oath, a prayer to the gods and a lex sacrata, that dedicated the offender to the infernal gods. The tribunician power then had religious character before being legally accepted with the Lex Valeria Horatia of 449 B.C. The penalty threatened by the lex sacrata (later replaced by maiestas) was exacted by the people who, by means of the oath, had the obligation to ensure the execution of this law's precepts.

Sacrosanctity was permanently connected with the tribunes' power, thus it could only be applied to women's honors by analogy, as indicated by Dio's expression ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου τοῖς δημόχοις ("on a similar basis to the tribunes"). The offences against which the tribunician sacrosanctity protected plebeian magistrates are rather vaguely alluded to by Livy, while Dionysius of Halicarnassus lists a series of specific offences. The protection covered not only physical attacks, but also those against one's reputation and dignity.³⁰

It is tempting to side with Willrich and assume that Livia and Octavia's honors paralleled, or were modeled on, those of the Vestals, since the virgins had thus far been the only Roman women to enjoy many privileges, such as the release from tutelage, as well as some of the later honors

voted to Livia. With reference to protection against physical harm and insults, it should be remembered that the inviolability of the Vestal had its origin and motivation in her ritual purity and ceased once that was forfeited. Moreover, the Vestal's privileges derived from the fact that she no longer had a family, as the ritual "snatching away" (captio) from her parents at an early age makes clear. She was no longer under her father's jurisdiction and protection, therefore she had to receive it from a different source, the community, whose daughter she now was, and the goddess she served. The arm of the law could not reach her against her will, not even to force her to give testimony, and she was accountable only to the pontifices. Livia and Octavia, on the other hand, although chaste and exemplary as married women, were under no such obligation as that of the Vestal, nor would Octavian--presumably--have liked to put them in a position above the law but under the pontifices, one of whom, at that time, was his enemy Lepidus. In absence then of a vow of perpetual chastity, the most comprehensive protection for a public figure was afforded by the tribunician sacrosanctity or--lacking the necessary prerequisites, in the case of women--by something similar to it in its protective range.¹¹

Despite all analysis, however, there still remains a certain ambiguity about the nature of this particular privilege. As mentioned earlier, the offices of the tribunes and

those of the Vestals had a common religious rather than legal character, hence the protection they offered was similar, or at least could pass for such. This may explain the silence of most sources on the nature of this grant.³²

Another contested point concerns the specific functions of Livia and Octavia which made the grant necessary. Contrary to Mommsen's hypothesis that they received it as wives of the rulers, Purcell argues that the motivation for this grant was the privileged status that Livia and Octavia were to assume as representatives of Roman womanhood. In these years they were encouraged to become public figures supporting Octavian's budding policy of moral restoration of Roman values, in opposition to Antony's increasingly orientalizing attitudes. Livia's and Octavia's public image therefore had to be managed and manipulated in accordance with the traditional values of family and country embraced by Octavian. In this context a carefully orchestrated program of propaganda, playing on the ambiguity inherent in the grant of sacrosanctity and other Vestal privileges, may have eased the acceptance of Livia and Octavia in their public roles. Since family was the microcosm of the social and cultural relations of the Roman state, the "frontier between domestic and public, between affairs of state and of the family . . . politics and household," as N. Purcell defines it, could be crossed back and forth when necessary, since it was not "an obvious, single, easily perceived on-

off line, but a remarkably nuanced zone of transition." As a logical consequence, the women of the budding "First Family" were co-opted into service to present a foil to the scandalous behavior of the Queen of Egypt. Bauman has recently argued that the impetus for the concession of sacrosanctity to the women came from Octavian, who was preparing to use Antony's repeated snubs of Octavia as a pretext for war. By giving his sister protection against offences of any kind (including moral ones), Octavian could manipulate Antony's behavior into a crime against a representative of the state. Livia, in Bauman's opinion, was included as an afterthought."

Though cogent, Bauman's argument, by limiting itself to the specific political moment (the antagonism to Antony) fails to take into account the larger picture. As Purcell points out, for Livia and Octavia crossing the boundary between private and public might prove dangerous as well as rewarding. Women, as well as their male relatives, had been the targets of political attacks in the past: Clodia, Fulvia, Sassia and, more recently, Livia had incurred "scurrilous vilification." Character assassination was an established tradition in political rhetoric, and it did not spare the virtuous matron if she became a public figure: even Cornelia, for instance, was rumored to have committed a murder. In view of this tradition, as well as of the fresh start of hostilities between the two brothers-in-law, the

grant of sacrosanctity to the women was essential.³⁴

6. The Creation of Livia's Public Image

It may safely be assumed that the foundations of Livia's virtuous image were laid in this period to create a paragon of Roman propriety and virtue against the foreign ways of the Queen of Egypt. Although Livia does not figure prominently in works by the writers associated with Octavian's party during these years, it is possible to imagine the impact that her presence and that of Octavia must have had in the war of words and propaganda themes preceding the battle of Actium. Of Octavia Plutarch reports that the nobility of her behavior toward Antony's children and friends despite her dismissal damaged her ex-husband's credibility and standing in the years before Actium more than any accusation made by Octavian's side. Pity and admiration for her increased proportionally to the scorn for Antony, while those who had met Cleopatra regarded her as inferior to Octavia in beauty and character.³⁵

If Octavia's superiority to Cleopatra was measured on the human and emotional level, Livia's shone forth with respect to those personal qualities that in Rome had great ideological value. During her visit to Rome in Caesar's days, Cleopatra seems to have done little to boost her popularity; Cicero had nothing good to say about either her or her entourage, noted for their superbia. His constant use of the word regina when referring to her should be

interpreted as more than just a title designating an ally: it suggested the hated title rex and added to the hostile tone of Cicero's remarks. Superbia, libido, crudelitas and vis constituted the character make-up of the stereotypical tyrant--Greek and oriental--found in Roman and Greek literature; to these were added lavish displays of luxury, always a symbol of moral decadence. Judging from the evidence of propaganda themes in contemporary Roman writers, primarily the poets, and by their echoes in later historical works, Cleopatra was made to fit the bill.

Her love of luxury became proverbial, although it seems to be a later invention, because it does not explicitly appear in the propaganda of these years. Later romanticized accretions are probably responsible for Plutarch's celebrated and mostly fictionalized narrative of her arrival at Tarsus in the manner of Aphrodite. The event is not related with the same resonance by other writers; Strabo, for instance, was very familiar with that area and would have reported on it had it been as fabulous an event as Plutarch describes. Far more publicized were her sumptuous banquets and the lavish gifts she gave to her guests, as well as the inimitable life-style that she and Antony enjoyed with their associates. Later she was portrayed as heavily made-up and covered with jewels. There was probably a certain amount of truth in some of these images, since Egypt's wealth was ancient and the pharaonic

rituals elaborate; on the other hand, part of this characterization seems to be dictated by the presence of stereotypes concerning oriental potentates.³⁶

Other accusations concerned Cleopatra's supposed drunkenness--a fault actually more imputable to Antony, as indicated by Octavian's libels. It was conveniently extended to her because she was his partner in banqueting, revelry and generally undignified behavior, such as their nightly escapades in the taverns of Alexandria and the pranks they played in disguise. The motif of her drunkenness, real and metaphorical, appears early, in Horace's odes: fortunaque dulci ebria; mentemque lymphatam Mareotico, and much less tastefully in Propertius, assiduo lingua sepulta mero. Drunkenness went hand-in-hand with immorality, since it removed all social and cultural restraints; as such, it suited Cleopatra's persona as a loose woman and hybristic tyrant. She already had a reputation as Caesar's and Antony's mistress; Propertius echoes official themes when he calls her regina meretrix incesti Canopi, who chooses her lovers even from among her slaves (famulos inter femina trita suos). Such a woman has enslaved a Roman general, asking as a price of her favors the walls of Rome. The words pretium and coniugis obsceni reinforce the images and allusions to prostitution and amorality.³⁷

Not only was Cleopatra amoral, she was a castrating woman: Horace presents her surrounded by contaminato . . .

grege turpium/morbo virorum, with Roman soldiers commanded by spadonibus . . . rugosis, the odiousness of their task emphasized by the use of the verb servire. Men who serve a woman are on the same level as eunuchs, a theme repeatedly echoed by Dio. Roman senators and knights, even the imperator Antony, are unmanned, turned into eunuchs by their contact with the queen. This must have been a common refrain in those years, and not only in poetry, as extant archeological evidence proves. The mythological theme of Hercules unmanned by Omphale decorates ceramic bowls and drinking vessels from Arretium, with clear allusions to Antony's reputed "Herculean" descent; in addition Cleopatra was, like Omphale, an oriental queen. An Arretine vessel shows Hercules reclining in a carriage, dressed in soft feminine fabrics, a parasol held over his head by a female slave. His head is turned, looking back at Omphale on another carriage, who wears his lion skin and sports his club. The two carriages are followed by soldiers carrying gigantic drinking horns; Omphale's maid is also handing her a gigantic drinking cup, a clear allusion to Antony and Cleopatra's drinking parties. Likewise, in Octavian's speech reported by Dio, Antony is said to be ineffective as a leader because he has become flabby and feminized (ἐκτεθειήλυται), having wasted away his strength by playing the woman (γυναικίζει); thus, he has become as feeble as one. Effeminacy and castration oddly surface also in Antony's own

iconographical representations in the Orient: in pageants and statues he appeared as Dionysus, hardly a specimen of divine manhood, who in one version of his myth had been castrated and torn to pieces. In Egypt, as spouse of Cleopatra-Isis, he was honored as Osiris, her maimed husband, king of the dead. Cleopatra is then also a witch, a Circe and a Medea, who enslave and transform powerful men by means of magic and potions: Antony follows her litter on foot, among her eunuchs."

Lastly, Cleopatra was also accused of crudelitas and of greed, other typical sins of the tyrant, although she did not seem to have gained a reputation for being excessively cruel. She did, however, have her sister Arsinoe murdered by Antony's soldiers, even as she sought protection in a temple. Her brother was also eliminated, possibly by poison, in which she was expert. After her return from Actium, she executed the wealthiest Egyptians opposed to her in order to confiscate their wealth, and she did not hesitate to despoil temples and sacred places of their treasures to finance a new army and purchase new allies. Although these acts of cruelty and impiety were motivated by her desperate political situation, and as such they may not qualify as pure greed, this last factor is implied by Josephus, who describes her desire for more and more land as an almost pathological trait."

Such unflattering portrayal is confirmed by the any-

mous author of the recently discovered Carmen de Bello Actiaco, a fragmentary work of poetry found on papyrus at Herculaneum, composed between 22 B.C. and A.D. 12. In it Cleopatra's cruelty often appears as an end to itself, particularly in the description of her experiments with poisons on common criminals, with the queen walking about observing the grisly results (col. 6).⁴⁰

In contrast with this image of Cleopatra, as must have been familiar in Rome in those days, are Livia and Octavian. Suetonius reports that Octavian preferred to wear clothes spun and woven by his womenfolk, describing at length the simplicity of his tastes in matters of furnishings and food, and the unpretentiousness of his houses. A similar image was projected by Livia; her diet was apparently frugal, since she attributed her good health and long life to her daily small salad and glass of bitter wine. Her clothing and appearance were consonant with her husband's traditional tenets, to the point that admonitions against sartorial excesses and undignified behavior were unnecessary.⁴¹

These elements seem to indicate frugality and abhorrence of luxury; however--while Livia and Octavian were probably not as ostentatious as some of their contemporaries --epigraphical evidence shows that Livia was an extremely wealthy woman who owned large estates both in Rome and abroad. Although her father had been proscribed and most of the family's wealth may have been confiscated during the

civil war, she still owned some property. The Villa ad Gallinas, where Livia received her first omen of the family's future greatness, already belonged to her during her betrothal to Octavian. More property was bequeathed to her in the course of time, as can be inferred from the nomenclature of her slaves. Thanks to the release from tutela, she could dispose personally of her vast resources with the help of a host of slaves, who performed very specialized and miniscule tasks. In a study on the data obtained from her columbarium in Rome, S. Treggiari formulated a partial estimate of the numbers of urban slaves employed in Livia's household, from a rather early period to late in her life: it amounts to about 1,100 people. Even taking into consideration the high turn-over of some jobs, such as that of hair-dresser and of pedisequus, whose holders Livia seemed inclined to manumit, and the chronological span mentioned above, the number gives a good idea of her wealth. This number provides also a fairly good indication of the proportion of dependents in her other estates. The degree of specialization of some jobs is also evidence that, given her increasing public role, Livia's life-style was not as frugal as one would believe. She owned a number of hairdressers, slaves in charge of her wardrobe of ceremonial dresses, and probably others in charge specifically of purple clothes, not to mention masseuses and perfume-makers. In view of all this,

Suetonius' statement about her spinning and weaving her husband's clothes should not be taken entirely at face value; Livia was a wealthy aristocrat, and those old-fashioned activities attributed to her must have resembled hobbies rather than the absorbing occupations they were in the times of Lucretia.⁴²

In contrast to Cleopatra's superbia, Livia's comitas which--as mentioned earlier--could appear almost excessive to some old-fashioned people, as Tacitus implies. Complementing her comitas was Livia's recognized mercifulness: Cleopatra knew about this, for she pretended to have set aside a number of jewels as a gift to her to gain her intercession with Octavian. In this respect, it can also be assumed that Octavian's own metamorphosis from the butcher of Perugia and Philippi into a more humane and milder statesman, may have been brought about by a process of political maturation to which Livia's advice, exemplified in Dio's passage on Cinna, was probably not extraneous. She continued to exercise and advise clemency throughout her long career, so that at her death the Senate voted an arch in her honor--something unheard of--for having saved the lives of many, and Velleius defines her femina, cuius potentia nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis. Many owed their careers to her, and remembered her with devotion, as did the emperor Galba. Others were suspected of having succeeded by currying her favor, and

Tiberius later condemned such amicitias muliebres. Even Tacitus, in her obituary, is forced to admit that while alive Livia was the only shelter from Tiberius' worst impulses. Her death heralds the period of terror, the dominatio of her son, who until then had been restrained by a deep-rooted deference toward his mother, whose authority held in check even Sejanus. Her last merciful act appeared to have been the suppression of letters denouncing Agrippina and Nero. Yet, despite all this, paradoxically Livia would be accused by her detractors, at a later stage, of crimes against her family similar to those committed by Cleopatra.⁴³

7. The Aftermath of Actium

After the celebrated victory and the final conquest of Egypt, culminating in the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra, Octavian became the sole master of the empire. His reorganization of the East left much of Antony's arrangements untouched, with minor changes. Egypt, on account of its wealth and importance as Rome's major corn supplier, he set aside for himself, preventing senators from setting foot in it. A knight would govern the region on Octavian's behalf. On his return to Rome the Senate and the people voted for him many honors, some of which he refused, mindful of Caesar's example. In 29 B.C. he celebrated his triumph; on this occasion young Tiberius Claudius Nero, Livia's eldest son, participated in the lusus Troiae, a cavalry

exhibition, leading a corp of older boys. Tiberius also appeared in the triumphal procession for the victory of Actium, riding the left trace-horse. He and his younger brother Drusus had returned to live with their mother at the death of their father, Tiberius Claudius Nero, in 32 B.C."

Among the many privileges voted to Octavian was the grant of another tribunician attribute in addition to sacrosanctity, the ius auxilii up to a one mile radius outside Rome. The Senate also confirmed the title of Imperator, already used by Octavian during the Triumvirate. Despite this, numismatic evidence attests to the fact that Octavian himself was beginning to place less emphasis on this title because of its revolutionary connotation. The images and ideas with which he wanted to be associated now were those of father and founder of the reestablished order and harmony, symbolized by Apollo the musician. In Apollo's honor Octavian had 80 silver statues of himself melted and used the profit to dedicate votive offerings of gold in Apollo's temple on the Palatine. For a short while he considered becoming the new Romulus, but the founder of Rome could prove an unsuitable choice in the as yet unstable political climate. Some versions of his legend had him, in fact, murdered by senators; moreover Romulus had built Rome after killing his own brother. The analogies with recent events were too obvious."

Lacking a suitable archetypal figure with whom to

identify, for the time being the unofficial appellation of princeps senatus was used, and the authority of consul. In 28 B.C. Octavian undertook to purge the Senate of those Antonian partisans that, in a show of clementia after Actium, he had not only spared, but allowed to retain senatorial rank. Not all the ex-Antonians were eliminated: applying the principle of divide et impera, Octavian retained the successful deserters, such as the infamous Munatius Plancus, and discarded those who could not meet the standard property requirements. In 27 B.C. the Republic was resuscitated, according to Octavian, when he resigned his powers to the Senate; others saw this year as the birthdate of the monarchy. While superficially governing as a primus inter pares, relying on his auctoritas, Octavian had control over the legions situated along the borders, as well as being the master of Egypt and having a personal body-guard of Germans.⁴⁶

Octavian's symbolic gesture was amply rewarded by the Senate: the title of Augustus conferred by the Senate, with its sacral overtones stressed that auctoritas--the intangible but necessary quality for a ruler--was now the foundation of the new regime, and sanctioned the transition from military rule to civilian administration. By virtue of the ius auxilii and of his tribunician powers Octavian became officially the protector of the people of Rome, now his personal clientela. Likewise the army, for the most

part under his control, looked to him for rewards and advancements. As Augustus, Octavian was allowed to decorate the doorposts of his house with laurel bushes and to have a corona civica over the door. In the Senate a gold shield was hung, with Augustus' virtues inscribed on it. These honors, Zanker and Alföldi observed, had an ambivalent character: on the one hand, laurel bushes traditionally marked sites of cult, the Regia, the seats of state priesthoods. They were also the emblems of victory and the plants sacred to Apollo, for whom Octavian had special devotion and with whom he identified in his earlier years. Livia was part of this, although unofficially: the laurel boughs probably came from one of her estates, where a peculiar event had happened, regarded as an omen of future greatness. Suetonius and Dio narrate how, as Octavian's new bride, Livia had cured a wounded bird which an eagle had dropped into her lap. Since the bird was holding a laurel twig in her beak, Livia took the event to be an omen, and planted the sprig, which grew into a bough: from this were taken the branches adorning the triumphs of Augustus and Tiberius. As for the oaken corona civica, it was a symbol of protection of one's fellow citizens but also, in Augustus' case, of his mercy toward those citizens whom he had vanquished. Because the oak was Jupiter's tree, in this case too, as with the laurel bushes, the real nature of these honors transpired under the surface of a return to

republican ideals.⁴⁷

The nobiles, although alternately vanquished and courted, could not be counted on for unreserved support. Despite Octavian's marriage to Livia, some aristocrats had still not accepted him: in 30 B.C., just before Actium, Maecenas had swiftly quelled a rebellion led by young Lepidus. Of the nobiles, some (like Messalla Corvinus) chose to cooperate, others (like the consul Piso) did so reluctantly out of patriotism. On the whole, Augustus' attitude toward the nobility for the next ten to twelve years seems one of outward respect but prudent distrust. The provincial gentry and the knights reaped the benefits of this, as they advanced in official careers in the service of the state. The winning over of the nobility was achieved gradually, by means of matrimonial alliances with the ruling house: this was the field of Livia's competence (examined in the next chapter).⁴⁸

Notes to Chapter One

1. J. Lindersky, "The Mother of Livia Augusta and the Aufidii Lurcones of the Republic," Historia 23 (1974), pp. 463-480: Alfidia is the accepted form of the name of Livia's mother, instead of Aufidia. Any family relation with the senator and famous gourmet M. Aufidius Lurco has been discounted. Contra T. P. Wiseman, "The Mother of Livia Augusta," Historia 14 (1965), pp. 333-334: Alfidia from Marruvium of the Marsi, in an area tied to the Drusi by friendship and clientela. However, no local Alfidii appear in the area, only Alfii and Alfeni.

2. F. Münzer, Römische Adelsparteien (Stuttgart 1963), pp. 229-236; R. Syme, The Roman Revolution (Oxford 1939) Table 2, on the family connections between Drusi and Gentes Maiores. T. P. Wiseman, Clio's Cosmetics (Leicester 1979), pp. 57-103 on the legends concerning the Claudii.

3. Suet. Tib. 2; Ovid Fasti 4. 326, Livy 29.14.12, Cic. Pro Caelio 14.34.

4. Cic. Ad Fam. 13.64, Ad Att. 6.6.1 on his warm relations with Ti. Cl. Nero). Caes. Bellum Alex. 25, Suet. Tib. 4, Dio, 42.40.6 on Nero's career under Caesar. Also cf. B. Levick, Tiberius the Politician (Sidney 1976), pp.13-15; R. Seager, Tiberius (Berkeley 1972) pp. 7-8; S. Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford 1991), p. 129.

5. Vell. Pat. 2.71.2, Dio 47.44.1 on Livia's father.

6. Suet. Tib. 4, 6 on Ti. Cl. Nero's activities during the Civil War, and on the exile.

7. Appian, B.C. 4.39-40: in a few cases, the wives persuaded the reluctant husbands to allow them to share the dangers of exile. The wife of Lentulus travelled disguised as a slave to reach her husband. On the other hand, other women who remained in Rome used their resources to win pardons for their husbands: this is the case of the anonymous matron praised in CIL 6. 1527 (Laudatio Thuriae), or the wife of Coponius, who prostituted herself to Antony to help her husband. Suet. Tib. 6 on the hardships of fleeing with an infant. S. Treggiari (above, n. 4), pp. 241-242: the word facilis could also have a negative connotation, as excessive indulgence.

8. The marriage of Livia and the birth of Drusus have been the object of ancient and recent controversies concerning the exact date of the event. These originated from Suetonius' statement (Claudius 11) that Claudius celebrated

his father's and his grandfather's (Antony) birthdays on the same day, Jan. 14th. W. Suerbaum, ("Merkwürdige Geburtstage," Chiron 10 [1980], pp. 327-350) attempts to solve the discrepancy by postulating that the banquet mentioned by Dio at 48.44.4 refers not to the wedding but to the betrothal. A. Guarino, instead, ("Il Coup de Foudre di Ottaviano" Labeo 27 [1981], p. 336) sees in the episode the deductio in domum mariti, while G. Radke, ("Der Geburtstag des älteren Drusus," Wü rz. Jhb. 4 [1978], pp. 211-213) argues for a different date of Drusus' birthday according to the Julian calendar (see M. Flory, "Abducta Neroni Uxor," TAPA 118 [1988], p. 348 n. 13 for further references).

9. Tac. Ann. 1.10.5 (abducta Neroni uxor et consulti per ludibrium pontifices), and 5.1.2 (exin Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito, incertum an invitam). The situation is used repeatedly in Greek and Roman historiography, following Hellenistic models: cf. Tac. Ann. 12.6.2 (audivisse a parentibus, vidisse ipsos abripi coniuges ad libita Caesarum), Suet. Gaius 24, 25, Livy, 1.58-59 (Lucretia), 3.44-48 (Verginia), to quote just a few.

10. Suet. Tib. 4.3 (uxorem . . . petenti Augusto concessit); Vell. Pat. 2.79.2 (Caesar, cum prius despondente ei Nerone . . . Liviam, also at 2.94.1); Dio 48.44.3, and also Pliny N. H. 15.136. Cf. M. Flory (above, n. 8), p. 346, and S. Treggiari (above, n. 4), pp. 144-145, 460.

11. Tac. Ann. 1.10.5, Dio 48.44.2 on Octavian's supposed mockery of tradition. Suet. Tib. 4 on Sex. Pompeius' lack of respect for Ti. Nero.

12. Plut. Pom. 9.2 on Aemilia's marriage, and Dio, 48.31.4 on Octavia's.

13. Suet. Aug. 69 on Octavian's and Antony's mutual reproaches; Dio 48.44.5 on gossip about the child's paternity.

14. Suet. Aug. 70 on the banquet of the gods; Plut. Ant. 24, 26-28.3, Vell. Pat. 2. 82-83.2 on mythological masquerades at the Alexandrian court. Hor. Ep. 9.6 on Sextus as Neptune. Cf. Flory (above, n. 8), pp. 353-356, for a more detailed discussion of the banquet.

15. Dio, 48.44.3-4 on the delicium's impertinent remark to Livia at the wedding banquet. F. Ghedini, "Augusto e la Propaganda Apollinea nell'Amphoriskos di Leningrado," Archeologia Classica 38-40 (1986-1988), pp. 128-135, esp. p. 130 n. 5. My own interpretation of the occasion for the creation of the little vase differs from Ghedini's (p. 133), who speculates a small marital crisis. The presence of

Diana Lucina, identified by Ghedini with Octavia, may imply Livia's new pregnancy, which ended in miscarriage. As for Livia's subsequent identification with Venus Genetrix, it seems secondary to that of Ceres (cf. Ch. 4 of this study).

16. Tac. Ann. 5.1.2. Suet. Aug. 62.2, 69.1, 71 on Octavian's reputation and marriages. Livy 1.58 (Lucretia), 3.44 (Verginia) on the theme of the beautiful victim, and also Flory (above, n. 8), pp. 350-352.
17. Syme (above, n. 2), p. 229; Dio 58.2.5-6; Suet. Aug. 99.
18. Syme (above, n. 2), pp. 207-208, 222, 224, 227-28, 234.
19. M. Levi, Ottaviano Capoparte (Firenze 1933), pp. 57-58.
20. Syme (above, n. 2), p. 239; P. Sattler, Augustus und der Senat (Göttingen 1960), p. 22; A. E. Glauning, Die Anhängerschaft des Antonius und des Octavian (diss. Leipzig 1936), pp. 24, 31.
21. Syme (above, n. 2), pp. 269-270, 275, 281-83; Levi (above, n. 9), p. 77; Glauning (above, n. 20), pp. 15, 29, 31.
22. Appian B.C. 5.130, Dio 49.15. 5-6, 49.18.6-7.
23. Dio, 49.38.1.
24. See, for instance, J. Aschbach, "Livia, Gemahlin des Augustus," Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna (1864) Bd. 13, pp. 36-84, esp. p. 39; G. Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," AJP (1946), pp. 222-252, p. 222; F. Sandels, Frauen der Julio-Klaudischen Familie (Darmstadt 1912), pp. 12-13; H. Willrich Livia (Leipzig 1911), pp. 54-55; E. Hohl, "Besass Caesar Tribunengewalt?" Klio 32 (1939), p. 70; P. L. Strack, "Zur Tribunicia Potestas des Augustus," Klio 32 (1939), pp. 368-369; R. Bauman, "Tribunician Sacrosanctity," Rheinisches Museum 124 (1981), pp. 166-183, and Women and Politics in Ancient Rome (London 1992), pp. 93-97; N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," PCPS 212 (1986), pp. 78-105, esp. pp. 85-87.
25. R. Winkes, "Leben und Ehrungen der Livia," Archeologia 36, (1985), p. 59.
26. Dio 49.18.6-7.

27. Platner-Ashby, Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome (Rome 1965), pp. 138-139 on the Temple of Concordia; H. Volkmann Cleopatra (New York 1958), p. 143.
28. Dio 49.38.2 on the grant. Willrich (above, n. 24), pp. 54-55; Sandels (above, n. 24), pp. 12-13; Hohl (above, n. 24), p. 70 in favor of Vestal character. Strack (above, n. 24), pp. 368-369; Bauman, "Tribunician Sacrosanctity," (above, n. 24), p. 171; Purcell (above, n. 24), p. 86 favor the tribunician aspect.
29. H. Fugier, Recherches sur l'Expression du Sacre' dans la Langue Latine (Paris 1963), pp. 181, 188-189, 191-192, 251-256-257; C. Koch "Vesta" in R. E. 2 Reihe, ed. K. Ziegler and W. John (Stuttgart 1958), col. 1744-1752.
30. Cic. Pro Sest. 79, De Leg. 3.9 on the tribunes' sanctity; Livy 2.33.2, 3.55.7 on offences against tribunes; Dion. Hal. 6.89.3-4 on specific offences against tribunes; Dio 44.5.3, tribunician protection to Caesar against offensive words and actions, 49.15.5 to Octavian, 49.38.1 to Livia and Octavia. Cf. Fugier (above, n. 29), pp. 189, 225-226, 235, and Bauman "Tribunician Sacrosanctity" (above, n. 24), pp. 167-168, 171.
31. Bauman, "Tribunician sacrosanctity" (above, n. 24), p. 176. C. Koch (above, n. 29), col. 1735, 1743.
32. Winkes (above, n. 25), p. 58.
33. Th. Mommsen, Staatsrecht (Leipzig 1887) vol. 2, pp. 818-819 n. 3; N. Purcell (above, n. 24), pp. 80, 84-87; E. Hohl (above, n. 24), p. 70; R. Bauman, Women and Politics (above, n. 24), pp. 96-97, and "Tribunician Sacrosanctity" (above, n. 24), p. 179-180, where he apparently contradicts himself with respect to Livia.
34. Cic. Pro Cae. on Clodia, Pro Clu. on Sassia, Phil. 3.4, 5.22, 13.18 on Fulvia. Plut. Ti. Gracchus 8.5, Appian B.C. 1.20 on Cornelia. Purcell (above, n. 24), pp. 80, 94-96.
35. Plut. Ant. 57.
36. Plut. Ant. 26, 26.4-27.1, 28, Lucan Phars. 10 on her luxury. Cf. I. Becher, Das Bild der Kleopatra in der Griechischen und Lateinischen Literatur (Berlin 1966), pp. 17-19 on Cicero's reactions, 134-137 on luxury. Cf. also S. Borzsak, "Persertum and Griechisch-Römische Antike," Gymnasium 94 (1987), pp. 289-297 on oriental rulers.

37. Plut. Ant. 29; Hor. Odes 1.37.12-14, Prop. 3.11.30, 3.11.39, 3.11.56. Cf. I. Becher (above, n. 36), pp. 44-45, 53-55, 146-147.
38. Hor. Odes 37.9-10, Ep. 9.13-14; Prop. 3.11.20; Dio 50.25.1-4, 50.27.4-7. Cf. Volkmann (above, n. 27), p. 94, and P. Zanker Augustus und die Macht der Bilder (Munich 1990), pp. 66-67. Prop. 3.11.9 on Cleopatra-Medea, Luc. Phars. 360 Cleopatra bewitches the older Caesar, Dio 50.26.5 her witchcraft responsible for Antony's un-Roman behavior, 50.5. Antony follows her among the eunuchs. Cf. also I. Becher (above, n. 36), p. 25. Hyginus, Fab. 167 on the myth of the castrated Dionysus. Cf. also R. Graves, The Greek Myths (New York 1955), vol. 1, pp. 103-104, and P. Slater, The Glory of Hera (Boston 1968), pp. 232, 264-265.
39. Jos. Bell. Iud. 359, Contra Ap. 2.58, J. Ant. 15.88, Dio 51.5.
40. G. Zecchini "Il Carmen de Bello Actiaco," Historia 51 (1987), pp. 27, 60-62, esp. p. 37: "Caratteristiche di Cleopatra sono la presunzione e l'arroganza prima di Azio, la codardia durante la battaglia, la finzione verso gli Egizi, il reiterato tradimento verso Antonio, l'infida seduzione verso Ottaviano, infine la crudelta', talora fine a se' stessa, quando e' ormai rinchiusa in Alessandria."
41. Suet. Aug. 72, 73, 74, 76, 77 on Augustus' lack of affectation; Pliny N. H. 14.8.60, 19.29.92 on Livia's diet; Dio, 54.16.4-5 on Livia's moderation.
42. Pliny N. H. 15.136-137. Cf. H. Willrich (above, n. 24), p. 71-72; Hirschfeld "Der Grundbesitz der Römischen Kaiser," Klio 2, pp. 45-46; S. Treggiari "Jobs in the household of Livia," PBSR 63 (1975), pp. 48-77, esp. pp. 52-53.
43. Dio 51.13.3 on Cleopatra's ploy, 55.14-22.2 on Cinna. Livia's reputation for mercifulness may also have been used by Augustus and Tiberius as a convenient device, to justify their own changes of mind and avoid creating precedents. Dio, 58.2.3, Vell. Pat. 2.130.5 on the public recognition of her virtue; Tac. Ann. 5.2.6 on F. Geminus, hated by Tiberius for currying Livia's favor, and 5.3.6 for the story that Livia withheld the order for Agrippina's relegation. Livia's posthumous reputation shared with Cleopatra the use of poison and the implications of witchcraft, as examined in chapter 7 of this study.
44. Dio 43.14.7, 43.46.1; Plut. Caes. 57.2, 60.3. Cf. Syme (above, n. 2), pp. 301-302.

45. Res Gestae 24 on the melting down of Octavian's silver statues. Dio 53.16 on rejection of Romulus. M. Grant From Imperium to Auctoritas (Cambridge 1946), pp. 422, 424, 442 on his distancing himself from the title imperator. P. Zanker (above, n. 38), pp. 90-96 on Apolline symbols.
46. Dio 53.2-12, Tac. Ann. 1.2. Cf. Sattler (above, n. 20), pp. 33, 44-45, 49, and Grant (above, n. 45), p. 443.
47. Res Gestae 34, Dio 53.16, Suet. Aug. 7 on the honors voted by the Senate and the etymology of the title. Suet. Galba 1, Dio 48.52 on Livia's "miracle." Cf. P. Zanker (above, n. 38), pp. 96-100, and A. Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der Römischen Kaiser," MDAI Rom. Abt. 50 (1935), pp. 11, 19-21 on Hellenistic precedents of crowns.
48. Vell. Pat. 2.88.1-3, Dio 54.15, Suet. Aug. 19 on Lepidus. Syme (above, n. 2) pp. 328, 368, 419-422 on Augustus' relations with the nobiles and marriage alliances.

Chapter Two

The Mother of the Country

Understanding Livia's career requires attention to chronology. This chapter is devoted to an examination of Livia's position in dynastic and international politics during the years from 27 to 2 B.C. The latter year is a turning point marked by two significant events: the discovery of Julia's "immorality" and her subsequent relegation to Pandataria, and the conferment of the title of Pater Patriae on Augustus.

Despite its aura of permanence the regime of Augustus was weakened in these years by losses and conflicts. His two senior advisors, Maecenas and Agrippa, both died; Tiberius withdrew to Rhodes in anger; Julia was suspected of subversive plans. Octavia had also died, depriving her brother of a valuable symbol. By 2 B.C. Augustus found himself alone at the helm, his designated heirs Gaius and Lucius too inexperienced to be of any help.

In these years Livia's influence within the family continued to grow, thanks to the support she gave to her husband's policies for the moral renovation of the upper classes. She herself contributed by personal example and practical incentives. Her prestige was, for a while, matched by Julia, as mother of Augustus' successors; nevertheless, Livia's preeminence was advertised on some of the most significant monuments of the regime. Beginnings of

her cult can be observed in the city of Rome during this period, and she became more and more involved in diverse forms of patronage.

In order to facilitate the examination of this period, what follows has been divided into two parts. The first deals with those non-official aspects of Livia's position under the Principate, such as the monopolization of public patronage, the moral reform, dynastic alliances and rivalry with Julia. The second part deals with Livia's official and unofficial position in the state.

Part 1: The Years 27 to 2 B.C.

1.1. Pax Verum Cruenta

This period marks a sustained effort on the part of Augustus, now sole arbiter of power, to fashion a new order based on stability and respect for tradition. Along with this there was a sustained effort at cooperation. In the Res Gestae Augustus reiterates the motif of concordia between Senate, People and Princeps, all acting in harmony with the institutions of the Republic and the unwritten codes of the mos maiorum.¹

One method of assuring harmony was periodical purges of the Senate, through which Augustus disposed of the most recalcitrant or unworthy on grounds of either poor morals or deficient finances. In the aftermath, vacancies were filled with adherents of Augustus, although a certain veneer of independence was maintained in the Senate and, to an extent,

even encouraged. Augustus tolerated free speech more than any of his successors. For this reason, he enjoyed a reputation for beneficence and tolerance of behavior considered insulting by his successors. Pollio or Labeo's outspokenness is often cited as an example. However, as Syme states, these two were not inclined "to advocate assassination or provoke a civil war for the sake of a principle." A certain opposition on the part of the Senate was still possible, in particular when Augustus' measures encroached upon their traditional social or economic interests. For the period in question, we should remember the unfriendly reception of his attempts to promote social and moral changes through legislation in 28 B.C. and 18 B.C. On the other hand senatorial opposition did not represent a majority; more importantly, the nobiles were even less inclined to accept the pre-eminence of one of their own than that of Augustus, who enjoyed the support of the army, the people and the knights.²

Another key motif which emerges from the Res Gestae is that of pax, the indispensable condition for the concordia of which Augustus boasts. The theme of pax is also reiterated in a number of ways, stressing his achievements as world pacifier. Pax is engendered by clementia, one of the four cardinal virtues engraved on the clipeus virtutis donated to Augustus by the Senate.³

Despite official claims and boasts, peace was neither

universal nor as firmly established as Augustus would have it appear. Tacitus defines pax as "bloody," and other sources report civil disturbances, riots, turmoil in the army, and occasional conspiracies. Although the information is unclear at times, the plots hatched and discovered in this period are, in chronological order, Murena and Caepio's (23/22), Egnatius' (three years after Murena's, although Dio puts it in 26 B.C.), Cinna's (16-13), and finally the mysterious affair of Julia in 2 B.C. Other less known plots and attempts are grouped together by Dio around the years 18 and 9 B.C. This period has been defined in retrospect as the beginning of the new monarchy. Dio is mainly responsible for this definition; other ancient sources (Velleius, Suetonius, Plutarch, and even Tacitus), seem uncertain as to the character of Augustus' peculiar rule. Was he the last of the dictators? Or was he the second ruler of the new monarchy (after Caesar)?

Such uncertainty is understandable. Indications which to modern scholars seem unmistakable signs of a new monarchy may have appeared to contemporaries as part of a transition between the old republican order and the establishment of a new senatorial regime. The composition of the Senate mirrored the changed political climate, and one senator appeared now to have pre-eminence among others simply because of his auctoritas and the legions he commanded on the frontiers. The many honors, grants, decrees and

renewals of his office were all authorized by the Senate. Augustus himself supported this pretense. For example, whenever his military command was renewed he took care to be present.⁵

The fact that he practically had a personal army, composed of the legions under his command, and that he could count on the support of the many veterans in the colonies in every part of the Empire, who were part of his clientela, was also not unusual to those Romans who still remembered the years of Marius, Caesar or Pompey. Furthermore, even in former republican times entire cities and colonies had been under the patronage of one senatorial house or another. Within the new family circle of Augustus, and within Rome's tradition, the Claudii were known for their extensive clientelae in southern Italy and in the East. Since the old Republic was based to a large extent on unwritten rules that responded more to relationships of interpersonal power than to written laws, the transformation from old forms into Augustan rule is not self-evident, but rather develops almost imperceptibly into a system in which a genuine republican principle--the formation of social and political power based on personal relationships and dependencies--was carried to extremes.⁶ Augustus then could be seen--in fact wanted to be seen--by his fellow-citizens as a patronus on a very large scale, almost in the tradition of an Appius Claudius Caecus or Marcus Livius Drusus the tribune, Livia's

grandfather. From 27 B.C. on, furthermore, Augustus seemed at great pains to obliterate the memory of his former years. He cancelled debts owed to the public treasury before Actium, rescinded all the arbitrary and illegal decrees issued during the Triumvirate, but above all he erased any physical record of his former self-promotion, melting down the many silver statues that portrayed him as the new Alexander and using the metal for votive tripods and candelabra, symbols of his new piety. He glossed over the period around Actium in the Res Gestae,⁷ having resigned his military title of imperator in favor of that of Augustus, granted by the Senate.

1.2. Augustus, Father of the Country

The new title of Augustus, proposed by Munatius Plancus, was indeed more suitable to suggest the type of power the former Octavian now wielded over the state. Connected with the words augurium, augere, auspicium, auctoritas, "Augustus" had archaic religious overtones, and was rich with associations that recalled Romulus, the first to take auspicia and to interpret auguria, activities originally included in rites promoting growth and fertility. In fact, the statuary portraits in vogue in this period represent Augustus preferably wearing a toga, with his head veiled, a clear reference to his political piety and to his program of religious revival. This type, together with the famous Augustus of Prima Porta, in cuirass, became very

successful and was widely reproduced and imitated by members of all classes.'

However, since the task of interpreting auguria and taking auspicia was, at the very inception of Rome, a prerogative of the paterfamilias, the title of Augustus also assumes this connotation, which becomes more explicit in 2 B.C. upon his acceptance of the new title of pater patriae. The identification of the ruler (and his family) with the state, begun in the years before Actium, was now complete. The auctoritas of the August One summed up all the facets of the most sacred forms of patriarchal power--the authority of the greatest patron, that of a religious figure, and that of the paterfamilias.'

These titles, suggesting a quasi-mythical past and harking back to the very origins of Rome, mark the transition into the new order. Augustus is now the paterfamilias of the entire community. The harmony and well-being of the commonwealth become one with the harmony of the princeps' family; its concordia mirrors the concordia ordinum permeating the various strata of a hierarchical society. It is not a coincidence that the Temple of Concordia, built by Livia as a reminder of the harmony essential to the family, was situated in the midst of the Porticus, donated by Augustus in her name to the people of Rome.

1.3. A City Made of Marble: Public Patronage

Augustus' extensive building activity in these years

is also an extreme extension of his much promoted image of primus inter pares. In the past, members of the upper classes had undertaken the task of restoring or rebuilding monuments or public facilities. The theater of Pompey, the Aqua Claudia, the Via Appia, the Aedes Concordiae are just a few examples of this activity. Shortly before Actium, as the propaganda war raged among the factions of Antony and Octavian, the latter and Agrippa competed with Antony's partisans in building impressive public monuments: the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, on the grounds of Octavian's former house, was rivalled by that built by the Antonian Sosius, and was enriched by more sumptuous decorations. Pollio's Greek and Latin library, showcasing Antony's favorite Hellenistic masterpieces, was countered by Agrippa's massive program of public works, financed by his own purse, to improve Rome's obsolescent infrastructures: the cleaning of the sewer system, reparation of the old aqueducts and creation of new ones to ensure a plentiful supply of fresh water to the city. After Actium, Augustus and members of his family participated in the massive rebuilding and renovation of the city, eliminating gradually the competition (i.e., senatorial or aristocratic houses not affiliated with his own) which could not afford such large-scale endeavors.¹⁰ The beautification of the new Rome, made of marble, became the monopoly of Augustus' family circle and of his adherents, each member in charge of

specific types of projects. Augustus reserved for himself the improvement and creation of cultic places, temples and fora; Agrippa was in charge of recreational grounds, baths, public utilities (exceptionally, the Pantheon); to Livia fell some temples and cults connected with women and the family, the Porticus Liviae which brought relief and fresh air to the Subura, and the Macellum Liviae, a meat market; Octavia with her Porticus, built by Augustus in her name, the enclosed Bibliotheca in memory of Marcellus, and a schola. Agrippa's sister Polla was also responsible for a Porticus Vipsania and for adorning the race courses. In some cases, as with the Porticus Liviae and the Porticus Octaviae, the Colonnade and Basilica of Lucius and Gaius, and the theater of Marcellus, the monuments were built by Augustus but named after members of his family. These were constant reminders to the Romans both of the family and of the person responsible for such beauty, grandeur, and order, even when he was away from the city.

Another area in which Augustus and his family monopolized public patronage was that of food distribution. The two original forms, the frumentatio, distribution of victuals on the part of the state, and the congiarium, a gift from the powerful to the people, were combined by Augustus, who restricted the use to the members of his family on the occasion of family celebrations and festivities. Livia, Julia, Antonia and the other female members of the First

Family figure prominently on the lead tesserae used to obtain food items or as tokens for access to shows and games given in their honor or sponsored by them.¹¹

1.4. The Moral Reform

Augustan propoganda insisted that pax and concordia had returned to Rome in the wake of the victory of Actium; the decadence which had ruined the Republic had been exorcised and cleansed by the forces of Apollinian order and by the virile discipline of the Roman/Italic people. The Penates of Rome had triumphed over latrator Anubis and the throng of omnigenum . . . deum monstra, the aberrations of a depraved pantheon and of a spent culture.¹²

This was the wishful thinking of the regime: in fact, the foreign ways which undermined "Roman" culture continued to exert an attraction on all classes.

One sees this in the ambivalent attitude of Romans toward things Hellenistic and Egyptian, an ambivalence evident even in Augustus' own circle. While the achievements of Classical Greece were valued and praised, the Romans were proud of their empire and determined to hold on to the virtues which--it was believed--had enabled them to gain it. Hence the efforts by Augustus to institute moral reform in Rome.

In 28 B.C. a series of measures was issued with regard to Egyptian cults: their intent was to limit public display of Egyptian cult images and their access on the part of

large crowds, for fear of seditious assemblies. The measures were subsequently reinforced by Agrippa's decrees in 21 B.C., which restricted such functions to areas well outside the city walls. At the same time, Egyptian motifs are present in decorations and wall-paintings in Roman houses, notably those of Augustus and Agrippa; Egyptian objects (especially obelisks) are incorporated into Augustan monuments in Rome and Italy.¹³

The same guarded acceptance informs the cult of Cybele. While horrified by its bloody excesses, the Romans had nevertheless incorporated the goddess into their pantheon as Magna Mater, the guarantor of victory against Hannibal and other enemies. Virgil celebrated her as the chief supporter of Aeneas and his people in their tribulations; she appeared as a benevolent mother-figure who brought victory over enemies and unruly passions. Augustus had refurbished her temple, close to his own house on the Palatine; not in marble, however, like most of the other religious buildings restored in those years, but in tufa.¹⁴

The Aeneid also tried to resolve this dilemma: inherent in the celebration of the feats of Troius Aeneas, pietate insignis et armis, is the necessity to resolve the conflict with the hero's obviously Eastern origin, and the contemptuous stereotypes associated with it by Aeneas' Italic rivals.¹⁵ Similar stereotypes had been successfully exploited by Octavian against Antony and Cleopatra.

Yet, since Republican times, there had been a steady exchange of ideas and influence between Rome and Hellenized upper-class Easterners. Rome's politicians preferred to deal with and incorporate local aristocracies and magnates, favoring oligarchical systems similar to her own. Educated Greeks and Easterners who had attached themselves to powerful Romans were invaluable political tools, both as ambassadors for their own communities and as mediators of their indigenous culture to the Romans. Augustus himself relied heavily on Easterners, some as tutors for his young relatives and for himself, others as unofficial counsellors and friends, using them as his own special representatives and envoys to specific communities in Asia.¹⁶

The last type of Hellenistic influence examined here is that of love poetry, a more subtle but also more threatening import, because its allure, unlike Cleopatra's, could not be subdued by weapons. Alexandrian love poetry had been known in Rome since 100 B.C. and had become instantly successful; yet only Catullus had been able to transform it into a Roman art form. Romantic love was the antithesis of Romanness, a threat to a social and political order in which marriage served both to forge political bonds and to produce future citizens and leaders. Love poetry poked fun at national characteristics such as gravitas and at institutions such as iustum matrimonium (Catullus' poems 5 and 45 exemplify this readily).¹⁷

The diffusion of life-styles and attitudes related to the irrationality and abandonment of Oriental cults and love poetry was blamed for the sapping of Rome's ruling class--a convenient excuse in troubled times, but one which seemed supported by contrast to the relative moral health of the rest of Italy, which had only recently been unified. In the attempt to bring back to Rome the pristine virtues and frugality of the Italian provincials, Augustus set to work employing art, literature, and the example of himself and his family, not to mention legislation and outright force where personal example proved too subtle.¹⁶

For a number of reasons marriage was a threatened institution. Most commonly, and simplistically, the cause was attributed to the emancipation of women. In reality, the turbulent conditions at the end of the Republic had contributed to undermine and deprive of any permanence the type of marriage that served as political alliance, while the proscriptions, exiles and assassinations had facilitated the break-up of traditional family hierarchies. The obsolescence of manus marriage may be another possible cause. These elements combined with a new individualism, fostered by wealth and intellectual refinement, the ultimate result of which was an increasing distaste, on the part of upper-class women, of child-bearing and rearing. Declining birth-rate among the upper classes had other practical reasons as well, in particular the immense cost of financing

the political career of a son or the dowry of a daughter: both had bankrupted many noble families. In this respect, as Hopkins pointed out, the individual woman's decision to limit the size of her family, although possibly motivated by desire for personal freedom, was a response to social pressures dictated by the males in order to preserve the socio-economical status of their families.¹⁹

Augustus' desire to see the birth-rate increase in the upper classes was partially motivated by a desire for peace, order and a harmony such as--in his eyes and in those of his wealthy provincial adherents--could be won by recreating the fictitious ancient Rome of their fancy. The project, however, was no uncharacteristically Roman utopia but was based on shrewd practical and strategic calculations. More children would tie up the resources of wealthy houses, preventing the concentration of too many resources in the hands of rivals. On the other hand, Augustus disliked creating too many openings for provincials.²⁰ He also wanted more men from the upper classes to govern his provinces and command his armies.

His legislation thus provided rewards for those who complied and penalties for those who did not. The rewards applied to both members of a fruitful union, regardless of status. Free men were advantaged in their political careers, free women (and even freedwomen) gained release from guardianship and permission to administer their own

assets. Since Augustus' main concern was to maintain the elites, his laws penalized inter-class marriages. Thus men of senatorial families could not marry freedwomen, actresses or prostitutes, while senatorial women could not marry socially inferior men, on pain of losing their social status. Remarriage was a duty for widows, widowers and divorced partners, the penalty being forfeiture of the right to inherit; lack of offspring diminished this right considerably.²¹

Thus, family relations became increasingly a matter of concern to the State, subjected to scrutiny and regulation; consequently, private crimes and misbehavior, such as adultery, also became State concerns. Adultery was transformed into an offence against the State, since it endangered the preservation of the social and political order. It will be used in imputations against women suspected of subversive sympathies, and against their real or imagined accomplices.²²

Informers were used for bringing charges against the recalcitrant wealthy, and were rewarded. The opposition of the upper classes to the moral reform meant to control and repress them was bypassed by submitting the laws to the approval of the Tribal Assembly. In so doing, Augustus acted as the patron of the common people and of the agrarian gentry of Italy.²³

In protest against these restrictions some well-born

women registered openly as prostitutes, to escape punishment from adultery by renouncing the privileges of their class, or by becoming actresses, or concubines of men of lower condition.²⁴ Given the resistance of large segments of the upper classes to Augustus' moral reform, it was essential that the First Family become an exemplar of morality, a demonstration of its value. Not only was Augustus and Livia's marriage under scrutiny, but also those of Drusus and Antonia, Julia and Agrippa, Tiberius and Vipsania, and later Tiberius and Julia.

1.5. Family Alliances

In 33 or 32 B.C., at the death of Tiberius Claudius Nero, Livia's sons came to live with their mother and Augustus. Tiberius became almost immediately a pawn in the game of political alliances, since he was betrothed to Agrippa's infant daughter Vipsania. Such a match, it has been remarked, was advantageous to both parties: to Agrippa because, in a way very similar to Augustus', he could join the Claudians, despite his own undistinguished origins; to Livia, because she acquired a powerful ally and had placed Tiberius within the innermost circle of power.²⁵ Young Tiberius began to appear in public at official events, as commander of a cavalry troop of youths in the lusus Troiae and, more importantly, riding in the celebrations for the triumph of Actium. Despite these marks of honor and public attention, his position was second to that of Marcellus,

Augustus' nephew, who was being groomed for unusually high honors and for the succession. In 26 B.C. both boys went with Augustus and Livia to Gaul and Spain, where they were introduced to army life. The following year they both returned to Rome, where Marcellus married his cousin Julia, while Tiberius continued his political career.

Syme sees the fruits of Livia's political alliance with Agrippa in the thwarted succession of Marcellus in 23 B.C., which would have prematurely uncovered the monarchical nature of the new order. Appearances were saved by entrusting Agrippa and Piso with the continuation of Augustus' policies. Marcellus' unexpected death shortly thereafter stirred suspicions against Livia, although Dio's attribution of the death to the capital's unhealthy climate, which had probably caused Augustus' near fatal sickness as well, is probably closer to the facts. Octavia's excessive mourning of her dead son, and her rather undignified resentment against Livia on account of the brighter prospects now open to her sons, indirectly bear evidence to the effectiveness of the compact Livia-Agrippa.²⁶ Octavia, after all, could still count on her daughters to make advantageous marriages; her extravagant grief clearly betrays her ambition to become queen-mother.

Tiberius and Drusus reached manhood in these years and became generals of the empire, securing the northern borders against German tribes and defeating Pannonians. The Ara

Pacis, dedicated on Livia's birthday in 9 B.C., exemplifies the spirit of the regime, which survived potentially perilous moments at the death of Agrippa. One year later Tiberius married Agrippa's widow Julia and became more and more involved in his step-father's policies. After his near-fatal sickness of 23 B.C., Augustus had devised a scheme that would allow his regime to continue even after his death, creating a chain of command based on pairs of colleagues who shared power and authority. At the top was the pair Augustus-Agrippa, with Augustus in a superior position but with Agrippa holding roughly the same powers (imperium maius and tribunicia potestas). Since Agrippa and Julia had been rather prolific, their children Caius and Lucius formed the other pair, not to be counted on for quite some time, given their young age. Tiberius and Drusus were therefore to occupy an intermediate position in case of accidental deaths of the former pair. To ensure loyalty between the colleagues and to the new order, the members of such a compact must belong to the same family, either by blood or matrimonial alliance, hence the necessity of a marriage between Tiberius and Julia. This scheme can then rightfully be defined as the "apotheosis of the family faction."²⁷ Despite all, Augustus was still at the helm of the state, summing up in himself the main functions, in particular that of supreme general and triumphator: Tiberius and Drusus must be content with ovationes for their victo-

ries.

Unfortunately, this carefully conceived order was upset once more in 9 B.C. by the sudden death of Drusus, which made a new partnership necessary between Tiberius and Augustus. Tiberius was granted tribunicia potestas and imperium proconsulare maius over the East, and the close collaboration between the older and the younger partner seemed to herald increased stability. The year 7 B.C. witnessed the dedications of a number of buildings sponsored by members of the family. The Porticus Liviae, with the shrine of Concordia built by Livia, the Macellum under her name, the restoration of the old Temple of Concordia by Tiberius and Livia and its dedication in his and Drusus' names. The illusion of concordia was, however, badly shattered the following year, with Tiberius' abrupt departure for his Rhodian exile, caused by his unhappiness with Julia's personality and with her political ambitions. Julia's friends and partisans had probably engineered a popular demonstration demanding a ludicrously premature consulate for Caius. Augustus felt betrayed and deserted at a difficult time, so that not even Livia could shield Tiberius from his anger. Her son had, to all effects, ruined his brilliant career on account of his pride and was to spend the next years (until A.D. 2) in an increasingly dangerous exile, until Livia's insistent pleas secured for him the "decorative" title of ambassador.

In 2 B.C. Julia's plot (euphemistically defined as "immorality") was discovered. She was banned to Pandataria, escorted by her mother Scribonia. The fact that her partners in immorality belonged to old senatorial families, that the chief culprit was Iullus Antonius, son of Antony and Fulvia, and that Scribonia, from a powerful Pompeian family, spent her years of exile with Julia all seem to corroborate the idea of an aborted coup. Augustus' close-knit family organization seemed to have fallen apart, with the more experienced and competent Tiberius out of the game and the two young and inexperienced princes Gaius and Lucius as Augustus' successors. During these years Livia, though valued by her husband as loyal wife, collaborator, and embodiment of peculiarly Roman feminine virtues, had nevertheless to share the spotlight with Julia, the mother of the princes and dynastically at the centre of Augustus' designs. It was Julia, not Livia, that was represented alone, as Diana, and together with her sons, under Augustus' symbol the corona civica, on some coins and on scabbards, to foster the loyalty of the troops."

1.6. Julia's Role: Daughter and Mother

Marriage to the unloved Scribonia had given Augustus his only child, while the union with Livia had proved fruitless. Scribonia has been stereotyped as too serious and hard to live with, gravis femina, divorced for her morum perversitas, because she could not tolerate the influence of

one of Octavian's mistresses, probably young Livia. Her morals were impeccable, and she was a proud woman in the tradition of her aristocratic family. Unfortunately, her powerful family was Pompeian, and personally she had none of the comitas that Livia displayed on similar occasions. She was somewhat older than Octavian and had been married twice before to men of consular rank, to whom she bore children. One of her children was the virtuous Cornelia celebrated by Propertius in 4.11, the other, her brother by the same father, a consul in 16 B.C.²⁹

Not much is known of Scribonia after her divorce; apparently she did not remarry, as there is no mention of other marriages. It is not known for how long Julia lived with her mother, since her father began to employ her very early as an instrument of his political deals. At the age of two she was betrothed to Antyllus, Antony and Fulvia's son, and, after that, to a number of others. In any case, the education Julia received under Livia's supervision must have been unobjectionable even to Scribonia: it was strict and extremely traditional. When Augustus' position became solid enough to free him from serious competition, he decided to reserve Julia, his only blood descendant, for expressly dynastic purposes: there were other relatives, more or less close, that could be used to tighten alliances with prominent noble houses. Their offspring supplied him opportunities for collateral relations to be used in turn to

enlarge the circle of aristocratic supporters of the regime.³⁰

Julia's task then was exclusively that of producing heirs for Augustus' bloodline, direct successors to his power. In this respect the republican varnish could not disguise the monarchical intent. If Augustus and Livia's union had been fruitful, the offspring would have combined the two branches of the family, possibly in a more harmonious union. The Claudians eventually became Julians (cf. Drusus' burial in Augustus' mausoleum), through marriages and elaborate adoptions, although not always harmoniously. Lacking a direct descendant of Augustus and Livia, Julia's marriage to Marcellus would consolidate the Julian line. Failing this, Agrippa, the second-in-command, finally provided the needed heirs; for the purpose, he had been compelled to divorce his previous wife Marcella, cousin of Julia. This had not been an uncommon practice even in the past, and yet Agrippa was being drawn closer and closer to the First Family at every successive marriage. The intention was clear: to establish a dynasty.

Having finally fulfilled her mission, Julia obtained due public recognition. After the adoption of her two sons by Augustus in 17 B.C., her image appears on commemorative coins which represent her and her sons on the reverse, with Augustus on the obverse. A civic crown hovers over her head to indicate her direct descent from Augustus, while on other

issues she appears as Diana, sister of Apollo, celebrated in the Carmen Saeculare as guarantor of fertility. Julia and her sons are reproduced also on scabbards, probably following Gaius and Lucius' presentation to the army of the Rhine. She is the first woman under the Principate to appear on coins,³¹ and during these golden years her importance surpasses that of Livia in some respects.

1.7. Livia and Julia

Archeological evidence attests to Augustus' desire to unite his wife and his daughter in artistic representations and in public honors; recently restored wall decorations in Agrippa's villa at Boscotrecase show portrait medallions of Livia and Julia. They also appear in symmetrical position on the walls of the Ara Pacis. There are instances of shared cult and honors in the East, after Julia's visit with Agrippa, from 16 to 13 B.C. In Athens Julia and Livia share a priestess and the temple of Hestia, in Thasos they are honored as "benefactresses" (εὐεργέτρις), but Livia is also styled "goddess" (θεά), whereas Julia is not. On Pergamene coins, Livia appears on the obverse as Hera, Julia on the reverse as Aphrodite. Among the inscriptions that celebrate Julia, one from Priene praises her as "she of the beautiful children" (καλλιτέκνος) without any mention of her husband Agrippa.³² This compliment to Julia's fertility, example of Augustus' marriage legislation, recalls her comparison with Diana in the above-mentioned Roman coins, since Diana

protected the young and was associated with childbearing and birth.

Livia was also associated with a divinity promoting fertility and abundance, Ceres. At first sight this seems redundant, as both Ceres and Diana protected birth, nurturing, fertility of the land and of marriage. Probably the difference lay in the dynastic implications of Diana, given her close association with Apollo, Augustus' tutelary god, and in the ideological purpose that each goddess fulfilled. As female counterpart of Apollo, Diana had helped Octavian to defeat Sextus Pompey at Naulochus. For this reason, the cultic representations of Diana and Apollo, previously extraneous to Italic tradition, intensify after Actium.

There may also be a suggestion of family devotion, since both Augustus' mother and the Octavii originated from the area around Nemi, seat of Diana's ancient cult. In her lunar aspect she complemented Apollo in assisting the growth of crops and the gestation of humans and animals, while their alternate rising and setting signifies the eternity of time and nature. In this added sense Julia, Augustus' only child, was complementary to him because she supplied the successors to continue his policies and augment the power of Rome. Ceres, on the other hand, was identified with Tellus, and refers to the fertility of the earth, brought about by the Pax Augusta, as suggested by the reliefs of the Ara

Pacis. Politically Ceres was a divinity closely associated with the plebs of Rome and with the origins of the Tribunate, the power of which had been transferred to Augustus.³³ Therefore Livia and Julia, with their honorary titles and representations, reiterated the connection between Augustus' family, Actium, and the plebs.

1.8. Scribonians vs. Livians

Julia's position in the dynasty was intended to be passive and iconic: yet she was a woman of remarkable charm, wit and culture, extremely proud of her origins, both because of her father's achievements and because of Scribonia's ancestry and personality. She eventually felt that her position, although high, was devoid of any real challenge or responsibility other than producing heirs to the regime. Her new marriage to the conservative and intense Tiberius was unhappy; she regarded him as an inferior and he, on his part, found her political ambition as distasteful as her morals.³⁴

A pervasive tendency of past scholarship to focus on Augustus and his accomplishments has neglected the influence and contributions of his associates, at the very best making concessions to the achievements of his male associates. The influence of his women, weighty in some cases, but mostly unofficial, has not been properly acknowledged, except where that influence was negative.

At this time Augustus' entourage was split into three

groups, centered around the principes feminae Livia, Julia and Antonia. Livia and Antonia had much in common and lived in agreement. Livia and Julia's entourages, on the other hand, were antithetical, and supplied a show within the show at public occasions. Their differences were clearly discernible, not only superficially, in the stark contrast between the older, dignified generation and the merry crowd of young intellectual hedonists, but also ideologically.³⁵

Julia and her children were extremely popular with the urban crowds, which could be harnessed into demanding Gaius' accession to the consulate at a ridiculously early age. The able Tiberius on the other hand, for all his proven ability as a general and administrator, lacked the charm and the charisma to make a favorable impact on the populace, which he intensely despised. Had the opportunity arisen, Julia and her group, with their strong appeal to the urban masses, might have instituted an alliance with the people that totally bypassed the Senate. Tiberius' adherents, by contrast, were a mixed batch, some distinguished (Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso, Antistius Veto) others less so, military men and protégés of Livia (Sulpicius Galba, Marcus Salvius Otho, Marcus Plautius Silvanus, son of Livia's friend Urgulania).³⁶

The ideological antagonism between the two groups was exacerbated by the personal disagreements between Tiberius and Julia. Such rivalry has been defined for a long time as

Claudians against Julians. B. Levick, however, has suggested a different alignment, Scribonians against Livians, which more accurately points to the struggle for power between descendants of Scribonia (Julia, Gaius and Lucius) and those of Livia (Tiberius). This new definition of the conflicting groups seems more appropriate because, as mentioned above, the Claudian element had somewhat ceased to exist as a separate entity, incorporated into the Julian by marriage (Drusus and Antonia, Tiberius and Julia). Furthermore the Claudians--unlike other aristocrats--were loyal supporters of the regime. The frictions within the family seem to have stemmed from a number of factors, including Julia's desire to play a more active role in the dynasty, Tiberius' resentment at the various accommodations demanded from him, combined with his dislike of Julia's ambition. Scribonia's fear of seeing the son of her rival Livia supplant her grandchildren Gaius and Lucius may also have been involved.²⁷

Tiberius' departure at the height of his career meant a victory for the "Scribonians." Livia was distressed over Tiberius' hasty decision: his followers were not a homogeneous group she could organize into a faction, and she had no close kin left. All she could do for her son at the moment was to bide her time and eventually convince Augustus to confer on him the title of ambassador to cover up the shame.

If Livia's faction was without a leader, Julia's could count only on the favor of the populace of Rome. The family names of her allies were impressive, but they did not seem to have had any following in the army, their movement being completely "urban." Julia's chief accomplices belonged to a group of interrelated patrician families whose members were to be involved later in the catastrophe of her daughter, the Younger Julia.³⁴ Scribonia was probably a supporter of the group, backing her daughter all along and not only during the years of her exile. She continued to do so even after Julia's death and that of her granddaughter: we find her again, an old lady, advising her great-nephew Scribonius Libo Drusus, charged in plotting against Tiberius.³⁵

1.9. A Political Crime

The destiny of Julia has supplied material for academic arguments, still ongoing, concerning the "plot" versus "immorality" theories. In recent years the political nature of her transgressions has been re-examined, with many scholars being won over to the "plot" theory. For over a century most theories made Livia responsible for the fall of Julia, even though the available ancient evidence disproves it. Tiberius had nothing to gain from Julia's disgrace, indeed he had a lot to fear, as Suetonius points out. Although he might have viewed the events with a certain satisfaction, political considerations dictated that he make a show of graciousness and mercy, interceding on her behalf with

Augustus. Julia's father had divorced her on Tiberius' behalf, and one can only imagine how reluctantly the exiled prince would have severed the only means that afforded him some protection from his adversaries.⁴⁰ Despite the fall of their mother, Gaius and Lucius still remained Augustus' heirs and were now dispatched to their posts of command with the armies. Gaius was sent to the East, so that henceforth Tiberius' life depended on his good will; Gaius, however, was surrounded by counsellors and retainers hostile to Tiberius.

The discovery of Julia's improprieties and of a presumed plot had ended with the relegation of Julia and of most of her accomplices and with the death of Jullus Antonius, an exception to Augustus' vaunted clementia. Jullus was one of the major culprits, suspected of monarchical designs on the basis of his family background. The conjectures on the possible implications of the relationship between an Antonius and a highly-placed lady were very suggestive of a still recent past. The suggestion of a plot is reinforced by Augustus' decision to exile Jullus' young son to Marseille under the pretext of furthering his studies, as well as the decision to allow the child of Sempronius Gracchus, another instigator of Julia, to accompany his father into exile.⁴¹

Should one wish to discount the existence of a full-fledged conspiracy, given that the sources are vague in this

respect, Julia's crime still retained a political character, and as such it demanded public and exemplary punishment. It has been observed that Julia becomes, in one of Augustus' memorable sayings, a metaphor of the state. As one of the principes feminae and daughter of the Pater Patriae, Julia's duty was to embody the highest moral standards and to set an example for the ladies. Together with Livia, Octavia and Antonia, she was to promote the new moral climate established by her father's laws and celebrated in the fanfare of the Secular Games. This was not an unimportant task, since the Princeps' family set the trend in many ways. It was a daunting task, as high society in the capital had demonstrated a definite aversion to moral reform. Julia's education had stressed the traditional and anachronistic role of the matrona, with the consequent duty to be exemplary, to transmit and reinforce the mos maiorum. Since her actions and words would be on record, subjected to the scrutiny of present and future generations, there should be no room for the personal, private and unconventional. In exchange for this unconditional surrender of body and soul to the dynasty and the state, she obtained the highest honors, almost overshadowing Livia.⁴²

Given this frame of reference, Julia's immorality, suggested by her famous jokes, transcended the limits of family disgrace. It became a public threat, an open incitement to disregard all that Augustus, Livia and the

regime stood for, a suggestion of hypocrisy. In short, it was an invitation to subversion. Instead of the domestic and civic virtue of Lucretia, a foil to tyranny, ultimately responsible for the creation of the Republic, Julia the matrona tried to rid herself of her husband and might have planned eventually to set up her lover as ruler. Her own whim would be the only law, luxury and licence the rule with the approval of the mob (a comparison with Cato's speech on the repeal of the Oppian law comes to mind). This is at least the interpretation that can be extrapolated from the scanty and obscure references to Julia. Her main failing was, according to Velleius, to believe herself above the law, or to be a law unto herself (luxuria libidine infectum reliquit magnitudinemque fortunae suae peccandi licentia metiebatur, quidquid liberet pro licito vindicans). She was thus guilty of tyrannical hybris, not simply of feminine arrogance and lack of restraint, since luxuria and libido are also characteristics of the tyrant."

Enumerating the calamities that beset Augustus, Pliny the Elder explicitly mentions the word parricida (consilia parricidae palam facta), which clearly refers to the person who commits or plots the action. Its vicinity to the words adulterium filiae and the context in which it appears, the family disgraces of Augustus, make it very probable that parricida may refer either to Julia or to Jullus. At any rate, whether one translates it at face value as

"parricide," with reference to the person who commits the crime, or, following Ferrill," chooses to take it as "assassination of a head of state" as a general reference to the many conspiracies (or supposed conspiracies) of those years, the context links Julia's fate with subversive designs. A well-born, traditionally educated lady and her lover(s) aim at undermining a strongly patriarchal regime based on the restored mos maiorum. These scattered references combine to give the composite picture of a woman who, like the Sallustian Sempronia, had the advantages of birth, husband, children and wealth, was well-read and personally very charming, but also dissolute. The same description could apply to the Cleopatra of literary tradition. The attempts to get rid of Tiberius and the supposed parricidium, on the other hand, are reminiscent of the story of Tullia, daughter of king Servius, narrated by Livy.

The woman's moral turpitude becomes then a metaphor for the rejection of the patriarchal social order in favor of res novae, revolution. In fact, even a model of chastity like Agrippina the Elder was posthumously accused of adultery by Tiberius; as Tacitus remarked, quia occupandae rei publicae argui non poterat. Yet, aside from Pliny's remarks, there are no indications that Julia's subversive plans included anything substantial, i.e., bribing the army or the praetorian guard. Her adherents were urban patrician intellectuals, not a solid base of power; as for the city

masses, their support was not enough to cause a revolution. Despite these considerations, as Bauman points out, Julia's behavior could undermine Augustus' reformist efforts and, in this respect, she could be seen as a parricida. This claim seems supported by the chronology of the incident, which took place in 2 B.C., the year in which Augustus received the title of pater patriae. It is not known whether the conferment of the title preceded the scandal or vice versa: at any rate, it influenced Augustus' harsh reprisal against his daughter. We may even speculate that, since the same title was granted to the early Brutus after he oversaw his own sons' death for treason, the honor to Augustus may have been intended to soften the blow of Julia's condemnation.⁴⁵

Julia's exile did not seem to change things substantially for Livia's son, but Livia herself now had sole access to her husband. Octavia had died in 11 B.C., embittered and aloof because of the death of Marcellus. Antonia, the widow of Drusus, chose not to remarry and remained instead in the house of Livia, with whom she had established a friendly relationship. Agrippa and Maecenas, whose counsel Augustus had valued, also died, the first in 12 B.C., the second in 8 B.C.. Aside from the young Gaius and Lucius, the patriarch had no close relatives to help and advise him. Livia was now his sole counsel.

Part 2: Livia's Official and Unofficial Position

2.1. The patron of marriage, motherhood and children

Livia's influence as Augustus' unofficial advisor was not officially publicized. This would have ruined the image of the archetypal Roman family. Furthermore, Octavian's propaganda against Antony had magnified the influence of two political women, Fulvia and Cleopatra; now Augustus could make himself vulnerable to similar criticism. Nevertheless, because of the lack of a clear demarcation between public and private in Roman political life, it was still possible for Livia to exercise her remarkable influence and intelligence to shape the ideology of the new regime while avoiding offense to Roman male sensitivities. In fact, she was praised as the mirror of wifely virtues. By financing with Augustus the lavish gladiatorial games and entertainments given by Tiberius at his coming of age, Livia made a tentative inroad into male territory.

More important on the symbolic level--even if largely unnoticed--was Livia's participation by proxy in the family's triumphs. The laurel branches adorning the victors came from one of her estates, as well as the boughs adorning Augustus' doorposts. From her villa at Prima Porta came also a statue of Augustus which became a model for subsequent portraits; its artistic vocabulary displays subtle political and ideological messages and allusions. The apparent incongruity of the bare feet in a martial portrait

are a reference to heroic and divine nakedness, a disguised allusion to Augustus' divinity, while the elaborate reliefs on the breastplate refer to Tiberius' Parthian successes. Because of the latter element, the statue of Prima Porta can be dated before Tiberius' retreat to Rhodes and may have been an indirect but pointed reminder of Tiberius' services to Augustus who was debating the succession.⁴⁶

Despite the apparent unobtrusiveness, Livia's power was well known throughout the Empire; her help was sought equally by private individuals from Gaul and by kings from the East. Indicative of the widespread reverence and gratitude she inspired is, in this respect, Dio's mention of the posthumous honors accorded her by the Senate.⁴⁷ The passage in question broadly defines the fields officially recognized as Livia's sphere of action--the patronage of women and children and her work as mediator and pacifier.

Livia's public role may seem a mere extension of her domestic one as matchmaker and official supervisor over the education of the First Family's many children. To regard it as secondary with respect to the role of Augustus, Agrippa or Tiberius, would be a mistake.

Livia's high position in the family hierarchy is clearly visible in the procession of Augustus' relatives on the Ara Pacis; she appears on the southern side, the more important, and follows immediately after Agrippa and Gaius Caesar, the first family members after the Princeps and the

priests in charge of the sacrifices. Behind her come Tiberius, Drusus and Antonia with the little Germanicus, followed by other family members. Julia does not appear on this side of the Ara, but on the northern side; she is in a position symmetrical to that of Livia, while Lucius Caesar is symmetrical to his brother. The scene represented here seems to refer to the inauguration (13 B.C.) preliminary to the construction of the edifice, as Augustus is portrayed in his quality of augur, burning incense from a little box carried by an attendant.⁴⁸

The dedication of the altar took place in 9 B.C. on January 30th, Livia's birthday. The year should have been full of personal satisfaction for her, since both her sons received ovationes for their victories in the North. Instead, Drusus died suddenly owing to an accident. The population of Rome shared in her grief, and the Senate granted her the ius trium liberorum, further freedom from patrimonial tutela. Her behavior on this occasion was worthy of a mother of the old days, her grief dignified and restrained, unlike the despair and bitterness shown by Octavia at the death of her son. Probably for this reason, and for her concern for Drusus' family, the Senate granted her the right to erect a number of statues.

Within the First Family, Livia had arranged the marriages of both her sons, placing them in key positions of authority: Tiberius as a son-in-law of Agrippa, Drusus of

Octavia. Both marriages were happy while they lasted. She also organized, probably in cooperation with Antonia, other matches involving close and distant relatives and friends of Augustus: Germanicus and Agrippina, Livilla and Gaius Caesar first, Drusus later, Aemilia Lepida and Lucius Caesar first, then Claudius, Claudius and Livia Medullina, then Claudius and Urgulanilla.

As a direct consequence of her involvement in dynastic marriages within the family, and as a sign of her agreement with her husband's legislation on marriage, Livia's public sphere of action entailed the "glamorization" of family life. Of chief importance here was the reinforcement of the position of the materfamilias through the rediscovery of ancient cults centered on women's lives and the restoration of the temples in which they were practiced. Livia also supplied practical incentives to effect the changes her husband's legislation was trying to promote.

The most important prerequisite in a Roman marriage was that it had to be a digna condicio, in which the partners were equal in social standing (pares), since an unequal marriage would demote the socially superior partner. A rich dowry was deemed indispensable for this purpose, especially in the upper classes, where it was frequently used to boost the husband's political career, as well as for the maintenance of a rich wife's lifestyle. In the lower classes a dowry was also important, since it represented a

wife's means of survival in the event of divorce and it made remarriage possible; even slave women sought to acquire one. Many senatorial families, as discussed above, had become impoverished because of proscriptions or career-related expenses, which made it impossible for them to pay high dowries for suitable matches. Since Augustus' marriage policies targeted in particular the senatorial and equestrian classes, Livia's subventions to "poor" girls in these classes assume vital importance. That she became official protectress of marriage is indicated not only by her cultic association with Juno, Vesta, Ceres, but also by the fact that in Egypt, as late as Hadrian's times, marriage contracts took place before a statue or an image of her.⁴⁹ Later this position was assumed by Faustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius, on account of her fertility.

Supplying dowries for needy girls had been mostly an act of individual charity in Rome. The existing data are not exhaustive, but it seems that in some parts of the Greek world, at least, such programs had been more or less sporadically available. In some places (Thasos, Rhodes) the dowries benefited the daughters of men fallen in war, especially in times when there was a shortage of women-citizens. In Hellenistic times, Queen Laodice III had distinguished herself in this field, setting up in Iasos a fund for the purpose of supplying dowries to girls. Previously, another Hellenistic queen, Phila, wife of

Demetrios Poliorcetes, had also provided dowries for sisters and daughters of the poor. Livia may or may not have had previous knowledge of this: perhaps in her case it seemed an appropriate form of patronage for an important woman. We know from Dio that, supposedly after Augustus' death, she used to hold public audiences at her house, and that they were less selective than those held by Augustus, since she received both members of the Senate and private citizens. On those occasions she may well have decided to help individuals to pay dowries or to support their children. As for rearing the children of many, it is not clear whether Dio refers to alimenta, food subsidies for poor children, which depended on acts of individual charity. Augustus himself had provided some relief, and Livia was probably both reinforcing his example and providing some of her own as patron of family life for the whole state. Her example seems to have been followed by some, but the activity itself was not organized as a state program until the end of the first century A.D.⁵⁰

Livia, Octavia and Antonia were also entrusted with the education of the children of foreign kings and princes, sent to Rome either as hostages or guests. Juba of Mauretania grew up in Octavia's house and eventually married Cleopatra's daughter Cleopatra Selene, also raised by Octavia. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Livia's friend Salome, was also educated at Rome, probably in Antonia's house,

given the friendship between Antonia and his mother Berenice; he grew up with Claudius and was friend and companion of Drusus and Caligula. The Herodian princes Aristobulos and Alexander were also educated in the same circles, and possibly even Arminius, who was among Gaius' retinue when the latter was introduced to the Rhine legions and later on in the East, in A.D. 2.⁵¹

Finally Vonones, installed by Augustus on the Parthian throne, soon became unpopular thanks to his Romanized attitudes. Thus, while carrying out activities perfectly appropriate to Roman matrons, Livia and her associates influenced both domestic and international politics in support of their male kin's activities.

2.2. Livia's restoration projects

Connected to the patronage of marriage and children was Livia's activity as a builder, restorer and dedicator. Some edifices were financed completely by her, others by her husband in her name. The buildings she commissioned or restored with her own money are the Temple of Concordia in the Porticus Liviae, the Temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana, and the Temple of Fortuna Muliebris. It is also possible that she restored a Temple to Pudicitia Plebeia. The dedication of the Temple of Concordia was performed by Livia alone in 7 B.C. on June 11th, during the festival of the Matralia in honor of the old Italic goddess Mater Matuta, protectress of women and children, whose rites centered on childbearing and

nursing. The emphasis on family, children and married life was strengthened by the chronological inclusion of the Matralia within the festival of the Vestalia, the rites of which were also performed exclusively by married women. The dedication of the shrine of Concordia during this period is therefore meant to emphasize above all the essential quality for a happy marriage, and to implicitly remind women that it was their task to create the conditions for it within the family, much as Livia herself did, by her facilitas (indulgence to Augustus' affairs) and comitas (graciousness, kindness), in addition to her scrupulous chastity.

The year 7 B.C., when this shrine was dedicated, was not marked by concordia within the First Family; in fact, it was marred by Tiberius' sudden departure for Rhodes. Thus, the internal dissensions of the ruling family have been used as an argument against the interpretation just discussed. In my opinion, the discordant situation within Augustus' family perhaps made the advertising of concordia even more necessary and, although it adds to the significance of the event, should not be regarded as the prime motive for the creation of the shrine. More recently, C. J. Simpson has argued that, contrary to the popular view expressed above, the temple in question was instead the Aedes Concordiae in the Forum, restored by Livia--who was present at the ceremony of re-inauguration in January--on the occasion of Tiberius' German triumph in 7 B.C.³² Flory and Simpson's

views are not necessarily opposed. Nothing prevents us from accepting Dio's statement about the presence of a shrine in the Porticus Liviae, while on the other hand recognizing the validity of Simpson's evidence. Both events emphasize Livia's role as straddling "the frontier between domestic and public, between affairs of state and of the family." This "remarkably nuanced zone of transition," as Purcell remarked, was the area in which the women of the ruling house, especially Livia, operated.

The restoration of the Temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana by Livia was celebrated by Ovid in the Fasti. She is praised for actively imitating her husband (ne non imitata maritum esset, / et est omni parte secuta viro 5.157-158), where omni parte stresses her total adherence to his program and conscious imitation of his policies. The restoration of this shrine had additional value for Livia in terms of her own family history, since its foundation was attributed by some to a Claudia who was a Vestal Virgin. Like Ceres, Bona Dea was a divinity protecting crops and women's lives, and was also in charge of healing. At her temple were kept a few sacred snakes, used for healing practices, and the priests functioned also as apothecaries, preparing medicines out of herbs. As Augustus had always been sickly and needed special care, Livia may well have become expert at administering medications and preparing them, an ability probably exploited by her adversaries in fabricating rumors

about poisons.⁵³

The Temple of Fortuna Muliebris also attracted Livia's interest because it commemorated the action of matrons as peace-makers, and because its rites emphasized chastity: only newly-wed women and women with a single husband could approach and touch the statue of the goddess. Other edifices carried her name, even if built by Augustus, including the Porticus Liviae and the Macellum. Unlike the shrines built and restored by Livia, these structures had utilitarian purposes and were open to all segments of the population, not only to women. They were a gift of the Princeps and his wife to the people, particularly to those who could not afford to relax in private country estates and villas. The choice of the location of this Porticus is especially interesting, since it was raised on the grounds of the former estate of Vedius Pollio, a disreputable friend and supporter of Augustus. At his death in 15 B.C., Vedius had left his enormous and sumptuous house to the Princeps, perhaps expecting some form of posthumous monumental commemoration. Instead, Augustus tore down the entire complex and, in due time, had the Porticus built in its place, not in memory of a dead supporter who had been an embarrassment because of his luxury and proverbial cruelty, but to honor his most trustworthy collaborator, Livia, whose virtues countered Pollio's vices. The Porticus was adorned with works of art and shaded by vines, with the shrine of

Concordia presumably in the middle; both structures carried a strong propagandistic message, the Porticus against selfish and useless luxury, the shrine in favor of a stable and harmonious married life based on the virtues of the wife.⁵⁴

The concept of the Porticus as a gift to the city and piece of self-advertisement must have appealed to women, since a similar structure, the Porticus of Eumachia, was donated by a wealthy benefactress to the city of Pompeii. The building was dedicated to Concordia and Pietas Augusta, two divinities associated with Livia: in imitation of Livia's complex, this porticus too was enriched with colonnades, statuary, marble doors decorated with vines, probably an allusion to those which shaded Livia's. It is fair to assume that Eumachia was present in effigy, probably a statue modeled on those of Livia as matrona stolata.

At Thugga in North Africa a freedwoman turned patroness built with her own money a small shrine with porticus to Ceres Augusta, and a temple to Concordia and Venus, and dedicated them in her quality of flaminica perpetua. It is possible that the temple was devoted to Ceres and Concordia as tutelary divinities of Roman Carthage, in whose district Thugga was located. However, it is also possible that this wealthy freedwoman was trying to imitate Livia, since Livia was associated with Venus-Aphrodite in many areas of the Mediterranean and had dedicated her own shrine to Concordia.

The assumption of a reference to Livia seems supported by another inscription on a temple to Tiberius restored by the freedwoman's husband,⁵⁵ which would date these works within the first century A.D.

2.3. Personal and Civic Patronage

Besides the large-scale forms of patronage mentioned above, Livia actively advanced or initiated the careers of a few individuals whose descendants became famous later on. The grandfather of the emperor Otho was raised in Livia's house and became senator thanks to her support; the future emperor Galba, stepson to a distant relation (Livia Ocellina), was one of her favorites and received a lavish inheritance. Even if he was denied the use of it by Tiberius, he cherished her memory, issuing commemorative coinage in her name during his brief rule, also in order to legitimate his position. Afranius Burrus, prefect of the guard under Nero, had started his career as supervisor of Livia's estates. Fufius Geminus was another special favorite of hers, and as such had to put up with Tiberius' malevolence: he was consul in the year of her death.⁵⁶

One of the results of Livia's trip to the East with Augustus from 22 to 19 B.C. was her personal acquaintance with local kings and queens. Dynamis of Pontus consecrated a statue to Livia in the temple of Aphrodite, either in thanksgiving for her patronage or in expectation of it. The dedication refers to Livia as benefactress and may imply

that she used her influence in favor of Dynamis as ruler of Bosphorus, where a town was named Livio polis in her honor.⁵⁷

Since Augustus' policy was to preserve the existing friendly dynasties, connecting them to one another by means of marriage, Livia must have helped to smooth difficulties and to promote politically advantageous alliances, using her powers of persuasion and her reputation as patroness of marriage. This mixing of personal and political amicitia, of private emotions and public duty is evident in the case of Livia's great friend Alexandra Salome, sister of Herod of Judea. Livia persuaded her friend to submit to the reason-of-state, and marry the decrepit and dignified Jew who was her brother's candidate, instead of the young and unscrupulous minister of an Arab king.⁵⁸ The episode confirms Livia's authority on the international scene: Salome's affair and marriage were not just "women's matters," but could have had political repercussions. Herod and his sister do not turn to Livia only as a friend, but also as an arbiter in an embarrassing and potentially dangerous family drama with diplomatic implications. As a true arbiter Livia ruled in favor of cold but advantageous politics, regardless of her friend's emotions, stressing the sacrifices necessary to ensure stability in the family and kingdom.

There is ample evidence of the unusually warm

relations between the ruling house of Judea and Augustus' family; Livia intervened to save not only Salome's reputation, but also her life, when she discovered a plot against her by Antipater, the heir to the throne, and Acme, her own Jewish secretary. Livia's relationship with Salome, however warm on the personal level, was not one between equals, but rather one of patronage, since Livia occupied a higher position. Salome, on her part, demonstrated her gratitude by bequeathing to Livia a sumptuous inheritance--the cities of Jamnia, Archelais and Phasaelis, famous for its palm groves and dates, which gave Livia a profit of 60 talents per year. The village of Bethramphtha became a town named Livias first, then Julias; Livia, on the other hand, in 10 B.C. contributed heavily to the expenses for the penteteric games given by Herod to inaugurate the new port-town of Caesarea. Livia and Augustus, as a sign of their deep appreciation of Herod, sent gifts to the temple in Jerusalem. The existence of ties of patronage between the two women, as well as friendship, seems supported by a comparison between the legacies of Salome and of Herod. At the death of Herod, Livia received the sum of 500 talents; Herod's bequest did not make any special distinction for Livia, as she received the same amount as other members of the family except Augustus.⁵⁹

Cities and communities also benefited from Livia's patronage. Sparta was rewarded with the island of Cythera

for the assistance given to Livia in her flight from the Triumvir Octavian, and its famous public repast was graced by the presence of Augustus himself. Samos apparently enlisted Livia's advocacy, and Augustus professed himself willing to satisfy her entreaties, although not to the point of contradicting his habits. This resembles the case of Livia's Gaulish client, to whom Augustus denied citizenship but granted exemption from tribute. Greek inscriptions praise Livia as benefactress, although the nature of her benefactions is not known, since the dedications are usually vague.⁶⁰

Finally, another form of activity connected to civic patronage is the offering of public banquets on the occasion of special events related to the family of the benefactor. Livia offered such banquets on at least two occasions, one to celebrate Tiberius' Pannonian victories in 9 B.C. when she and Julia entertained the women of Rome at their expense, the other after Tiberius' dedication of the Temple of Concordia in 7 B.C. A similar event was in program to celebrate Drusus' ovatio, but the festivities were cut short by his premature death. That the banquets in question must have been offered to all the women of Rome, not just to the members of the upper classes, can be inferred from Dio's statement about Tiberius' part in the same event; he is said to have feasted some of the people on the Capitol, others in other parts of the city. Such forms of public magnificence

had their roots in Roman religious tradition, the lectisternia and sellisternia, associations with the gods, which were geared to promote good-will and reconciliation among the people. They could also be used in the same way as public spectacles and games to boost one's reputation and popularity, particularly with the lower classes, who always appreciated a free meal. As such, they were employed by Augustus' regime to strengthen the bond between the people and his family.⁴¹

2.4. Honors and the Beginnings of Livia's Cult

During these years Livia received relatively few new official honors in Rome, despite the great increase in her influence both within the family circle and in public life. This is probably due to the fact that she did not yet have an official position, such as she would have later as Mother of the Successor or Priestess of Augustus. Nevertheless, the dedication of the Ara Pacis on her birthday in 9 B.C. has great symbolic significance, proclaiming to the public her closeness to her husband's regime. In the same year she received the ius trium liberorum from the Senate and more statues as a token of sympathy at Drusus' death.

Between 27 and 2 B.C., however, it is possible to see her cult begin to emerge in Rome in the form of the cult of her Juno. This manner of devotion was private and servile in character, as originally it was supposed to complement that of the Genius of the paterfamilias, practiced by slaves

and members of each household. The antiquity of the cult of the Juno is disputed, and it is less well attested to than that of the Genius; the formula in the ritual of the Arvales, Juno Deae Diae, often quoted as proof of its antiquity, may be due to Augustan innovations. In fact, the principate rediscovered and revived ancient and obsolescent rituals, giving some of them a more archaic patina by adding modern elements. The first literary mention of a woman's individual Juno is to be found in Tibullus, contemporary of Augustus, and more allusions follow. As for the epigraphical records, the relatively abundant number of available inscriptions seems to belong to the more recent past, some specifically in connection with Livia's cult. The interesting fact is that the woman's personal Juno gains importance under Augustus, as a complement to the man's Genius at a time in which the cult of the Princeps' own Genius intrudes on that of the family Lares. Likewise, images of Livia have been found in lararia of private dwellings in Naples, Pompeii, Lyons.⁶²

As mentioned above, the attention paid to the individual Juno, along with swearing by her, sets this cult in the context of slave religious and private practice; in Tibullus' Eleg. 3.19.15 service to a mistress is implied. Particularly significant in this respect is an altar from vicus Sandaliarius in Rome, an area situated in the Subura. Chronologically, this piece of evidence belongs to the

period examined, since it is dated 2 B.C. The altar, dedicated by four freedmen, the magistri, to the Genius Augusti and the Lares, is unusual in a number of ways. For our purposes, the most noteworthy characteristic is the triad in the front, not the Genius and Lares expected, but the Genius Augusti, that of Gaius Caesar and a female personage identified by Gross as Livia, or rather the Juno of Livia. The bare feet and the diadem indicate that the woman is a divinity of unclear identity; she wears a torque around her neck like Venus Genetrix, but in her hands she holds a sacrificial cup and a small incense box, and on one of her arms she wears a snake bracelet. Cup and snake are accessories of Bona Dea, also identified with Salus; sometimes the variation has a cornucopia instead of the cup. Livia, as restorer of the temple of Bona Dea, was associated with her and Salus, although the coinages of Salus date from much later (after her illness of A.D. 22). This would therefore be the first representation of Livia as Salus, and also the very first plastic representation of a woman's Juno. The latter may help to understand the apparent discrepancies in the attributes and instruments held by the divinity. That the snake may, among other things, represent the Genius (and consequently, the Juno) is evidenced by a private altar from Carthage dedicated to the Julians, the reliefs of which show two snakes, the Genius of Augustus and Juno of Livia respectively.⁶¹ Another archeological find

from the lararium of a house in Ephesos shows a snake uniting the busts of Livia and Tiberius, again a symbol of Genius and Juno.

The solid but inartistic quality of workmanship of the relief of Vicus Sandaliarius does not permit us to identify Livia clearly according to the criteria of hair-style and apparel established by Gross, but the chronology and analogy with other archeological pieces points in the direction of Livia. At this time Julia, Gaius' mother and probable candidate for identification, was in disgrace, and all images and records of her had presumably been destroyed. Moreover, the location of the altar is in the Subura, where two public structures in Livia's name stood, the Porticus and the shrine of Concordia. Even more relevant to our hypothesis is the evidence of Livia's association with Gaius and Lucius in a number of archeological items from different areas. An Egyptian inscription of 4 B.C. records the dedication of an altar and chair on behalf of Augustus, Livia, Gaius and Lucius Caesar by a Roman official. Livia appears in company of Gaius and Lucius on coins: an issue from Magnesia bears jugate busts of Augustus and Livia on the obverse, Gaius and Lucius face to face on the reverse. Another, from Tralles, has the head of Gaius Caesar on the obverse and Livia-Demeter on the reverse, with the caption *Καίσαρέων Λείβια*.

The dating of these coins is 4-2 B.C., perhaps a little

later; the coins from Tralles celebrate games in honor of the principes iuventutis, and the Livia-Demeter, in full figure, may represent a cult statue of Livia. Similar issues, with Gaius and Lucius on the obverse and Livia-Demeter on reverse, appear also in Pergamon.⁶⁴

Given this evidence, the identification of the female figure on the altar of vicus Sandaliarius with Livia in some divine form is extremely likely. Since the cult of the Genius Augusti had been established in 30 B.C. for Rome and 12 B.C. for the rest of the empire, an analogous process can be inferred here for Livia. By leaving ample freedom of cult forms to the vici, Augustus encouraged not only the diffusion of his personal cult but also that of Livia, which eventually spread beyond Rome and the lower classes.

Further archeological evidence from a slightly later period indicates the diffusion of the cult of Livia's Juno in combination with that of her male relatives. An inscription from El Lehs in Africa, dated A.D. 3, refers to a votum to Livia's Juno by the dedicators, a (married) couple. Another inscription from Falerii, Italy, dated between A.D. 4 and 14, was set on a monument dedicated by a freedman to the Genii of Augustus, Tiberius and the Juno of Livia. This private form of devotion then helped to prepare the way for further divine assimilation and honors.⁶⁵

The oldest archeological records of honors to Livia belong to the East, notably Greece and Asia Minor. One of

the earliest inscriptions was found in Eleusis, dated between 31 and 27 B.C.: Livia is referred to with her full name, Livia Drusilla, wife of the emperor, and the dedicator is the people. Since there is reason to believe that Octavian visited Eleusis shortly after Actium, Livia may not have been present. However, it was common practice to dedicate monuments to female relatives of Roman leaders even in absentia (wives and daughters in particular, mothers less often). Another dedication from Thasos probably dates back to some time after Livia's trip to the East and Julia's subsequent sojourn: Livia, Julia and her daughter Julia are honored and the hierarchy established. While Julia is honored simply as *ἑυεργέτις* because of her ancestry, a secular title expressing gratitude without implicating divinity, Livia is also *θεά*. The word *θεός* clearly implies a cult of a ruler, because it is not normally used for well-known divinities, who obviously do not need the title.⁶⁶

Coinages from Pergamon have Livia-Hera on the obverse, the more important side, and Julia-Aphrodite on the reverse. Other coinages from Clazomenae in Ionia, between 15 and 6 B.C., bear the caption *θεά Λίβια* and a bust of Livia on the reverse, Augustus *κρίστης* on the obverse; they were issued in recognition of the help received from Augustus and Livia after an earthquake in 12 B.C. Instead of assimilation to divinities, other types of coins follow the Hellenistic model of the jugate heads: those of Ephesos, datable only

approximately between 29 B.C. and A.D. 14, and those of Rhomethalkes of Thrace, between 6 B.C. and the king's death before Augustus'. The double portraits of Rhomethalkes and his queen are modeled on those of Augustus and Livia, the women's portraits showing traits similar to those of the men.

Finally, there are the Alexandrian coins with Livia's image, which appear rather early, a fact hardly surprising given Egypt's monarchical tradition and her separation from the rest of the empire. Alexandrian issues with Livia's portrait can help to identify her in other unnamed portraits; her features appear on small bronze coins, with either a bust of Euthenia (A.D. 9-12) on the reverse, bound with wheat and with ears of corn in her hands, or else showing a modius full of ears of corn, poppies, bound with wreaths of flowers and flanked by flaming torches with serpent twines. After 2 B.C. the reverse bears a cornucopia, with or without the caption Παρὸς Παρβόδος. Her portrait and name are evident since 10-9 B.C. as Λιούια Σεβαστοῦ, literal translation into Greek of Livia Augusti.⁶⁷

The various local coinages constitute the most abundant source of identification of Livia for iconographical purposes and for the study of her cult. There are, however, a few more archeological documents attesting to other forms of honors received by her during these years. An edict from

Mytilene, loosely dated between 27 and 11 B.C., honors Augustus, the Senate, the Vestals, Livia, Octavia and their children. Here the dynastic and monarchic idea is very clearly expressed in the association of the family of the Princeps with the political and religious institutions at the core of the Roman state.

Another comprehensive honor conferred on the most significant members of Augustus' family is the renaming in their honor of the months in the Cypriot calendar. The governor of the island, Publius Paquius Scaeva, reformed the calendar in 15 B.C. Changes were afoot in those years in the island, Paphos had received permission to be renamed Augusta, and an earthquake had brought about destruction and consequent generous help from Augustus and Livia. The new calendar year started with Sebastos (October 2), after Augustus, followed by Agrippaios and then Libaios, the first month in the list named after a lady of the imperial house, and followed by Octabaios (Octavia) and Iouliaos (Iulia). Livia has therefore a position of pre-eminence among her female relatives and is second only to Agrippa, the same ranking being repeated in the frieze of the Ara Pacis a few years later. Tiberius and Drusus also appear on the calendar, while Gaius and Lucius are missing, strangely enough, since by this time they had already been adopted by Augustus (17 B.C.). The calendar underwent a radical revision a few years later, made necessary by all the events taking place

in the family, so that only Augustus' month remained. Nevertheless, the precedent had been created for the proposal, a good many years since, by the Roman Senate to name the month of October Livia and that of September Tiberius.⁶⁸

Conclusion

This cursory examination of the archeological material datable with some measure of certainty allows us to observe the following trends in this period. In Rome, Livia's official position is not yet well defined for lack of an official title or task. Her leadership within the Princeps' family circle and pre-eminence over other female members is, however, well recognized and advertised, as well as her ideological loyalty to her husband's program. Her importance as unofficial advisor is suggested by the privileged position she occupies on important monuments of the regime, with respect to the rest of the family and collaborators of Augustus.

While always extremely careful not to succumb to pitfalls with regard to personal cult and honors to himself and to family members, Augustus allows the creation of a private cult of his own Genius which invades the traditional family cult and prepares the way for a full-fledged state cult. The same can be observed, although on a smaller scale, for Livia's cult: the inception of the cult of her Juno along with that of the Genius Augusti represents the embryo of cultic and divine honors offered to a woman for

the first time in Roman tradition. The traditional patina given to it, with the references to the Arvals' ritual, and the parallel emphasis on the personal Juno of women successfully mask the actual novelty of the cult.

In the East Livia is honored as wife of Rome's ruler, and in a few places she is the titular figurehead of divine cult (Thasos) or associated in cult with divinities like Hera, Hestia (in Athens) and especially Demeter; the connection with the latter will also be exploited to her advantage in the western part of the empire.

Her work of patronage centers on issues related to the life of women and the family, with particular emphasis on marriage and the rearing of children, the reestablishment of cults concerning marriage and the conduct of the married woman. In this respect her personal example could have more far-reaching effects than the repressive laws enacted by her husband.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. R. G. 6.2, 8.2, 8.12 on Augustus' reiteration of the concept of concordia between the senate and the people and the princeps. Cf. E. Ramage "The Nature and Purpose of Augustus' Res Gestae," Historia 54 (1987), for an in-depth discussion of the Res Gestae.
2. Suet. Aug. 51, 54, 55, 56.1 on Augustus' tolerance of free speech; cf. Tac. Ann. 1.72: facta arguebantur, dicta impune erant. Suet. Aug. 34, Dio 54.16 on reform of marriage. Cf. also K. A. Raaflaub and L. J. Samons II, "Opposition to Augustus," Between Republic and Empire, ed. K. A. Raaflaub and M. Toher (Berkeley, 1990), p. 444; R. Syme, The Roman Revolution (Oxford, 1952), pp. 320, 419-20, 479-487.
3. R. G. 3.1, 13 on peace. E. Ramage (above, n. 1), p. 31 on Augustus' emphasis on precedents, and pp. 76-99 on paux and the other Augustan blessings.
4. Tac. Ann. 1.10.4, Suet. Aug. 19.1, Dio 54.15.1, 55.4.3, Sen. De Brev. Vitae 4.4-5, Pliny N. H. 7.147 on plots. Cf. E. Ramage (above, n. 1), pp. 34-35 on reliability and omissions. R. Bauman, The Crimen Maiestatis (Johannesburg, 1970), p. 197: the author places this conspiracy in 22 B.C. W. Eder, "Augustus and the Power of Tradition," Between Republic and Empire (above, n. 2), pp. 73-74 on the transition from republic to a new order.
5. W. Eder (above, n. 4), p. 78.
6. W. Eder (above, n. 4), p. 83.
7. E. Rawson, "The Eastern Clientelae of Clodius and the Claudii," Historia 22 (1973), pp. 219-239, and "More on the Clientelae of the Patrician Claudii," Historia 26 (1977), pp. 340-357. Cf. also W. Eder (above, n. 4), pp. 72, 83. R. G. 15-24 on Augustus' own liberalitas; cf. E. Ramage (above, n. 1), pp. 44-46. P. Zanker, Augustus und die Macht der Bilder (München, 1990), pp. 92-93. W. Eder (above, n. 4), p. 72, and E. Ramage (above, n. 1), p. 27: no mention of Antony's name at R. G. 1.1, 24.1.
8. Suet. Aug. 7: Plancus was one of the most successful deserters in the period of the Civil Wars, having left D. Brutus for Antony and eventually the latter for Octavian. He was the father of the notorious Plancina, Livia's friend and enemy of Agrippina the Elder. Cf. K. Scott, "Tiberius' Refusal of the Title Augustus," C. Ph. 27 (1932), p. 46 on the symbolism of the title, and W. Eisenhut, "Augures,"

Kleine Pauly 1 (1979), col. 734. M. Torelli, "La Rappresentazione e lo Stile nella Dinamica dell'Ascesa Sociale della Tarda Eta' Repubblicana e della Prima Eta' Imperiale," Quaderni Camerti di Studi Romanistici 13 (1985), pp. 591-592; P. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 103-104, 132-135; M. Hofer, "Portrait," in Kaiser Augustus und die Verlorene Republik (Mainz, 1988), pp. 323-324 n. 168, pp. 341-342 n. 192, on portrait types.

9. Cf. Chapter 1.5 of this study: Dio 49.18.6-7 reports the privilege of dining in the Temple of Concordia, granted by the senate to the triumvirs and their families, as the first official recognition of the identification of the ruler and his family with the state.

10. P. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 73-79; H. von Hesberg, "Die Veränderung des Erscheinungsbildes der Stadt Rom," in Augustus und die Verlorene Republik (above, n. 8), pp. 97-108; E. La Rocca, "Der Apollo Sosianus-Tempel," (above, n. 8), pp. 123-136; P. Gross and G. Sauron, "Das politische Programm der öffentlichen Bauten," (above, n. 8), pp. 58-59.

11. M. Rostovtzeff, "Römische Bleitesseren," Klio, 3 (1905), p. 20.

12. Virg. Aen. 8.698.

13. Dio 52.42.6-7. The short discussion on Egyptian influences is indebted to an unpublished paper of Sarolta Takács, "Isis, Sarapis and the Roman Emperors," delivered at the University of Oregon in the fall of 1992.

14. Catullus, n. 63 on the rites of Cybele; Livy 29.10.4, 38.18.9-10; Polyb. 31.37; Diod. Sic. 36.13; Plut. Mar. 17.5-6 on the association of Cybele with Roman victories. Cf. R. McKay Wilhelm, "Cybele: the Great Mother of Augustan Order," Vergilius 34 (1988), pp. 77-78, and P. Zanker (above, n. 7), p. 115.

15. First and foremost, effeminacy and cowardice (4.215-217, 9.614-620, 11.769-777, 12.99-100), but also wife-stealing (4.215-217, 7.361-364). For Roman attitudes toward Hellenized Easterners, cf. J. P. V. D. Balsdon, Romans and Aliens (Chapel Hill 1979), pp. 29-53, 60-63, 66-68.

16. G. W. Bowersock, Augustus and the Greek World (Oxford 1965), pp. 3, 7, 31.

17. In Augustus' times, Propertius, Tibullus and Horace appear rather cool to the moral propaganda, and Ovid was eventually exiled also for his flouting of moral themes.

18. R. Syme (above, n. 2) pp. 453-455 on the characteristics of Italian provincials.
19. Cf. R. I. Frank, "Augustus' legislation on marriage and children," CSCA 8 (1975), pp. 41-43; K. Hopkins, Death and Renewal (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 80-98.
20. Hopkins (above, n. 19), pp. 97-98.
21. R. Frank (above, n. 19), pp. 45-48, and J. Crook, Law and Life of Rome (Ithaca, 1967), pp. 99-102.
22. Tac. Ann. 3.22.1, 4.52.2: the charges of impudicitia, adulterium, veneficia in principem, devotiones, quaesitum per Chaldaeos in domum Caesaris, used against female friends of Agrippina.
23. R. Frank (above, n. 19), p. 48.
24. Suet. Tib. 35; Tac. Ann. 2.85. Cf. J. Crook (above, n. 21), p. 102.
25. B. Levick, Tiberius the Politician (London, 1986), p. 19. R. Syme (above, n. 2) p. 345.
26. Dio 53.30.2, 53.33 on Marcellus' thwarted accession; cf. also R. Syme (above, n. 2), pp. 346, 415-417. Sen. Ad Marciam 2.3-4 on Octavia's undignified and excessive mourning. Cf. S. Dixon, The Roman Mother (Norman, 1988), pp. 73, 178, on the political significance of Octavia's bitterness.
27. B. Levick (above, n. 25), p. 29.
28. B. Levick (above, n. 25), pp. 41-42; contra A. Ferrill, "Augustus and his Daughter: A Modern Myth," Latomus 168 (1980), pp. 332-345. P. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 219 n. 167 and 221 n. 172.
29. Sen. Ep. 70.10; Suet. Aug. 62.2, 69.1. Cf. E. Leon, "Scribonia and her daughters," TAPA (1953), pp. 169-170.
30. Dio 48.54.4, Suet. Aug. 63.2, Tac. Ann. 4.39.5, 4.40.7-8 on Julia's betrothals; Suet. Aug. 64 on her upbringing. Cf. R. Syme (above, n. 2), pp. 378, 421.
31. Cf. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 218-221; H. Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire at the British Museum (London 1965), pp. 21-22; F. Sandels, Frauen der Julio-Claudischen Familie, (Darmstadt, 1912), p. 52.

32. M. Anderson, "The Portrait Medallions in the Imperial Villa at Boscotrecase," AJA 91 (1987), pp. 127-135; G. Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," AJP 67 (1946), p. 230; H. Mattingly (above, n. 31), p. 21; Fitzler, "Iulius (Iulia)," RE (Stuttgart, 1917) 19 Halbband, col. 904.
33. F. Ghedini, "Augusto e la Propaganda Apollinea," Archeologia Classica 38-40 (1986-1988), pp. 133-135: Octavia was represented as Diana Lucina on the St. Petersburg artifact. P. Zanker (above, n. 7), p. 195: Apollo and Diana are represented also on the cuirass of the Augustus statue of Prima Porta, as following on each other's steps. This, in Zanker's opinion, signifies the eternity of time. Livy 3.55.6-8: the temple of Ceres, Liber and Libera benefited from the confiscation of the property of those who had injured the tribunes.
34. Macr. Sat. 2.5.2, 2.5.5-6, 2.5.8 on Julia's personality; Tac. Ann. 1.53.5, Suet. Tib. 7.32, 10.35 on her disparagement of Tiberius.
35. The expression princeps femina appears in Ovid Ex Pon. 3.1.125; Livia is also referred to as princeps in the Consolatio ad Liviam 349-356. For a detailed discussion see N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," PCPS 212 (1986), p. 78-82.
36. Suet. Aug. 66.10, Dio 55.9.2-3 on Julia's popularity. B. Levick, Tiberius the Politician (above, n. 25), p. 42, and M. Pani, Tendenze Politiche della Successione al Principato di Augusto (Bari, 1979), pp. 42-44 on Julia's possible plans. B. Levick, "Tiberius' Retirement to Rhodes," Latomus 31 (1972), p. 808 and (above, n. 25), pp. 42-44; R. Syme, (above, n. 2), pp. 422-425 on Tiberius' adherents.
37. B. Levick, "Julians and Claudians," G&R 22 (1975), p. 30; Scribonia's presence behind the curtains may be inferred also from the fact that Cornelius Scipio, one of the accused, was her grandson.
38. B. Levick (above, n. 36), p. 33.
39. Tac. Ann. 2.27-31, Suet. Tib. 25, Vell. Pat. 2.129.2, Dio 57.15.4-5 on Libo's crime.
40. For a more specific discussion of the two "fields," see A. Ferrill (above, n. 28), pp. 332-334. Suet. Tib. 12-13 on the dangers besetting Tiberius in exile.

41. Vell. 2.100.4, Tac. Ann. 1.10.4, 4.44.3, Dio 55.10.15 on Iullus' death. Vell. 2.100.4, Sen. De Brev. Vitae 4.5 on his family's background. Dio 55.10.15 on his monarchical designs. Iullus' son died young in Marseilles (Tac. Ann. 4.44.10), Sempronius' became a merchant (Tac. Ann. 4.13), a fate worse than death for a Roman aristocrat.
42. A. Richlin, "Julia's Jokes," Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York, 1992), p. 74. Julia appeared on numismatic issues in Rome, while Livia never had her own coinage in the city until Tiberian times, and even then, her identity was implied rather than made explicit.
43. Ovid would be involved in a similar scandal with Julia's daughter. His poetry by and large poked fun at the moral reform, subverting it through humor. Vell. Pat. 2.100.4, on Julia's hybris. Cf. R. Dunkle, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography," CW 65 (1971) and "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic," TAPA 98 (1967); see also the discussion of role models and stereotypes in Chapter Five of this dissertation and Chapter Six for a discussion of Cato's speech against the repeal of the Oppian Law.
44. Pliny N. H. 7.149. Cf. A. Ferrill (above, n. 28), pp. 344-345.
45. Tac. Ann. 6.25.2, 6.10.1. In this interpretation of immorality I agree with R. Bauman, Women and Politics in Ancient Rome (London, 1992), p. 153; cf. also Bauman, pp. 116-118 on the reasons and timing of the scandal. Livy 2.5.5-10: Brutus oversees the execution of his sons, and 2.6.4: Brutus is mourned by Roman women as a father, avenger of their honor.
46. R. Syme (above, n. 2), p. 414 on Octavian's propaganda against Fulvia and Cleopatra. N. Purcell (above, n. 35), pp. 78-105, esp. pp. 85-87, on Livia triumphator by proxy through the erection of monuments; also G. Zinserling, "Kunstpölitik des Augustus," Klio 67 (1985), pp. 79-80. P. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 192-195, agrees on the heroic and divine nakedness of the bare feet, reinforced by the little Cupid riding the dolphin, an allusion to the origins of the Julians. However he believes the statue to have been the marble copy of a bronze original commissioned by the Senate.
47. Dio 58.2.2-3. Suet. Aug. 40, Tib. 51 on Livia's intercession in favor of provincials wishing to become citizens. Jos. A. J. 17.10, B. J. 1.566, 2.641-643 on her help to Herod and Salome.

48. E. La Rocca, Ara Pacis Augustae (Rome, 1983), pp. 31-34, 38.
49. S. Treggiari, "Roman Marriage," in Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean, ed. M. Grant and R. Kitzinger, vol. 3, p. 1348; Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford 1991), pp. 84-85 and chapter 10 and "Digna Conditio," EMC/CV 3 (1984), p. 423; also J. Crook (above, n. 21) p. 102, and U. Wilcken, "Ehepatrone im römischen Kaiserhaus," Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung, 29 Bd. (1908-1909), pp. 504-507.
50. S. Pomeroy, Women in Hellenistic Egypt (New York, 1984), p. 15. Dio 57.12.2 on Livia's audiences: there is really no indication that this custom had not been in use earlier. Diod. Sic. 19.59.4 on Phila. CIL 10.5056: H. Basila donated 400,000 sesterces to Altina for the support of needy children, cf. also W. Sontheimer, "Alimenta," in Kleine Pauly Bd. 1 (München, 1979), col. 256-257. Suet. Aug. 41.46; Dio 51.21.3, 53.2.2 on Augustus' relief to needy families.
51. Jos. A. J. 18.143, 156, 165, 15.342-343, 16.16; Strabo Geogr. 16.2.46 on Herod Agrippa's upbringing. Cf. also D. R. Schwartz, Agrippa I (Tübingen, 1990), p. 41. Suet. Aug. 48, Gaius 26; Dio 51.15.6 on Juba and Cleopatra Selene; cf. also A. Momigliano and T. J. Cadoux, "Juba," OCD (Oxford, 1970), p. 566. R. Hanslik, "Arminius," in Kleine Pauly Bd.1 (Munich, 1979), col. 601, and E. Hohl HZ 167 (1942), p. 465 on Arminius. Tac. Ann. 2.1.2 on Vonones.
52. Dio 55.8.2, Ovid Fasti 1.637-650. M. Boudreau-Flory, "Sic Exempla Parantur: Livia's Shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae," Historia 33 (1984), pp. 313-318; for the matron's qualities, see S. Treggiari, R. M. (above, n. 49), pp. 242-249 on partnership. C. J. Simpson, "Livia and the Constitution of the Aedes Concordiae," Historia 40/4 (1991), pp. 449-455.
53. H. Jordan, Topographie der Stadt Rom im Altertum (Rome repr. Rome, 1970), part 2, p. 183. Cic. De Domo 136 on temple's foundation by a Licinia. Cf. Ovid Fasti 5.149-158. A. Greifenhagen, "Bona Dea," MDAI 52 (1937), pp. 236-237, and H. H. J. Brouwer, Bona Dea (Leiden, 1989). Macr. Sat. 1.12.26 on the pharmacy at the temple; Suet. Aug. 80-81 on Augustus' frail health. Cf. N. Purcell (above, n. 35), p. 95.
54. Ovid Fasti, 637-648 on Vedius' palace. Dio 54.23.3-4 on Vedius' cruelty. Pliny N. H. 14.11 on the aspect of the colonnade. Cf. M. Boudreau-Flory (above, n. 52), p. 318, and P. Zanker (above, n. 7), pp. 141-142.

55. P. Zanker (above, n. 7) pp. 316-319. Cf. C.I.L. 8.26464, AE 1969-70, 648; C.I.L. 8.26471, AE 1969-70, 650. New Carthage's name AE 651; Livia-Aphrodite, AE 1950, p.7, Paphos; also J. Reynolds, "The Origins and Beginnings of the Imperial Cult at Aphrodisia," PCPS 206 (1980), 70-84, p. 78. See also R. Duncan-Jones, Structure and scale in Roman Economy (Cambridge, 1990), p. 179.
56. The Fasti Consulares of Cupra Maritima quoted in Epigraphica 9 (1947), pp. 131-142, and AE 1950, 93, coincidentally give the names of M. Plautius Silvanus as consul and C. Fufius Geminus as consul suffect for the year 2 B.C.: two of Livia's adherents were consuls in the year of Julia's catastrophe. Regardless of Tiberius' disgrace, his mother's influence was still felt. Cf. Suet. Otho 1, Galba 3-6; on Burrus, cf. CIL 12.5842; Fufius Geminus, Tac. Ann. 5.2.
57. M. Rostowtzeff, JHS 39 (1919), pp. 99-104.
58. Jos. A. J. 17.10, B. J. 1.566.
59. On the towns named after Livia, Jos. A. J. 18.27, B. J. W. 2.59; gifts to the temple in Jerusalem, Jos. A. J. 16.5.1, Philo Leg. ad Gaium 40. 319-320; penteteric games, A. J. 16.139; inheritance from Salome, A. J. 18.31, B. J. 2.167; inheritance from Herod, A. J. 17.146, 190.
60. J. Reynolds, Aphrodisias and Rome (London, 1982), pp. 104-6: text quoted by N. Purcell (above, n. 35), p. 102 n. 55. Dio 54.7.1 on Sparta's benefits; Suet. Aug. 40 on Livia's Gaulish client. M. Kajava, "Roman Senatorial Women and the Greek East: Epigraphic Evidence from the Republican and Augustan Period," in Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History, ed. H. Solin and M. Kajava (Helsinki, 1990), p. 65.
61. Dio, 55.2.4, 55.8.2-3; D. Fishwick, The Imperial Cult in the Latin West (Leiden, 1987), v. 1, pp. 584-85.
62. G. Dury-Moyaers and M. Renard, "Apercu Critique des Travaux Relatifs au Culte de Junon," ANRW 2.17.1, pp. 148-149, n. 45. Tib. 3.6.48, 3.12.1, 3.19.15; Sen. Ep. 110.2; Petr. Sat. 25.4; Pliny N. H. 2.7.16. Epigraphical records, see for instance CIL 5.6954. For images in private lararia, see G. Grether (above, n. 32), p. 225.
63. H. Trankle, Appendix Tibulliana (Berlin, 1990), p. 331 n. 15. W. H. Gross, Julia Augusta (Göttingen, 1962), p. 77. A. Greifenhagen (above, n. 53) and H. H. J. Brouwer (above, n. 53) p. 19; G. Grether (above, n. 32), p. 225; R. Winkes, "Leben und Ehrungen der Livia," Archeologia 36 (1985), p. 64.

64. I.G.R. 1.11099, p. 380 Egyptian inscriptions; B.M.C. Lydia, pp. 144, 344 coins from Magnesia and Tralles, discussed by Gross (above, n. 63) pp. 26, 41; B.M.C. Mysia, p. 140 coins from Pergamon.
65. CIL 5.2.6954, 8.16456, 10.1023, 11.3076.
66. AE 1971, 439, SEG 24.212, cf. AE 1928, 50. Dio 51.4.1. M. Kajava (above, n. 60), pp. 107-108. D. Fishwick (above, n. 61) vol. 1, pp. 27-28, 34.
67. B.M.C. Mysia, p. 139 coinages of Pergamon; B.M.C. Ionia, pp. 31, 72, 73 Clazomenae and Ephesos; B.M.C. Alexandria, p. 4; for description and discussion, cf. Gross (above, n. 63), pp. 23 n. 2, 26, 29, 33. R.P.C. 1.1, p. 693: this series could have started even in 30-28 b.C.
68. I.G.R. 4.39 Edict of Mytilene. Dio 54.23.7 on Livia's and Augustus' help after the earthquake; Suet.Tib. 26 on the Senate's proposal. Cf. K. Scott, "Honorific Months," Y.C.S. 2 (1931), p. 208; Bischoff, "Libaios," R.E. (Stuttgart, 1958) ed. K. Ziegler and W. John, col. 1744-1752.

Chapter Three

The Queen Mother

With the adoption in A.D. 4 of Tiberius as successor together with Agrippa Postumus, Livia saw her ambitions only partially realized, owing to the persistence of Julia's faction. The adoption of Germanicus as son of Tiberius and brother-colleague of Drusus was meant to strengthen the dynasty and end old family resentments: instead, it eventually created greater friction, on account both of Germanicus' own popularity and of his connections to Julia's group through Agrippina. For the time being, however, it served to keep the empire reasonably peaceful, giving the impression that the situation was under control and calming the worries created by Augustus' old age and failing health. Livia's position as mother and grandmother of the successors was officially advertised. Her iconography in these years presents her as mother--of the dynasty and of the country--associating her with a number of benevolent maternal divinities in more or less direct fashion. This assimilation had been in progress for some time in the Hellenized areas of the empire. Now in Rome, in addition to the cult of her Juno (companion to Augustus' Genius) Livia is also associated with Ceres and Ops through the erection of the altars of Ceres Mater and Ops Augusta.

1. Family Politics from A.D. 4 to 14

The premature deaths of Lucius (A.D. 2) and Gaius (A.D. 4) brought about belated recognition for Tiberius but created suspicion that Livia had contrived to accelerate nature's processes. She certainly played a role in the adoption of her son, as she was fond of reminding him in later years. Tiberius, on the other hand, even if leading a private existence at this point, was the only choice available at the moment.¹ He was the only candidate with the skill and experience necessary to bridge the generation gap between the aging and sickly Augustus and the younger heirs, Germanicus, Agrippa and Drusus. The pressure exercised on Augustus by the two family factions (Julian and Claudian or, better, Julian-Scribonian and Livian) was evident in the selection of the two immediate successors, Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus, both adopted in A.D. 4. Agrippa's adoption was a compromise because he received little official recognition and none of the privileges which his two dead brothers had enjoyed while they were still under age; this was possibly due to his unsuitable personality.

Tiberius was granted tribunician power (extraordinarily) for ten years, becoming in practice co-regent, and was sent to command operations in Germany. The adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius, prior to his own adoption, strengthened the Livian faction, since Germanicus was Tiberius'

nephew and a descendant of Octavia, without Scribonian blood in him. By this new adoption Tiberius' son Drusus and Germanicus were on an equal footing as colleagues, in an arrangement similar to that previously existing between Gaius and Lucius.²

The Julian-Scribonian faction, represented by Agrippa, his sister Julia and her husband Lucius Aemilius Paullus, a grandson of Scribonia, probably viewed with alarm the concentration of power in the hands of their rivals, and were possibly behind a number of popular agitations for the recall of the elder Julia from exile, placed by Dio around these years. These agitations were aided by a combination of natural disasters, famine, discontent in the army and trouble at the frontiers; revolutionary plans were discussed in the City, attributed to a certain Publius Rufus, believed to be an adherent of Julia. The marriage of Germanicus with Agrippina, probably in A.D. 5, did not mend family rivalries; on the contrary, it pitted Agrippina against her sister Julia, in competition over the position of their respective children within the succession. Although Julia's daughter was betrothed to Claudius, the chances of a male descendant of Scribonia reaching the inner circle of the immediate successors seemed slim at the time; they became even slimmer with Agrippa's progressive disgrace. Official reasons attributed his fall from grace to his intractable and uncouth character; his lack of refinement may have

combined with an uncompromising and undiplomatic nature, like that of his sister Agrippina, and he may have sought fast advancement, crossing Livia's path (hence his insults and anger toward her). In A.D. 6 he was emancipated and sent to Surrentum; from there, since his attitude did not improve, he was banished to Planasia the following year, probably to forestall dynastic troubles.³

Dynastic troubles could not be avoided. Between the end of A.D. 7 and the beginning of 8 both the younger Julia and her husband were condemned on separate charges: he of having had part in plots, probably those of Publius Rufus, she of adultery and immorality. The engagement of Julia and Paullus' daughter to Claudius was broken. The fate of Paullus is a matter of conjecture: it is commonly believed that he was executed or died, although Syme claims that he was simply banished, since his name still appears in the list of the Arvales of A.D. 13. The supposed adulterer Decimus Iunius Silanus chose to go into exile, although no sentence was passed against him by either the Senate or by Augustus. The poet Ovid instead was relegated to Tomis, by means of a personal edict of Augustus. Unlike Ovid or Julia, Silanus eventually returned to Rome during the reign of Tiberius. The Silani were connected with the Lepidi, but also with the Sempronii Gracchi, the Quinctii and the Appii Claudii, as well as with the circle of Germanicus and Agrippina. Members of these families had been previously

involved in the scandal of the elder Julia. This, and the fact that Julia's memory--like that of her mother--was obliterated in every possible way suggests the hypothesis that she may have been guilty of conspiracy.⁴

Nevertheless, the banishments of Julia and her brother did not make Tiberius' succession more secure, because there were periodic attempts to rescue them and their mother: Asinius and Epicadus' in A.D. 8, Clemens' between A.D. 14 and 16. Their existence, as well as frequent mutinies in the army, continued to threaten Tiberius' position and made Agrippa's murder in A.D. 14 necessary.⁵

In A.D. 13 Tiberius became officially collega imperii, with the renewal of his tribunician power and the grant of consular imperium, while Germanicus and Drusus' careers accelerated as a result. Augustus in the meantime--while still carrying out his public duties--became increasingly weaker and tired, to the point of discontinuing his audiences to people and Senate and curtailing his attendance at public banquets; in the Senate he showed up rarely. As for Tiberius, after assisting Augustus with the census in A.D. 14, he left for Illyricum to supervise the operations against the rebels. Augustus accompanied him for part of the way. It is in this period that the controversial "secret" visit of Augustus to Planasia, with the company only of his friend and relative Fabius Maximus, took place. Its purpose, variously interpreted as a tentative

reconciliation with the exiled Agrippa, or as the last, convincing proof of the young man's unfitness to rule, owes its coloring to subsequent events. At any rate, despite the reportedly affectionate tone of the encounter, Agrippa's chances did not change, since his name was absent from Augustus' will.⁶

The story of the secret trip has left some scholars skeptical; already in antiquity Pliny and Plutarch regarded it as doubtful. Some believed it (Tacitus, Dio). Modern scholars are divided: some believe the story partially, others reject it. That Livia was unaware of it would seem improbable, given Augustus' frail health and her knowledge of the comings and goings in the palace. The story of how Fabius' wife Marcia unwittingly betrayed the secret to Livia has been discounted by Syme as fictitious. The absence of Fabius Maximus from a significant ceremony in Rome after May 14, documented by the Acta Fratrum Arvalium,⁷ has been taken by some scholars as proof that the trip really took place. On the other hand, it may also have been due to other reasons, such as bad health for example.

The sources themselves are very uncertain with regards to this secret visit. Pliny the Elder, enumerating the various unhappy events that marred Augustus' life, refers to his relationship with Agrippa in these words abdicatione Postumi Agrippae post adoptionem, desiderium post relegationem. C. Questa argues that the word desiderium

indicates wistful yearning and regret on the part of Augustus, without implying any further action on his part. Plutarch also alludes to Augustus' possible intention to recall Agrippa (βουλευόμενος), but makes no mention of the trip. His version of the event seems furthermore unreliable, because he mistakes Fabius for Fulvius and turns Marcia and Maximus into a replica of Arria and Paetus.⁶ Tacitus and Dio both accept without reservations the reality of the trip, because it fits in their own narrative schemes: real or not, the trip to Planasia became, in anti-imperial history writing, the necessary prelude to Tiberius and Livia's quest for power. Its ramifications, i.e., the death of Augustus and the murder of Agrippa, herald the motif of internecine strife that soon became a recurrent theme in the history of the Julio-Claudians. The source of the story may be tracked to the memoirs of Agrippina, given the emphasis placed on a possible reconciliation with Agrippa and also on the figure of Fabius Maximus. Pliny implies that Maximus' presence may have worried Livia and Tiberius, since both Fabius and his wife Marcia had connections with the circle of Julia and Agrippa through their acquaintance with Ovid. Marcia was also a cousin of Augustus and had access to Livia; as such, she had been enlisted by the poet's wife to speak on his behalf. Fabius was known for his loyalty to Augustus and his line; he may well have promoted the trip, in the belief that it might lead to a reconciliation and to

the reinstatement of a direct descendant of Augustus as a successor. The removal of Agrippa may even have proved advantageous to Agrippina, since it would improve the chances for the succession of her own sons. Nevertheless, years later, in the climate of suspicion and bitterness created by Germanicus' death and by Sejanus' maneuvers, Fabius' sudden death and the Marcia episode were fashioned into providing ammunition against Livia and Tiberius by partisans of Agrippina and by writers hostile to Tiberius.'

2. The death of Augustus

Shortly after the supposed trip to Planasia Augustus died peacefully in Nola in Livia's arms, after having seen Tiberius off to Illyria. This much is certain; for the rest, the moment of truth for the regime and for the empire inspired a number of versions of the event, which have fostered lively debates among scholars.

Generally, the narratives concerning the death of Augustus seem to fall into two categories: those which follow the "official" version, presented by Suetonius and Velleius, and those which prefer the more intriguing, but highly fictionalized anti-Tiberian version, presented by Tacitus and Dio.

The official version presents Tiberius as the chosen successor of Augustus. Suetonius reports that Tiberius, urgently recalled, found his step-father still alive and conferred at length with him. Typically, the author reports

even Augustus' last, uncharitable comment on his successor. The actual death eventually occurred in a semi-public setting, with friends and visitors arriving from Rome, and Augustus having himself groomed for the occasion.¹⁰

Tacitus and Dio's accounts on the other hand, bring to the inevitable conclusion the chain of events set off by the trip to Planasia. While Tacitus hints at a possible involvement of Livia, Dio refers to the means by which she accomplished her crime, i.e. Augustus' favorite figs, poisoned right on the tree. The outrageousness of the statement, as well as its patently fictitious nature, does not seem to disturb Dio who, in the same breath, admits that Augustus' demise may have been due to other causes as well. Both Tacitus and Dio would like their readers to believe that Livia had kept her husband's death secret by preventing access to the house and by issuing deceptive bulletins on Augustus' health, while Tiberius was still securing his own position. Both authors are aware of the official version: Dio mentions it, but states that his own account follows the version preferred by "the most trustworthy writers." Tacitus, on the other hand, seems to contradict himself at 1.13.2, where he mentions Augustus' last conversations, presumably with his friends, concerning the qualities of possible candidates to the principate. The inconsistencies of the version preferred by Tacitus and Dio have been noticed and discussed by a number of scholars, who

preponderantly absolve Livia.¹¹

The stratagem, of dubious historicity, has similarities with Tacitus' narrative of the death of Claudius at the hands of Agrippina, and with the Livian legend of Tanaquil and Servius Tullius; there is a strong suggestion that fraud led to the succession of Tiberius. Had the stratagem actually been used, it probably would have been a sound practical decision, motivated by the uncertainty of the situation: the possibility of uprisings was very real, the legions in turmoil, Julia and Agrippa's adherents still active. The murder of Agrippa, mysterious first crime of the new regime, was a political necessity: even before Augustus' death there had been attempts to free him and his sister. Some even postulate that the order for his execution may have been issued by Augustus himself, with Tiberius' seal affixed by Sallustius Crispus, while Livia's supposed involvement is downplayed or rejected.¹² The wisdom of the decision became immediately apparent: just about the same time, Agrippa's slave Clemens attempted the rescue of his master, to smuggle him to the legions in Germany, where his sister Agrippina and his brother-in-law Germanicus were. A plan so daring probably enjoyed the support of influential people at court. A possible proof of this is that Agrippa's murder delayed Clemens but did not deter him: assuming his master's identity, he continued in his plots, his followers growing in the meantime. Tiberius

succeeded in getting rid of him only two years later.¹³

The funeral ceremonies of Augustus were grandiose: they harkened back not only to those given Marcellus and Agrippa, but Sulla himself, the restorer of the aristocracy. According to Dio, the materials of the bier were decidedly royal. The waxen imago placed in the coffin was not a realistic reproduction of the aged and sick ruler but the idealized portrait of the ever-young conqueror, in his triumphal costume. A similar effigy, in gold (symbol of immortality), was borne from the Senate, and another placed in a triumphal chariot. The concept was reinforced by the parade of images representing the people subjected, as well as by the procession of portraits of Roman greats, to enhance the scanty gallery of the Octavii and to indicate the ideological respectability of the Augustan program. Significantly, no image of Caesar was paraded among those of Augustus' relatives and ancestors, but that of Pompey appeared among the Roman greats. The inclusion was more appropriate than one would think: Pompey's career had paralleled in illegality that of the young Octavian, but after his death Pompey had been associated with the champions of the Republic. Continuity with the past, visibly reiterated in the monuments of the regime, had allowed Augustus to maintain his rule, and would now support the rule of his successor: as Augustus had presided over Caesar's deification to legitimize his own power, he

likewise choreographed his own funeral and the aftermath of his death (cult, creation of the Augusta) to give a solid base to his successor.¹⁴

Livia collaborated, lavishly rewarding the man who swore to have seen Augustus' soul fly up to heaven with a sum of money sufficient to put him in the senators' ranks. Tiberius rejected titles for himself, except that of Divi Augusti filius, which made him also grandson of Caesar, thus assenting to becoming an hereditary dynast. The legitimation offered by the Senate paled in comparison to that given by the two divi. This accounts for Tiberius' conscious effort, throughout his rule, to adhere to the principles set out by Augustus. After the cremation, Livia and a number of knights remained by the pyre for five days, while the bones were being gathered and prepared for the mausoleum. Rather than an uninterrupted stay, this was probably a ritual watch: widows were expected to have a noticeable part in the rituals for their deceased husbands, remaining by the pyre for some time. In the case of the princeps' funeral, the period set aside for the ritual watch was undoubtedly longer.¹⁵

Meanwhile, according to the provisions of Augustus' will, Livia had become heir to one-third of her husband's estate, thanks to a privilege received sometime earlier in A.D. 9. Along with a number of trustworthy women she had been freed from the restraints of the *lex Voconia*, which

limited the amounts inherited by women. Livia, who had already been freed from tutela by the grant of the ius trium liberorum in 9 B.C., could now inherit large amounts and use them as she saw fit. The nature and chronology of this measure seems to indicate that perhaps Augustus considered leaving her more than just a large amount of his patrimony. Chronologically, the new privilege was granted the year after the banishment of Julia and her accomplices: the inheritance of one-third of Augustus' patrimony would make Livia the wealthiest member of the family, second only to Tiberius and therefore able to give him material support against rival factions. Livia's adoption into the Julian clan was done through the testament, so she then became, at her husband's death, the oldest member of the Julian family. She had been Augustus' closest collaborator and the unprecedented bequest of the title of Augusta was a public acknowledgment of her supporting role and of the authority she enjoyed not only within the ruling family but in the state as well.

3. Livia's status from A.D. 4 to 14

3.1 Public Persona

Livia's public persona in these years centers on the image of the mother of the heir and on that of the helping mother through her association, in coins and monuments, with divinities such as Ceres, Bona Dea and Ops. Her association with Demeter-Ceres began to be exploited more directly in

this period, probably on account of the wide appeal of this mother-figure in both West and East. In a few cases, her closeness to the divinity in question seems to imply shared cult forms, while her association with Bona Dea and Ops was more indirect and does not seem to have been cultivated outside the boundaries of Italy.

Tiberius' adoption as the official successor enhanced his mother's already semi-official role, adding that of mother of the successor and grandmother of the princes to the previous one of ruler's spouse. A number of monuments in the West emphasize her unique position with respect to the other women of the dynasty; probably the most significant is the arch of Pavia in A.D. 7-8, where the statue of Livia stood among those of the men of Augustus' family, including the long-dead Gaius and Lucius. Livia's was apparently the only female statue on the arch, and was placed in a central position, along with those of Augustus and Tiberius.¹⁶ Her semi-official titles are evident on other inscriptions as well: on a mangled remnant from Tarraco she is honored in her quality of grandmother of Germanicus and Drusus. An altar in Sicily is dedicated to her husband and to her also as mother of Tiberius, while at Superaequum, in Central Italy, she is honored as mother of Tiberius and Drusus. This latter inscription, found in a veterans' colony, among the relics of Roman structures in a locality still named "Arco d'Augusta," could be construed,

together with that on the arch of Pavia, as evidence of precedents for the posthumous arch voted in her memory by the Senate, arguing against Dio's statement that this was a novel honor to a woman, particularly in the city of Rome.¹⁷

The dynastic closeness to husband and son was advertised also on local coinages in the East: an issue of Smyrna represents her as Aphrodite Stratonikes on the reverse, with Augustus and Tiberius facing each other on the obverse. The date of issue falls between A.D. 4 and 14, since Tiberius has the title of Caesar. This numismatic issue seems to bear some similarity to earlier coins from Tralles, in which Livia is portrayed as the local divinity (Hecate) on the reverse, with Gaius Caesar on the obverse. The example from Tralles is an earlier type,¹⁸ but there too Livia appeared in association with the dynastic heir. This was probably because, since Augustus had adopted Gaius as son and heir, Livia had become Gaius' adoptive mother as well.

The personal cult of Livia's Juno as patroness of married life or in conjunction with the Genii of Augustus and Tiberius is also well documented in this period. Statues and statuettes of Livia and her male relatives were also set up in a number of private lararia,¹⁹ the best known of which is probably that of Ovid at Tomis.

For a while it was believed that the cult of the Juno/Genius was included in that of the numen Augustum, an

Augustan novelty. Unlike the Genius, the numen was an entirely abstract entity, the quality that makes a divinity divine and a human exceptional. Because of its extreme abstraction, artistic representations of the numen were not attempted, so that possibly for this reason the geographic extension of this cult seemed limited at this time: aside from the Ara dedicated by Tiberius in Rome (A.D. 6), other examples of numen cult can be traced to Lepcis Magna, Tarraco, Narbo. The celebrations at the ara Numinis Augusti at Forum Clodii, often cited as evidence of the inclusion of Genii and Juno, demonstrate the contrary, since the Genii of Augustus and Tiberius had to be "invited" to participate in the celebrations, during which the Juno of Livia was also honored.²⁰ The ara Numinis Augusti in Rome, dedicated by Tiberius in A.D. 6, honored only Augustus' "divine inspiration" to rule. Livia was subliminally included, not as part of the Numen, but because the ceremony took place on her wedding anniversary, a tribute to the part she played, and continued to play, in her husband's "inspiration."

3.2 Honors and associations

In the following year (A.D. 7), more indirect tributes to Livia are to be found in the altars of Ceres Mater and of Ops Augusta. Although neither one specifically referred to Livia, her association with Ceres was not completely new: in the years between A.D. 4 and 14, a number of local coinages portrayed her as Demeter, sometimes with local variations.

The most secure identification of Livia as Demeter appears on the coinages of Tralles, in which her name is indicated (Καίσαρέων Λείβια). The figure represents a standing Demeter, carrying ears of wheat and poppies in the left hand and an unidentifiable small object in the right hand. Near her head is a crescent moon, interpreted as a reference to Hecate, connected with Demeter in the eleusinian cult. In many Sicilian coinages she appears both as Demeter and as Persephone, crowned with barley instead of wheat. On Syrian coins she receives the title of καρπόφορος, while her own coinages in Alexandria, during Augustus' years, associate her with Εὐθηνία (abundance) and bear the image of a cornucopia, or also a modius full of fruit and flowers, and torches. The Εὐθηνία issues, with modius or with oak wreath and date, belong to the years between A.D. 9-10, and appear repeatedly until A.D. 12-13.²¹ Bithynian coinages issued by the proconsul Marcus Granius Marcellus in the late Augustan years show Augustus and Livia on the obverse and an enthroned female on the reverse, holding a cornucopia but without attribute in her right hand. There is no clear indication here that the figure refers to Livia or is meant to be Livia, since there were no sitting portraits of her before the death of Augustus. On the other hand, the presence of the familiar cornucopia, as well as Livia's portrait on the obverse, may well suggest some association. Finally, the Pergamene issues of Menogenes also show a sit-

ting Demeter on the reverse, holding a sceptre and ears of wheat. Although the inscription Σεβαστή Περγαμῆνων indicates that this coinage is probably early Tiberian, Gross confidently affirms that the type of representation is still late Augustan, and places these issues at the very beginning of Tiberius' rule.²²

In the West, the mint of Lugdunum produces also coinages with Livia-Ceres on the reverse in the years A.D. 11-13; according to Gross, the Ceres coinages are those that most certainly refer to Livia, and were possibly inspired by the dedication of the ara Cereris Matris. The symbols of Ceres are the nuptial torches (with or without snakes), wreaths of poppies and grain (wheat, barley), the cornucopia. A few of these attributes, such as snakes and cornucopia, are common to another divinity associated with Livia in these years, Bona Dea. The snakes symbolize different concepts, ranging from the Juno/Genius to fertility, chastity and healing. The cornucopia is an attribute of Bona Dea, who protected the Roman state and the fertility of the women. She also protected the fields in general (Agrestis) and the granaries, so that in some parts of the empire she was connected with Ceres (Bona Dea Cereria, Aquileia) and Mater Magna (Mater Magna Cereria, also in Aquileia). The rituals of Bona Dea seem to have been related to those of Ceres: in both cults the presence of men was (supposedly) taboo, and later writers such as

Macrobius identify Bona Dea as Proserpina.²³ From agricultural divinity of plebeian origin, Ceres had extended her patronage over marriage: both agriculture and marriage clearly represented means of regulating and controlling nature, to submit her to man's civilizing purposes. In Rome, as in the greek Thesmophoria, the rites of Ceres-Demeter were practiced by women and intended to control their public and private behavior, through the prerequisite chastity, fasting and sexual abstinence. Bona Dea also emphasized chastity in her own mythology and tradition: it is therefore easy to see why Augustus was so keen on revitalizing these cults. Under Augustus, Ceres usurps Juno's role as protectress of marriage, but she also becomes special patron of the countryside and of the provinces, populated by those farmers whose crops and numerous families sustained the city and the empire. Nevertheless, while idealizing and honoring these social classes (women and small farmers) by using peaceful rural life and values as a foil to the corruption of urban life, Augustus also successfully marginalized them, since it was in the City that political decisions were taken.²⁴

The links created in Augustan times between Ceres, originally a divinity of the plebs, and Bona Dea, associated by most literary sources with the aristocracy of the republic, are evident in the calendar, in the ritual and in Augustus' household. The mysteries of Bona Dea took place

in early December, a month devoted to festivals honoring the divinities of the earth, all of which received sacrifices of pregnant sows (Tellus, Ceres, Proserpina), and with whom the "agrarian" version of Bona Dea shared attributes. Livia, as previously mentioned, was by family tradition a devotee of Bona Dea, whose temple she restored: one of her freedwomen, Philematio, is referred to as sacerdos a Bona Dea, an unusual title which may perhaps indicate the existence of a sodality under Bona Dea's protection among Livia's slaves and freedmen.²⁵

Livia was also associated with Bona Dea in Forum Clodii, where--from A.D. 18--her birthday was celebrated by the women of the local quarter of the Bona Dea, probably a collegium.²⁶ With her marriage to Augustus she had brought an aristocratic republican divinity into the household gods of the representative of the plebs, thus symbolizing the union of nobility and common people in the concordia ordinum under the new rule.

Less clear, at first sight, is the connection between Livia and Ops. This divinity had been part of the Roman pantheon since republican times and was originally associated with agricultural abundance. Ennius and the early Latin writers had made her the companion of Saturn, and turned her into the ancestress of the Olympian dynasty, following a euhemeristic model; nevertheless, the goddess lacked a distinct personality and a clear identity, as

evidenced by the scarcity of iconographical representations. Caesar had revamped her fortunes by depositing (his) public treasure in her temple. In those times, as appears from Cicero's writings, the concept of Ops had been updated, evolving from its agricultural roots to a more generalized idea of auxilium, so that she became protectress of abundance by whichever means it came (commerce, real estate, etc.). This more general idea of protection remained valid in Augustus' time, and it was put to the service of his regime and of his family.²⁷

The consecration of the altar to Ceres Mater and Ops Augusta took place in chronological proximity to the festival of the Volcanalia, in August, the month in which a number of important events in the career of Rome's ruler were also commemorated. With the title opifera (bringer of help), Ops is mentioned in the calendar of the Arvales under the entry for 23 August, feast of the Volcanalia. Ops was honored in her primitive area at the borders of the Forum, near the Volcanal and the temple of Saturn, at the same time as a number of other deities, Vulcan, Saturn, the Nymphs, Maia and Hora, each one in different parts of town. The array of divinities symbolized a combination of earth and water, emblematic of the help solicited by Augustus in his struggle to protect the city from fires and famine. In A.D. 7 their auxilium was vital to Augustus, who had taken over the duties of the annona since 22 B.C: the years between

A.D. 5 and 8 had been marred by famine caused by grain shortages, so that Augustus had had to resort to double distributions of food. The combination Ops Augusta--the adjective underscoring the source of this blessing--and Ceres Mater assumes in this context a strong propagandistic flavor, enlisting the divine help to enable the prince to provide the Romans with their daily bread.²⁸

Ops shared some characteristics with Bona Dea: the adjective opifera, an Augustan innovation, was used for both divinities. Furthermore, according to Macrobius, Bona Dea was one of the names of Ops, since her help was essential to life. Therefore, their characteristics overlap to a certain degree, although further epigraphical evidence demonstrates that the two divinities were not interchangeable.²⁹

The idea of Ops bringing a widely defined assistance, essential to life, and of Ops bringing assistance against fires threatening life, property and food staples, supplies a roundabout route to connect this divinity and Livia. As discussed in Chapter Two,³⁰ Livia was involved in various activities promoting the welfare of the Roman family, using her vast patrimony to supply material incentives in support of her husband's family reforms. Thus, her range of action included activities that combined the notions of motherhood and of assistance (Mater and Ops): her portrait appeared on tesserae for grain distribution, she helped support needy children, gave dowries to daughters of impoverished

families. She also lent active help when fires broke out, either by directing the operations or by succouring the victims. That her involvement on such occasions was customary is indicated by Suetonius' remark: et ipsam intervenisse populumque et milites, quo enixius opem ferrent, adhortatam, sicut sub marito solita esset (Suet. Tib. 50-51). Aid given during fires was especially welcome in a city such as Rome, where most buildings were made of wood. Being able to offer this type of aid could be exploited to gain political popularity with the masses, which were more easily victimized by sudden outbreaks. Witness to this the case of Egnatius Rufus, one of the early conspirators against Augustus: he had formed a private militia of fire-fighters and had ensured the gratitude and support of the plebs, through which he became praetor in 21 B.C. His excessive popularity eventually ruined him, but suggested to Augustus another way of reaping political benefits by organizing corps of fire-fighters in the various districts of the city.³¹ Aside from Suetonius and Dio's comments on Livia's involvement in this very specific type of assistance, we do not have other types of records that would permit us to establish the extent of her activity. What makes this scrap of evidence noteworthy is that it represents Livia as openly intruding in an otherwise masculine sphere (hence Tiberius' annoyance): this seems certainly an unusual behavior in a woman who made a career

of standing discreetly behind her male relatives. Even more important to the effects of this discussion is the fact that this scanty record permits us to establish the nature of the connection between Livia and Ops Augusta.

The examination of archeological evidence indicates that in these years the association between Livia and Ceres-Demeter is emphasized and advertised in a number of ways, from monuments to numismatics. The aspects of motherhood and prosperity, suggested by the figure of Ceres, are connected with the concept of benevolent assistance promoting life, suggested by Bona Dea and Ops. However, while the ideological closeness of Ceres-Demeter and Livia could be widely exploited, that between Livia and Ops seems to have enjoyed a more localized appeal (within the city of Rome). As for Livia's connection with Bona Dea, this also seemed to spread to areas geographically closer to Rome (Forum Clodii), rather than uniformly throughout the empire.

4. Cult

It is sometimes difficult to assess the chronology of Livia's titles and attributes, given the fragmentary condition of inscriptions and lack of other indications on coins. The commonly held view, which bases her chronology on the change of name from Livia to Julia Augusta, helps only up to a point, since some later cult inscriptions, ranging from after A.D. 15 to the end of the first century, still refer to her as Livia. Such is the case with an

inscription from Galatia from Galba's time, in which offerings are made to the goddess Livia, the goddess Roma and Augustus; one from Elea, in which People and Senate dedicate statues to the deified Caesar, Livia Augusta and Augustus; another from Chios which mentions a priestess for life of the august goddess Aphrodite Livia. Most of these examples come from the East, one from the West. Given the above, the chronological points in the development of her cult must be approximate.²²

Some evidence, mostly numismatic, gives indication of early cultic honors paid locally to Livia: the words θεά and dea accompany or precede the name of Livia, on coinages from Clazomenae which honor Augustus as founder and the goddess Livia. Gross believes this issue to have originated after the earthquake of 12 B.C., which explains the title κτιστης given to Augustus on account of his support in rebuilding the city. Livia's title implies cult, probably as εὐεργετης, as it is spelled out, for instance, on a more or less contemporary inscription from Thasos, evidence of some form of cultic honor going back to Livia's visit East (Julia is also mentioned, but not as a divinity). To this group can be added another inscription from Asia Minor (Λιβίαν θεάν γυναίκα . . . Καίσαρος θεοῦ AE 1940.184) since the wording refers to her as wife of the emperor Augustus, son of the deified Caesar, a formula similar to other early inscriptions. Coinage from Lesbos also refers to θεά

Λιούια, while in the West some evidence is found in the Greek-speaking parts of Italy. Coinages from Thessalonika and Methymna follow the same pattern, unless the caption is interpreted as θεοῦ or--possibly--as the initial of an ethnic name.³³

In other parts of the Empire, Livia is "assimilated" to particular divinities by assuming some of their attributes, or by "impersonating" them, dressed in the garb typical of the divinity in question. Into this category fall the cult honors to Livia-Demeter-Hecate in Tralles. Gross and Grether assume that the image on the coin represents a local cult statue of Livia-Hecate. At Smyrna she was assimilated to Aphrodite Stratonikes, a tradition later followed by Drusilla and Poppaea. The image on the reverse of the coin seems to reproduce a cult statue.³⁴

Early issues from Pergamon, dating back to shortly after her voyage east, identify her with Hera on the obverse, Julia with Aphrodite on the reverse. Hera-Livia appears also on coinages of the Thessalian League and from Eumenea, the latter a smaller denomination apparently issued by a local benefactress.³⁵

Both assimilation and identification, the forms of comparison to divinities illustrated in the specimen mentioned above, do not suggest divine nature or outright divinization, which could be achieved only through apotheosis. They are rather steps taken as preparation for

divinization, meant to lift the honorand above the human level without yet assigning him or her to the divine sphere.³⁶

At this point, a few comments are also necessary with regard to the possible chronology of the title of Σεβαστή. It is commonly believed that Livia took the title of Σεβαστή at the same time that she was granted that of Augusta, of which it is the literal translation. There are, however, a few odd archeological and numismatic pieces, some mentioned above, that make this classification problematic. Admittedly the counter-evidence supplied by the pieces in question is sometimes dubious, nevertheless there are instances that seem to imply a possible use of the title even before Augustus' death. The problem arises from the difficulty of recognizing the identity of Livia's partner, simply named Σεβαστός on some coins. That usage enables scholars to place some issues before A.D. 14. Even less clear is the inclusion of Livia among the Σεβαστοί: the error originated from a misreading of legends in coins from Smyrna and Magnesia, which actually have Σεβαστοί. The legend in question does not refer to Livia, although she appears with Augustus in double portrait. In the other cases reported the doubts arise because Livia's partner cannot be identified.³⁷

Not surprisingly, the instances discussed above of cult honors for Livia originated in the Hellenized parts of

the empire, where the tradition of special honors to both civic benefactors and rulers was well established. The Greek language did not have a specific word for cult of benefactors: τιμή covers a wide semantic area, which includes "worship" as well as "honor." Thus, honors granted to the divinities differed only in terms of degree from those granted to benefactors, not in kind. ἰσόθεοι τιμαί may be offered to civic benefactors, but did not mean divine honors; rather, they implied that the honors were similar to those tributed to the gods. Because of their position and function in society, rulers occupied an intermediate stage between civic benefactors and divinities. As such, honors as civic εὐεργέτες may not be sufficient: θεοὶ εὐεργέτες expressed more suitably the rulers' exalted, above-human position as benefactors who bestowed concrete benefits on the community. Yet the term θεός did not refer to the ruler's divine nature; it indicated his/her privileged status and it implied cult." Thus, it is possible to trace the progress of Livia's cult from exalted patroness--responsible for practical benefits to individual communities--to embodiment of the virtues and attributes of the divine consort (Hera) and of the bountiful mother (Demeter). Demeter in particular, when associated with Livia and the successors (Gaius, then Tiberius) suggested the idea that Livia, mother of Augustus' heir, helped to maintain the conditions for the peace and stability of the empire.

Conclusion

These years crown the efforts of Livia as a mother to secure her son's, and her own, political and perhaps even physical survival after Augustus' death. By and large her efforts met with success: the wisdom of the political choice that destiny and Livia foisted on Augustus was advertised far and wide by the monuments of the regime. With her ever-growing personal wealth, Livia was able to support her husband's policies to promote family life and prosperity: these years see her increasingly associated with Ceres-Demeter, the patroness of agriculture and of fruitful and chaste women. Nevertheless, at the death of Augustus the political situation was far from stable, and the assassination of Agrippa Postumus offered Tiberius' political rivals the opportunity to fabricate and circulate stories suggesting the illegitimacy of his claims. Augustus' selection of Tiberius as successor at the expense of his own closer kin was attributed to Livia's wiles and ultimately to murder at her urging. From bountiful Mother of the dynasty and of the state Livia would eventually be seen as the hateful step-mother of the house of the Caesars.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Tac. Ann. 1.3.3, Dio 55.10A.10 on Livia's suspected involvement in the deaths of Gaius and Lucius. Tac. Ann. 4.57.3, Suet. Tib. 51 on Livia's reproaches to Tiberius. Suet. Tib. 23, the preamble to Augustus' will. Cf. B. Levick, "Atrox Fortuna," CR 22 (1972), pp. 309-311, refuting the common opinion that the testament clause was meant as an insult to Tiberius.
2. Suet. Tib. 15.2 on Germanicus' adoption prior to Tiberius' own. Cf. B. Levick, "Drusus Caesar and the Adoptions of A. D. 4," Latomus 25 (1966), pp. 227-244, esp. pp. 228, 232, on Germanicus' adoption, p. 233, n. 2 on the date of Germanicus' marriage, pp. 239-244 on Germanicus and Drusus' careers. At pp. 232-234 Levick discusses the correspondent functions of the pairs Gaius-Lucius/Germanicus-Drusus, and observes that Drusus--in addition to marrying Livilla, formerly betrothed to Gaius--may have been regarded, with Germanicus, as princeps iuventutis. Dio, 56.17, 56.25.4, 56.28.1 on Germanicus and Drusus' advancements. Cf. also R. Seager, Tiberius (Berkeley, 1972), p. 37 on Germanicus' adoption; M. Grant, From Imperium to Auctoritas (Cambridge, 1946), p. 268 on provincial coinages celebrating Germanicus' adoption, and B. Levick, Tiberius the Politician (London, 1976), p. 49-50.
3. Suet. Aug. 65, Dio 55.13.1 on popular agitations for Julia's recall. Dio, 55.22.3, 23.1, 26, 28-29 on disasters and famine. Dio, 55.27 on revolutionary plans. Tac. Ann. 1.3.4, Dio, 55.32.1 on Agrippa Postumus' uncouth character. Cf. also B. Levick, Tiberius (above, n. 2), pp. 57-60; S. Jameson, "Augustus and Agrippa Postumus," Historia 24 (1975), pp. 287-314. Cf. also J. H. Corbett "The Succession Policy of Augustus," Latomus 33 (1974), pp. 87-97; D. C. A. Shotter, "Julians, Claudians and the Accession of Tiberius," Latomus 30 (1971), pp. 1117-1123 on the succession to Augustus. Cf. M. Pani, Tendenze politiche della successione al principato di Augusto (Bari, 1979) on the unstable situation at the accession of Tiberius and on the milieu of the Julias, Germanicus and Agrippina.
4. Tac. Ann. 3.24 on D. Silanus. Ovid Tris. 1.3 on his own relegation. Cf. B. Levick, Tiberius (above, n. 2), p. 55, and "The Fall of Julia the Younger," Latomus 35 (1976), p. 305 on Julia's connections. Cf. E. Meise, Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Julisch-Claudischen Dynastie (Munich, 1969), p. 42 on the destruction of her lavish villa: in republican times this was the punishment for those who committed crimes against the state. As for Aem. Paullus' execution, the ancient sources are not clear: they simply

list his name among those of many conspirators against Augustus. The assumption of his execution is based on information culled from a scholium to Juv. 6.158. Syme, (History in Ovid [Oxford 1978], pp. 137, 209-211) does not believe Paullus was executed.

5. Tacitus (Ann. 1.6) represents the decision to murder Agrippa as the first ominous deed of the new princeps and of his mother. Yet, Tiberius' alleged fiction, i.e., that Augustus' had ordered that in his testament, does not sound improbable, and has been accepted by Syme (Roman Revolution [Oxford 1939], p. 439) and E. Hohl (Hermes 70, [1935], p. 350). The fact that Tiberius was ready to have the Senate examine the deed should be constructed as proof of his lack of involvement. The murder probably was authorized by the zealous Sallustius Crispus: cf. S. Jameson (above, n. 3), p. 314.

6. Dio 56.26.1, 56.28.1: Germanicus and Drusus were allowed to be consuls without having served as praetores first. Tac. Ann. 1.5.1, Dio 56.30.1 interpret the visit to Planasia as a reconciliation; B. Levick, Tiberius (above, n. 2), p. 65, and "Drusus Caesar" (above, n. 2), p. 242, n. 3 implies that Augustus decided Agrippa's death. R. Seager (above, n. 2), p. 49, also agrees on Augustus' decision to eliminate Agrippa, and sees the absence of Agrippa's name from the testament as proof that Augustus had decided that his grandson should not survive him. S. Jameson (above, n. 3), pp. 304-310, argues that Agrippa was not mentioned because he had been completely disinherited due to a sentence of agua et igni interdictio, passed by the Senate against him at Augustus' behest (Suet. Aug. 65).

7. Pliny the Elder, N. H. 7.45.150, Plut. Mor. 3 ("De Garrulitate" 11) imply doubts concerning the trip. H. Willrich, Livia (Leipzig 1911), p. 28 n. 1; M. P. Charlesworth, "Tiberius and the Death of Augustus," AJP 44 (1923), pp. 149-150; C. Questa, "La Morte di Augusto secondo Cassio Dione," La Parola del Passato 54 (1959), pp. 43-44; R. Syme (above, n. 4), pp. 150-151 express skepticism with reference to the trip. B. Levick, Tiberius (above, n. 2), pp. 64-65; M. Pani (above, n. 3), p. 81; S. Jameson (above, n. 3), p. 310 believe the story partially. The document in the Acta Fratrum Arvalium is quoted and discussed by M. Pani (above, n. 3), p. 81 and S. A. Jameson (above, n. 3), p. 310.

8. Pliny, N. H. 7.45.150; Plutarch Moralia 3, "De Garrulitate." On Arria and Paetus, Pliny, Epist. 3.16, Martial 1.13. See C. Questa (above, n. 7), pp. 43-44.

9. Cf. R. H. Martin "Tacitus and the Death of Augustus," CO 5 (1955), pp. 123-128 for the fashioning of Augustus' death on that of Claudius in the Annales. Pliny, N. H. 7.46.150 on Livia and Tiberius' apprehension. Ovid, Fasti 6.804, praise of Marcia, and Ex Pon. 3.1.77, 1.2. The circumstances of Fabius Maximus' death were unclear: Tacitus (Ann. 1.5.2: dubium an quaesita morte) typically insinuates. Plutarch (Moralia 3) gives a highly unreliable account, with the wrong name of Maximus and contaminating the episode with that of the death of Arria and Paetus. On the existence of a tradition hostile to Tiberius and favorable to Germanicus prior to Tacitus, cf. G. A. Harrer, "Tacitus and Tiberius," AJP (1920), pp. 57-68, and M. P. Charlesworth (above, n. 7), pp. 146-147, and 154 for Agrippina's hand in perpetuating the rumors; with reference to the latter, cf. also C. Questa (above, n. 7), p. 52 n. 30.

10. Suet. Aug. 98, 99, Tib. 21.

11. Dio 56.30.1 on Augustus poisoned by the figs. Cf. C. Questa (above, n. 7), pp. 48-49 nn. 19, 20 for the mythic and fictitious elements concerning poisoned fruit and for the chthonic associations of figs in particular. Tac. Ann. 1.5.4, Dio 56.31.1 on Livia's part. H. Willrich (above, n. 7), p. 29, n. 1, p. 33; M. P. Charlesworth (above, n. 7), pp. 152-153; R. H. Martin (above, n. 9), p. 124; C. Questa (above, n. 7), pp. 50, 52 n. 29 reject the stories about Livia's meddling.

12. See Seager (above, n. 2), p. 49; Levick, Tiberius (above, n. 2), p. 65; Syme (above, n. 5), p. 439.

13. Tac. Ann. 2.39 on Clemens' designs, 2.40.3 his end and the support of influential people; cf. also Suet. Tib. 25 and Dio 57.16.3. M. Pani (above, n. 3), pp. 56-58: Clemens' movement may have been revolutionary and truly monarchic, opposed to Tiberius' more conservative and Senate-oriented approach. See also Seager (above, n. 2), p. 93, on Tiberius' possible reasons for dispatching Clemens in secret.

14. Dio 56.34, Suet. Aug. 100 on the funeral. Livy was called "Pompeian" by Augustus for his republicanism (Tac. Ann. 4.34). Cf. Syme (above, n. 5), pp. 50-51, 317-318 on the "recycling" of Pompey's image. Cf. also H. Chantraine, "Der tote Herrscher in der Politik der römischen Kaiserzeit," GWU 2 (1988), pp. 67-80, especially at p. 72.

15. H. Chantraine (above, n. 14), p. 72. This is also the source of Tiberius' occasionally puzzling and unpredictable behavior, stemming from the conflict between his own heart-felt dislike of hereditary rule and the inevitability of it. Cf. Seager (above, n. 2), p. 57 and Levick's discussion

(above, n. 2), pp. 76-81. Cf. S. Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford, 1991), p. 490 on the duration of the funerals.

16. The inscriptions at the base of the statues recorded the names of the honorands and their ties of kinship (CIL 5.6416).

17. CIL 2.3102 (Tarraco); CIL 10.7340 (Sicily); CIL 9.3304 (Superaequum). W. Lebeck, "Ehrenbogen," ZPE (1991), pp. 49-50. Posthumous honorary arches, single or multiple, topped by a statue of the honorand or by a group of statues representing family members, were an Augustan innovation to honor important dead. Drusus the Elder had apparently been the first to whom a funeral arch had been voted by the Senate. On the other hand, Octavian had received honorary arches from the Senate and the People in appreciation for ending the civil wars.

18. RPC 1.2, n. 2467, BMC Ionia, p. 268, nn. 259-261 (Smyrna); RPC 1.2, n. 2647-2648, BMC Lydia, p. 344, 117-120 (Tralles). W. H. Gross, Julia Augusta (Göttingen, 1962), p. 37.

19. CIL 8.16457 (El-Lehs), CIL 11.3076 (Falerii). Ovid, Epist. Ex Ponto, 2.8; 4.9. Cf. G. Grether "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," AJP 67 (1946), pp. 225-226. See also Chapter Two of this study on the cult of the Juno of Livia.

20. L. R. Taylor, "Tiberius' Ovatio and the Ara Numinis Augusti," AJP 58 (1937), p. 189: the Numen Augustum was supposed to be a collective divinity including the Genii of Augustus and Tiberius and the Juno of Livia, unlike the Numen Augusti which referred only to Augustus. Cf. D. Fishwick, The Imperial Cult in the Latin West (Leiden, 1987), vol. 2 part 1, pp. 378, 380 n. 23.

21. BMC Sicily, p. 125 (Panormus); BMC Lydia, p. 344, RPC vol. 1 part 2, nn. 2647-2648 (Tralles); BMC Mysia, p. 140 (Pergamon). In many instances, pre-Augustan Sicilian coinages show Demeter crowned with wheat and corn (BMC Sicily, Leontini, p. 93 nn. 59, 62, 66; Menaeum, p. 97 n. 1), while Persephone is crowned with barley (Gela, p. 75 nn. 84-85; Entella, p. 60 n. 4). In some cases Demeter on the obverse holds torch and sceptre, Persephone on obverse crowned with barley (Acrae, p. 2 n. 2), while in others Demeter wears earrings, necklace and barley crown (Enna p. 58 n. 2); even Isis appears with these attributes (Syracuse, p. 704). L. Robert OMS 2.807, n. 2 on Syrian coins. RPC vol. 1 part 1, pp. 692-694 on Egyptian issues.

22. W. H. Gross (above, n. 18), p. 28. BMC Mysia, p. 140; cf. also Gross, p. 40.

23. Gross (above, n. 18), p. 14 on positive identification of Livia-Ceres. Cf. Katalog Alexandrinischer Kaisermünzen der Sammlung des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität Köln, Band 1, p. 24 n. 38, and BMC Alexandria, p. 4 for Livia's Alexandrian coinages. Cf. H. H. J. Brouwer, Bona Dea, (Leiden 1989), p. 348, and A. Greifenhagen "Bona Dea" RM 52 (1937), pp. 227-244 on the characteristics of the goddess. Cic. De Legibus 2.9.21 on the nocturnal rites. Ancient literary sources are at odds with epigraphical evidence, which indicates a number of men, although smaller than that of the women, as worshippers of the goddess. See Brouwer, pp. 256, 258, 276; identification with Proserpina, pp. 418-19.
24. I. Chirassi Colombo, "Funzioni Politiche ed Implicazioni Culturali nell'Ideologia Religiosa di Ceres nell'Impero Romano," ANRW 2.17.1, pp. 418-423, 428. Cf. Brouwer (above, n. 23), pp. 324-325.
25. Brouwer (above, n. 23), pp. 351-352, 378; CIL 6.2240.
26. CIL 11.3303; Brouwer (above, n. 23), p. 374.
27. P. Pouthier, Ops et la Conception Divine de l'Abondance dans la Religion Romaine jusqu'a la Mort d'Auguste (Rome, 1981), pp. 225-226.
28. Dio, 55.22.3, 26.1, 31.3; Suet. Aug. 42. Cf. Pouthier (above, n. 27), pp. 287-293.
29. Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.12.10. Cf. Pouthier (above, n. 27), pp. 179-181; AE 1961, pp. 9-10, n. 45.
30. Cf. Chapter Two, parts 1 and 2, of this study.
31. Suet. Tib. 50-51, Dio, 57.16.2 on Livia's involvement during fires. Dio, 53.24.4 on Egnatius Rufus. Suet. Aug. 30.1, Dio 55.8.7 on the creation of urban cohortes.
32. A.E. 1933.2, A.E. 1970.594, SEG 15.532, CIL 6.1.1815 (inscription by a freedwoman of the Diva Livia Augusta).
33. Gross (above, n. 18), p. 34. BMC Ionia, p. 31 n. 119, RPC vol. 1 part 2, n. 2496 (Clazomenae); IGR 1.835 (Thasos); SEG 24.212 (Eleusis), SEG 23.472 (Dodona). Mionnet 3.39, n. 55; CIL 10.7464 (Haluntium, Sicily); CIL 10.8042 (Campania): fragment of tequla bearing the stamp Daae Liviae; RPC 1.2, n. 1563 (Thessalonika), n. 2338 (Methymna).

34. Fishwick (above, n. 20) vol. 1 part 1, p. 29 on divine assimilations. Gross (above, n. 18), p. 41 and Grether (above, n. 19), p. 231 n. 48 on cult statue of Livia. RPC 1.2, nn. 2647-8, BMC Lydia, p. 341 (Tralles); RPC 1.2, n. 2467, BMC Ionia, pp. 267-8, n. 254 (Smyrna). In both cases the name of Livia is clearly identifiable.
35. BMC Mysia, p. 139, nn. 248-9 (Livia and Julia); RPC vol. 1 part 2, n. 1427 and n. 3143 (Livia-Hera).
36. Fishwick (above, n. 20), vol. 1 part 1, pp. 29, 40.
37. Cf. Mionnet's coinages of Λιβία Σεβαστή quoted by L. Ollendorff, "Livia" RE Bd 13 (Stuttgart, 1927), col. 913, and discussed by W. Ritter in "Livias Erhebung zur Augusta," Chiron 2 (1972), p. 316 nn. 17-18. Cf. also Grether (above, n. 19), p. 241 n. 110. RPC vol. 1 part 1, p. 50 for the discussion of the identity of Livia's partner. Ritter suggests that the attribution of some coins to before A. D. 14 may be possible for coinages that have no indication of the officials who issued them. Grant (above, n. 2), p. 463 believes the Σεβαστός to refer to Augustus, which would enable one to see Livia as the Σεβαστή on the coinages where they appear together. The examination of the portraits, however, does not allow this interpretation, according to the authors of RPC vol. 1 part 1, p. 50. Cf. BMC Ionia, nn. 254-258, BMC Lydia, p. 144, n. 44-46 and Gross (above, n.18), p. 26. Cf. also Ritter p. 317 n. 18.
38. Fishwick (above, n. 20), vol. 1 part 1, pp. 21, 27-28, 33-34.

Chapter Four

The Augusta

This chapter has as its objects the consolidation of Livia's power and influence during the Tiberian years, as well as the unresolved contradictions resulting from the presence of a powerful Mother at the top of the hierarchy in an avowed patriarchal society. The authority enjoyed by Livia as Julia Augusta had social, as well as religious and political character: on the one hand, she was a princeps femina, pinnacle of the ordo matronarum,¹ on the other, she was regarded as Parens/Mater Patriae and Genetrix Orbis, extreme magnifications of the moral authority of the materfamilias. As mother of the dynasty and of the country, Livia officially supported and assisted her son's policies: as mother of Tiberius, she struggled with her son to fulfil her own ambition to rule. Domestic and personal contrasts between mother and son mingled with the dynastic struggles of Agrippina and Livilla, exacerbated by the deaths of Germanicus and Drusus and by the maneuvers of Sejanus.

1. The Augusta

In the past much emphasis has been placed on the "Hellenistic" elements of Livia's new distinction as Augusta. Because the figure of a visibly authoritative queen mother appeared alien to Roman tradition, scholarship has tended to regard the conferment of Augustus' title on

Livia as being derived from foreign models. More recent studies seem to have relinquished the idea, partly because Livia's power was of a different nature (sacral but not divine, unlike that of Ptolemaic queens like Arsinoe and Berenice), but also because new light has been shed on the figure of the Roman mother and her position within family and society. Therefore, it is safe to state that the model on which the Augusta's role rests is closer to that of the Roman mother than of a Hellenistic queen in disguise.'

If one accepts that Augustus' new regime was a sort of family faction writ large--wherein the First Family resulted from a victorious struggle against other family factions--then Livia's privileged position appears not to contradict Roman tradition, but responds rather to the internal logic of the family system. The Roman mother, more than the wife, enjoyed great prestige in practice and tradition, even if legally subordinate to male authority. Chapter Five of this study examines the role of the matron and mother as educator of the children, teacher of traditional morality and of family history. Her influence over her children continued, despite divorce and remarriage, well into their adulthood and maturity, and concerned not only personal choices, but also economical and political matters. She exercised a sort of "moral mentorship" over her sons, which increased considerably if she became a widow. Such mentorship was generally viewed with approval, as long as her ambition was

not publicly flaunted.³

It is much more difficult to find a comparable mother figure in the social history of Greek and Hellenistic culture, where the mother never enjoyed the same public prestige as in Rome. Consequently, there did not seem to exist a definite role model for Hellenistic queens, unless one went back to the Homeric Arete. Although Hellenistic rulers share some characteristics with Augustus, the parental character is missing, aside from the purely dynastic element. Generally, king and queen were the parents of the heir to the throne, but this aspect did not extend to the parenthood of the country, unlike Augustus' rule. On the other hand, Hellenistic monarchs were active as benefactors; the king was the political, military and religious leader, much like Augustus, while the queen should be noted for her wisdom, virtue and dignity, as Livia was.⁴

As Mother of the Country Livia fulfilled a highly symbolic task, which was far from being purely ornamental, although deprived of the accoutrements of power (command of the army, tribunicia potestas): hers was a moral power that arose from ancient Roman traditions. She was adopted into the Julians through testamentary provision, her inheritance of a major portion of Augustus' estate having been anticipated through previous exemption from the Voconian law. The most unusual feature of Augustus' testament was the transmission to Livia of his own title along with his own

family's name, undoubtedly the first instance of an honorific title bequeathed to a woman.

Surprisingly, the main historical and literary sources simply register the fact without further comment. This attitude seems puzzling, considering that the ambiguity inherent in the legacy generated a variety of contrasting interpretations, by Livia herself and her contemporaries, as well as by more recent scholars. Yet the lack of reactions in the ancient sources is perplexing.

Suetonius makes clear that the title of Augustus had assumed a dynastic meaning in addition to the original honorific and religious character: Augustus' veto of honorific titles for Tiberius after the Illyrian campaign was due to the fact that Tiberius would eventually inherit his own title. The adoption of Livia into the Julians, designed to strengthen Tiberius' position as head of the dynasty, demonstrates Augustus' keen awareness of the dangers of factional strife within the family: as such, the adoption was a sufficiently momentous event, witness the ara adoptionis voted by the Senate to commemorate the occasion. Even so, the possibilities that would emerge after his death must have appeared gloomy, if Augustus felt that he must bequeath her a title clearly indicating his political successor. Modern interpretations regarding the nature of Livia's task originally followed the theory of joint rule expounded by Mommsen and Kornemann, while Wilamowitz saw it

instead as mere decoration. More recently, W. Ritter has tried to steer a middle course between the two currents, highlighting the transformation of Hellenistic elements into a form more acceptable to Roman sensibilities.⁵

Livia's adoption made her Tiberius' legal sister: this, on the one hand, may be similar to the position of a woman married in manu, while on the other the inheritance of a title on the part of brother and sister alike is an element common to Hellenistic monarchies. Yet, the heirs of Hellenistic monarchs inherited equal rights along with the title, whereas Livia's were limited: unlike her Hellenistic (particularly Ptolemaic) counterparts; however, she could not be commander-in-chief, nor could she address the Senate, since she had neither imperium nor tribunicia potestas, and her own portion of inheritance was inferior to that of Tiberius. Ritter however points out that, like his Hellenistic counterparts, Augustus transmitted his title without mediation from the Senate, although it was from this body that he had received it. Given the above, Ritter suggests that, in creating the Augusta, Augustus adapted Hellenistic elements and transformed them into something Roman.⁶

What did Livia's new title entail? An examination of the nature of Augustus' prestige vis-a-vis that of Livia is necessary. Augustus' prestige was based on three apparent factors: a) his virtues, recognized by the community by the

bestowal of the clipeus in 27 B.C.; b) the attainment of the supreme religious authority in the state (the Pontificate); c) the crowning title of Pater Patriae.

Augustus' much advertised personal virtues, engraved in the gold clipeus, were: virtus, clementia, iustitia and pietas, which engendered pax, concordia and salus. Briefly stated, while virtus and pietas were old republican virtues, clementia was the quality of a ruler, who bestowed it on his adversaries from a position of superior power. Augustus was proud of having been granted the civic crown ob cives servatos on account of the mercy demonstrated at the end of the civil war. The idea of the princeps as merciful savior became one of the cardinal points of Augustan ideology.⁷

Pietas was also much on display, both with regard to Augustus' actions toward Caesar, the adoptive father, and with regard to the ancient cults and religious rites reestablished. In Cicero's opinion pietas was the foundation of all virtues, since it involved loyalty to one's country, gods and family.⁸ Finally, virtus was what made a man manly, an umbrella-category which subsumed physical prowess, self-restraint, gravitas and dignity.

With the exception of iustitia, recognized in a cult developed late in Augustus' reign (A.D. 13), the virtues mentioned above paralleled those most advertised in Livia: mercy, chastity, piety. Livia's clementia was well-known both in the political and private arena: not only Cinna and

other senators appreciated it, but also a group of anonymous drunks, who were running about naked. They crossed paths with Livia's entourage, and would have been put to death for presenting such an offensive sight, had she not interceded on their behalf, saying that to chaste women they were no different from statues. Her pietas was also widely recognized, both toward the gods, in imitation of her husband, and toward her relatives: she lived in harmony with Antonia and helped her raise her and Drusus' children, protected Agrippina and her children against Sejanus, and supported the exiled Julia. Both aspects of pietas were summed up in Livia's exercise of her religious duties to the memory of her deified husband, which combined the dutiful respect of a daughter/wife toward the parent/husband/god.⁹

Finally, what virtus was to a man, puicitia was to a woman, since both were qualities necessary to the survival of the state. Also in this respect Livia was exemplary. As for iustitia, Livia's association with it has been recently discounted, although it had been previously accepted on the basis of numismatic evidence.¹⁰

Augustus' (and Livia's) virtues engendered many blessings for the community: the two most commonly attributed to Livia's influence were concordia and salus. Concordia, although not exclusively Augustan, was associated with Livia in a number of ways: she had been personally involved in the ceremony for the formal constitution of the restored temple

of Concordia in the forum (Jan. 7 B.C.), later dedicated by Tiberius in A.D. 10. In addition to that, she privately financed the construction of the homonymous shrine in her own portico. Concordia was the ideal condition which the Roman family and the state strove to attain, and with which the ruling families, from Augustus on, tried particularly hard to identify, even in the face of adverse reality. To create the proper conditions for concordia and to maintain it was also, for the most part, one of the wife's tasks; in this respect Livia had done more than her required share to preserve the family's reputation, despite blatant internal disagreements (Tiberius' departure for Rhodes, for instance). As for salus, coinages of the Tiberian years represent this blessing with Livia's idealized, but recognizable, features. Pax, another much-publicized Augustan blessing, was associated with Livia indirectly, but no less symbolically, since the Ara Pacis had been inaugurated on Livia's birthday. The symmetrical qualities displayed by Livia and Augustus, whether they were the fruit of similar personalities or artfully cultivated, suggest that the prestige enjoyed by Livia was based on the display of virtues recognized as typical of a wise princeps, in her case a princeps femina.¹¹

The second essential element of Augustus' auctoritas was the religious aura that surrounded his title, an aura which had been reinforced by the conferment of the Pontifi-

cate in 12 B.C. The peak of his career was eventually reached with the grant of Pater Patriae ten years later, whereby "the August One" became the archetypal social and religious head of the Roman state. W. K. Lacey remarks that in Rome the most important institutions, i.e., family, religion and government, were based on forms of power and authority developed from the original patria potestas. For this reason the state was organized in structures that tended to echo the family's internal hierarchy, dominated by the figure of the paterfamilias. Thus, for instance, the social inequality between father and children was replicated in the relationship between patronus and clientela, as well as in that of the Pontifex Maximus and the Vestals. As chief authority figures in their respective areas of influence, both the paterfamilias and the consul could take auspicia to interpret the will of the gods. Finally, the main government body, the Senate, originally convened the Patres of Rome's most powerful families. The intertwining of paternal, religious and social authority is also evident in the development of the cult of Vesta from domestic to state divinity, in the care of a father figure, the Pontifex, who presided over the Vestals. As discussed earlier, the close association of the state with Augustus' family had begun in triumviral times and continued in a number of different ways so that, as Lacey observed, the transition from paterfamilias to pater patriae would be a

logical consequence.¹²

A similar trend is manifested in the creation of Livia's new official persona. Her auctoritas as well seems connected to the title and function of parent because, as soon as she became Augusta, the Senate proposed to grant her the titles of Mater or Parens Patriae which, despite Tiberius' veto in Rome, will reappear later in Spanish coinages and inscriptions amplified in Genetrix Orbis. The proposed addition of Juliae filius to Tiberius' name may actually have been meant not to embarrass Tiberius, as Tacitus suggests, but as extrapolation from Mater Patriae and as a parallel to his other title of divi Augusti filius, to increase the legitimacy of his position at the head of the state. Indeed a few inscriptions honor Livia, as well as her mother Alfidia, as benefactresses of the world, probably on account of their respective children, while others unequivocally refer to Livia as mother of the dynasty.¹³

A religious aura surrounded the title of Augustus and had been augmented by the attainment of the Pontificate, while in Livia's case this added prestige had to be supplied by the only female priesthood grounded in Roman tradition, that of the Vestals. The symmetry was not exact, however, and presented some technical problems: while Augustus was Pontifex, Livia could not, under a practical point of view, be a Vestal.¹⁴ The proximity between the Augusta and the

Vestals was emphasized in a number of ways, physical, symbolic and legal: like the Vestals, Livia had been granted, early on, the sacrosanctity and the permission to administer her own patrimony. During Tiberius' reign, she was granted the use of the carpentum and could employ one lictor when on duty as priestess of Augustus. On the other hand, the Vestals received some of the privileges granted Livia, such as the ius trium liberorum and the freedom from the restrictions of the Voconian law; furthermore, the old Augusta sat among them at the theatre. All this lent further weight to the supporting role that Livia was to play in this sensitive transitional phase.

The title of Augusta was not only honorific and dynastic, but indicated also Livia's function of priestess of the deified Augustus. As such Livia pursued vigorously the creation of the cult of Rome's new protector. With Tiberius she financed the construction of the temple to the Divus, and on her own she instituted the Ludi Palatini. Although this was a private festival honoring Augustus' memory, members of the upper classes were selectively invited to the celebration: the last day of the festivities coincided with Livia's wedding anniversary. Years later she and Tiberius dedicated a statue of Augustus in the Theatre of Marcellus; on this occasion Livia had her name inscribed before that of her son. The fact was unusual enough to deserve mention and it may have inspired gossip as to the

relations between mother and son. It has been argued that she did so as priestess of the Divus: a likely explanation for the anomaly, which may reflect her unique position with respect to other state cults. In fact, it was unprecedented that a woman should serve a god who technically was her father: the only recent precedent of a divinized leader's cult, that of Divus Julius, had no women in priestly functions, possibly because none of Caesar's lawful wives had ever undertaken tasks of social representation similar to Livia's. Her position as priestess of Augustus may seem redundant, however, since there was also a body of priests in charge of the cult of the gens Julia, the sodales Augustales. They were chosen from among the highest families, under the leadership of males of the imperial house. The first flamen Augustalis was Germanicus. Redundance was not Augustus' intention: the correspondence between male and female religious title in this case is reminiscent of ancient practices, originally carried out by the rex and regina sacrorum, or by the flamen and flaminica. Finally, in order to explain the precedence of the Augusta over Tiberius in this inscription: in Rome and in the West Tiberius preferred not to use any of the titles which he had inherited from his adoptive father, particularly that of Augustus, which he permitted only in the case of foreign correspondence. Livia, on the other hand, had shown no reservations against using in Rome her title of Augusta;

therefore it is possible that the prestige of the title justified the privileged position of her name on this particular inscription.¹⁵

The above discussion is meant to highlight the social and religious elements inherent in the concept of Augustus, which may help to clarify the reason of its transmission to Livia and define the nature of the title and position she inherited. The Augusta's auctoritas was not based on the exercise of effective power or political office, but rather on personal qualities that were symmetrical to those of the princeps. Much like that of her consort, her authority had religious and social character, because her title was combined with others suggesting parenthood and the highest priesthoods in the state.

2. The Tiberian Years: Mother and Son at the Helm of State

The first part of Tiberius' rule, from A.D. 14 to A.D. 23, the year of Drusus' death, was viewed in generally positive terms even by those ancient writers who were critical of the principate in general and of Tiberius in particular. Thus Tacitus and Dio acknowledge Tiberius' efforts to ensure a responsible administration of power while trying to restore decision-making power to the Senate. The ruler's preoccupation with the welfare of the common people and of the provincials in the areas of food supply and fair governing practices is also remembered. Moderation and justice were the chief virtues with which Tiberius

wished to inform his own rule: during these years he seemed, in fact, to live up to his own aspirations. He did not covet the wealth of others in order to replenish the Treasury's coffers (although this was one of his primary preoccupations), nor did he resort to political trials for this purpose. His interest in the administration of the law led Tiberius to attend frequently the criminal courts and supervise the proceedings personally in order to prevent blatant abuses. In the vain attempt to restore a certain independence to the Senate, Tiberius strove to maintain an air of impartiality and objectivity, separating his own decisions in matters of policy from those of a more personal nature (as indicated, for example, by his leniency in the first maiestas trials and by his behavior in the course of Cnaeus Piso's trial). Unfortunately, his good intentions were misunderstood or misrepresented, so that his characterization by Tacitus and Dio survives as a byword for deviousness, inscrutability and duplicity.¹⁶

The servility and flattery of the Senate, which refused to share Tiberius' burden of responsibility, genuinely disgusted him. Tiberius' official discountenance of the titles of Augustus and Pater Patriae for himself was not just a consequence of his own moderation and dislike of pomp and flattery, but also of his desire to establish the deified Augustus as the legitimate origin of his power. By placing Augustus in the position of the numen--to whom alone

allegiance was due--as sanction for his own rule, Tiberius aimed at presenting himself as the continuator of his divine predecessor's policies. The further development of the concept of maiestas and its employment with reference to Augustus' new position became a means to establish the principate on unassailable grounds as well as to control possible opponents. The emphasis on Augustus was however also a weapon in Tiberius' struggle against the factions within his own family and against Livia's demands.

2.1. Tiberius and Livia

The years from A.D. 14 to 29 witness the peak of Livia's public acclaim and political influence, as well as the low point in her relationship with her son.

Owing to his reluctance to employ monarchical titles for himself and to accept extraordinary honors, Tiberius also felt it necessary to curtail similar honors heaped on Livia by the Senate, deeming them extravagant and excessive, particularly for a woman. Once again, an attitude that in other circumstances would have been praised as one of respectable restraint in the best republican tradition was distorted and misrepresented as evidence of Tiberius' hatred toward his mother and his family at large.¹⁷

Indeed the relationship between mother and son was extremely complex, much more so than the maneuvering frequently imputed by the main sources, since the personal and the political were intertwined to an unprecedented

degree: Livia was not only Tiberius' mother, nor even just the Queen Mother, she was also the Augusta. The ambiguities inherent in her official position spilled over into her personal dealings with her son.

Tiberius' awareness of his own dependency on her advice and support, particularly during the very delicate phase of transition, was deeply troubling to him. On her part, Livia's attitude, when her will was thwarted, fueled the unkind gossip that had already circulated widely in Rome since Tiberius' adoption. Dio states repeatedly that Livia was, by this time, taking active part in the political process in a fashion far less discreet than she had done under Augustus, although still within the limits of accepted social conventions.¹⁸

Personal disagreements were played down in the official propaganda: archeological evidence of various types points to the unprecedented official nature of their partnership, as Livia-Julia Augusta and Tiberius appear--with or without the Senate--in a number of artifacts, private and public. Her position of pre-eminence as priestess of the Divus Augustus is evident in the Grand Camée de France, a piece modeled on the Gemma Augustea: although chronologically Claudian, it reflects the dynastic situation of the early Tiberian principate.¹⁹ The seated arrangement Tiberius-Livia is clearly reminiscent of that of Augustus-Dea Roma on the Gemma Augustea; Livia appears as

priestess, with hair tied with fillets and a laurel crown, but instead of the expected sacrificial patera, she holds ears of wheat and poppies in her right hand, according to her Livia-Demeter representation. This iconographical representation is rather puzzling, since as a mortal priestess she could not be shown seated. Could this conflation of different attributes be a rendition of the Diva Augusta? The Claudian date makes it likely.²⁰ The disposition of other family members on either side of Tiberius and Livia must have corresponded to a somewhat standardized arrangement, since a similar order has been noted in the disposition of imperial statues in the temple of Augustus and Roma in Leptis Magna.²¹ There, the pre-eminence of Livia and Tiberius was emphasized by the size of their respective statues, larger than those of the other family members.

Livia and Tiberius appear on many specimens of local coinages in a variety of combinations. The most significant for our purposes are those in which they are defined as Σεβαστοί, and those in which Livia appears alone as Julia Augusta or as a divinity. It is commonly believed that Livia was united in cult and honors with the Divus Augustus as the Σεβαστοί only after her death. There are, however, a few provincial coinages that indicate the opposite, i.e. that the title was also applied to her and Tiberius during their lifetime. Issues from Pergamon, Aphrodisias, Mastaura

and from the tetrarchy of Philip show Tiberius and Livia's jugate heads on the obverse, with the title Σεβαστοί. Equally significant are coins representing Livia alone, on the obverse side, in a number of instances.²² Among the most noteworthy are the issues of the city of Augusta in Cilicia, founded in A.D. 20 expressly to honor Livia: only one issue shows the usual arrangement, i.e., Tiberius on obverse, Livia on reverse. All the others, down to the time of Nero, show only Livia.

In A.D. 17 a violent earthquake destroyed a number of cities in Asia Minor: Sardis and Magnesia by the Sipylus were the most heavily damaged. Tiberius supplied generous help and tax relief, and Livia too was probably involved in providing aid, since coinages of Magnesia represent on the reverse a bust of the Augusta, on the obverse the Senate (a young male); a similar type has Livia on the reverse as θεάν Σεβαστήν, probably as benefactress.²³

In A.D. 22 and 23 the provincials of Asia successfully prosecuted their governor, Gaius Silanus, and Tiberius' procurator, Lucilius Capito. Both defendants were condemned to exile, and the provincials celebrated their victory with the construction of a temple to Tiberius, Livia and the Senate. Livia's part in the proceedings is not immediately evident, but we may assume that she must have had her say on the subject, since issues from Smyrna celebrating the completion of the temple show draped busts of Livia and of

the Senate facing each other on the obverse, with the caption Σεβαστῆ Σύγκλητος. On the reverse is the temple in question.²⁴ The representation of Livia and the Senate on the same face of a coin is rare, since the only other related specimen has her on the reverse: perhaps she influenced members of the Senate in securing Silanus and Capito's condemnation.

Livia and Tiberius appear jointly as rulers on an inscription from Macedonia, where the date of the event celebrated (A.D. 22) is calculated according to the years of Tiberius and Julia Augusta's rule.²⁵ This is probably the most unequivocal evidence of the way in which the Augusta was commonly perceived, despite Tiberius' careful avoidance of his mother's direct involvement in government. As priestess of the deified Augustus, Livia's presence next to Tiberius or the Senate on artifacts, monuments and inscription signified divine sanction for the continuation of Augustan policies.

2.2. Julia Augusta and the Senate

The above mentioned numismatic issues of Livia and the Senate, despite their rarity, are not the only indications of the harmony between the two.²⁶ In fact, there is significant evidence that, throughout her long career, she enjoyed the respect, admiration and--in a few cases--probably the affection both of individual senators and of the body as a whole. The outpouring of concern on the

occasion of her near fatal illness in A.D. 22 manifested itself in supplications, votive games sponsored by the major priesthoods, the vowing of an altar to her recovery, coinage of Salus, Pietas and Iustitia issues, celebrating the renewed health of Livia and of the state and Tiberius' pietas. The recovery brought her also the one numismatic issue in Rome with her name, a senatorial coinage which recorded the grant of the use of the carpentum, the vehicle permitted to the Vestals and to members of some priesthoods. Both the carpentum and the Salus portraits contributed significantly to the further development of the imperial iconography and ceremonial: Salus became the model of subsequent representations of Julia Augusta, while the carriage was one of the many privileges transmitted to Livia's female successors.²⁷ Her death in A.D. 29 was the occasion for another series of unprecedented honors, to be discussed below. Suffice it to say for now that the number and variety of honors created for her by the Senate in A.D. 14 and in A.D. 22 are evidence not so much of senatorial adulatio, as of genuine admiration and appreciation of her character and political significance.

Despite the Senate's overwhelming support for the deification of Augustus and the establishment of his cult by Livia, the question of the status of the Divus vis-a-vis the State and the law needed to be clearly defined.²⁸ The law of maiestas became a means to this end: according to

Tacitus, it was "rediscovered" by Tiberius and abused as an instrument of tyranny. Modern scholars, however, have been more generous: Seager and Levick recognized that maiestas was part and parcel of the institution of the principate and that the law had already been used under Augustus, though with less publicity.²⁹ The following discussion will deal briefly with the particular maiestas trials that are relevant to the examination of Livia's official position.

2.3. Livia and the trials for Maiestas

The crimen maiestatis had been used since republican times to punish those misdeeds that tarnished and diminished the majesty of the Roman people. That general definition, despite refinements by Sulla and Caesar, allowed use of this law for the purpose of incriminating political rivals.

Maiestas trials appear in Tacitus' Tiberian narrative very early, and are reported frequently: between A.D. 15 and 23 at the rate of one a year, with a dramatic increase after Sejanus' fall.³⁰ Among the first cases, in A.D. 15, was that of Falanius. An obscure knight, he had been accused anonymously of having tolerated a notorious male prostitute and mime, Cassius, among his home's collegium of worshippers of Augustus, and of having sold a statue of the same along with the gardens in which it stood. Tiberius' response was rational and lenient: Livia herself had employed Cassius in the ludi Palatini in honor of her dead husband; as for the sale of the statue, it was no more abhorrent than that of

the statues of other gods in private houses.

The anonymity of the accuser suggested to Bauman the possibility that Livia may have been the instigator of Falanius' trial, failed because of "an unfortunate oversight" in choosing Cassius, "a vulnerable example." In his opinion, Livia had planned the incident to enhance her own influence as priestess of the new cult. In a similarly arbitrary fashion, he also associates her with a later case, that of Clutorius Priscus in A.D. 21. The defendant was guilty of having read prematurely a poem on the death of Drusus, meant as a companion piece to another, on the death of Germanicus, that had actually been praised by Tiberius. Clutorius was not as lucky as Falanius: in Tiberius' absence, he was hastily condemned to death by the Senate, in a rather unusual fashion, under the pressure of D. Haterius Agrippa. Bauman connects Haterius to Livia through the former's father, a clumsy senator who had unwittingly offended Tiberius and was saved by her intercession. Livia is also deemed to have exerted pressure on the matrons present at the infamous recitation to force them to testify against Clutorius.³¹

These assumptions seem unsupported, as there is absolutely no trace in the sources of even the smallest involvement of Livia in the charges brought in both cases. Had there been the faintest suspicion of her hand in these trials at any time, Tacitus and other unfavorable sources

would certainly have used it to their own advantage. Instead, Bauman's argument centers on Haterius' family's debt of gratitude to the Augusta. However, if Haterius' gratitude is the motivation, then he had a more personal debt with Drusus (whose relative he also was) who, with Germanicus, had won him the praetorship. This seems a more reasonable cause for Haterius' harshness; a more probable inducement for the trial may be attributed to Drusus' desire to strike a blow against Sejanus, with whom he was at odds (Priscus' only defender was a Vitellia, from a family friendly to Claudius, at this time almost a relative of Sejanus).³²

On the other hand, when we consider the only case reported in which both Livia and Tiberius were the object of defamation (a crime specifically included by Augustus in the law of maiestas), the outcome is different. In A.D. 17 Appuleia Varilla, relative of Augustus, was brought to trial for insulting remarks on the Divus, the Augusta and Tiberius, as well as for adultery. Tiberius' reaction, after consulting with Livia, was magnanimous: only offences to the name of Augustus should be punished. Appuleia was found guilty of adultery, not of maiestas. It would have been not only possible, but legitimate for Livia to demand the punishment of Appuleia without incurring any censure. Her own sacrosanctitas made insulting remarks against the Augusta a crime. The defendant, however, had no real power

to effectively harm the regime; therefore, Livia and Tiberius could afford to be merciful. By comparison, the trial of the historian Cremutius Cordus, accused of having praised Brutus and Cassius in his writings, ended with the death of the scholar. What made this possible, in addition to Sejanus' pressures, was the fact that Cordus was perceived as having diminished the importance of Augustus' achievements. Instructive, for the purposes of the present discussion, is the opening of Cordus' self-defense: sed neque haec in principem aut principis parentem, quos lex maiestatis amplectitur (4.34.2). These words clearly state that, by A.D. 25, the Augusta was--in the eyes of the law--a public official and, as such, invested with the majesty of the Roman state, not just with the sacrosanctity accruing to religious figures.³³

In general, Tiberius' policy with respect to treason during the first part of his rule consistently advocated leniency when crimes of a rather frivolous nature were directed toward himself or members of his family, as long as these did not question or diminish the accomplishments of Augustus. Scattered references to Livia suggest that, within ten years from the creation of her title and function, she was regarded as the only female public official of the state who could benefit from the protection afforded by the law of maiestas. On the basis of the scanty evidence available, it seems reasonable to say that, even in this

position, she continued to exercise her well-known restraint.

2.4. Divine Personifications and Other Honors

The most noticeable aspect of the semi-divine honors and divine personifications employed in these years to exalt Livia is the emphasis on maternal titles and figures, now more accentuated than in the preceding period. The concept of Augusta as mother (of Tiberius, of the Domus Augusta, of the world) is recurrent in a number of artistic mediums. She also continues to be associated with divine mothers protecting prosperity (Ceres, Demeter), and with divinities safeguarding the security and well-being of the state (Vesta, Cybele, Salus Augusta).

The numismatic portrait of Julia Augusta seated and holding a patera, based on Tiberian coinages of A.D. 15, became extremely popular on account of its adaptability, and was reproduced in a number of combinations (veiled, with patera as sacerdos; with long sceptre and patera as Juno; with sceptre, ears of corn and poppies as Ceres-Demeter) in widely different areas of the Empire. While the combination of varying attributes may sometimes confuse modern scholars trying to decipher the message, it was indicative of Tiberius' own uncertainty as to which divine honors would be appropriate for his mother to accept, as is evident in his answer to the Gytheates' requests for permission to pay her semi-divine honors. Yet the ambiguity, fostered by the

absence of explicative captions on some coinages, did not work to Livia's disadvantage: the ambiguity of the message left room for subjective interpretations, which in turn fostered a cult-like reception.³⁴

The most outspoken tributes to Livia's motherhood come from the Western provinces, particularly from the veterans' colonies of Spain. Romula's coinages portray Divus Augustus on the obverse and the rare and unusual caption Iulia Augusta Genetrix Orbis on the reverse, which shows Livia's head on a globe with a crescent. Tarraco, on the other hand, chose to emphasize Livia's descendants. The reverse of a piece bearing a laureate Tiberius on the obverse has Livia and her grandson Drusus. The concepts advertised in these two coinages reappear, combined, in an inscription from Anticaria in Baetica, honoring Iulia Augusta, mother of Tiberius and Germanicus and genetrix orbis.³⁵

In Africa, pieces from Leptis Magna also present a laureate Tiberius and a seated, veiled Livia holding a patera and sceptre, with the caption Augusta Mater Patriae. A Greek inscription from Tlos conveniently sums up and expands this theme, celebrating Livia as the creator of a race of immortal θεοὶ ἐπιφανεῖς. The glorification of imperial motherhood and ancestry also functioned retroactively as Livia's parents were remembered with statues as well.³⁶

The concept of a Domus Augusta immortal, incorruptible and eternal expressed on the Tlos inscription, links Livia

with providentia, a virtue advertised by Tiberius in union with aeternitas. As defined by Charlesworth, providentia is the foresight, manifested by the gods or by their human intermediaries, which helps to secure the continued and peaceful existence of the state, and protects it from internal and external dangers. In more tangible terms this translates into "paternal" (or maternal, as the case may be) "and loving forethought for the people . . . , a continual steady drive of goodwill." In spite of Tiberius' lack of public relations skills, his demonstrable concern for a healthy state treasury, judicial justice, respect for the governing magistrates and discriminating support of the truly needy, are all expressions of such "steady drive of goodwill." As for that of Livia, it was well-known and appreciated by Senate and people alike, as indicated above. Guaranteeing able successors was also one aspect of providentia, which secured the aeternitas of the Roman state. Livia had done her part in this respect, giving origin to Tiberius and Drusus and, consequently, to their descendants and successors. Although no trace exists on monuments in Rome of a clear identification of Livia with providentia, she was so honored in Athens.³⁷

On the ideological and propagandistic level, the association of Livia and Tiberius with Rome's symbol for eternity, the cult of Vesta, was put forward in a number of ways. Tiberius was the Pontifex Maximus, Livia an honorary Vestal:

she enjoyed sacrosanctity, the use of one lictor and of the carpentum and sat among the Vestals at the theatre. After her divinization, the Vestals were in charge of her cult. Nevertheless, the relationship between Livia and Vesta was not as widely appealing as that between Livia and Ceres-Demeter and seems to have remained circumscribed to Rome and Greece. Only two inscriptions from Greece attest to it. One of these, however, from Lampsacus, mentions a cult statue of Iulia Augusta-Hestia and new Demeter, a unique combination.³⁸

When motherhood was not clearly spelled out, it was suggested and implied by the association of Livia with or her impersonation of deities protecting it, Juno-Hera and Ceres-Demeter. A number of inscriptions refer to Iulia Augusta as the new Hera. A statue of Livia stood in the temple of Hera in Samos, along with those of her parents. In Larissa she had a priestess as Iulia Augusta-Hera, while coinage specimens from Thapsus bear the caption Iun. Aug. and one from Oea a bust of Livia and a peacock. Issues from Utica also seem to show a local variation of the theme, Livia-Juno-Astarte.³⁹

The last association of Livia with a divine mother figure is that with Cybele. Judging from the extant evidence, this link would not seem quantitatively very important, since it was not as widely advertised as that with Ceres-Demeter. Yet the Great Mother was essential to the

regime and connecting her with Livia is most indicative of the Augusta's ideological function.

The only remaining artifacts available in this respect are a Vienna sardonyx, a sitting statue at the J. P. Getty museum and a coin of uncertain origin. For present purposes, the Vienna sardonyx will suffice. This jewel belongs to the Tiberian years and represents Livia as priestess of Augustus, since she holds a small bust of the Divus with her right hand, her head partially veiled. She also wears a diadem and, on top of that, Cybele's mural crown. Her left forearm rests on a tympanon on which a lion has been carved, while the left hand holds a bunch of corn ears and poppies, symbols of Ceres. Although the general interpretation overwhelmingly favors Livia as Cybele, the presence of Ceres' attributes should not be forgotten.⁴⁰

Livia had special ties with the Great Mother. The first oriental divinity imported to Rome during the Hannibalic wars, her fate had been very different from that of other oriental and Egyptian cults. Her bloody native rituals fascinated and repelled the Romans: Roman citizens were excluded from the priesthood, and the magistrates limited and curtailed any political involvement on the part of the Great Mother's priests.

The goddess, guarantor of victory against enemies, underwent a complete Romanization and became especially connected with the aristocracy. The Claudians, in particu-

lar, claimed a vital part in the introduction of her cult, since it was thanks to their kinswoman Claudia Quinta that the Great Mother was able to reach Rome. The story of Claudia was acted out annually in the ludi scaenici, which were part of the Megalensia, festivities in honor of the goddess organized by representatives of Rome's bluest blood. To preserve the aristocratic flavor of the celebration, foreigners and slaves were not admitted. As a Claudian by birth, Livia probably felt under special protection of this divinity: signs and omens vouched for that. The statue of Claudia Quinta, in the temple on the Palatine, survived two fires unscathed; palms grew by the goddess' temple and in the Forum before Livia's wedding to Octavian. Livia herself vied in chastity with her ancestress. After Augustus' extensive restoration and reconstruction of the buildings on the Palatine, the temple of Cybele stood close by the houses of Augustus and Livia; in fact, it appeared almost like an extension of the palace. Although the Julii had not particularly distinguished themselves in the past as devotees of the goddess (their representatives were in charge of the Megalensia only four times), and although the only reference to Octavian as devotee was rather unflattering, it was the marriage to Livia that once again (as in the case of Bona Dea) brought an aristocratic divinity into the sphere of Augustus."

Livia's identification with the Great Mother was

believed to betray her intention to offset the cult of the Julian Venus Genetrix: an interesting interpretation and not improbable, in view of the simmering rivalry and resentment on the part of some Julians. Cybele and Venus had been at odds in the past, in fact the former had triumphed over the latter. After the victory of Pharsalus over Pompey (protected by Venus Victrix), Antony rode in a chariot drawn by lions. On the other hand, the two goddesses also collaborated to bring victory to the Roman people. Republican coins show Cybele on her chariot on the reverse, Venus Genetrix on the obverse. Lucretius, moreover, had somehow blurred the boundaries between them, employing imagery related to the Great Mother in his initial description of Venus, the reverse to introduce the Great Mother in book 2. Yet, in the national epic of Virgil, it was Cybele who had been exalted as savior and protector of the Trojans, genetrix of the Roman and Augustan order, despite the various interventions of Venus in favor of Aeneas.⁴²

Livia, acknowledged mother of the dynasty, could certainly be expected to impersonate Venus Genetrix. Instead, rather peculiarly, the artistic representations of Livia as Venus are the most controversial and least reliable. Gross for one dismisses as such one of the pieces that would seem to confirm the Livia-Venus association, i.e., the Altar of Ravenna. While a few Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor indeed refer to Livia as Σεβαστή Θεά

'Αφροδίτη Λίβια, numismatic issues from the Asiatic Bosphorus make the identification doubtful. The one possible link to Venus Victrix (identified by some as one and the same with the Genetrix) may be seen in Augustan issues from Smyrna which establish a relation between Livia and 'Αφροδίτη Στρατονικής, the local patron. However, the image of the goddess may simply refer to the local cult.⁴³

The great maternal divinities with whom Livia was linked in these years shared certain characteristics: for a long time Cybele, Demeter and Hera had been linked together by the Greeks as the Great Mother, Ceres, Ops, Vesta and Tellus had been by the Romans. The goddesses corresponded to different aspects of the female principle: the generative power, source of life in nature, protecting bountiful crops, assisting in the preservation of family and property and ultimately ensuring the successful and eternal survival of the state and of its hierarchical order. This may explain why Livia-Cybele is portrayed holding corn and poppies, with diadem and veil like Hera. By way of contrast, it is interesting to notice that links between Cybele and Isis, another very popular motherly divinity, although evident, were not emphasized by state cult, despite the fact that Livia was identified with the new Isis in Egypt. The reason for this is probably to be found in the more inclusive character of the Isiac religion, regarded as dangerously subversive by Augustus and his successors.⁴⁴ Representing

Livia with the attributes of the divinities mentioned above contributed to create the symbolic image of Julia Augusta, Mother of the Empire.

In addition to identifying with motherly divinities protecting family and state, Livia was also honored in association with the cult of the "blessings and virtues" of the regime. This cult centered on deified qualities and benefits brought by the ruler, which were ideologically vital to his/her rule. Though Hellenistic in origin, it had enjoyed a certain popularity in Rome since Republican times and culminated in the establishment of Concordia as state divinity. This system was especially appropriate to the construction and dissemination of the image of female members of the dynasty, because it was discreet and ambiguous. Although the form of the adjective Augusta defining Salus and Pietas did not refer expressly to Livia, but to the deified concept in question, it was nevertheless highly polyvalent (unlike the masculine genitive Augusti) and allowed a number of different interpretations. It may suggest that a particular virtue or blessing originated from the ruler, or that they had been appropriated for the advantage of the ruler and of his family. For the female members of the dynasty, this polyvalence was not a disadvantage: Salus Augusta may even imply that the well-being of the state depended on Livia, and that it was thus necessary to seek the assistance of Salus for her recovery. The

identification of Livia with Salus, Pietas and Iustitia is controversial. Experts disagree as to which of the three is the most reliable or the least unreliable. However, the fact that Salus coinages became the model for subsequent official portraits of the old Augusta is indicative.“

2.5. Cult

Manifestations of the cult of Julia Augusta were frequent and varied in these years: her image was paraded around in civic festivals, her birthday became an official festivity, vota were made for her health, and her statues were placed in temples and other public structures. This section will examine the development of her cult during Tiberius' reign, trying to show the correspondences, as well as the differences, between Hellenized and non-Hellenized areas of the empire. The following discussion will also address the question as to whether the cult of Julia Augusta implied divinity, or just super-human status?

Beginning with the Hellenized areas of Asia Minor, one is faced with the conventional wisdom of numerous historical and scholarly accounts, according to which the emperor was seen as an unquestioned divinity in the East. Tacitus and many Roman writers dismiss the imperial cult as Graeca adulatio, evidence of unmanly character. Some modern scholars in turn have represented it as a "loyalty game" played by essentially sceptical upper classes, with little or no appeal to the lower social groups. A discriminating reader

cannot help being perplexed at the incongruence of Greek intellectual and cultural achievements vis-à-vis abject sycophancy and naivete, thereby siding with Nock, according to whom Graeco-Romans fully understood the difference between kings and gods. S. R. F. Price has recently debunked the myth of Graeca adulatio, demonstrating the complex nuances of the imperial cult in Asia Minor. Particularly useful in this respect is his discussion of the architecture of sanctuaries, and of the impact of the cult in the transformation of civic space.⁴⁶

Imperial statues were placed in many different parts of a city: porticos, gymnasia, squares, as well as in the imperial temples (Sebasteia). A Sebasteion might consist of sanctuary plus an altar, surrounded by a number of statues of the imperial family or, in some cases, they may host a special shrine for the imperial images. The latter was not a full-blown temple, only a "sacred shelter" for the statues. Such seems to have been the sanctuary of Livia at Eresus in Lesbos, where she had her own sacred precinct separate from the sanctuary of Augustus. The statues in question, *ἀγάλματα*, were cult images inasmuch as they occupied a sacred place. However, devotion could also be paid to *εἰκόνες* in public places. The honors attributed to the painted likenesses of Augustus, Livia and Tiberius during the festival at Gytheum (discussed below) support this point. The images venerated corresponded to models

chosen in Rome and reproduced on coinages. Generally sacrifices were made not to the emperor and his family, but on his behalf, and these consisted of libations, the offering of ritual cakes, and the burning of incense. The slaughter of animals, bulls or cows, seems to have taken place at civic festivals.⁴⁷

The Sebasteia were not the only sacred precincts where imperial images could be honored. In many cases, the imperial family shared quarters with local divinities: not in the same temple, but in a different building within the temple precinct, which did not rival in magnitude the shrine of the divinity. This seems to indicate that the provincials consciously avoided putting the emperor and his family, however great and benevolent, on the same level as the deity. Thus, for instance, the statues of Livia and her parents in the sanctuary of Hera in Samos were in a different building from that of the goddess. Sometimes the statues of the imperial family were placed around the statue of the deity to whom the temple belonged, but the arrangement left no doubts as to whose was paramount. Sharing temple space did not necessarily mean that the imperial family received cult honors. The presence of imperial priests may help to determine whether or not the emperor and his relatives enjoyed cult status. This seems to be the case in Samos, where Livia shared a priestess with Hera; the same may apply to Larissa, where, however, it is

not clear whether Livia was honored along with Hera, or whether the Juno of Livia was honored. In Attalia Livia and other members of the family were honored along with dea Roma, with whom Livia also shared a priestess, and in Cyzicus the queen Antonia Tryphaena received the priesthood of Augusta Nikephoron from the city."

The recognition that the emperor and his family, although somehow more than ordinary mortals, were not equal to divinity is evident in the inscriptions adorning these temples. On some the honorands are referred to as the "new" divinity, or the name of the honorand is linked to that of the god(dess) in question. This does not imply however that the god has been reincarnated in the ruler, but only that the ruler approximates the deity's qualities and reproduces some of his/her achievements by analogy."

In the case of Julia Augusta, a number of inscriptions bear this out. In Assos, she was the goddess Livia Augusta (odd combination), new Hera. In Lampsacos, she was Julia Augusta-Hestia, new Demeter, and she had an $\delta\gamma\alpha\lambda\mu\alpha$, although it is not clear in whose temple. In Pergamon she was again the new Hera, while in Cyzicus she was venerated as Demeter, in addition to having a cult statue in the temple of Athena Polias as Augusta Nikephoron (from the name of the temple). The latter had been dedicated by Antonia Tryphaena, descendant of Antony and widow of Cotys of Thrace, who was also priestess of Julia Augusta. Although the occasion is

not mentioned in the fragment, we may assume that it may have been an offering of thanks after the adjudication of the throne to Antonia's children, sometime in A.D. 18. An inscription from Larissa records a priestess of Ἰουλία Ἥρα Σεβαστή, an unusual title that some scholars believe to be a translation of the Juno of the Augusta. In Thespieae she was associated with Mnemosyne on occasion of thymelic games, while in Attalia (Pamphylia) the inscription records a priestess of Julia Augusta and of the goddess Roma. The specific date is missing, and one can only conjecture that this cult belongs to the Tiberian years, based on the mention of the name of the priestess' son, who became governor under Claudius.⁵⁰

Other places in which statues or images of the emperor and his family could be honored and receive cult were porticos and gymnasia. In some instances both structures contained shrines or chapels for this purpose. This type of architecture was common along the Mediterranean; in Rome, for instance, the Porticus Liviae housed a shrine to Concordia, while in Ephesos and Aphrodisias statues of Augustus and Livia stood in porticos. The same situation could be expected in the Western areas, with some local variations. In Rome, for example, cult honors could be paid to the emperor and to Livia at the various altars set up in the vici. At Leptis Magna, in addition to the imperial temple, which housed gigantic statues of the imperial

family, statues of Livia, Augustus and other Julio-Claudians stood in the Forum, in front of the Temple of Roma and Augustus, and probably also in the theatre. The dynasty's presence was visible all over the provincial cities, in places that were the destination of processions and parades during the celebrations of imperial festivals.⁵¹

The organization and celebration of festivals and games in honor of the ruling house involved almost every social class. The regularity with which these events were held reflected, in Price's opinion, the provincials' perception of the stability of the empire. The official correspondence between Tiberius and the leaders of the town of Gytheum in Peloponnese, on the subject of a festival in honor of the deified Augustus, Livia and Tiberius supplies general indications in this respect. Divine honors and a festival for the Divus Augustus, Julia Augusta and Tiberius were decreed by a sacred law in A.D. 15. The festival was to last six days, with daily processions of painted images of Augustus and Livia side-by-side, followed by Tiberius, from the temple of Asclepius and Hygieia to the theater where thymelic competitions and ludi scaenici would take place. En route the procession would stop at the shrine of Augustus, where a bull was to be sacrificed by the imperial priests on behalf of the emperor, and then continue to the agora. Once in the theater, the images received a sacrifice of incense burned on special burners. Fishwick assumes the

celebration to be a lectisternium meant to ensure the preservation and continuation of the ruling house. Julia Augusta was to be honored as Tyche of the city and of the confederation to which Gytheum belonged. Despite Tiberius' own reluctance to accept super-human honors, Livia was free to decide for herself on the subject, and it seems that she accepted the honors. The base of a votive statue bears a dedication to the Tyche of the city, which Kornemann identifies with Livia.⁵²

Julia Augusta may also have been included in the honors paid by some communities to the Σεβαστοί, or θεοὶ Σεβαστοί, already at this stage, contrary to the commonly held view that she joined them only after her consecration. A good number of Eastern coinages and inscriptions indicate that she and Tiberius were referred to as Σεβαστοί during her lifetime, while others referred to her as θεὰ Σεβαστή well before her death. This makes the assessment of her cult problematic, since inscriptions on monuments do not allow us to determine exactly when the living ruler(s) were included in the cult of the divi. As a rule of thumb, according to Fishwick, the presence of the dea Roma along with the name of a ruler indicates that the cult in question focuses on the living person.⁵³

Other types of honors in which Julia Augusta was included were celebrations of anniversaries, special events of the imperial family, and imperial birthdays. Local

calendars were supplemented by calendars from Rome, so that a certain uniformity was ensured throughout the empire. It is not known when Livia's birthday began to be officially celebrated, but the earliest evidence is dated A.D. 18. In Forum Clodii wine and sweets were distributed to the city officials and to the women of the vicus ad Bonam Deam. There is no precise information about the nature of the rites, but it is assumed that they were similar to the supplicatio on the occasion of Augustus' birthday. Livia's birthday continued to be celebrated at least until A.D. 108, long after the natales of more recent emperors had become obsolete. It is unclear whether in Rome there was an animal sacrifice on this occasion, as for the Divus Augustus. She received the sacrifice of a cow on her birthdays after her own deification, but there is no indication of that during her lifetime.⁵⁴

Although the observation of her birthday was officially sanctioned, the date of the actual celebration in the West differed from that in the East. In Forum Clodii and in Rome the celebrations took place on the appointed date; in Pergamon her own festival was made to coincide with Augustus' natalis which, after the reform of the Asiatic calendar by a proconsular governor in 9 B.C., represented the beginning of the new year. On this occasion, as well as on other imperial anniversaries, the Pergamene hymnodoi sang hymns and held private celebrations within their

association. Also celebrated in various areas of the empire were the annual vota pro salute on January 3rd, a Roman import observed from Pergamon to Narbo. The Acta Fratrum Arvalium mention Livia, as well as Tiberius, as recipients.⁵⁵

In the East the existing established tradition of cult honors to rulers facilitated the institution of the new ruler's cult. It has long been assumed that Eastern cult practices gradually spread westward. The West, however, lacking a tradition comparable to the Hellenistic, developed its own forms of devotion. In Baetica, Narbonensis and Africa Proconsularis the imperial cult relied on local initiative, whereas in the more recently conquered areas it was imposed in order to create loyalty to the empire and accelerate the process of Romanization. This accounts for the distinction drawn between the functions of the sacerdos and those of the flamen, which have as Eastern correspondents the $\lambda\epsilon\rho\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ and the $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\lambda\epsilon\rho\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$. Briefly stated, a sacerdos is the religious official of a foreign (or also municipal) cult who worships at an ara, while the flamen (and flaminica) represent a state cult imposed from Rome and serve only one divinity in a municipal temple in a colony. Both priesthoods were usually not permanent, although a few inscriptions specify that the honorand had been priest(ess) for life. Although a provincial flamen was usually in charge of the cult of the divi, i. e. the dead

and deified rulers, Julia Augusta had a flamen in Olisipo and another at Gaulos during her lifetime. Elsewhere she had a flaminica (Augusta Taurinorum, Vasio Vocontiorum, Baeterrae in Narbonensis, Corfinium, Emerita): this uncertainty reflects the necessity for Western cults to accommodate a living woman as one of its objects.

Sacerdotes of Julia Augusta were recorded at Pompeii, Gaulos and Corfinium. The latter inscriptions are particularly puzzling, since they seem to indicate that a sacerdos and a flamen/flaminica were employed at the same time. Whether this is due to faulty restoration or it denotes a cultic innovation, the inscriptions need further study.⁶⁶

The cult in the Western provinces, of which the largest were nominally assigned to the Senate, seems at this time to be exclusively municipal and, with the exception of Divus Augustus, aimed at living people. Spain is apparently the most enthusiastic in honoring the domus Augusta and particularly Livia, and Tiberius could not forestall all those honors, although he did veto the erection of a temple to himself and his mother. In some places the celebration of Livia's birthday became such an integral part of the community's calendar that it continued into the following century. Despite the absence of a Western tradition of divine honors to rulers, the honors paid to members of Augustus' family and to Julia Augusta in particular indicate a readiness and willingness on the part of the provincials

which belie charges of servilism and flattery and contradict the old-fashioned scholarly opinion of "imports" from the East. This is evident on the occasion of Livia's near-fatal illness, which produced a varied series of votive honors for her recovery, both in Rome and in the provinces. In East and West alike, the cult of the chief representatives of the dynasty acted as the unifying element which held together vastly different areas by means of common ceremonies and rituals observed with regularity.

3. Last Years

The remainder of this chapter will examine the last ten years of Livia's life in relation to those events which, according to Tacitus, constituted a watershed in Tiberius' rule.

The death of Germanicus in A.D. 19 and that of Drusus shortly after, in A.D. 22, brought to light as never before the frailty and inner divisions of the Augustan dynastic system. Their consequences have been aptly defined by Levick as the "dynastic catastrophe." It was precipitated, but not primarily caused, by feminine rivalries spinning out of control. The cause itself may be attributed to contrasting views of the principate, the more "republican" and aristocratic outlook of Tiberius vs. the "monarchic" and populist tendencies of Julia's descendants (discussed below). A convergent factor was the ambitious natures of Livia, Agrippina and Livilla, mothers of rulers or of prospective

rulers: because of their gender, becoming "Queen Mother" was the only outlet for their desire to rule. Livia and Agrippina, in particular, had "friends" who helped to polarize the atmosphere, so that Tiberius, unable to tolerate the situation any longer, retired to Capri. Due to the subterranean tensions created by these ambitious ladies and their entourages, and exploited by Sejanus for his own ends--rather than to Livia's growing interference alone, as some authors state--Tiberius abandoned Rome to his minister.⁵⁷

3.1. Agrippina and Germanicus

The marriage of Agrippina, daughter of Julia and Agrippa, to Germanicus, son of Drusus and Antonia, probably took place sometime in A.D. 5, shortly after the adoptions of Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus as Augustus' successors, and the adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius. The years between A.D. 5 and 7 were marked by social and political instability (famine, natural disasters, unrest in the armies), eventually culminating in the relegation of Agrippina's siblings, Agrippa Postumus and Julia.

The marriage of Agrippina and Germanicus seemed to recall the past happiness of that between Antonia and Drusus: soon Augustus could boast of a bevy of grandchildren, and the young couple became the most popular advertisement for Augustus' reformation of family life. At this time there was no visible disagreement among Agrippina,

Tiberius and Livia, whatever Agrippina's feelings about the fate of her mother and siblings may have been. Perhaps she may not have felt much affection for them; in the later years of her life the focus of her emotions and political efforts seems to have been her dead husband and her own descent from Augustus, without any mention of the rest of her family. Probably chaste Agrippina, the pride of Roman womanhood, did not care to be associated with a mother and a sister who had been banished for immorality. Of the six surviving children from her marriage, four were named after Livia and Tiberius. That alone is no indication of family harmony; however, Livia took an active interest in their education and seemed especially fond of one of the children, who died in infancy and whose statue--in the semblance of a little Cupid--she placed in the temple of Venus Genetrix.⁵⁵

The general consensus is that rifts in the family became evident on the occasion of Germanicus' visit to the East, although suspicions and misunderstandings were rife already during his campaign in the North. The contrasts between Tiberius and Germanicus were represented, at a superficial level, as envy and resentment of the young prince's popularity; at a deeper level they involved suspicions of Antonian attitudes and excessive cultivation of the army's sympathies. Such suspicions were not allayed by Germanicus' proof of loyalty during the riots in Germany: they were reinforced by his ostensible desire for glory, which

translated into limited successes against the Germans at the price of heavy losses in human and material resources. This may not have pleased Tiberius, who preferred diplomacy to military action whenever possible. Resentment and mistrust were also fanned by Agrippina's exploits, which gave rise to her reputation as a leader and supplied ammunition to her enemy Sejanus.⁵⁹

Despite her wifely virtues, Agrippina was not a suitable specimen of Roman womanhood: even her bravery on the Rhine could become a negative example for other wives--an encouragement to interfere. In fact, her behavior was later imitated by Plancina, with deleterious consequences for the well-organized army life. The speech given by Caecina Severus in the Senate a few years later, chastising the meddling of governors' wives in provincial affairs, may have been aimed at Agrippina as well as at Plancina. Bauman suggests that Caecina Severus held a personal grudge against Agrippina. He was a legate in Germany at the time, and the retreat of his army created the panic that was contained by Agrippina's intervention. This assumption seems supported by the fact that, as A. J. Marshall also observed, some time later a law was passed, which made provincial governors responsible for their wives' behavior. The law was prompted by the trial of a friend of Agrippina, Sosia Galla, and of her husband Gaius Silius, both condemned for corruption and bribery following the rebellion of Sacrovir in Gaul.⁶⁰

3.2 Aemulationes muliebres

Sosia's fate, although deserved, was then visited upon many of Agrippina's friends by the machinations of Sejanus, who aimed to isolate Agrippina and eventually eliminate her and her sons. Regardless of the alleged charges, the common denominator of this group of people seems to have been emphasis on the divinity conferred by descent from Augustus. Tacitus made Agrippina express this idea in the course of an angry outburst concerning her friend and cousin Claudia Pulchra, brought to trial on the charges of immorality, veneficia and magic, usually brought against women suspected of political activities. Having burst in on Tiberius while he was sacrificing to Augustus, Agrippina berated him for honoring effigies mutae, while persecuting her, Augustus' vera imago, through her friends. The identification of herself as repository of Augustus' divinity (divinum spiritum transfusum) with the vera imago of divine cult is strengthened by the allusion to Pulchra and Sosia as worshippers (Agrippinam . . . ad cultum delegerit). The content of these remarks drew Tiberius out of his usual inscrutability to the point that he spelled out (in Greek) the real reasons for Agrippina's scene, i.e., that she felt personally affronted for not being made queen.⁶¹

Such a divinizing, Antonian conception of the absolute primacy that should automatically accrue to one who is caelesti sanguine orta clearly demonstrates Agrippina's

monarchic tendency, shared by members of her group. One is also reminded of the words of her mother Julia, reported by Macrobius, to the effect that she never forgot that she was Augustus' daughter. Agrippina indeed made sure that her direct descent from Augustus was never forgotten: she used it, together with her fecunditas, as a weapon against the competition, namely the Augusta and Livilla. Aemulatio muliebris, simmering under the surface of the Augustan family, erupted in all its pent-up aggression under Tiberius, feeding on itself in a vicious circle. Livilla's eventual success in presenting Tiberius with not one, but two grandsons, was perceived by Agrippina as a blow to her own widowhood and as a setback to her own aspirations. So did the common people of Rome, despite Drusus' devotion to Germanicus' memory and his support of Germanicus' sons. Drusus' death precipitated Agrippina's impatience and her desire to see her sons advanced quickly. This in turn worried Livilla and pushed her even more into Sejanus' corner. He capitalized on the atmosphere of distrust and rivalry, seeking for himself the position of regent: to do so safely, he first had to get rid of Agrippina and her sons.⁶²

What was Livia's attitude with regard to Agrippina's claims? Tacitus' depiction of Livia as the criminal mind behind the scene is unique, in that he takes for granted what other sources (Suetonius, Dio) report as rumours.

Introducing the theme of Livia's hatred for Germanicus and his family in 1.33, Tacitus refers to novercales offensiones used by her to spur the already excitable Agrippina (paulo commotior, a true understatement). Next, in 2.43, Tacitus says that Livia certainly (haud dubie) conferred with her agent Plancina, instructing her to provoke Agrippina (insectandi). The terms used by Tacitus to define Agrippina's supposed persecution on the part of Livia (1.33.3 stimulis, 2.43.5 insectandi) refer figuratively to hostile pursuit and chase, which suggest the myth of Io, persecuted and chased over the sea by a gadfly because of Hera's jealousy. This was, apparently, a favorite theme of the Augusta, since a painting on this subject graced the walls of her house on the Palatine.

On the other hand, Agrippina hardly fits into the mold of the suffering heroine. Even Tacitus could not help betraying his own ambivalence toward her, as he uses very similar expressions to describe her personality and that of Drusus, for whom he never shows any great sympathy (he is impatiens aemuli et animo commotior, 4.3.2; she is aequi impatiens at 6.25.3, paulo commotior at 1.33.5). However, the Augusta's exertion in favor of Plancina seemed to confirm in the eyes of the people the reality of a plot against Germanicus' family.⁴³

In reality, despite obvious ill-feeling between the Augusta and Agrippina, Livia was discharging her obligation

as patrona of Plancina (discussed below). Against Tacitus' innuendos on Livia and Tiberius' responsibility for Germanicus' death, it should be remembered that Antonia, mother of Germanicus, lived in Livia's house most of her life and never demonstrated any animosity toward her or Tiberius. On the contrary, her loyalty to Tiberius was unquestionable and appreciated. On the other hand, Agrippina's greed to rule was undisguised: Tacitus uses the verb inhiare, graphic and unflattering, suggesting (among other things) the image of a dog avidly awaiting a bone. The work of Sejanus' agents to sour thoroughly the relations between Agrippina and the Augusta may have been superfluous.⁶⁴

In view of the above, Tacitus' statement at 5.3.1, that Livia had protected Agrippina against Sejanus, comes as a surprise. Seager rejects it, as the last person whom Livia exerted herself to save had been Plancina. This would turn the story of Sejanus' letter, intercepted by Livia, into a legend. Seager's statement receives further support from Suetonius and Velleius, who prove Tacitus' chronology wrong; Agrippina's relegation anteceded Livia's death, and took place probably in A.D. 27. Bauman's solution to the discrepancy seeks to accommodate the new chronology and Tacitus' claims. Livia may indeed have saved Agrippina from capital punishment, while not objecting at all to her relegation. This seems a sensible solution, especially

since we do not know Livia's attitude toward Sejanus. Perhaps the proud old Claudian resented the interference of the "municipal upstart" as much as Agrippina did. Her silence on the occasion of Sejanus' request of Livilla's hand is instructive, since dynastic marriages and family matters were her acknowledged sphere of action.⁶⁵ She and Antonia counselled Livilla, and probably Tiberius too, on the advisability of forestalling any remarriages of the two younger widows, given the renewed wave of rivalry between Agrippina and Livilla as mothers of prospective successors.

Scholars now agree that the pressures put upon Tiberius by three of the four widows by whom he was surrounded (Livia, Agrippina and Livilla) were the chief reason for his self-imposed exile on Capri. His departure certainly saved him from giving a final answer to Agrippina and Livilla on the subject of remarriage, leaving that field to Livia and Antonia. Agrippina's relegation shortly after made it a moot point.⁶⁶

The play given by Tacitus, more so than by Suetonius or Dio, to aemulatio feminarum has the function of emphasizing the decadence from old (and largely imaginary) standards of virtue. It also highlights, as L. Rutland has pointed out, the arbitrariness and irrationality governing the struggle for power, which becomes the playground of malicious Fortuna, embodied by the overtly ambitious, ruthless and formidable Julio-Claudian women.⁶⁷

3.3 Livia's women-friends: amicae or clientes?

Livia's defense--through the recalcitrant Tiberius--of Munatia Plancina, accused of having caused Germanicus' death by poison and black magic, was the determining factor in establishing her notorious reputation as noverca of the house of the Caesars. While Piso was condemned on well-substantiated charges of treason and sedition, Plancina was acquitted from the charge of poisoning, despite the circumstantial evidence that linked her to a notorious poisoner, Martina, dead under mysterious circumstances. Public opinion, based on Agrippina's popularity and on Plancina's arrogance, had already condemned her. In supporting Plancina, the old Augusta lost irretrievably whatever popularity she had among the common people."⁶

Prevailing upon Tiberius to defend Plancina, Livia also gave the impression that to be her friend meant to be above the law. Tacitus clearly points this out with respect to the outrageous behavior of another friend of the Augusta, the formidable Urgulania. In both cases Tiberius reluctantly agreed to publicly defend two extremely unpopular women, making it clear that he did so out of filial duty. In reality, Livia probably had no choice but to take these very unpopular steps, lest her own dignitas be sullied.

Plancina is commonly referred to as "friend" of Livia, yet nowhere in the Annales does Tacitus employ the word

amica Augustae or other expressions that may suggest intimacy. At 2.43.5, for instance, Tacitus declares: Plancinam haud dubie Augusta monuit aemulatione muliebri Agrippinam insectandi. The word monere could be used in the context of amicitia, but in this case it seems to denote more a situation in which instructions are given.

Elsewhere, at 3.15, Tacitus states: Eadem Plancinae invidia, maior gratia. Gratia had a double meaning, signifying both the support and favor shown by a patron/friend to the client after the performance of an officium, and the position of the recipient of the favor. As a consequence, the relationship between the Augusta and Plancina--despite the latter and Piso's high self-esteem--was not one of equality, in view of Livia's position as Augusta. Amicitia usually obtains among equals, otherwise it is patronage under disguise. Based on fides, it entails obligations for the patron, including the defense of the client in court. Tiberius and Germanicus pleaded cases on behalf of dependents; Livia, as a woman, would have incurred censure if she had showed up in court. Tiberius had to do it, as representative of his mother."⁹

The case of Urgulania presents further interesting details concerning Livia's patronage. When brought to court by Lucius Piso, Urgulania refused to show up, taking refuge instead at the house of the Augusta. Unimpressed, Piso dragged her from there, unmoved by Livia's protests that her

authority had been violated and demeaned. Bauman takes Livia's language as an allusion to imperial maiestas, and interprets it as a challenge to Tiberius to give her constitutional recognition. What exactly Bauman means by "constitutional recognition" is unclear: however, as a person invested with sacrosanctitas, Livia may have been able to extend protection to those in her vicinity, in a fashion analogous to that of her Vestal ancestress who, by riding in her father's chariot, was able to secure his illegal triumph.⁷⁰ Urgulania's subsequent outrageous behavior (when she failed to show up to give her deposition in a case, a praetor had to take it at her house) caused Kornemann to attribute monarchic tendencies to the Augusta. It is possible to give such an interpretation to Livia's behavior in these two cases, and the word potentia, with a negative connotation, was often used in such a context. On the other hand, De St. Croix points out that in the courts, the practice of granting special favors to clients of powerful patrons was well established. In this respect, it is difficult to institute a net demarcation between monarchical practices and accepted forms of patronage. L. Piso seemed to take advantage of the ambiguity: his challenge to Urgulania and to the Augusta is narrated in 2.34, as a follow-up to his avowed intention to retire to the country, disgusted by the corruption and venality of the courts.⁷¹

Tiberius, as we have seen (3.2), took personal interest in supervising the administration of justice. By dragging the powerful friend of the Augusta to court, Piso forced Tiberius to behave in accordance with those republican principles which he professed to follow. The final result, Tacitus says, was an enhancement of the reputation of both men. On the other hand, Livia, as a religious official, had certain prerogatives and privileges which entitled her to extend special protection to her clients.

3.4. Partes Agrippinae

Referring to the atmosphere of the palace, at 2.43.5 Tacitus states: Divisa namque et discors aula erat tacitis in Drusum aut Germanicum studiis. This is the milieu in which feminine rivalries develop and fester, spreading from individuals to entourages and giving origin to a party--the party of Agrippina.

In the course of Germanicus' fatal assignment in the East, the contrasts already existing between Piso and himself were exacerbated by the activities of the prince's amici, who, Tacitus said, purposely twisted the meaning of words and deeds on the part of Piso and of his family. Yet, despite the obvious animosity implied, as Bauman observed, these maneuvers still fell under the rubric tacita studia, since there is no mention of a party of Germanicus. His sympathizers seem to have numbered a few members of the old

aristocracy, connected to the circles of Julia Maior and Minor, literati (Ovid, Clutorius Priscus), and knights (Titius Sabinus). Above all, his support was large among the urban crowds and in the army.

After his death, some of Germanicus' supporters apparently passed into the clientela of Sejanus, while others, instead of openly opposing the regime, functioned as pressure groups within the court environment. The party of Agrippina comes to the fore in A.D. 24, on the occasion of the induction of Drusus and Nero in the annual vota for Tiberius. Significantly, it comes to life in the words of Sejanus, who represents to Tiberius the unsolicited inclusion of the two princes as an attempt at destabilization engineered by Agrippina's party.⁷²

By comparing the occurrence of the word partes in Tacitus' works, Bauman concluded the existence of a real political party headed by the widow of Germanicus. According to Hellegouarc'h, the word has, in this case, the negative connotation of factio. Pani states that Agrippina's supporters had little in common with Germanicus' old group, but rather that she joined forces with senatorial opponents like Asinius Gallus and Lucius Arruntius and members of the nobility who had been left out by Sejanus.

There seems to be an agreement on the fact that Sejanus, not Tiberius, was the target of this party's activities, since the death of Drusus had deprived Agrippina's sons of a

protector. On the other hand, the fact that it is Sejanus who names this supposed "party" makes its whole existence as suspicious, a deliberate effort to exaggerate the sphere of influence of Agrippina's sympathizers in order to justify their removal.⁷³

Although Livia and Agrippina passed into history as rivals, they had more in common than has been acknowledged; both were extremely ambitious and both were, to a great extent, models of those ancient feminine virtues by means of which the Augustan moral reform tried to rejuvenate the declining upper classes. Both women were essentially tragic characters, in that both tried to satisfy their own desire for power within the limits which society imposed on them. Where Livia seems to have achieved partial success by means of her patience, diplomacy and absolute discretion, Agrippina appears to have failed miserably because of her impatience and arrogance. Neither obtained what she really wanted, i. e., unhampered access to that power to which they felt entitled on account of birth, personal qualities and competence. Tacitus tried to work with this contrasting material in such a way that emphasizes his "double view" of these women. Contrary to his reputed misogyny, their portrayals present different sides of their personality: in the end, Livia was a noverca who somehow protected her alleged victims and restrained her son's worst tendencies, Agrippina a heroine with fatal character flaws.⁷⁴

4. Livia's Career: An Assessment

In A.D. 29 Livia fell terminally ill and died, after waiting in vain for a final visit from her son. Suetonius reports that she made the arrangements for her own funeral, which probably were not carried out as she wanted, since Tiberius, from Capri, did his utmost to annul most of her final requests. The Senate nevertheless organized her funeral, which was simple, and decreed one year of mourning on the part of the women. Tiberius absolutely forbade her deification, but the senators voted for an arch to be built in her honor out of gratitude for the benefits she had bestowed on many of them. The fact that Tiberius successfully sabotaged the project by promising to build the arch at his own expense should not diminish the importance of this unprecedented honor. Honorary votive arches had never before been erected for a woman, so that the novelty of the honor is a clear indication of the overwhelming gratitude and respect that the governing body felt for the Augusta. She had also left ample legacies to certain senators who were her favorites, but Tiberius refused to pay them, as well as other bequests. These legacies were eventually paid by Caligula at his own accession to the throne, not out of any respect for his grandmother, but in the interest of his own popularity.⁷⁵

Livia's detractors (particularly Tacitus) were forced to acknowledge that her death had marked a turning point in

Tiberius' rule, which seemed now to degenerate into open tyranny. While she was alive, neither Tiberius nor Sejanus dared contradict her authority. In this respect, she indeed had fulfilled a maternal role for the benefit of the country.⁷⁶

Inversely, her admirers (in particular, Velleius) had to admit that, for all her virtues, she had potentia, never a good thing in Rome, especially in a woman. While originally potentia indicated the capacity to achieve one's objectives by means of wealth and clients, it soon acquired the negative connotation of power derived from social superiority but devoid of moral and ethical qualities, hence the arrogance of tyrants. Livia's potentia is a concept often repeated in the Annales (hardly surprising given Tacitus' dislike of women in power). What is curious, however, is finding it mentioned in a rather paradoxical statement of Velleius, at the end of his praise of Livia: cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis. Perhaps this was his answer to the charges of her detractors, although a "good" potentia sounds like an oxymoron. Potentia is related to ambition and desire to rule; from the very beginning of the Annales this is attributed to Livia (accedere matrem muliebri impotentia: serviendum feminae . . .), and in the later books to Agrippina the Younger. This brief sentence, placed by the author in the mouths of the populace commenting on the consequences

of Augustus' death, concisely presents all the basic elements (minus the poison) of the myth of Livia. Muliebri impotentia--the main theme of Cato's speech against the repeal of the Oppian law--is Tacitus' recurring motif in the narratives concerning the Julio-Claudians. It is the most unequivocal evidence of the moral degeneration of Rome's political system and of the influence of irrational Fortuna. The expression serviendum est feminae is deliberately vague as to its subject, implying Tiberius', as well as the state's, subservience to Livia." This is a novel variation on the familiar theme of subservience to women: since Livia was unofficially regarded as mother of the country, the entire state would then be ruled by her "maternal" whims.

The conscious styling of the Tacitean Livia on the character of Agrippina the Younger has been discussed by R. H. Martin and M. P. Charlesworth. The evidence ranges from verbal and structural correspondences (the similar expressions to describe Agrippa Postumus and Iunius Silanus' deaths, the use of Tiberius' old name, Nero, at the conclusion of the episode of the death of Augustus, the specific use of scelus for "poisoning" in both accounts) to Tacitus' unique borrowing from Livy's Tanaquil episode. Martin also mentions Tacitus' "self-referential" borrowings: while the facts narrated in both episodes derive from Claudius' death, the language is that used for Augustus'. All these elements are employed to focus the reader's attention on the supposed

illegality of Nero's (and--by association--of Tiberius') accession.⁷⁶

Tacitus has been occasionally taken to task for his use of rumors and innuendo, judged by some modern scholars as incompatible with the aims of true historiography. His representation of Livia is often quoted as an example of the author's sharp divergence from "facts." Yet P. Sinclair has argued that, in the case in question, Tacitus' method vividly represents the atmosphere of the early principate, during which observable political events could not always, or entirely, be explained. In other words, official explanations often did not suffice, and there often seemed to be more than met the eye. Therefore, the author's reliance on unsubstantiated reports, unproven charges and suppositions recreates the uncertainty, fear and diffidence engendered by a system in which political debate was dead and decisive power was no longer vested in the Senate.⁷⁹

The above comments accurately describe the reign of Tiberius and Livia; however, with respect to that of Nero and Agrippina, Tacitus' tone is different. While expressions denoting rumor, gossip and allegation are frequent in the Tiberian books, they seem to decrease progressively with the growth of Agrippina's potentia. For instance, at the onset of Augustus' fatal illness, the following expressions are found all compressed in the space of one subchapter: quidam scelus uxorius suspectabant, followed by dubium an

quaesita morte (on the highly controversial death of Fabius Maximus), utcumque se ea res habuit and by the vague neque satis compertum est. By contrast, in book 12.66, we find tum Agrippina, sceleris olim certa et oblatae occasionis propera ("then Agrippina, who had long decided about the crime and was ready to seize the best chance"), followed by a "factual" description of the "who, when and how" in the next subchapters, accompanied by adeoque cuncta mox pernotuere, ut temporum illorum scriptores prodiderint ("Every detail became soon so well known that the historians of the period were able to narrate. . ."). Likewise, Livia's other supposed crimes, i.e., the murder of Agrippa Postumus and that of Germanicus, remained shrouded in mystery: Agrippina's are in the open, and she is unapologetic and ready to admit to them (in 13.14.3 she threatens to "go public" with the story of Claudius' poisoning). With respect to Agrippina's attempted incest, intended to counteract Poppaea's influence, Tacitus will even quote his sources by name, instead of resorting to the usual rumors: in fact, he institutes a gradation (Cluvius, Fabius Rusticus, other authors, fama). Agrippina's openness (or shamelessness, if one prefers) is evident when her portrait is compared with that of Livia; her unashamed lust for power is (oddly) associated with her "masculine" character. In Tacitus' words, as soon as Agrippina married Claudius

From that moment on, the order in the city was

subverted, and everything submitted to a woman, not on account of her wantonness . . . servitude was imposed in an almost manly fashion: in public she was austere, and more often arrogantly proud; in private she committed no adultery, unless it brought advantage to her rule.

Versa ex eo civitas, et cuncta feminae oboedi-
bant, non per lasciviam, . . . adductum et quasi
virile servitium: palam severitas ac saepius su-
perbia; nihil domi impudicum, nisi dominationi
expediret.

(Ann. 12.7.3)

Although Livia too was portrayed by Tacitus as a domineering woman (serviendum feminae), her obituary gives an image apparently diametrically opposed to that of Agrippina:

In her private life, she was as chaste as in the days of old, more courteous than what was proper in ancient aristocratic women, a domineering mother, a compliant wife, well attuned to her husband's intrigues and to her son's hypocrisy.

Sanctitate domus priscum ad morem, comis quam antiquis feminis probatum, mater impotens, uxor facilis et cum artibus mariti, simulatione filii bene composita.

(Ann. 5.1.3)

Livia's chastity was absolutely beyond reproach, and--by a lucky chance--that was also a convenient means to preserve her power, along with being a uxor facilis (which could never be said of Agrippina). Nevertheless, both women, despite their obvious personal differences, had the common goal of ruling through their sons. Livia's portrait could be defined as her "mask of power," in the sense of her image as a role player, a public persona rather than a person (cf. Augustus' dying words to his friends as to whether he had played his role well). In Livia's obituary, Tacitus introduces the jarring mater impotens to suggest her true nature behind the mask, in a fashion similar to his obituary of Tiberius.⁶⁰ Agrippina, on the other hand, does not disguise her true identity; her power and ambition are naked, because the principate was, at that stage, firmly established. The difference between Livia and Agrippina thus seems more a matter of nuances than of substance; as discussed in Chapters Five and Six, the masculine virago and the exemplary wife may actually represent the complementary sides of the same coin.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," PCPS 212 (1986), pp. 78-105.
2. H. Willrich, Livia (Leipzig 1911), p. 6, n. 2; G. Sandels Frauen der Julio-Claudischen Familie (Darmstadt 1912), p. 10. Cf. discussion of the matron and mother in Chapter Five of the present study.
3. B. Levick, Tiberius the Politician (London 1986) p. 29. Compare the discussion of the relation between female stereotypes and those applied to ruling women in Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. by B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen, (Greenwood Press, 1992) pp. 65-66. For influence on adult sons, see S. Dixon, The Roman Mother (Norman, Oklahoma 1988), Chapters Five and Seven.
4. S. Dixon (above n. 3), p. 171; also S. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves (New York 1975) pp. 74, 78. On Hellenistic counterparts, see Women in Hellenistic Egypt (New York 1984), pp. 11-16. A careful analysis of the social function of the queen in general has not been so far undertaken; G. Macurdy's Hellenistic Queens (Baltimore 1932), the only study attempted in this area, does not deal with the social aspects of Hellenistic queenship, but rather with the careers of individual queens.
5. For the veto of honorific titles for Tiberius, see Suet. Tib. 17.2; ara adoptionis, Tac. Ann. 1.14; estimate of situation after Augustus, Tac. Ann. 1.13.2-3. On the implications of Livia's new title, see T. Mommsen, Staatsrecht, II.2, p. 764, 788, 795; E. Kornemann, Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung im Imperium Romanum (Leipzig 1930), p. 40; U. von Wilamowitz, Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften (1911), p. 810; H. Willrich (above n. 2), pp. 56-57; Sandels (above n. 2), p. 22, n. 6, simply presents contrasting views; G. Grether "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," AJP 67 (1946), pp. 222-252, at p. 233, n. 63, and J. Balsdon, Roman Women (New York 1962), p. 94, list Livia's honors without commenting on the process. Also H. Temporini, Die Frauen am Hofe Trajans (Berlin 1978), p. 41 n. 207.
6. W. Ritter, "Livias Erhebung zur Augusta," Chiron 2 (1972), pp. 313-338.
7. On clementia: Sen. De clem. 1.3.3, 1.5.7; on Octavian's mercy, Dio, 53.16.4. Cf. D. Fishwick, The Imperial Cult in the Latin West (Leiden 1987), vol. 1, pp. 1, 108.

8. Cic. Pro Plancio, 29.

9. Fishwick (above n. 7), vol. 1, p. 1 and p. 86 n. 16. Dio 55.14-22 on Cinna. Dio 58.2.4 on the naked drunks: in this case, the death penalty may have been exacted because Livia's sacrosanctity protected her against a wide range of offences, physical and moral. Livia's intercession to save their lives may have a correspondent in the Vestal privilege to save the lives of those condemned to death that happened to encounter the Virgins on their way to the execution. This explanation is possible on account of the ambiguity inherent in the grant of sacrosanctitas (cf. Chapter 1.5.1 of this study). Tac. Ann. 1.13.6, 5.3, she saves the lives of senators. On Livia's pietas toward family members, Tac. Ann. 4.71.4, 5.3.

10. Livy, 10.22: creation of the temple to Pudicitia Plebeia. Val. Max. 6.1; Tac. Ann. 5.1; Sen. Ad Marciam, 4.3-4; Dio 58.2.5-6 on Livia's exemplary chastity. See also Fishwick (above n. 6), vol. 1, pp. 1, 108.

11. C. J. Simpson, "Livia and the Constitution of the Aedes Concordiae," Historia 4 (1991), pp. 449-55. On concordia as one of the wife's duties, see S. Dixon (above n. 3), p. 235; N. B. Kampen, "Between Public and Private: Women as Historical Subjects in Roman Art," in Women's History and Ancient History, ed. S. Pomeroy (1991), p. 231; S. Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford 1991), pp. 245-47, 251-53. W. H. Gross, Julia Augusta (Göttingen 1962), p. 59 on Salus coinages, and also J. R. Fears, "The Cult of Virtues," ANRW 2.17.2, p. 891 on Spanish coins of Livia-Salus, and R. Etienne, "Le Culte Imperial dans la Peninsule Iberique," BEFAR 191 (Paris 1958) pp. 321-322, 329, 428, 430. Ovid Ex Pon. 3.1.125 princeps femina, Cons. ad Liviam 349-356 Livia as princeps. See also N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," PCPS 212 (1986), pp. 78-82.

12. W. K. Lacey, "Patria Potestas," in The Family in Ancient Rome ed. B. Rawson (Ithaca 1986), pp. 121-144, esp. pp. 123-133, 139-140. See also Chapter 1.5 and Chapter 2.1.2-1.3 of this study.

13. The correlation between the titles of Augusta and of Mater/Genitrix/Parens (Patriae, Orbis etc.) and those of Augustus/Pater Patriae have been emphasized also by H. Temporini (above n. 5), p. 42 n. 210. On giving titles to the Augusta, see Tac. Ann. 1.14, Dio 57.12. Spanish inscriptions, CIL 2.2038. Livia and Alfidia as benefactresses, IGR 4.249, CIG 3.4711, SEG 28.1227.

14. With regard to the sacrosanctitas, see the discussion in Chapter 1.5.1 of the present study.

15. J. Gagé, "Divus Augustus," Rev. Arch. 34 (1931), p. 16 on Livia's precedence. Fishwick (above n. 7), vol. 1 part 1, p. 163 n. 83, on Livia's anomalous position. Rex/Regina Sacrorum, see Temporini (above n. 5), p. 42 n. 210. For Tiberius' use of titles, see Suet. Tib. 26.
16. Tac. Ann. 4.6; Dio 57.7.2-6; Suet. Tib. 30-31 positive evaluation of Tiberius' first years. Tac. Ann. 2.87 on his care for the welfare of common people and provinces. Dio 57.10.5, Tac. Ann. 2.48 lack of covetousness. Suet. Tib. 33, Dio 57.7.6 interest in justice. Dio 57.7.4-5 impartiality, interpreted as deviousness, Dio 57.1.1-6, Tac. Ann. 1.11.2-3. Cf. R. Seager, Tiberius (Berkeley 1972), pp. 123-139; B. Levick Tiberius the Politician (London 1976), pp. 92-97, 125-135, 181-182.
17. Suet. Tib. 50 - 54; Tac. Ann. 3.64, 5.1; Dio 57.3.3.
18. Suet. Tib. 21, 50, 51; Dio 57.3.3, 12.2-3; Tac. Ann. 1.7.7.
19. W.-R. Megow, Kameen von Augustus bis Alexander Severus (Berlin 1987), pp. 203-206.
20. According to W. H. Gross (above, n. 11), pp. 15-16, the Claudian images of the Diva Augusta represent Livia sitting, holding sacrificial cup and ears of wheat, like Ceres-Demeter, and were probably modeled on a statue in the temple of Divus Augustus in Rome.
21. Gross (above, n. 11), pp. 106-107.
22. Livia and Tiberius together on obverse, RPC vol. 1, part 1, n. 2369 (Pergamon), n. 2673 (Mastaura), n. 2842 (Aphrodisias), nn. 3053-3054 (Tripolis). More frequently, Livia is on the reverse. Livia alone on obverse, n. 2568 (Mysomakedones), n. 2699 (Magnesia on the Maeander), n. 2840 (Aphrodisias), n. 2865 (Apollonia Salbace), n. 2886 (Cibyra), n. 3148 (Eumeneia), n. 3160 (Eucarpeia), nn. 4007-4014 (Augusta), to quote a few.
23. BMC Lydia (Magnesia), p. 144, nn. 47-48.
24. Tac. Ann. 3. 66-69, 4.15; Dio 57.23.4. RPC vol. 1, p. 1, n. 2469. The caption in question exemplifies the ambiguity favored by Tiberian representations of Livia in official quality. The Greek word for Senate can be used with a feminine article, therefore the caption can be interpreted literally as "The August Senate"; however, the feminine form of the adjective also refers clearly to the image of Livia.

25. SEG 24.613.

26. SEG 22.152 reports an inscription from the Agora of Athens, in which Livia is associated with Artemis Boulaia (see also A. E. 1938.83 for an incomplete version), a divinity which protected the Boule, the Athenian equivalent of the Senate. See J. Oliver, "Livia as Artemis Boulaia," C. P. 60 (1965), p. 179.

27. The senators who had debts of gratitude with Livia: Q. Haterius (Tac. Ann. 1.13.6); Galba (Suet. Galba 5); Otho's grandfather (Suet. Otho 1); Fufius Geminus (Tac. Ann. 5.2.2). Reactions of the Senate at Livia's illness: Tac. Ann. 3.64, 12.42; Dio 59.3, 60.22. Carpentum as honor transmitted to imperial women: Suet. Claudius 17. Coinages: Grether (above n. 5), p. 237; F. Sandels (above n. 2), p. 26; L. Ollendorff, "Livia," R. E. 13 (1927), col. 921. The knights also joined in expressing relief over Livia's recovery, making a votive offering on her behalf to Fortuna Equestris, whose temple was in Antium (Tac. Ann. 3.71.1).

28. R. Bauman, Women and Politics in Ancient Rome (London 1992), p. 133.

29. R. Seager (above, n. 16), pp. 152-162; B. Levick (above, n. 16), pp. 192-195.

30. Seager (above, n. 16), p. 152. Discussing Tacitus' reports Seager (p. 161) says that the trials mentioned by Tacitus were probably just the tip of the iceberg, selected by the author because they showed the expansion of the law and the increase in the denunciations of distinguished defendants, in whose cases Tiberius got personally involved.

31. Tac. Ann. 1.73.2-4 on Falanius, 3.49-50 on Clutorius Priscus. Cf. R. Bauman (above, n. 28), pp. 133-135.

32. Tac. Ann. 1.13.6 on Livia's intervention to save Haterius' father, 2.51 on Haterius' debt with Drusus and Germanicus. Suet. Claud. 27: Claudius' son Drusus was betrothed to Sejanus' daughter.

33. Tac. Ann. 2.50 on Ap. Varilla, 1.14.1 on the title Parrens Patriae proposed for Livia, 4.34 on Cremutius Cordus. E. Kornemann, Tiberius (Stuttgart 1960), pp. 129-130, for sacro-sanctitas as a suitable cause for prosecution. Suet. Tib. 28, 59; Tac. Ann. 2.50 on Tiberius' lenient attitude toward slander, and 3.66-69, 70, 4.18-20 on his leniency on other cases of treason. Tac. Ann. 3.37, 38 on punishment for improper use of maiestas.

34. Gross (above, n. 11), pp. 51, 59. The model for the portrait of Iulia Augusta was probably based on statuary originals, which portrayed Livia in full figure, seated, as opposed to the mode prevalent under Augustus, the bust or head, which seems to indicate the absence of a set statuary type. From A.D. 22 on new types, the Salus and the Pietas emerge (of the two, the Pietas is the least identifiable with Livia's features).
35. RPC n. 73, Romula; RPC n. 233, Tarraco; CIL 2.2038, Anticaria: Iuliae Aug. Drusi Div. Matri Ti. Caesaris Aug. Principis et Conservatoris, et Drusi Germanici, Genetrici Orbis M. Cornelius Proculus Pontufex Caesarum.
36. RPC n. 849. SEG 28.1227, Greek inscription quoted by S.R.F. Price, "Gods and Emperors," JHS 104 (1984), p. 88. Dedications to Livia's parents: CIL 9.3660 (Marruvium Marsi) to M. Livius Drusus Claudianus, CIL 9.3661 to Alfidia (bilingual), the Greek version praises her as the origin of the greatest goods for the universe.
37. M. P. Charlesworth, "Providentia and Aeternitas," Harvard Theol. Rev. 29 (1936), pp. 107-132, esp. pp. 122-124; R. S. Rogers, Studies in the Reign of Tiberius (Baltimore 1943).
38. C.I.G. 1.313, Athens; C.I.A. 3.316 quoted by Grether (above, n. 5), p. 230 n. 43; I.G.R. 4.180 (C.I.G. 3642), Lampsacus.
39. I.G.R. 4.319, Pergamon; C.I.G. 1.1775, Larissa; RPC n. 833 Oea, nn. 796-797 Thapsus, nn. 721-726 Utica.
40. W.-R. Megow (above, n. 19), p. 254 B15.
41. Livy 29.10.4, 38.18.9-10; Pol. 31.37; Plut. Mar. 17.5 on Cybele as guarantor of victory. Suet. Tib. 2.3, Ovid Fasti 4.305-344, Livy 29.14 on Claudia Quinta. Suet. Aug. 68 on Octavian as priest of Cybele. Dio 48.43.4, Val. Max. 1.8.11, Tac. Ann. 4.64.3 divine protection of the Claudii. Cf. I. Becher, "Der Kult der Mater Magna in Augusteischer Zeit," Klio 73 (1991), pp. 157-170 and R. McKay Wilhelm, "Cybele: the Great Mother of the Augustan Order," Vergilius 34 (1988), pp. 77-101.
42. I. Becher (above, n. 41), p. 165 n. 72 on Cybele against Julian Venus; R. M. Wilhelm (above, n. 41), pp. 84-91 on Cybele protector of the Trojans. Cf. also Becher, pp. 168, who notes however a certain ambivalence in Virgil, p. 169.

43. Gross (above, n. 11), pp. 82-84, and Grether (above, n. 5), p. 229 n. 38. Livia-Aphrodite: I.G.R. 4.257 (Assos), SEG 15.532 (Chios). Coinages: R.P.C. vol. 1, part 1, nn. 2464, 2466; BMC Asiatic Bosphorus, pp. 51, 54. Identity between Venus Victrix and Genetrix: M. Speidel, "Venus Victrix Roman and Oriental," ANRW 2.17.4, p. 226.
44. Cf. P. Zanker, Augustus und die Macht der Bilder (Munich 1990), p. 236.
45. This discussion is heavily based on D. Fishwick (above, n. 7), vol. 1, part 1, p. 85 and vol. 2, part 1, pp. 455-465. See also J. R. Fears (above, n. 11) 2.17.2 p. 890 n. 292 (Salus and Iustitia do not represent imperial ladies), p. 891: Spanish coinages represent Livia as Pietas and Salus. For Spanish coinages of Livia-Salus, see also R. Etienne (above, n. 7), pp. 321-322, 329, 428, 430. Gross, (above n. 11), p. 59, states that the Pietas portrait is the least reliable; however, the issues of Caesaraugusta seem to be closer to Livia's features.
46. S. R. F. Price, Rituals and Power (Cambridge 1986), pp. 16-17, 21-22, 107-108, 114-116; for the discussion of temple architecture, see Chapter Six, pp. 133-169.
47. S. Price (above, n. 46), pp. 134-135, 176-178, 208-210.
48. S. Price (above, n. 46), pp. 146-156. C.I.G. 1.1775 Larissa; SEG 2. 696, cf. R. Mellor, "The Goddess Roma," ANRW 2.17.2, p. 981. SEG 4.707 (I.G.R. 48.4.144) Cyzicus.
49. Price (above, n. 46), pp. 146-156, 210. Fishwick (above, n. 7), vol. 1, part 1, p. 29. See also T. Pekary, Das Römische Kaiserbildnis (Berlin 1985) p. 60. The only place where the adjective "new" meant reincarnation was, not surprisingly, Egypt. Livia is referred to as "new Isis", Cleopatra's epithet, in an inscription of A.D. 21 (C.I.G. 3.4711).
50. Assos, I.G.R. 4.249-250; Lampsacus, I.G.R. 4.180, C.I.G. 3642; Pergamon, I.G.R. 4.319; Cyzicus, SEG 4.707, 33.1055, I.G.R. 4.144; Larissa, C.I.G. 1.1775; Thespieae, SEG 31.514; Attalia, SEG 2.696. Antonia Tryphaena, Tac. Ann. 2.66-67; see also G. Macurdy (above, n. 4), pp. 10-11. L. Ollendorff (above, n. 27), col. 914.
51. Price (above, n. 46), p. 187.
52. Price (above, n. 46), pp. 136-145; Fishwick (above, n. 7), vol. 2, part 1, pp. 518-525; E. Kornemann, "Neue Dokumente zum lakonischen Kaiserkult," Schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Cultur, Heft 1, Breslau

(1929), pp. 1-31.

53. BMC Ionia n. 187 rev., BMC Lydia n. 48 rev., RPC vol. 1 part 1 nn. 2453, 2673, 2842. Fishwick (above, n. 7) vol. 1 part 2, pp. 271-273, 283.
54. Fishwick (above, n. 7) vol. 2 part 1, pp. 482, 484, 490, 516-518. CIL 11.3303 Forum Clodii; CIL 6.29681 unknown colony celebrated Livia's birthday in A.D. 108; CIL 6.1.2024 Acta Fratrum Arvalium on sacrifice on Augusta's birthday.
55. Fishwick (above, n. 7), vol.2, part 1, pp. 495, 510, 514, 564, 569. CIL 6.1.2024, 2027 vota pro salute; IGR 4.353 food and drink distributions at the hymnodoi's celebrations in Pergamon.
56. Fishwick (above, n. 7), vol. 1 part 2, pp. 266, 270-273, 283. Cf. also R. Etienne (above, n. 11), pp. 190-192, 199, 234-235, 290. CIL 2.194 flamen of Livia and Germanicus at Olisipo, CIL 5.2.6954 flaminica at Augusta Taurinorum, CIL 12. 1363 flaminica at Vasio Vocontiorum and 12.4249 at Baeterrae in Narbonensis. AE 1915.95 Emerita, 1988.422 Corfinium, 1970.269 (CIL 10.7501) Gaulos. CIL 10.961 sacerdos at Pompeii.
57. Tac. Ann. 4.1, 7; Dio, 57.7-13.6. B. Levick (above, n. 16), pp. 148-179. R. Syme, "History or Biography: The Case of Tiberius Caesar," Historia 23 (1974), p. 487. Livia's responsibility for Tiberius' secession: Suet. Tib. 51, Dio 57.12.6, Tac. Ann. 4.57.3.
58. R. Hanslik, "Agrippina" Der Kleine Pauly, Band 1 (Munich 1979), col. 148; J. P. Balsdon, "Agrippina," Oxford Classical Dictionary 2nd ed., p. 31 on the marriage of Agrippina and Germanicus. Suet. Aug. 34 on Agrippina and Germanicus as examples of marriage laws. The children named after Livia and Tiberius: Drusus, Nero, Livia Drusilla and Julia Livia. CIL 6.3998, 4252, Suet. Cal. 7, quoted by L. Ollendorff (above, n. 27), col. 920 on Livia's involvement with the children.
59. Suet. Cal. 1, 3-6; Tac. Ann. 1.33, 2.73, 82-83; Dio 57.18.6 on Germanicus' popularity. Tac. Ann. 2.5.2, 2.26 on Germanicus' near insubordination in Germany; 2.58 his unauthorized trip to Egypt; 2.53-55.1, 2.59 "Antonian" tendencies. Tac. Ann. 1.36.3, 1.39, 1.49 on Germanicus' ineffectual handling of the revolt; 1.50-51.1 attacks on unarmed Germans; 1.64-65 near defeat, Romans saved by the Germans' greed; 2.23-24 ill-advised sea-voyage, ending in heavy losses. Compare with Drusus' ability to turn the Germans against each other, Tac. Ann. 1.62, and 1.63-64.1-2 Tiberius' own diplomatic victories, 1.65 Tiberius' desire

for tranquillity. Tac. Ann. 1.40-41, 1.44.1-2, 1.69; Suet. Cal. 9 on Agrippina and the army.

60. Speech of Caecina Severus: Tac. Ann. 2.33-34. Trial of Silius and Sosia, law against crimes of magistrates' wives: Tac. Ann. 4.19-20. See also A. J. Marshall, "Tacitus and the Governor's Lady," G&R 22 (1975) pp. 11-18, and R. Bauman (above, n. 28), p. 252 n. 32. Interesting, although not backed by hard evidence, is Bauman's idea that Sacrovir's rebellion may have been organized by Agrippina's Gallic clients to destabilize Tiberius' regime (pp. 146-147). On pp. 152-153, however, he apparently contradicts himself and claims that Agrippina's efforts were aimed at eliminating Sejanus only (also Levick, above, n. 16, p. 158).

61. Tac. Ann. 4.52; Suet. Tib. 53.1 reports the comment as Tiberius' reply to Agrippina's unwise remarks on Germanicus' death. Tacitus' version seems to support the impression of the author's fundamental ambivalence toward Agrippina.

62. M. Pani, Tendenze Politiche della Successione al Principato di Augusto (Bari 1979), pp. 78-79, 84-88 on the divinizing attitudes of Germanicus' circle. Tac. Ann. 2.84 on Livilla's twins, and 2.43.6 on Drusus' devotion to Germanicus. B. Levick (above, n. 16), pp. 158, 162 on Sejanus' plan to become regent.

63. L. Rutland, "Women as Makers of Kings in Tacitus' Annals," CW 72 (1978), pp. 15-29 on Tacitus' uniqueness in his treatment of Livia. L. Ollendorff (above, n. 27), col. 903, G. E. Rizzo, Le Pitture della Casa di Livia, fasc. 3, pp. 25-30, on the paintings of Io.

64. Val. Max. 4.3.3 on Antonia living in Livia's house. Jos. 18.181-182, Dio 65.14 on the discovery of Sejanus' plot. Tac. Ann. 4.12.3-4 inhiare dominationi.

65. Suet. Cal. 10.1, Vell. 2. 130.4 on new chronology of Agrippina and Nero's relegation. Cf. R. S. Rogers (above, n. 37), pp. 54-58; Seager (above, n. 16), p. 209; R. Bauman (above, n. 28), pp. 254-55 n. 58.

66. R. Syme, "History or Biography: the Case of Tiberius Caesar," Historia 23 (1974), pp. 481-496, esp. p. 487; E. Kornemann (above, n. 33), p. 180.

67. L. Rutland (above, n. 63), pp. 28-29. Cf. also F. Santoro L'hoir, The Rhetoric of Gender Terms (Leiden 1992), pp. 122-126 on the contrast between the immorality of Roman aristocratic women, especially imperial, and the chastity of German women.

68. Tac. Ann. 2.69.3, 2.71.2, 2.74.2 the poisoner Martina, 3.1, 3.4 people and soldiers mourning Germanicus, 3.3 Tiberius and Livia create suspicions by not appearing at the funeral, 3.7.2 mysterious death of Martina, 3.12.3, 3.13.2 Piso charged of sedition, 3.15, 3.17.2-4 Plancina saved by Livia, popular indignation.
69. Tac. Ann. 2.34 on Urgulania, 2.43.4 on Piso and Plancina's self-esteem. Cic. Verr. 2.1.94, Val. Max. 3.8.6, 8.3 on women appearing in the courts. Cf. also R. Bauman (above, n. 28), pp. 48-50. J. Hellegouarc'h, Le Vocabulaire Latin des Relations et des Partis Politiques (Paris 1963), pp. 28-29, 54-55, 204 on gratia and amicitia. N. Rouland, Pouvoir Politique et Dependence Personelle dans l'Antiquite' Romaine (Brussels 1979), p. 524, on clientes.
70. Cic. Pro Cae. 14.34, Suet. Tib. 2 on the Vestal Claudia; Tac. Ann. 2.34 on Urgulania and Piso. Cf. R. Bauman (above, n. 28), p. 135 on Livia's reaction.
71. Tac. Ann. 2.34.4 on Urgulania. E. Kornemann (above, n. 33), p. 116 on monarchic elements of Livia's patronage, and G. E. M. de St. Croix, "Suffragium: from Vote to Patronage," British Journal of Sociology 5 (1954), pp. 33-48, esp. pp. 42-44 on Urgulania as a client of Livia.
72. Tac. Ann. 4.17.3 on Agrippina's party, 2.57.2-3 on hatred between Germanicus and Piso stirred up by Germanicus' friends. Cf. R. Bauman (above, n. 28), pp. 154-156 on Agrippina's plans.
73. J. Hellegouarc'h (above, n. 69), p. 114, n. 2 on partes; Pani (above, n. 62), pp. 96-101 on Agrippina's group. On the importance of Agrippina, see Levick's contrasting opinion: ". . . Agrippina was a nuisance, not a threat and overestimated her own importance. . ."; (above, n. 16), p. 167.
74. See K. Gilmartin Wallace "Women in Tacitus," ANRW 2.33.5, pp. 3564-3565; M. Kaplan, "Agrippina Semper Atrox," Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History 1 (1979), pp. 410-417; B. Baldwin, "Women in Tacitus," Prudentia 4 (1972), pp. 83-101.
75. Suet. Tib. 51, Gaius 16, Tac. Ann. 5.1-2, Dio 58.2.1-6, on Livia's death.
76. Tac. Ann. 5.3. Suet. Tib. 61, seems to imply this, though he does not refer to her specifically.

77. Vell. 2.130.5, Livia's obituary. J. Hellegouarc'h (above, n. 69), pp. 238-242, on potentia. Tac. Ann. 1.4.5, 2.34.4, 4.12.4, 4.21.1, 4.57.3, 5.1.3 on Livia's potentia. Cic. Cael. 62, on Clodia mulier potens; Suet. Nero 28.2, on Agrippina ferox atque impotens mulier. Cf. also L. Rutland (above, n. 63), pp. 15-29, particularly p. 18, and F. Santoro L'hoir (above, n. 67), pp. 50-51 n. 29, 122-123, 133-134.
78. R. H. Martin, "Tacitus and the Death of Augustus," CO (1955), vol. 5, pp. 123-128, and M. P. Charlesworth, "Livia and Tanaquil," CR 41 (1927), pp. 55-57.
79. P. Sinclair, "Rhetorical Generalizations in Annales 1-6," ANRW 2.33.4, pp. 2796-2829, especially pp. 2802-2808, 2813.
80. Cf. R. G. Tanner, "Thought and Style in Tacitus," ANRW 2.33.4, pp. 2699-2700, on the mask of power. Suet. Aug. 99 on Augustus' last remarks. Tac. Ann. 6.5.3 on Tiberius' personality.

Chapter Five

The Matron and the Tyrant

The preceding chapters have followed the evolution of Livia's political career, from its beginnings as the wife of a revolutionary leader to the achievement of the highest honors ever for a Roman woman. Her marriage to Augustus symbolized the reconciliation of the social classes in the peace and stability of the new regime, based on the reestablishment of those demarcations which the civil wars had shattered. Under the auspices of Augustus' national program all the different segments of society were reunited, in allegiance to the rejuvenated Roman state, personified in the archetypal figure of the Pater Patriae. Livia had an important role to play in this program, inspiring the women by her personal example of wife, mother and patron. This she did by surrendering her sons to Augustus' dynastic politics and by closely, but often unofficially, cooperating with him.

One would look in vain to the historical Livia for intimations of the sinister stepmother conjured by Tacitus. Yet, the negative stereotype survived for centuries, despite recent attempts by scholars to redress the balance. The reasons for the appeal of the harsh stepmother of the Julio-Claudians go beyond Tacitus' art and the impact of his work on traditional education. They can be traced to an elemental ambivalence toward powerful females and maternal

figures who, although essential for the survival of tradition, were perceived as having ambitions incompatible with that tradition. The remaining chapters of this study discuss Roman female stereotypes and role models whose elements contributed to the creation of the literary Livia.

1. Stereotypes and Role Models: The Matron

In an article on the use of anecdotal evidence for the principate, Richard Saller stresses the pervasiveness of anecdotes ranging from dinner-party repartee and gossip to such exalted genres as oratory, moral treatise, biography and antiquarian disquisition. Despite the acknowledged inaccuracy of anecdotes, even serious historians have not been able to resist employing them where ideological ends were served. In keeping with the didactic and moralistic thrust of most Roman literature, moral exempla from the past, often in anecdotal form, were used as "illustrative material" to create stereotypes of virtues and vices. Emperors were especially susceptible to this kind of personification: Augustus was normally used to embody clemency and tolerance, Tiberius meanness and duplicity, Caligula gratuitous cruelty, and Claudius foolish subservience to women and freedmen. The same could happen to their womenfolk, and the Julio-Claudians have provided fascinating specimens of virtues and vices for moralists and historians alike: Livia the schemer (whom Caligula dubbed "Ulixes in woman's clothes"), the two Agrippinas,

domineering and quick-tempered, the two Julias and Messalina the profligates, and the two Octavias, innocent victims of the men they married.¹

However plausible these characterizations may seem, they reveal the ideological bias of the writers and the historians who deploy them. Many historians belonged to the senatorial class and were unsympathetic toward the monarchy and the Julio-Claudians, who founded it. In addition, their portrayals of influential imperial women are often vitiated by the deep-seated diffidence of Roman males toward politically ambitious women. While the Romans prided themselves on their total exclusion of women from official political life, their attitude toward political activities of women was rather more complex than that of Classical Athens where, according to Pericles, the greatest glory for a woman was to be the least talked about by men, whether in praise or in criticism. Unlike the Athenians, the Romans did not try to eliminate women from public life altogether; on the contrary, women played important roles both in the legends about Rome's origins and in the historical events of the republic, exercising their influence for political ends, good or evil, through their male relatives and connections. This was due to the leading role played by aristocratic families, and to the character of Roman family life. Upper-class women assumed pivotal importance both as facilitators of political alliances and as repositories and

mediators of their own family's tradition to future generations. From childhood on a woman of the Roman aristocracy was steeped in politics, learned through involvement in the careers of her male relatives. When she married she spent her life not in the seclusion of the women's quarters, which did not really exist in Roman houses (as they did in Greek houses), but at the visible center of domestic activity; the atrium, an area of public access similar in function to a modern reception room, was where the matron and her women gathered to spin wool. Although subordinate to her husband by custom and law, she was nevertheless the domina, mistress of the house and guardian of its wealth and of its traditions, responsible for the material and moral welfare of its inhabitants.²

Since the matron's most important task was that of bearing and rearing children to continue the family line and surpass, not just emulate, its legacy of excellence, her most valued quality was chastity, which for the practical Romans assumed not only a moral connotation, but an eminently material one as well. Epitaphs and inscriptions indicate as stock epithet for wives "chaste" (casta), "modest" (prudica), "frugal" (frugi), "sparing" (conservatrix), the ideal wife being defined "as thrifty as she was chaste" (tam frugi tamque prudica), combining practical trustworthiness with sexual loyalty. Having borne children who resembled her husband was an additional merit

(patri similes uno de coniuge nati). Fertility in a woman was important, but even more crucial was her capacity to protect and guarantee the seed of her husband. The social recognition of a woman's worth, through her sexual loyalty and good performance of her domestic duties, symbolized the family's ability to protect its material boundaries, i.e., the family's patrimony. Female chastity thus became a commodity that could be used to acquire or enhance a family's power. The perfect matron, therefore, does not squander the material patrimony of the family through luxurious living nor the genetic one through wantonness; on the contrary, she devotes herself to the preservation and increase of the patrimony. Inscriptions often refer to her as "sitting or remaining at home" (domiseda), busy at her lanificium, the preparation and spinning of wool for clothing and other domestic needs, a typically feminine activity of great importance in antiquity, given that most clothing was homemade. Spinning wool is therefore especially appropriate to the chaste housewife. One of the most famous wool-spinners of Roman tradition is Lucretia, whose example Livia seems consciously to have followed. The Etruscan Tanaquil, under her Roman name of Gaia Caecilia, was also curiously associated with spinning and woolworking in the marriage rituals. As for Livia and her female relatives, Suetonius says that Augustus preferred to wear clothing made in his house by his sister, wife, daughter or

granddaughters.³

Chastity was also an essential requisite of the matron because she was responsible for the education of the children, not only during the early years but also, in some cases, in later life. According to Tacitus, the protracted contact of the young with their mother and senior female relatives ensured in more virtuous times that the future leaders would grow up honest, virtuous, and disciplined. The mother and the elderly relative who supported her in this task must be of irreproachable habits, since they were in charge not only of the children's studies but also their games and recreation. Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, personally supervised (as did the mothers of Caesar and Augustus) the education of her sons and groomed them to become great men in her family's tradition.⁴ In Tacitus' own times, the mother of Julius Agricola, his father-in-law, took care to set her straying son's feet in the right direction. Tacitus recalls:

I remember that he himself used to recount how in his early youth he thirsted for the philosophical studies with more intensity than it was given to a Roman and a Senator, if his mother's wisdom had not constrained his burning mind.

Memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare se prima in iuventa studium philosophiae acrius, ultra quam

concessum Romano ac senatori, hausisse, ni
 prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum
 coercuisset.

(Agr. 4.4)

The remarkable influence exercised by the Roman mother on her children thus served to reinforce the precepts and code of behavior dictated by the mos maiorum, the tradition which in Rome had the force of law. As the passage concerning Agricola's youth makes clear, the mother saw fit to force her son to abandon his much-beloved philosophical studies in favor of those disciplines essential to a future Roman senator, destined to hold positions of command that required a different type of knowledge and expertise. Vergil spells out the task assigned to the Romans by the gods in Book Six of the Aeneid, where Anchises prophesies:

Others will beat out bronze breathing in softer
 lines (at least I believe), and will draw living
 features out of marble, will plead cases better,
 and describe the paths of heaven with pointers and
 forecast rising stars: you, Roman, remember to
 rule over other peoples (these will be your
 special skills), to add civilization to peace, to
 spare your subjects and vanquish the haughty.

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera/(credo
 equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus,/ orabunt

causas melius, caelique meatus/describent radio et
 surgentia sidera dicent:/ tu regere imperio
 populos, Romane, memento/(hae tibi erunt artes),
 pacique imponere morem,/ parcere subiectis et
 debellare superbos.

(6.847-853)

While other peoples have been granted excellence in arts and sciences, the Romans have been assigned the duty to ensure peace and stability, the conditions without which the arts and sciences would be unable to flourish. Agricola's mother, in steering her son's interest away from philosophy toward more practical concerns, fulfills her duty to her family's tradition and to the state. Like the mothers of earlier times, she identifies herself entirely with her family and with the essentially aristocratic ethos that regulated every type of interaction in Roman society. As such, women's involvement was welcome because it promoted the perpetuation of the social and cultural fabric of the state and did not infringe upon the principle of oligarchic male leadership.⁵

Chastity and loyalty to tradition were not only important to family life but were vital to the very survival of the state on the religious level as well. No other cult was deemed so essential to the preservation of Rome as that of Vesta, and in no other case did the pollution of the individuals in charge of a cult cause the same panic and

hysteria as a Vestal's breach of the vow of chastity. While the accidental extinction of the sacred fire was not regarded as jeopardizing the safety of the state, the charge of sexual immorality spelled death for the unchaste Vestal. In times of national disasters, when the wholeness of the state seemed threatened from the outside, the Vestals were more likely to become the scapegoats of national hysteria. In view of the examples quoted, it seems reasonable to assume that in classical antiquity chastity was considered the foundation of many feminine virtues and was essential to the welfare of the state. In the specific case of the Romans, one could claim that the proven virtue of their women in adherence to tradition was one of the most important pediments on which their claims to universal rule rested.⁶

The virtues that the Romans held to be inherent in their race, such as discipline, unquestioning obedience, dignity, trustworthiness, piety, endurance and manliness, were also thought to set them apart from both the wily and corrupted Easterners and the savage and unruly Northerners. As a consequence it was necessary to safeguard these essentially aristocratic qualities by preventing or limiting to a minimum any encroachment on the part of the "lower" classes of people. The original prohibitions of marriage between patricians and plebeians, introduced by the decemvirs, were abolished only in 446 B.C. by the Lex

Canuleia, while Augustan law prevented people of the senatorial class from marrying freed people. Augustus, in his effort to reestablish traditional values, had made it an important point of his policy not to extend the benefits of Roman citizenship indiscriminately. Suetonius says that Augustus "thought it most important not to let the native Roman stock be tainted with foreign or servile blood and granted Roman citizenship very sparingly" (Magni praeterea existimans sincerum atque ab omni colluvione peregrini ac servilis sanguinis incorruptum servare populum . . . , civitates Romanas parcissime dedit); he even refused requests for citizenship from Livia and Tiberius on behalf of their clients and admonished his heirs to be likewise sparing in granting citizenship.⁷

2. Lucretia

The points discussed above are exemplified in the story of Lucretia as narrated by Livy, in which feminine chastity plays a fundamental role in the valorization of the all-Roman way against foreign customs. Lucretia's noble behavior and the choices she makes when faced with dishonor to both herself and her family reflect the tenets of proper wifely and filial behavior and, through her exaltation as a model of the Roman woman, convey a specific political message.

The legend of Lucretia originated in Ardea and was subsequently imported to Rome, where it was used not only to

legitimate the change of government, but also in the form of an aetiological myth, to explain the origins of Roman ideals concerning public and private behavior, politics and sexuality. One may wonder why, of all possible aetiological explanations, it was necessary to select a story of rape to mark the institution of a new political order. Rape and the consequent pollution seem to strike at the heart of a community's identity. Herodotus notes the tradition that repeated rapes of women were the determining factor in the development of enmity between East and West. Tales of tyrants' lust, innocent victims and of the former's overthrow for sexual transgressions abound in Greek and Roman historiography.⁶

The Lucretia legend describes how, in the course of a slow-moving military campaign, Collatinus and his cousins, the royal princes, decide to verify personally the conduct of their respective wives, about whom they have been boasting, to determine whose spouse is the most virtuous. Setting out from camp, they reach the city late at night to find the princesses intent on merrymaking with their friends in convivio luxuque, wasting time and money and, possibly, being disloyal to their husbands. Not so Lucretia, who is found sitting in the middle of the house, engrossed in her wool-working among her women, also busy at their spinning. She is the center of the house, not only spatially (in medio aedium sedentem; inter ancillas) but also in terms of her

activity: instead of wasting her husband's wealth in luxury, she is engaged in an occupation which promotes the welfare of his dependents.' Her chastity is fully recognized (spectata castitas) and brings honor to her husband, who wins the wager. But to Lucretia, the victory is a harbinger of ruin: the word spectata draws attention to a certain voyeurism on the part of the men, who gaze and judge her behavior, as if her modesty were on display. She becomes a spectaculum; while attracting the attention of men, she also attracts lust. In fact it is her chastity, more than her beauty, that becomes a powerful aphrodisiac for Sextus Tarquinius, who determines that he must seduce her.¹⁰

After having suffered violence at the hands of Sextus, Lucretia chooses death over a life of shame. Despite her kinsmen's attempts to console her, she refuses to set a bad example for her countrywomen: "Even if I absolve myself from wrongdoing, I am not freeing myself from punishment; nor will any unchaste woman live after this, taking Lucretia as an example" (Ego me etsi peccato absolve, supplicio non libero; nec ulla deinde inpudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet).¹¹ Paradoxically, she preserves her honor and that of her family by submitting to violence in order to avoid an even more infamous form of dishonor, for in order to conquer her, Sextus had threatened to kill her and lay her body next to the naked corpse of a slave to suggest that she had been caught in adultery. To save herself from the suspicion of

having had an affair with a slave, she must therefore submit to a man whose family, as well as custom, is alien and tainted with servile blood.

By choosing to die, Lucretia affirms her identity as a Roman, and her private tragedy becomes a communal one, with political consequences of which she herself may not be unaware.¹² Until her death, her actions have taken place within the house, and she seems not to have had a voice. We do not hear her speak when she welcomes her guests, nor when she resists Sextus. Her words are reported by Livy in indirect form. Her first public utterance is also her last. After her suicide her body is displayed in the market square, the pitiful sight of which awakens the consciousness of her compatriots. This is symbolized by the sudden metamorphosis of Brutus from self-styled dimwit to fiery orator and leader of the rebellion:

Then he passes the knife to Collatinus, and from him to Lucretius and Valerius, amazed by the prodigy, whence came the new spirit in Brutus . . . then Brutus reprimanded their useless tears and lamentations and caused them to do what was worthy of men, and of Romans, to take up arms against those who had dared to treat them as enemies.

Cultrum deinde Collatino tradit, inde Lucretio ac

Valerio, stupentibus miraculo rei, unde novum in
 Bruti pectore ingenium . . . tum Brutus castigator
 lacrimarum inertium querellarum auctorque quod
 viros, quod Romanos deceret, arma capiendi
 adversus hostilia ausos.

(1.59.4-5)

The repetition quod viros, quod Romanos, in which both terms are governed by the verb deceret, stresses the identity of Romans and men, the men, as an echo and answer to Lucretia's last plea: "But pledge your right hands and swear that the adulterer will not go unpunished . . . if you are men . . . you will see to it, that he gets what he deserves" (Sed date dexteras fidemque haud impune adultero fore . . . si vos viri estis . . . , videritis, quid illi debeatur). Her wish to be avenged becomes an implicit political statement. Since the adulterer is the king's son, exacting the punishment from him is tantamount to open rebellion, especially since his father is Tarquinius Superbus, the first king to treat Rome and its inhabitants as his own private property.¹³

Lucretia and Brutus are often represented as the liberators of Rome and the models of appropriate behavior for women and men. Lucretia expressly states her purpose not to be an excuse for immoral behavior in other women. Her chastity is a cultural construct, something she has been trained in. As a woman, she cannot act outside the domestic

sphere, except as an example or pretext. Therefore, she can only act against herself by committing suicide. Then she can have a political impact: figuratively, her body is taken to the market square, her castitas to be again spectata, gazed upon and judged by men.

Brutus' exemplarity derives from the repression of his most personal feelings. He rejects the tearful display of pain and the "feminine" lamentations of Lucretia's other male relatives and incites them to act. As Brutus himself had discovered after Tarquinius' murder of his own brother and father, the repression of one's own feelings was an instrument of survival and a means of overthrowing servitude and unmanliness. Brutus will demonstrate the truth of this when faced with the betrayal of the new republic by his sons. By commanding their execution he will become Pater Patriae. Both Brutus and Lucretia thus glorify behavior that is not natural, but cultural, responding to the demands of society.¹⁴

3. The Tyrant

Livy's portrayal of Tarquinius as the very first despot of Rome recalls the portrayal by later historians of some emperors. In creating his Tarquinius, Livy was influenced by the stock character of the tyrant, familiar to the Roman audience through representations of Greek tragedies, Greek and Hellenistic historiography, political invective and rhetorical declamation. Hellenistic

historiographers had in turn been influenced not only by stories of early Greek tyrants, but also by Herodotus and Thucydides' accounts of Oriental potentates, particularly of Persian monarchs.¹⁵

Tarquinius Superbus is the black sheep in the history of Rome's origins. Judging from the extant fragments of early historians, such as Fabius Pictor, Calpurnius Piso, Cassius Hemina, and of poets such as Ennius and Naevius, the kings were generally regarded positively as the founders of religious traditions and of law.¹⁶ Tarquinius Superbus, however, was the first ruler to break the traditional collaboration between king and Senate, governing instead by his sole authority and by the whims of his household:

He in fact was the first of the kings to break with the established tradition of consulting the senate about all matters, and administered the state through private consultations within the family; all by himself, without the authorization of the people and the senate, he made and unmade war, peace, pacts, alliances with whom he wanted.

Hic enim regum primus traditum a prioribus morem de omnibus senatum consulendi solvit, domesticis consiliis rem publicam administravit; bellum, pacem, foedera, societates per se ipse, cum quibus voluit, iniussu populi ac senatus, fecit

diremitque.

(1.49.7-8).

He actively persecutes the senators, fearing their opposition, and disposes of their most threatening representatives in a totally arbitrary and despotic manner, conducting trials for capital offences by himself and without advisors.¹⁷ He reigns through terror not only in Rome, but also among the allies, as the fate of his opponent Turnus Herdonius proves, using mostly trickery and deceit in an altogether un-Roman fashion, minime arte Romana, to achieve his goals and silence the opposition. His penchant for deceit and intrigue is all the more disappointing because he demonstrates, on several occasions, that he is indeed capable of manly conduct as an expert general and soldier.

Tarquinius' autocratic ways are also evidenced by his ambitious building program. The temple of Jupiter, which he has projected, will be an outstanding piece of work, worthy of the king of gods and men and displaying Roman might. Yet despite his avowed intentions, it is questionable whether the might of the Romans will be glorified by the temple, since he forces the free citizens to work at tasks unworthy of free men and soldiers, cleaning ditches and sewers in the city, and lending their work as artisans: "The Roman men, conquerors of all the surrounding peoples, were turned from warriors into artisans and stone-cutters" (Romanos homines, victores omnium circa populorum, opifices ac lapicidas pro

bellatoribus factos).¹⁸ This is the exact antithesis of Anchises' prophecy in Aeneid 6, where the Romans were represented as the future conquerors of the world; here instead they are forced to debase themselves performing the tasks which their subjects are supposed to supply in exchange for protection.

Despite this offence to the pride and dignity of Rome's citizens, the rebellion was triggered by the violation of a matron's honor. The social and political value of Lucretia's self-immolation in restoring Rome's lost identity was recognized by Seneca, who represents her as the mother, cultural rather than natural, of liberation: "In the city where Lucretia and Brutus tore the yoke of a king from the necks of the Romans--to Brutus we owe liberty, to Lucretia we owe Brutus" (In qua regem Romanis capitibus Lucretia et Brutus deiecerunt: Bruto libertatem debemus, Lucretiae Brutum).¹⁹

As a foil to Lucretia's Roman virtues, Livy devotes considerable space to the women of the Etruscan dynasty, Tanaquil the founder and Tullia, partially responsible for its demise.

4. Tanaquil and Livia

Tanaquil is the first royal consort in the history of Rome to elicit a certain amount of attention in her own right. Until her appearance the wives of the previous kings of Rome do not figure prominently in the accounts about the

origins. When they are mentioned, they generally do not capture the amount of attention that Livy grants Tanaquil. Even the mythical Egeria, Numa's alleged wife and advisor, cannot be taken as a significant deviation from this rule. Her semi-divine nature sets her aside from her mortal counterparts, so that what is allowed to a goddess is not always to be promoted in mortal women.

Tanaquil's influence over her husband's most important decisions cannot be easily dismissed or interpreted as the advice of a goddess. Despite her expertise in interpreting celestial signs, she is motivated by earthly ambition and uses her intelligence and skills to further her own ends. She is the prime mover and co-founder of the Etruscan ruling house--a ruling house marking a new era in Roman political life. Owing to her active participation in politics, her character assumes a certain importance in literary tradition, especially in historiography; there are many analogies between her and Livia.²⁰

As Tanaquil is Rome's first queen in her own right, so Livia is the first Augusta, and the two women share many similar features in their literary representation. They are ladies of noble lineage, ambition, pride, considerable political savvy and sangfroid. Livy treats Tanaquil with respect and portrays her favorably. In a brief article entitled "Livia and Tanaquil," M. P. Charlesworth discusses the analogies between Livy's account of the way in which

Servius Tullius was brought to power and Tacitus' narrative of the death of Augustus. Against the suggestion that Livy's Tanaquil may have inspired Tacitus' Livia, Charlesworth points out that, given the generally favorable characterization of Tanaquil, it is rather improbable that Tacitus would have used her as a prototype of Livia. He rather believes that the Livia of the Annales was not modelled on Tanaquil but on the imperious and meddling younger Agrippina, whose image was sufficiently tarnished to shed a negative light on that of her great-grandmother by association. The analogies that link Livia, Tanaquil and Agrippina will be discussed later; for the moment, it is enough to suggest that perhaps the adaptation of Tanaquil's character to Livia's is not as implausible as Charlesworth believes. While strong parallels undeniably exist between Livia and Agrippina's literary representations, they also exist between the pairs Livia/Agrippina and Tanaquil/Tullia with regard to the function performed by each of these pairs within the cycle of their respective dynasties.²¹

In Livy's story, Tanaquil is a lady of distinguished background and high ambition, married to the wealthy but less distinguished Lucumo of Tarquinii, the son of a Greek political refugee and an Etruscan woman. His origin proves to be a hindrance to his political ambitions as well as to those of Tanaquil. No longer able to stomach the disdain of her countrymen for Lucumo's qualities, she eventually

persuades him to search for fame elsewhere. Rome seems to her the most suitable place, the "land of opportunity" for energetic and ambitious men, regardless of their ethnic origins. (A number of Rome's kings had been foreign: Tatius a Sabine, Numa from Cures, Ancus partly Sabine.) The wisdom of Tanaquil's choice becomes manifest when, in the vicinity of Rome, an eagle snatches Lucumo's hat from his head, soars high and then replaces it. To Tanaquil, versed in the art of augury, this is an unmistakable sign of future royalty; eventually it comes to pass when Lucumo, entrusted with the guardianship of the royal princes, eliminates them through a bloodless stratagem and usurps the rule.

Having thus realized her ambitions, Tanaquil does not fade into obscurity, content with her dignity as queen. She reclaims the spotlight at a critical point by advising her husband on the choice of his successor. Once again she uses her interpreting skills to identify the candidate--a sleeping slave-boy whose head was engulfed in a supernatural flame that did not burn him. Despite his class, the boy, adopted by the king and reared as a prince of the blood, demonstrates the nobility of his character and confirms once more Tanaquil's acumen. He is the future Servius Tullius, whose name bore traces of his servile origin. This fact prompted the class-conscious Romans, at one time or another, to speculate as to his "true" origin, eventually reaching the reassuring conclusion that a king of the Romans could

never have been a slave born in bondage, but rather must be the son of a captive aristocrat befriended by the queen. With Roman pride thus satisfied, both the foreign Tarquinius and the slave-born Servius proved to be capable and respected monarchs. Tarquinius' only negative mark, according to Livy, was his preference for intrigue, which would resurface with evil consequences in his descendant Tarquinius Superbus--"Thus a man for all other things exceptional retained even in his rule that spirit of intrigue that he had demonstrated while competing for the throne" (Ergo virum cetera egregium secuta quam in petendo habuerat etiam regnantem ambitio est).²²

This character trait of the king, along with his willingness to listen to and act upon his wife's advice, distinguishes him from his predecessors. His claim that he is not the first alien to seek the throne in Rome does not erase the fact that he is certainly the first non-Italian, a point which assumes great importance in the eyes of the exiled princes:

Then the two sons of Ancus, even though before they had considered it the greatest indignity to have been expelled from their father's kingdom by the fraud of their guardian, and that Rome should be ruled by a foreigner, not just of a neighboring race, but not even Italian: but then the indignity had been increased by the fact that, even after

Tarquinius' death, the kingdom would not return to them, but would plunge from there into the hands of slaves so that, almost one hundred years later, the same city in which Romulus, begotten by a god and himself a god, had ruled during his lifetime, would be possessed by a slave born of a slave. It would be not only a general disgrace to the Roman name, but to their house in particular if, with the male offspring of Ancus still alive and well, the sovereignty of Rome were open not only to foreigners, but also to slaves.

Tum Anci filii duo, etsi antea pro indignissimo habuerant se patrio regno tutoris fraud pulsos, regnare Romae advenam non modo vicinae, sed ne Italicae quidem stirpis, tum impensius iis indignitas crescere, si ne ab Tarquinio quidem ad se rediret regnum, sed praeceps inde porro ad servitia caderet, ut in eadem civitate post centesimum fere annum quod Romulus, deo prognato deus ipse, tenuerit regnum donec in terris fuerit, id servus serva natus possideat. Cum commune Romani nominis tum praecipue id domus suae dedecus fore, si Anci regis virili stirpe salva non modo advenis, sed servis etiam regnum Romae pateret.

As this passage spells out, the peculiar character of the ruling house is augmented by the choice of the king's successor, not a Roman aristocrat or a legitimate heir, but a slave. Such a decision is based on the suggestion of a woman rather than by deliberation of the Senate and the people. A complete subversion of Rome's power structure has taken place, with dire consequences for the future. The subterfuge used by Tarquinius to gain power; Tanaquil's lies to the people to secure Servius' accession to the throne; the queen and the slave-prince pretending to act in the name of the dead king while actually consolidating their own power--all these elements herald both the excesses of Tarquinius Superbus' reign and the intrigues of the imperial dynasties, especially the Julio-Claudians.

Charlesworth points out the common pattern followed by the events surrounding the deaths of Tarquinius the Elder, Augustus, Claudius and Trajan, and the advent of their heirs. The old king's death is kept secret by the queen by means of a stratagem until her son, natural or adopted, has securely gained power. Unfortunately, Charlesworth dismisses this rather interesting pattern as "the commonest stock-in-trade of all court history".²³ This may be true, but closer attention should perhaps be paid to the features that the characters of one plot share with their counterparts in other such schemes, as well as to the ways in which they may diverge from one another, to bring to light the

role of typology in Roman historiography.

The analogies between Tanaquil and Livia are not restricted to the part played in securing the throne for their respective sons, but are numerous and varied. They can be traced in the main historiographical sources (Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio) and are, in my opinion, derived both from the Livian narrative and from a body of anecdotes circulating in Rome, undoubtedly with the blessings of the First Family. While the majority of these anecdotes refer to omens and miracles portending the future greatness of Octavian, a few concern Livia and they are ideologically significant. Dio Cassius, for instance, reports at length Livia's speech to Augustus, urging him to adopt a policy of clemency and tolerance toward conspirators against his rule in order to establish his power firmly on the goodwill of the people. The story is also related by Seneca, though much more concisely; on his part, Suetonius mentions Augustus' habit of consulting Livia in the form of written notes.²⁴ These stories emphasize Livia's political skill and the value that Augustus assigned to her judgment, and create a link with the figure of Tanaquil, chief advisor to her husband.

Livia and Tanaquil are not only chief advisors to their husbands, but they also share a similar literary portrait as ancestresses and co-founders of dynasties which, in their respective cycles of development and decadence, present many

common features. In this case too, the influence exerted by the Livian narrative can be detected mainly in Tacitus' account of the Julio-Claudians' rule and, to a minor extent, in Dio and Suetonius. An examination of the anecdotes concerning Livia's early life may help to clarify this point.

Events similar to Tanaquil's prediction of Tarquinius' success based on the incident with the eagle can be found among the anecdotes on Livia related by Dio Cassius and Suetonius. In one instance, a white bird carrying a twig of laurel was seized by an eagle and dropped into Livia's lap. According to Dio, Livia interpreted the event as a favorable omen, and she nursed the bird back to health and planted the twig. Both survived and prospered, the twig growing into a laurel bush from which the branches were taken to adorn the Julio-Claudians in their triumphs; the offspring of the bird multiplied and survived well into the reign of Nero. Both the plant and the animal died shortly before the disastrous end of Nero's regime, forecasting the impending death of the last of the dynasty. With very slight variation, the same story is narrated by Suetonius in his life of Galba.²⁵

The similarities between Livy's story of Tanaquil and Dio and Suetonius' anecdote of Livia concern the Etruscan art of augury in relation to the founding of a royal house or city. A related example is the legend of Rome's founding by Romulus and Remus. The main differences between Livy and

Dio lay in the tone of the author and in the representation of the event. Livy represents Tanaquil as an intermediary between human and divine worlds by means of her ability to interpret divine signs: she is perita . . . caelestium prodigiorum mulier and performs an almost sacral function, suggested also by the fact that she and Tarquinius travel by carpentum, a carriage commonly associated with the Vestals. It is true that the carpentum was not exclusively reserved for religious uses (the pilentum, a larger and more luxurious version, was).²⁶ Nevertheless, the use of a relatively small carriage mostly employed in the city seems odd, considering that, two lines earlier, Livy reports that the pair is travelling with all their possessions (a larger carriage would have been in order, since Tarquinius is wealthy). The eagle is deliberately sent by the gods (ministerio divinitus missa) to indicate their favor to Tarquinius in his highest endeavor by placing the cap back on his head. The idea that he will reach the top is implied by the emphasis on the head, where the cap is returned, and by the repeated use of words like sublimis, excelsa, alta. The recipient of divine favor is Tarquinius, the future king; Tanaquil is simply the medium through which the will of the gods is conveyed and made known. In such context, she performs an acceptable role within Roman society, compatible with those traditionally assigned by the Romans to their women in the transmission of family name and

tradition and, at times, in the mediation of conflicts. It is a supporting role, neither entirely passive nor active, socially acceptable because it may confer a certain authority on the woman without infringing on traditional male prerogatives.

Dio's Livia is much more ambivalent. The incident of the bird with the laurel is introduced as one of a series of miraculous but ominous occurrences that disturbed the population of Rome and of the empire. Dio says that the event was viewed with pleasure by Livia, with dread by the rest.²⁷ Unlike Livy's Tanaquil, Livia is not perita . . . caelestium prodigiorum, although she acts both as interpreter and recipient of the signs. Since her interpretation is entirely subjective, not rooted in mystical art but in her own person, the event is viewed by the author as ominous. Although her behavior toward the injured bird is nurturing and benevolent, and though the success she encounters in restoring health and prosperity to bird and plant recall the main themes of her iconography, she is alone in her joy at the miracle, while the rest are filled with dread. The eagle, messenger of the gods and symbol of royalty, has, by dropping the bird in Livia's lap, singled her out as the chosen one, much as in Livy the eagle had singled out Tarquinius by dropping the cap back on his head. Livia's husband, the ruler of the Roman world, is destined to be ruled by her (in modern terms he was "in her

pocket," in Greek he was "in the folds of her robe"), the source of her power residing in her lap. Significantly, the specific word used, ἐγκολπώσασθαι (48.52.3), has as its root κόλπος ("womb, vagina"), a clear allusion to her influence as a wife and as mother of the successor. Symbolically, the idea of Livia as ruler is also reinforced by the fact that it is from her laurel bush that the branches come to adorn her male relatives' triumphs, thus she also is a triumphatrix by proxy.

The last, but not least important, difference between Livy and Dio's narratives is that Livia's role in the survival of the dynasty is clearly indicated as one of the significant factors. The fortune of the family seems tied to the life of the bird and plant under her protection, symbols of her enduring presence. On the historical level, this is confirmed by the emphasis placed by Claudius on his kinship with the deified Livia, while outsiders like Galba relied on almost filial forms of reverence toward her to legitimate their claims to power.

The second anecdote showing Livia as interpreter of signs is related by Suetonius in his life of Tiberius. The expectant Livia, wishing to foretell the gender of her child, "hatched" a hen's egg in her hands, eventually producing a fine chick with a fully formed comb, sign of Tiberius' royal destiny. Here the analogies with the spirit of Tanaquil's story are more evident, since Livia is the

intermediary through which the chick/emperor is brought to life, the recipient of the sign being her son, not herself.

In the development of their respective dynasties Tanaquil and Livia play similar roles, with their descendants Tullia and Agrippina as opposites. Among other factors, they are destined to become role models for their female descendants in a rather peculiar way.

5. Tarquinius and Julio-Claudians

According to Livy, it was the envy that Tullia felt for her grandmother's accomplishments that spurred her on to her crimes. Likewise, Agrippina's resentment and envy of Livia's position and honors caused her to demand not only all the honors and privileges granted her great-grandmother, but to desire for herself even more public authority than Livia ever exercised, thus preparing her own demise.

Tullia's consuming desire to imitate and surpass the political successes of her grandmother stands out as a perhaps unwitting parody of traditional Roman pride and emulation of the ancestors:

Nor could she give herself peace, when she thought that Tanaquil, a foreign woman, had conceived such machinations as to be able to bestow the rule twice in succession, to her husband and to her son-in-law while she, of royal descent, would count for nothing in making or unmaking a king.

Nec conquiescere ipsa potest, si, cum Tanaquil
 peregrina mulier tantum moliri potuisset animo ut
 duo continua regna viro ac deinceps genero
 dedisset, ipsa regio semine orta nullum momentum
 in dando adimendoque regno faceret.

(1.47.6-7)

Superficially animated by Roman patriotism, this passage is a parody of Roman family pride, as the opposition peregrina mulier versus regio semine orta suggests; above all, it emanates subversive irony, since it is about the sort of political ambition which was normally encouraged in males rather than in females. What Tullia strives so hard to imitate and surpass are not Tanaquil's well-known wifely virtues, but her political prowess in tampering with the established power structure. Even more ironically, Tullia, in defining herself as regio semine orta, glosses over her own father's servile origin, a point on which her husband Tarquinius frequently (and indelicately) returns in his rebellious speech: "a slave born of a slave woman after his father's shameful death" (servum servaque natum post mortem indignam parentis sui).²⁸

Anomalous behavior is the main characteristic of the Etruscan ruling house, not only as far as the behavior of some female members is concerned, but as a general rule. An examination of the *modus operandi* of its principal members, male and female, demonstrates how their behavior is

consistently characterized by flouting and reversing of the most intimate and sacred social bounds. By stressing the indifference of Tarquinius Superbus, Tullia, and Sextus to the ties of affection among close relatives (brother, sister, father, cousin), Livy graphically presents the Etruscan ruling house as an aberration, culturally and morally alien to their Roman subjects, thus rationalizing the deeply rooted antipathy of the latter toward the monarchy. The patriotic and xenophobic emphasis of the whole saga reflects not only the social and cultural climate fostered by Augustus' pre-Actium and, later on, reformistic propaganda, but also Livy's own republican and moralistic inclinations, fruit of his old-fashioned Patavian upbringing.

The decadence and demise of the Etruscan monarchy are portrayed in sombre colors, with a deep fatalism that mocks king Servius' futile attempt to preempt threats to his rule from within the family by marrying off his two daughters to the two sons of Tarquinius--a useless stratagem. The familiar theme of mismatched partners is used by Livy to highlight the inevitability of self-destructive ambition inherent in monarchy. Tullia and Tarquinius, drawn to each other by the same arrogance and thirst for power, soon eliminate their meek spouses, who were but obstacles to their ambitions. Goaded by Tullia's constant urging and by his own unrestrained ambition, Tarquinius is easily

persuaded to usurp the throne and do away with the aged Servius, in a tragic and impious parody of Tanaquil's role (cf. excelsa et alta sperare . . . virum iubet). What Tanaquil had done on a symbolic level, abandoning the fatherland that stifled her own aspirations, Tullia realized on the practical level, contributing to the murder of her own father, guilty of obstructing her husband's, and her own, path to power. Tanaquil's attitude is defined by Livy as oblitaque ingenitae erga patriam caritatis, dummodo virum honoratum videret. The words ingenita and caritas indicate the affection a child naturally ought to feel for the parents, while the word patria, from the same root as pater, makes the fatherland an extension of the father, primary recipient of affection.²⁹

Tullia can then be considered the negative side of Tanaquil, partially responsible for the ruin of the dynasty through her deeds as much as her grandmother had been its co-founder through her counsels. Tarquinius is also not spared by Livy's wit: like Tullia, Tarquinius is oblivious to the intense irony of his own predicament. He lambasts Servius for his low birth and indebtedness to a woman for his royal title (muliebri dono instead of per suffragium populi . . . , auctoribus patribus), forgetting that he is treading the same path. In fact it is Tullia who, after the mutiny, first hails him king in public, a gesture that reveals her brazen disregard for the rules of decorum and

propriety so dear to the Romans: "It is agreed . . . that she was driven to the forum in a covered wagon, and not at all ashamed of the crowd of men, called her husband forth from the senate-house and was the first to salute him king" (Carpento certe . . . in forum invecta, nec reverita coetum virum e curia regemque prima appellavit).³⁰ The political significance of her gesture is augmented by its openness; she does in public what Tanaquil had done in secret, invading male territory by entering the forum, off-limits to well-born women, anticipating the Senate and the people's decision by calling him king. The crescendo of Tullia's subversive acts against family and state reaches its peak when she drives her carriage over the dead body of her father, in open desecration of cultural and familial ties. Her action is a political crime, since her patricide is also regicide.

The mockery of Roman tradition and values continues when Tarquinius refuses proper burial rites to his father-in-law, claiming that even Romulus had had no burial.³¹ A rule begun under such auspices cannot but end in disaster; it is therefore hardly surprising that Sextus, offspring of such parents, violated the bonds of family and the sacred rules of hospitality by raping Lucretia, his cousin's wife, who had received him as a guest.

Tullia and Tarquinius represent an inversion of the positive qualities of the pair Tanaquil-Tarquinius: what

their ancestors--wise and beneficent rulers, even if not scrupulously honest--had obtained without bloodshed, using fraud (against Ancus' sons), deception (in Servius' succession to power) and mystical art (Tanaquil's interpretation of omens), Tullia and Tarquinius obtain through heinous crimes (against family and state), deceit (plotting to overthrow Servius) and impiety (irreverence to the father's body, refusal of proper burial rites). At the same time, the transformation indicated above suggests a change of the sphere in which these actions take place: Tanaquil and Tarquinius' predilection for secrecy and subterfuge degenerates into Tullia and Tarquinius' shameless openness. The irresistible evolution of monarchy from enlightened despotism into naked tyranny is complete.

Shifting attention from Livy's semi-historical Etruscan dynasty to narratives concerning the historical Julio-Claudians, it is possible to notice that the transformations observed in the story of Tanaquil and Tullia can be applied to that of Livia and Agrippina. Within the events of their dynasty they played roles analogous to those of the Etruscan princesses, and they too appear as opposite sides of the same coin. This is only partially accidental: it is my opinion that Tacitus' representation of Livia and Agrippina was consciously modelled on those of Tanaquil and Tullia. While it is chronologically untenable to suppose the opposite, i.e., that Livia and Agrippina were the "raw

material," since the first five books of Livy's work were composed between 29 and 24 B.C., Tacitus' borrowings from Livy's first book, verbal as well as thematic, are well attested. The Tacitean reelaboration of the episode of Tarquinius' death to fit the circumstances of Claudius' and Augustus' deaths has been mentioned before. More recently, P. Sinclair has demonstrated the conscious use by Tacitus of an expression borrowed from the Lucretia episode and applied, by way of contrast, to the adulterous Livilla. These Livian "echos" demonstrate Tacitus' special interest in the narrative of the rise and fall of the Tarquinian dynasty and in the ideologically "charged" character of Lucretia.²² Combining a few significant events in the lives of Livia and Agrippina culled from our main historiographical sources (Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio), one is struck by some noticeable coincidences. For example, for both Livia and Agrippina the marriage to the ruler of Rome was a dramatic turning point in their political career. Both marriages, for different reasons, were regarded as scandalous by their contemporaries and caused sensation even in the jaded atmosphere of Rome.

Livia and Augustus were married after hasty divorces from their former consorts; although politically motivated divorces were no novelty in Rome, what made this case so special was the bride's advanced pregnancy with the child of her first husband. Obliging, Livia's ex-husband consented

to act in lieu of her father and give her away, a fact that gave immense scope to gossip and amusement to lampoonists. There is an intimation of incest in the figure of the husband-father, an intimation that became reality when Agrippina actually married her uncle Claudius. By any standard, Agrippina and Claudius' marriage was regarded as incestuous and against custom, so that the Senate had to break the rules and make such arrangements lawful for anyone who wished to follow suit. Very few did. The union of Livia and Augustus, although unorthodox, still fell within the prescriptions of the law, as the Pontifices attested (Dio's ironic remarks were unwarranted).³³

Both Livia and Agrippina had set ambitious goals for the sons born of their former unions and worked tirelessly to assist their children, in both instances to the detriment of the state, at least according to some historiographers (Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio). Nevertheless, even anti-monarchic historians had to recognize Tiberius' ability as an administrator and a leader, while on the other hand Nero's disgraceful antics and general incompetence inspired ridicule and hatred.

After the deaths of their husbands, both women demanded increasing influence in shaping their sons' policies, claiming that they had been vital in securing their sons' titles, thus alienating them to the point that Livia ended up abandoned, Agrippina murdered at her son's command.

It is generally agreed, even among her detractors, that Livia's conduct had been, in the main, discreet and unobtrusive, particularly during Augustus' life. She preferred to exercise her influence over political matters in private, actively supporting her husband's social agenda by personal example. Whether her partnership with Augustus was viewed as a successfully concerted effort on the part of two hypocrites to deprive Rome of liberty, or as the admirable realization of a mythical patriarchal past, she was undeniably an asset to her husband. Agrippina, by contrast, is unanimously portrayed as a liability to her husband Claudius and her son alike. Her claims to the spotlight, already rather aggressive under Claudius, became even more so under Nero. Unlike Livia, who worked in accord with her husband and could make his patriarchal fantasy credible to the majority, Agrippina used Claudius for her own purposes in accord with the imperial freedmen. Compared to Livia's, her behavior was extreme and openly threatening: she joined the emperor at transactions of public business and at audiences with foreign ambassadors (the most remarkable sight of the time), at first sitting on a separate tribunal, later on demanding public acknowledgment of her position at the head of the empire. Seneca and Burrus were occupied full-time trying to prevent foreign embassies from witnessing in person the fatal weakness of the empire, gradually undermining her authority to the

benefit of state business--if Dio is to be believed.³⁴

The noticeable analogies between significant events in the careers of Livia and Agrippina indicate that the functions fulfilled by the two women in Roman historiography are those associated with the creation and demise of the dynasty and seem to correspond to the functions that Tanaquil and Tullia perform in the Livian narrative of the Etruscan monarchy. While Livia and Tanaquil represent the benevolent side of a monarchy that is capable of harnessing feminine ambition to the advantage of the state, Agrippina and Tullia, in their desire to emulate and surpass their forerunners, represent the despotic and unrestrained side of the same coin. Their function is to lay out in the open the arbitrariness and irrationality of a system no longer able to control and exploit feminine ambition for the common good. Hence the virtuous matron and the female tyrant are complementary aspects of the same reality.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. R. Saller, "Anecdotes as Historical Evidence for the Principate," Greece and Rome 28 (1981) 69-83, esp. pp. 71-72, 78-79. On Livia-Ulixes, see Suet. Gaius 23.2; on the two Agrippinas, Tac. Ann. 4.52, 4.54.1, 5.3.10, 12.7.10, 13.2.8; Dio 61.3.3-4; on the two Julias and Messalina, Tac. Ann. 1.53.1, Juvenal 6.115-132; on the two Octavias, Plut. Ant. 35, 54.2, 57.2, Sen. Octavia.
2. On the exclusion of Roman women from official politics, see J. Hallett, Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society (Princeton 1984), p. 8; also Lactantius, Epit. 33 (38), 5. On silence concerning honest women, see Thuc. The Peloponnesian War, 2.45.2. On the early exposure of Roman women to politics, see B. Försch, Die politische Rolle der Frau in der römischen Republik (Stuttgart 1935), pp. 32, 45-46. On the ideological importance of woolworking and on the relationship between private space and feminine activity, cf. T. Hillard, "On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of Politically Active Women in the Late Roman Republic" in Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York 1992) pp. 40-41.
3. T. E. V. Pearce, "The Role of the Wife as Custos in Ancient Rome," Eranos 72 (1974), pp. 25-27, 33. On stock epithets and qualities praised in inscriptions, see R. Lattimore, Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs (Urbana 1942), p. 277. On the wife's chastity, see D. Gilmore, "The Shame of Dishonor," pp. 4-7, and C. Delaney, "Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame," D. Gilmore, ed., Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean (American Anthropological Association, Washington 1987), pp. 39-43. On spinning, see S. Pomeroy, Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves (New York 1975), p. 199; on Livia's spinning, Suet. Aug. 73. For Tanaquil's association with marriage rituals, see Pliny, N. H. 8.194, quoted in S. Treggiari, Roman Marriage (Oxford 1991), p. 27 n. 109, as well as associations of lanificium with chastity, pp. 206, 220, 243, 375.
4. On the influence of the mother on the children's education, see Tac. Dial. De Orat. 28.
5. Tac. Dial. De Orat. 28.
6. On chastity, see J. P. V. D. Balsdon, Roman Women (New York 1962), p. 240; Livy, 10.23.8, on the equivalent value of chastity for women and courage for men. See also Pomeroy, above n. 3, pp. 211-212. Women as the repositories of the honor of a group symbolize, in a larger context, the state. This may seem strange in societies like Greece and

Rome's, where women were actively barred from public office. Yet the ideal which the women's purity embodied was an aim which the family group and the community strove to satisfy, although it was so high that it was generally unattainable. Hence the severity towards those women who were perceived as "erring." S. Ortner, quoted in Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon, P. Allen (Westport 1992), p. 67.

7. Suet. Aug. 40.3; Dio 56.33. Suet. Divus Augustus tran. E. Shuckburgh, (New York 1979), p. 87 n.40. Also Förtsch (above, n. 2), pp. 48-50, and J. A. Crook, Law and Life in Rome (Ithaca 1967), p. 99.

8. S. H. Jed, Chaste Thinking (Bloomington 1989), pp. 2-3. Also I. Donaldson, The Rapes of Lucretia (Oxford 1982), p. 8. Herodotus, 1.1-3; Thuc. 6.54; Arist. Politics 1311a, 1314 b. Livy, 3.44-48.

9. She is probably in the atrium. Cf. T. Hillard (above, n. 2), pp. 40-41.

10. See Ovid's description of affairs initiated at banquets in Amores 1.4. Voyeurism and modesty: in this respect, there is a certain parallel between this voyeurism and that narrated by Herodotus in 1.8-11, where Gyges is forced by King Candaules to observe the queen naked in order to judge her beauty. This insult to her modesty will result in the king's death. Concerning the function of the eye of the community in determining personal and social worth, the following words of D. Gilmore "Honor and Shame: Male Status in Contemporary Andalusia," in Honor and Shame (above, n. 3), p. 101--though they refer to shame--seem relevant to Lucretia's observable behavior: "shame is above all visual and public. Unlike guilt, shame requires an audience: the watchful community. In the psychic mechanism of shaming, it is the 'eye' of the community and the related sense of paranoid observation that are assimilated to worldview and to personality."

11. Livy, 1.58.10-11.

12. In the context of suicide as resistance to domination, see M. Giovannini, "Female Chastity Codes," in Gilmore, ed., Honor and Shame (above, n. 3), p. 66. The internalization by Lucretia of patriarchal notions of honor as resistance to political authority seems to me similar to the increase of veiling and seclusion of women in some Islamic societies to express opposition to colonialism and westernization (cf. Giovannini, p. 70).

13. On the metaphorical substitution of Tarquinius Superbus for Sextus, see S. Philippides, "Narrative Strategies and Ideology in Livy's Rape of Lucretia," Helios 1984, pp. 114-119.
14. S. Jed (above, n. 8), p. 15; I. Donaldson (above, n. 8) p. 123.
15. R. Dunkle, "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus," CW 65 (1971), pp. 12-20; S. Borzsak, "Persertum und griechisch-römische Antike: Zur Ausgestaltung des klassischen Tyrannenbildes," Gymnasium 94 (1987), pp. 289-291, 293-294; R. Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic," TAPA 96 (1967), pp. 151-171.
16. C. J. Classen, "Die Königszeit im Spiegel der Literatur der Römischen Republik," Historia 14 (1965) 388-389; 394.
17. Livy, 1.49.4.
18. Livy, 1.59.10.
19. Ad Marciam, 16: the context of this reference also concerns the repression of personal feelings.
20. M. P. Charlesworth, "Livia and Tanaquil," Classical Review 41 (1927), pp. 55-57.
21. Charlesworth (above, n. 20), p. 56. See also S. E. Smethurst, "Women in Livy's History," Greece and Rome 19 (June 1950), pp. 81-82, for the apparent contradiction: "Livy's attitude to her is non-committal. . . . He cannot disapprove, but he does withhold his approval" versus "With the exception . . . of Tanaquil and Fecenia vivid characterization of 'good' women is lacking."
22. Livy, 1.35.6.
23. Charlesworth (above, n. 20), p. 55.
24. Livy was familiar with the court, since he was Claudius' mentor (Suet. Claudius 41). On Livia and mercy: Dio, 55.14-22.2; Sen. De Clem. 1.9.6. Livia as Augustus' advisor: Suet. Aug. 84.2.
25. Dio, 48.52; Suet. Galba 1.
26. Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd ed., "Carriages," p. 207; Kleine Pauly, vol. 5, col. 1345 "Wagen."
27. Dio, 48.52.3.

28. Livy, 1.47.10.

29. Livy, 1.34.9, 1.34.5.

30. Livy 1.48.5-6.

31. Livy, 1.48.

32. On Tacitus' verbal and thematic borrowings, see, in addition to Charlesworth (above, n. 19), R. H. Martin, "Tacitus and the Death of Augustus," CQ (1955) vol. 5, pp. 123-128, and P. Sinclair, "Tacitus' Presentation of Livia Julia," AJP 111 (1990), pp. 238-256.

33. On Livia's second marriage: Dio, 48.44; Suet. Aug. 69.1; Tac. Ann. 1.10.20. On Agrippina and Claudius: Suet. Claudius 26.

34. Hypocrisy of Livia and Augustus: Tac. Ann. 5.1. Agrippina and the freedmen: Dio, 59.33. Disease of the empire: Dio, 59.7, 59.3.4.

Chapter Six

Women and Subversion in Roman Historiography

Along with the celebration of Lucretia as a model of feminine patriotic virtue and the official exaltation of the matron's duty to her family and to the state, there was a powerful suspicion of ambitious women, expressed in misogynistic literature. Such suspicion was inspired by the belief that women could imperil or subvert the established order of things. The threat was more imaginary than real, since there is no factual record in Roman history of any politically motivated organization of women. Even the actions of the most notorious, such as Sempronia, Fulvia, Servilia, Agrippina, always centered on male relatives and had as their goal the advantage of their families. The instances of large numbers of women uniting to protest unpopular measures are rather isolated in Roman history; such demonstrations usually met with no opposition from the majority of the male population and did not reveal any permanent solidarity among women as a political class.¹ Yet the austere customs of yesteryear were often invoked by moralists as a positive foil against which the lack of discipline among contemporary women was compared. Writers such as Livy, Tacitus and Juvenal cast the erosion of family mores as a metaphor for social upheavals in general. The theme of the assertive matron who lords it over her husband is very often connected to that of the woman ruler of men.

On a few occasions this became dangerously close to reality with the exploits of Fulvia, Agrippina and of the women of the Severan dynasty. In foreign politics, the conflict with Cleopatra was represented as a titanic struggle of the manly Romans against a castrating female from the East. By and large, however, these are isolated cases in the vast expanse of centuries since Rome's foundation.

Moralistic historiography used female immorality to explain social and political conflicts which threatened the rule of the Patres. The threat could manifest itself either as an organized body of matrons or of strong-willed and daring individuals. In the speech of Cato against the repeal of the Oppian Law, revised by Livy, the protesting women are compared to the rebellious plebeians in the time of the struggle of the orders. In the Bacchanalian scandal, also narrated by Livy, the offenders of public morality are mostly women and simillimi feminis mares, men who are no longer men because they had subjected themselves to corrupted practices. Again in Livy matrons are responsible for poisoning a good number of primores civitatis. Sallust, Cicero and Dio also present well-bred ladies predisposed to join plots and rebellions aimed at de-stabilizing the state, either as accomplices (Sempronia) or as leaders (Fulvia). Other writers give us both individualized portraits of power-thirsty women and more generalized depictions: for an example of the former, see Tacitus' Livia and the two

Agrippinas; for the latter, the governor's wife in Ann.

3.33. The rhetorical topoi on which these portrayals and narratives are based were used in political propaganda and invective and had their origins in social reality. P. Slater observed that sexual and social inequalities tend to engender fear of retribution.² In the Roman world this fear was expressed in a variety of ways, most notably by myths of warrior women (the Amazons), homicidal spouses (the Lemnian women, the Danaids, Clytemnestra) and in the periodic threat of rebellions led by demagogues or slaves. A closer examination of the passages in question may help to clarify their cultural origins.

1. Triumphant Women: Cato and the Repeal of the Oppian Law

At the beginning of book 34 of his history, Livy relates a curious incident, sandwiched between the wars just terminated and those about to begin. The author describes it as "a trifling thing to relate, but one which was magnified into a violent contention on account of the passions it excited" (res parva dictu, sed quae studiis in magnum certamen excesserit). The tribunes of the people had proposed the repeal of the Oppian law, which restricted the possession and display of luxury items on the part of women; the motivation for passing such a decree--the hardships caused by the war against Hannibal--was no longer valid, they argued. Public opinion was split among those in favor

of the repeal and those against it, so that the matrons came out in a body to lobby the elected officials in favor of restoring their former privileges. Livy describes the scene as follows:

The matrons could not be kept at home by authority or modesty or orders by their husbands, but they besieged all the streets of the city and approaches to the forum, begging the men coming down to the forum that, in the prosperity of the state, when the private fortunes of all men were daily increasing, the matrons should be allowed to resume their former distinctions.

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

(34.1.5-6)

This paragraph contains in nuce the main elements of the episode: the contrast between matronae and viri; the rebellion against social and political standards, since the women ignore the commands of authority and of their own husbands (nec auctoritate . . . nec imperio virorum), as

well as those of socially dictated modesty; the military metaphors (limine contineri, imperium, obsidebant) oddly clashing with viros . . . orantes; and finally, the allusion to the past (pristinum). The images suggested are contradictory, since the women are represented both as mutinous soldiers and as plying the men with entreaties. As regards the bone of contention, the desire to wear former emblems of class distinction, the adjective pristinus implies a range of positive associations.³ Livy reports further that many men were sympathetic to the women's pleas, and that the motion for the repeal of the law had not been introduced by the women themselves, but by the tribunes of the people.

In spite of these considerations, the speech attributed to Cato on this occasion is replete with misogynistic, class-oriented rhetoric. According to A. Astin, the text of Cato's real speech may not have been preserved, and was probably not known to Livy. Nevertheless, even if based on Livy's inference of Cato's themes, the speech is instructive for the persistently negative characterization of women in the political arena. In recreating its gist, Livy institutes a parallel between the women's agitation and the plebeians' struggle that seems to transcend mere rhetorical hyperbole.⁴

In Livy's rendition of Cato's possible interpretation of the event, the unorthodox but substantially peaceful gathering of women--not only from the city but from the

surrounding areas as well--is likened to a catastrophe of the state: "Now that our liberty has been conquered at home by female violence, even here in the forum it is bruised and trampled upon, and because we have not kept them under control individually, now we are terrified of them collectively" (nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri hic quoque in foro obteritur et calcatur, et quia singulas non continuimus, universas horremus). With the exception of the qualifying muliebri, one may think that Cato is either speaking about real political adversaries or external enemies, to whom the rule of divide et impera must be applied.

The sentiment expressed by the phrase et quia singulas non continuimus, universas horremus recalls to a certain extent an analogous thought expressed by Tacitus in the Germania: speaking about the Germans' propensity to fight against one another, he hopes that there "may remain and endure for a long time among those peoples, if not the love toward us, at least the hatred among themselves, since when destiny threatens the empire, fortune can grant us nothing better than discord among the enemies" (Maneat, quaeso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui, quando urgentibus imperii fatis nihil iam praestare fortuna maius potest quam hostium discordiam).⁵ Cato's fictional speech seems to express an underlying fear of obliteration, as if, despite both the restrictions imposed on women by law

and tradition (auctoritate) and the women's awareness of their own political impotence (viros . . . orantes ut . . . matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur), it were within their power to turn the tables on men. The mythical example chosen by the speaker to prod his argument makes this evident:

Indeed I thought it a fable and a piece of fiction that, on a certain island, the whole male gender had been wiped out, root and branch, by a conspiracy of women; from no other class is there a greater danger, if you allow them meetings and gatherings and secret consultations.

Equidem fabulam et fictam rem ducebam esse, virorum omne genus in aliqua insula coniuratione muliebri ab stirpe sublatum esse; nullo ab genere non summum periculum est, si coetum et concilia et secretas consultationes esse sinas.

(2.2-4)

The implication that women are indeed a political group is made by associating the matrons with the plebeians, both on the linguistic level and by insinuating that the tribunes, representatives of the plebs and sponsors of the bill, have instigated the women's folly:

This feminine folly, whether it is spontaneous or

due to your instigation, M. Fundanus and L. Valerius, but which undoubtedly discredits the magistrates, I don't know whether it is more disgraceful to you, tribunes, or to the consuls: to you, if you have brought these women in to support tribunician seditions; to us, if we must accept laws forced upon us by a secession of women now, as once before by a secession of plebeians.

Haec consternatio muliebris, sive sua sponte sive auctoribus vobis, M. Fundani et L. Valeri, facta est, haud dubie ad culpam magistratum pertinens, nescio vobis, tribuni, an consulibus magis sit deformis; vobis, si feminas ad concitandas tribunicias seditiones iam adduxistis; nobis, si ut plebis quondam, sic nunc mulierum secessione leges accipiendae sunt.

(34.2.6-8)

The terminology used is distinctly political: seditio is the result of rivalry between two organized political groups (patricians and plebeians), for the purpose of revolting against the established order. It is commonly used by the optimates with reference to popular agitations provoked by the plebeians. Secessio also recalls the famous plebeian mass abandonment of Rome, and is regarded as a consequence of seditio. Coniuratio on the other hand

indicates a group of people bound by an oath for revolutionary purposes: the term is usually employed in a negative sense, to define a movement aiming at personal advantage instead of the common good.⁶ Regardless of their different social standing, the matrons are portrayed as being allied with the representatives of the lower classes, performing a function similar to that of the plebeians in an attempt to destroy Rome's cherished patriarchal oligarchy. While the plebeians had eventually been persuaded to remain as part of the existing system without radically altering its fabric, the women are perceived as bent on annihilating it without offering any viable alternative, only chaos and anarchy (omnium rerum libertatem, immo licentiam . . . desiderant). What makes capitulation to the women's pressure more dangerous than the concessions granted to the plebeians is, in Cato's eyes, the fear that the women's demands--unlike those of the plebeians--will escalate, and eventually lead to the establishment of total feminine domination: "As soon as they will begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors" (exemplo, simul pares esse coeperint, superiores erunt). Such an event would mean the end of Rome's supremacy over the rest of the world, supremacy achieved thanks to the "masculine" virtues of its leading class. If the women were allowed to take over by relaxing discipline, the scenario would not be different from the island quoted at the beginning of Cato's tirade:

the entire male gender would be symbolically wiped out, because in a society run by women's unrestrained licence "real" men would have no place. What women really want, according to Cato, is the opposite of what the Roman male elite has created by means of self-restraint, discipline and obedience to tradition and hierarchy.

The subversion of the established social and cultural order operated by the women's seizure of power is poignantly exemplified in the image of their triumph over the vanquished law: ". . . that we may be carried through the city as in triumphal parade over the law vanquished and abrogated and over the votes captured and snatched away from you [the Senators]; that there should be no limit to our spending and luxury" (. . . velut triumphantes de lege victa et abrogata et captis et ereptis suffragiis vestris per urbem vectemur; ne ullus modus sumptibus, ne luxuriae sit). The greatest masculine distinction in Rome, the triumphal parade, has been usurped by women; the victory has been celebrated not over foreign enemies that threaten Rome's stability, but over the very same laws that make such an order possible. The system of checks and balances implied by suffragiis and lege is countered by ne ullus modus, which suggest total lack of restraint not simply in spending and luxury, but especially the anarchy and chaos that eventually lead to tyranny.

2. Sex and Poisons

Women involved in activities aimed at de-stabilizing the status quo appear in another Livian narrative, that concerning the Bacchanalian scandal.⁷ The orgiastic cult of Bacchus, of Oriental origin, is here described as being based on the systematic annihilation of the social, cultural and familial bonds that defined Roman society. According to tradition, the nightly celebrations granted unrestrained sexual licence to all participants, culminating in the homosexual initiation of young men. However, the violation of the boundaries between male and female was not the only crime committed: perjury, forgery, and poisonings resulting in the death of relatives, were also practiced. The majority of the followers seem to have been women, many of them noble, and young men, also of noble families; their numbers were large, characterized by the consuls as a population within the population (alterum iam populum).⁸ Nevertheless, their forces were contemptible (nulla adhuc vires coniuratio), since they were constituted of women and effeminate (mulierum magna pars est . . . deinde simillimi feminis mares). Despite the type of activities promoted by the leaders, the object of the cult does not appear to have been the overthrow of the state. This goal is rather assumed by the consuls and by the senators:

Then a great fear caught hold of the Fathers, both for public safety, lest these conspiracies and

nocturnal gatherings might bring about some hidden treachery or danger, and privately for their own sakes, lest any of their own relatives be involved in the crimes.

Patres pavor ingens cepit, cum publico nomine, ne quid eae coniurationes coetusque nocturni fraudis occultae aut periculi importarent, tum privatim suorum cuiusque vicem, ne quis adfinis ei noxae esset.

(39.14.4)

The link between the predicament of the state and that of the senators' families is rather clearly established. It is reasonable to assume that quis adfinis may refer to the senator's wife as well as to members of her family. The senators' anxiety is motivated both by concern for their own political careers and also regarding the possibility of becoming victims of poisoning and forgery. Coincidentally, the leaders of the cult in Rome are said to be two members of the Roman plebs, another parallel, although far less univocal, with the episode of the repeal of the Oppian law.

The Bacchanalian scandal supplies a significant element that links matrons, immoral behavior and subversive attempts against family and state--poison. The equation of mulier impudica with venefica was an established rhetorical principle, since adultery--one consequence of the lack of

restraint (cf. ne ullus modus of Cato's speech)--impelled the guilty woman to eliminate the husband, obstacle to her passion. The veneficus and the mulier infamis are listed among the typical supporters of Catilina, along with the effeminate youths expert at spargere venena. In imperial times veneficia (in principem) was usually one of the charges--along with interest in the occult and consultation of Chaldean magi concerning the imperial family--brought against political rivals of the emperor and their adherents. Women were particularly susceptible to this charge, often combined with that of adulterium (Aemilia Lepida, connected with the group of families supporting Agrippina and Germanicus, and Claudia Pulchra, cousin and friend of Agrippina).⁹

According to Livy, the very first trial in Rome involving politically motivated poisoning took place in 334 B.C. and was so unprecedented as to be treated as a portent, an act of collective madness.¹⁰ The alleged culprits were a large group of matrons, the victims an equally large number of primores civitatis. Livy is inclined to believe that the sudden deaths may have been caused by epidemics fostered by the unhealthy climate. The official version preferred to attribute the deaths to human agency, and the matrons became a convenient scapegoat. Many of them were caught making concoctions they claimed to be medicamenta and were forced to drink their own potions. A group of them

died, another hundred and seventy were found guilty. Since the monstrosity of the event defied logical explanation, it was considered a portent and dealt with accordingly by magical means. Harmony (and health?) was restored by means of the same remedy that had healed the city after the secession of the plebeians many years before.

Poison, women and conspiracies are not always necessarily connected. In the context of Roman historiography, however, poison seems an appropriate metaphor for subversion, within the family structure and--in a wider context--within the state, since it attacks the body from the inside and is generally administered to the victim by trusted family members. In two of the passages examined, the matrons--the guardians and transmitters of family tradition--manufacture poisons used against their families (venena indidem intestinaeque caedes) and against the primores civitatis.¹¹

The episode of the alleged mass poisoning by the matrons also points to the ambivalence of medications, medicinal potions and remedies, which can be used for killing as well as for healing. The preparation of medications was originally a feminine activity involving the brewing of herbs and potions, probably connected with a woman's role as a midwife. With the development of more stratified societies the medical profession passed into the hands of men, free or slaves. Wealthy Roman households

included medical personnel, doctors and midwives, for the care of the familia. Yet the mistress of the house might demonstrate an interest in brewing home remedies, despite the presence of male doctors. The ambiguity of the practice is easily displaced onto its practitioners, so that one could easily imagine how Livia, to whom such ambiguity applied, acquired the reputation of a poisoner.¹²

3. Subversive Women

The supposed collusion between matrons and plebeians implied by Cato's speech and by the Bacchanalian rituals prompts the examination of a related topic--the perception that women allied themselves to the less worthy or disenfranchised elements of society, attempting to wrestle control from male authority figures, either the Senate, the emperor, or the paterfamilias. This collusion is represented in various ways: Tanaquil and Servius (the slave-prince), the younger Agrippina and the imperial freedmen, the faithless matrons and Catiline's ramshackle army, the wives of Roman governors and disreputable provincials. Although these examples range from legend to history to rhetorical topos, the pattern persists with minor variations.

This supposed alliance is clearly portrayed in Cicero's orations against Catiline: the dichotomy between the Patres, also referred to as Optimates and Boni by Cicero, and the chaotic rabble enlisted by Catiline assumes unequivocal

moral overtones. Cicero fondly reiterates the concept that his rival's forces are indeed contemptible because they are made up of the dregs of society, i.e., criminals, slaves, ruined veterans, immoral women and effeminate youths.¹³

In the first oration, Catiline is defined as a "rouser of slaves and ruined citizens" (evocatorem servorum et civium perditorum): among the many types of "ruined citizens" Cicero lists the mulier infamis as one of Catiline's cronies. Although Cicero chose not to elaborate on this point, Sallust specifically refers to the role that these women were expected to play when he describes the matron Sempronia. Her presence in the narrative seems puzzling; while it is generally agreed that she represents the female equivalent of Catiline, her role in the plot does not warrant the detailed portrayal she is given by Sallust. Except for a cursory mention at a later stage, she practically takes no part in the action. Syme tentatively identified her with an aunt of the famous Fulvia, wife of Antony, but failed to explain the incongruity between her characterization and her actual role in the conspiracy. B. Weiden Boyd, on the other hand, sees Sallust's emphasis on Sempronia as a moral judgment on the whole conspiracy and on the degeneration of Roman virtus in general: "Sempronia is both Catiline's complement and his ironic reverse: both use and abuse the products of luxuria to manipulate others . . . both represent a perversion of the natural order,

Catiline by his lack of virtus and Sempronia by her possession of its Ersatz, virilis audacia."¹⁴

She is one of many ladies of distinguished family who must resort to prostitution in order to cope with their expensive and extravagant life-style. Deeply mired in debt, they are recruited by Catiline, with the task of securing the support of the city slaves: "Through them Catiline thought he could tempt the city slaves to his side and set fire to the city, and either attach their husbands to himself or else do away with them" (Per eas Catilina credebat posse servitia urbana sollicitare, urbem incendere viros earum vel adiungere sibi vel interficere)(Sall., B. C. 24). These women are the anti-Lucretias, who hold their modesty in little account and who, one may assume, would not be above using their charms to attract slaves (Sallust does not really explain by which means they were to stir up city slaves). In a different speech (Pro Caelio), Cicero draws a picture of the social arena in which a woman like Sempronia operated. The matron lambasted in this piece is Clodia, a woman who, like Sempronia, had all she could want--noble family, noble husband (whom she was rumoured to have poisoned), wealth and beauty. Her biggest fault, in Cicero's eyes, was that of being the sister of his bitter political rival Clodius, tribune of the people and demagogue. The condition of her house represents, in microcosm, that of a state left to the whims of women and

slaves:

Who in fact, o judges, does not see or ignores this, that, in such a house, where the mistress of the house lives like a prostitute, where nothing is done that could be mentioned in public, where orgies, debauchery, luxury, all the most unthinkable vices and crimes are carried out, the slaves are no longer slaves, to whom all tasks are entrusted, by whom all is accomplished, who participate in the same pleasures . . .

Quis enim hoc non videt, iudices, aut quis ignorat, in eius modi domo in qua mater familias meretricio more vivat, in qua nihil geratur quod foras proferendum sit, in qua lustra, libidines, luxuries, omnia denique inaudita vitia ac flagitia versentur, hic servos non esse servos, quibus omnia committantur, per quos gerantur, qui versentur isdem in voluptatibus . . .

(23.57)

As in the Bacchanalian scandal, the quest for unrestrained licence has undermined the orderly activity of the household hierarchy, so that in its place there is undifferentiated anarchy, and the slaves are on equal footing with the domina. The word mater familias conjures up images of traditional respectability and even sanctity, in jarring

contradiction to the phrase meretricio more. In a reversal of roles, women like Clodia and Sempronia, who possess all the requisites necessary to be good guardians of the household, instead of protecting their husbands from danger or joining them in their exile or death, may destroy them by dragging them into fatal enterprises. Along with the effeminate youths amply described by Cicero, these women constitute Catiline's "elite body-guard of whores" (Catilinae scortorum cohortem praetoriam), a poor match against the forces of virtue and of the Senate.¹⁵

Despite Cicero and Sallust's insistence on the perverted creatures who formed Catiline's following, the conspirators also counted among their numbers "respectable" men, wealthy men (horum omnium species est honestissima, sunt enim locupletes), and ruined Sullan veterans who, if nothing else, were exercitatione robustum, a group inured to fatigue; however, the leader's favorites are the soft and debauched young men:

these boys so smooth and delicate have been taught not only to love and be loved, or to dance and sing, but also to stab and poison. . . . Indeed what do these wretches want for themselves? Are they going to take their girlies along to camp?

Hi pueri tam lepidi ac delicati non solum amare et amari, neque saltare et cantare, sed etiam sicas

vibrare et spargere venena didicerunt . . . Verum tamen quid sibi isti miseri volunt? Num suas secum mulierculas sunt in castra ducturi?

(2.10.22-23)

There seems to be little difference between these young men and the women conspirators, if one compares their description with that given by Sallust of the matron Sempronia:

But among these was Sempronia, who had often committed many crimes of masculine daring . . . she was learned in Greek and Latin letters, could play the lyre and dance more gracefully than an honest woman needs, and had many other accomplishments which minister to voluptuousness . . . but even before she had broken her word, repudiated her debts, been accessory to murder; poverty and extravagance had driven her headlong.

Sed in eis erat Sempronia, quae multa saepe virilis audaciae facinora commiserat . . . litteris Graecis et Latinis docta, psallere et saltare elegantius, quam necesse est probae, multa alia, quae instrumenta luxuriae sunt . . . Sed ea saepe antehac fidem prodiderat, creditum abiuraverat, caedis conscia fuerat, luxuria atque inopia praeceps abierat.

(Bellum Catil. 25.2-4)

Both categories, that of the promiscuous women and that of the dainty young men, present similar and interchangeable characteristics: for instance, the young men are expert dancers and singers, like Sempronia, objects and subjects of love (amare et amari) and skilled poisoners. Both types have been brought to such depths by their love of money, luxury and unrestrained licence. Love of luxury, typical of women, emasculates men and renders them simillimi feminis: their skill as poisoners symbolizes this, since poisoning, given its association with duplicity, was considered by Romans to be a typically feminine crime.¹⁶

Sempronia, on the other hand, is said to have often committed crimes of virilis audaciae. These being Catiline's picked troops, the struggle against him pits the forces of virtue, order, freedom, all embodied by the Senate, against those of vice, chaos and tyranny. Since the Senate is Rome's exclusively male governing body, the implication is that virtue, order and freedom are associated with "masculine" ethos; could their opposites symbolize "feminine" chaos and anarchy?

4. Female tyrants

Lack of self-restraint, violent passions and a thirst for power characterize women as a category and as individuals when they allow their personal ambition to encroach on male territory. Without adequately strict control, there would be a breakdown of those social and

cultural distinctions and differentiations which regulated Roman society and permitted its functioning. For instance, the unrestrained sexual licence fostered by the Bacchanalia accompanied criminal acts against family and property (forgery, perjury). Catiline's favorite accomplices are represented as liminal, men who behaved like women and women who committed manly crimes. The abolition of demarcations between the feminine and masculine spheres of action engenders confusion and lawlessness, eventually leading to tyranny. This is exemplified by Tacitus' description of the evils caused by the governor's wife and by Appian and Dio's narration of Fulvia's actions.¹⁷

Fulvia is no great favorite of Roman writers, who universally stress the negative sides of her character, in particular her supposed lack of femininity; this was taken to explain her desire to rule over men. Her early years, spent in the socially acceptable roles of wife and mother, are almost totally ignored in the assessment of her character. Instead, she has left her mark in history as the bloodthirsty virago who instigated the Perusine War and the savage proscriptions that cost Cicero his head.

With reference to the theme of women triumphing over the symbols of male authority (cf. Cato's speech), Dio reports an incident in which Fulvia, at the height of her power as wife of Antony and mother-in-law of Octavian, granted the triumph to her brother-in-law Lucius for a

victory he had not achieved. She is represented as ruling as a queen, her will being law for both the senate and the representatives of the people, neither of which dared to contradict her. She initially refused Lucius' request for the undeserved triumphal honors, probably because, as Förtsch assumes, it seemed a ridiculous request; yet later on, "when her favor was courted" (ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐκέλευθ' ἑραπευθεῖσα), she changed her mind and granted it.¹⁸

Dio presents the incident as being dictated by the whims of a vain woman, who incidentally seems to respond, in a stereotypically feminine way, to flattery. Perhaps Fulvia's initial refusal may be better explained by her desire not to let anything--not even a mock-triumph--distract the Romans' attention from Antony's own achievements. Her subsequent change of heart may likewise have been motivated by a desire to add to the family's many successful enterprises, in competition with those of young Octavian's, who at that time was also her son-in-law. Dio alludes to the fact that she, more than Lucius, boasted of the triumph, and with good reason: except for the fact that he donned the triumphal garb and went through the motions of the ceremony, it was Fulvia who--to all effects--was celebrating the victory.¹⁹

Lucius is therefore degraded to the role of actor and impersonator in a show that, in substance, has become similar to those in the Circus. This time, however, the

show is not offered to the crowds by a state official to enhance the importance of his family, but by a woman who, though powerful, has no public office. The analogies with Cato's metaphor of the triumphant women are striking. This triumph is likewise celebrated only superficially over Rome's external enemies, while actually it is over Rome herself, since Fulvia has usurped all the prerogatives of the governing bodies. She enjoys not only the senate's decision-making power, but also acts as a general and commander-in-chief, and not just by proxy. After the capture of Praeneste, she conducted deliberations with her associates and, with the sword at her side, passed the watchword and occasionally harangued the troops.²⁰

It is hardly surprising that such a radical departure from standard expectations of feminine behavior earned her the antipathy of supporters and foes alike, who concur in representing her as an androgynous creature, totally uninterested in proper feminine activities and lacking any sentiment of solidarity for her fellow women.²¹ On the other hand, her single-minded devotion to Antony is evident, since in his absence she undertook to lead the struggle against his rival Octavian: her extreme means were commensurate with the extremity of the situation.

Fulvia's behavior, hardly the standard specimen for a Roman matron, came in response to a troubled political situation she had not created. Nevertheless, the type of

anti-female rhetoric that animates Cato's speech survived through the centuries and found a complement in the speech delivered by Caecina Severus many centuries later against the presence of the magistrates' wives in the provinces. While Cato had imagined the women celebrating a hypothetical and symbolic triumph over the male social order, Caecina pictures them as having taken over the command of the troops and of the provinces, stressing the harmful consequences.

His opening remarks establish that the presence of women among the soldiers runs against the grain of the Roman character, the army being the ultimate male institution and the foundation of Rome's power: military camps were traditionally off-limits to respectable women, regardless of the amount of power they enjoyed. Even Livia, at the height of her authority, never set foot in the camp of the pretorian guard.²² On the other hand, a few Roman examples to the contrary could be found, and some even of women celebrated for their virtue.

The presence of women in the army was considered alien to Roman tradition, a characteristic of either barbaric or effete people. For instance, some Macedonian queens of barbarian origin were at home both in the palace and on the battlefield. Their last descendant was Cleopatra, who insisted on taking part in military action to the chagrin and demoralization of Antony's Roman soldiers. Later, Zenobia of Palmyra led her armies against Parthians and

Romans, while Boudicca was the sole leader of the British revolt against the Romans (at her death the revolt fell apart). The Syrian women of the Severan dynasty were actively present in the army, as Julia Domna's title Mater Castrorum indicates. As their origins denote, most of these women were Eastern (Cleopatra, Zenobia, the Severans), which places them within a certain tradition. Caecina contends that, if wives were allowed in the camps, the well-ordered march of the Roman legions would come to resemble the procession of a barbarian army.

The term barbarus is rather generic, applied to anyone beyond the pale of Roman culture. The Germans were accustomed to taking along wives and children on some military expeditions, as their presence was thought to spur the men to fight more bravely.²³ In the present context, however, the image conjured up seems to refer more to the corteges of Eastern monarchs, who were notorious for hampering the effectiveness of their forces by sometimes dragging their harems on the march, along with their retinues and baggage. The luxury of such corteges had on occasion demoralizing effects on the undisciplined Eastern armies. This seems to be implied by the juxtaposition of luxus and formido in Caecina's claim "that they impede the attainment of peace with their luxury, the conduct of warfare with their cowardice" (pacem luxu, bellum formidine morentur), since luxury and cowardice were recognizable

characteristics of a stereotypical East."⁴

The main inconveniences presented by women on the march were not just due to the general weakness of the gender, but especially to the dangers arising from their alleged lack of discipline and restraint. This is the old Catonian theme of feminine licence (cf. Livy, 34.2.14) with a vengeance: "if given free rein, they are cruel, intriguing, power-thirsty" (si licentia adsit, saevum, ambitiosum, potestatis avidum). The women make themselves commanders-in-chief, in a manner analogous to Fulvia's: "They parade among the soldiers, have the centurions at their beck and call; recently a woman presided over the exercises of the cohorts, and at the manoeuvres of the legions" (incedere inter milites, habere ad manum centuriones; praesedissee nuper feminam exercitio cohortium, decursu legionum). After this, the next step for the governor's wife is that of setting up, to all effects, a dyarchy:

there are two potentates to salute in the streets, two government houses, the more headstrong and autocratic orders coming from the women who, once kept at bay by the Oppian and other laws, have now cast their chains and rule supreme in the home, in the courts, and by now in the army itself.

duorum egressus coli, duo esse praetoria,
pervicacibus magis et impotentibus mulierum iussis

quae, Oppiis quondam aliisque legibus constrictae,
nunc vinclis exsolutis, domos, fora, iam et
exercitus regerent.

(3.33.4)

The rule established by the women is therefore the worst form of tyranny for the helpless provincials. Women, generally speaking, are wild and untamed animals unable to set limits to their own licence, cruel, ready for intrigue and power-thirsty. Because of this, they tend to attract the basest local elements, who court the favor of the magistrates' wives because the women have taken all business into their own hands.

The passages examined so far deal with various Roman instances which, despite differences in chronology, reiterate the same theme, i.e., that the alienation of women from the political process is essential to the welfare of the state. Any inroad made by women into politics is perceived by most historians as a fundamental alteration of the natural order of things, not just of the hierarchy within the state. Nowhere else are these tenets more clearly displayed than in the mythology surrounding the battle of Actium, which in unambiguous and redundant terms exploits the opposition of Virtue/Masculinity/Rome/Octavian versus Corruption/Femininity/East/Cleopatra.

Octavian's harangue to the troops before the battle of Actium, as Dio imagined it, is instructive in its lack of

subtlety.²⁵ After having established the inherent righteousness of his cause by identifying it with the Roman cause, Octavian elucidates the reasons underlying the conflict, which at the same time constitute implicitly the conditions for his success:

For we, who are Romans and lords of the greatest and best portion of the world, should be despised and trodden underfoot by an Egyptian woman, it is unworthy of our fathers . . .

Τὸ γάρ τοι Ρωμαίους τε ὄντας καὶ τῆς πλείστης καὶ ἀρίστης οἰκουμένης ἀρχοντίας καταφρονεῖσθαι καὶ καταπατεῖσθαι πρὸς γυναικὸς Αἰγυπτίας ἀνάξιον μὲν τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν

(50.24.3)

The sentiments expressed in this sentence echo those of Cato's speech in Livy (nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri) and also the words of the consul concerning the Bacchanalian threat (nulla adhuc vires coniuratio): men chafing at the arrogance of the women who threaten their superiority while at the same time needing to belittle their opponents as unworthy, as women and simillimi feminis mares, perhaps to reassure themselves of their own superiority. Here the contrast between the superiority of the Romans and the inferiority of the present enemy is stressed by the enumeration of the mighty peoples previously

conquered by Rome, enemies who were much more formidable than the present one because they were "masculine" and savage (Cimbri, Ambrones, Gauls, Pannonians, Germans, Britons). Now instead, Octavian's troops face

Alexandrians and Egyptians (what worse or what truer name could one apply to them?), who worship reptiles and beasts as gods, who embalm their own bodies to give them a semblance of immortality, who are most reckless in effrontery but most feeble in courage and who, worst of all, are slaves to a woman and not to a man?

Ἄλεξανδρείς τε καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι ὄντες (τί γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο τις αὐτοὺς χεῖρον ἢ ἀληθέστερον εἰπεῖν ἔχοι;) καὶ τὰ μὲν ἔρπετὰ καὶ τ' ἄλλα θηρία ὥσπερ τινὰς θεοὺς θεραπεύοντες, τὰ δὲ σώματα τὰ σφέτερα ἐξ δόξαν ἀθανασίας ταριχεύοντες, καὶ θρασύνασθαι μὲν προπετέστατοι ἀνδρῖσασθαι δὲ ἀσθενέστατοι ὄντες, καὶ τὸ μέγιστον γυναικὶ ἀντ' ἀνδρός δουλεύοντες.

(50.24.6-7)

Egypt is represented as a place in which natural hierarchies have been inverted: animals are gods, corpses seem immortal and men willingly submit to a woman ruler, when submitting to a man would be bad enough. This sentiment can be compared to that expressed by Tacitus in Germania 45: "The Sitones are for all other things similar to the Suiones,

except that they are dominated by a woman: to such an extent they degenerate not just from liberty but from slavery as well" (Suionibus Sitonum gentes continuatur. Cetera similes uno differunt, quod femina dominatur: in tantum non modo a libertate sed etiam a servitute degenerant). Dio repeats the concept endlessly and without nuance: back in Alexandria from the Actium fiasco, Cleopatra enrolled her son Caesarion and Antyllus, son of Antony, among the youths of military age, so that the Egyptians would feel reassured, since they finally had a man for their king.

Not only does the rule of a woman over men constitute servitude, it also contradicts nature. The threat that Cleopatra poses to the Romans and their order is much more elemental than the loss of prestige and possessions. She does not merely turn men into slaves, but into actual women: Roman knights and senators fawn upon her like eunuchs. Antony, once imperator, has worn himself out playing the woman (γυναικί(ζ)ει) and, putting himself physically in the company of eunuchs, followed her chair on foot with her eunuchs when she rode into town.²⁶ One could almost add that Antony seems to follow her chair as a captive would follow a triumphal parade. Cleopatra is assimilated to a witch, a novel Circe, but more dangerous: Circe externalized men's bestiality, Cleopatra eliminates their masculinity (cf. the island of murderous women in Cato's speech).

Both she and her flock bring disease and contagion:

she is demens, ebria, lymphata in Horace's Ode 1.37, adjectives that indicate lack of self-control due to insanity and intoxication. Her followers, through whom she plans to conquer Rome herself, are effeminate tainted with disease (contaminato cum grege turpium/ morbo virorum 37.9-10). Their pollution threatens to weaken Roman courage and manliness, transforming the masters of the world into near-women, as the fate of Antony proves. It is therefore a matter of survival for the Romans to maintain unsullied the legacy of their forefathers in all its patriarchal strictness:

And yet I can tell you of no greater prize than to maintain the renown of your forefathers, to preserve your own proud traditions, to take vengeance on those who revolt against us, to avenge yourselves on those who insult you, to conquer and rule all mankind and to allow no woman to make herself equal to a man.

Καίτοι μείζον οὐδὲν ἂν ἄλλο φῆσαιμι ὑμῖν
 προσκεῖσθαι τοῦ τὸ ἀξίωμα τὸ τῶν προγόνων
 διασῶσαι, τοῦ τὸ φρόνημα τὸ οἰκεῖον φυλάξαι, τοῦ
 τοὺς ἀφεστηκότας ἀφ' ἡμῶν τιμωρήσασθαι, τοῦ τοὺς
 ὑβρίζοντας ὑμᾶς ἀμύνασθαι, τοῦ πάντων ἀνθρώπων
 νικήσαντας ἀρχειν, τοῦ μηδεμίαν γυναῖκα περιορᾶν
 μηδενὶ ἀνδρὶ παριστουμένην

(50.28.3-4)

In Dio's reproduction of Octavian's speech the motifs employed by Livy in his speech for Cato have come full circle: feminine arrogance and desire to be not just equal to a man but to rule over him; the perceived threat of obliteration of male hierarchical order from a feminine, i.e., feminized, enemy (the myth of the island of women, Cleopatra and her eunuchs, Bacchanalian revelers and revolutionaries); lawlessness and corruption in government caused by feminine licence and love of power (the governor's wife). All these very disturbing elements are conveniently summed up in the legendary figure of Cleopatra, a foreigner onto whom internal Roman weaknesses could be projected: her defeat allowed the Roman writers to exorcize, for a while, the spectre of female domination.

The women examined so far were perceived as threatening to Roman patriarchal and oligarchical values on account of their unconventional behavior, which openly challenged the distinction between "proper" political activity for women (peace-makers, links to political alliances)--and was either passive or unofficial--and the public sphere reserved exclusively for males. In Cleopatra's case, aberrant behavior is attributed to her foreign origin, while in Fulvia's it is emphasized as lack of femininity, to the detriment of her more conventional activities of wife and mother. Sempronia is also represented as somewhat virile in her criminal enterprises and intellectual capacities.

Visible aberration from the norm, however, is not the conditio sine qua non for being regarded as a potential threat to the system: the converse can be equally true. Roman history abounds in examples of women of conventional feminine virtues who alarm authorities by becoming the rallying point of political opposition. Lucretia was the first to use her virtue to destabilize monarchy; Cornelia, the spotless mother of the Gracchi, was believed to be somehow responsible for her sons' revolutionary politics and was even suspected of having assassinated her son-in-law Scipio Aemilianus for opposing her son Tiberius.²⁷

5. Can "Good Women" Be Trusted?

Let us now consider the example of the elder Agrippina, a woman of "notable fruitfulness and resplendent chastity" (insigni fecunditate, praeclara pudicitia), who posed a serious threat to Tiberius' rule. She could, in fact, rally around her not only the civilian opposition but also part of the troops, loyal to the memory of her father and her husband, and who were also impressed by her strength of character.²⁸

Because of such strength, she is portrayed as masculine (virilibus curis feminarum vitia exuerat), despite her many children and her obsessive devotion to her husband. Already at her first appearance Tacitus, an admirer of hers--at least superficially--points out that her personality may, in other circumstances, be a liability rather than an

asset (quamvis indomitum animum), since quamvis reveals a certain ambivalence. This ambivalence becomes apparent in her obituary, where Tacitus uses the phrases aequi impatiens, dominandi avida to describe her personality. These are hardly complimentary terms, since the ideas they express remind us of Cato's extemplo, simul pares esse coeperint, superiores erunt.²⁹

By her death Agrippina became a heroine. Had she lived and prospered, she would have been a female tyrant like her daughter Agrippina and like Fulvia long before her. Her active involvement in her husband's army life brought her to Germany during the mutiny at the death of Augustus. Her supporters asserted that the sight of her leaving the camp put the mutineers to shame and helped to end the revolt. The reality may have been very different.³⁰ During these same years, Agrippina assumed on one occasion the duties of a general by preventing the panicky soldiers from demolishing a bridge on the Rhine; later she stood at the head of the same bridge thanking and praising the returning troops. On this occasion she also displayed her motherly side by personally caring for the sick and wounded. Her magnanimity toward the soldiers was, probably correctly, perceived by those close to Tiberius as another "publicity stunt," much like the display of little Gaius in his little army boots. She, more than Germanicus, seemed to be Tiberius' rival: "Already Agrippina counted for more with

the armies than any general or generalissimo; a woman had quenched a rebellion which the imperial name had failed to stop" (Potio^{re}m iam apud exercitus Agrippinam quam legatos, quam duces: compressam a muliere seditionem, cui nomen principis obsistere non quiverit).³¹ Taken alone, this sentence could be construed as approval of Agrippina's involvement, since the result of her actions seems to be the pacification of troops vital to the survival of the empire: she is here performing a meritorious service similar to that of Coriolanus' mother and wife and to that of the Sabine women. Yet the tone of the entire paragraph registers disapproval, probably even from Tacitus himself, although he can disguise it behind Tiberius' persona:

Nothing would be left for the commanders-in-chief to do when a woman inspects the units, approaches the standards and plans for money distributions . . . a woman had quenched a rebellion which the imperial name had failed to stop.

Nihil relictum imperatoribus ubi femina manipulos intervisat, signa adeat, largitionem temptet . . . compressam a muliere seditionem, cui nomen principis obsistere non quiverit.

(1.69)

The woman who inspects the units and distributes money to the soldiers recalls the image of the governor's wife, as

well as the improper behavior attributed to Agrippina's rival Plancina.³² Yet despite these indications, Agrippina was exalted as a standard of ideal womanhood, particularly after Germanicus' death:

Nothing however sank deeper into Tiberius' breast than the kindling of men's enthusiasm for Agrippina: the glory of her country, the last scion of Augustus, the peerless pattern of ancient virtue, so they styled her; and, turning to heaven and the gods, they prayed for the continuation of her issue, that they may survive their persecutors.

Nihil tamen Tiberium magis penetravit quam studia hominum accensa in Agrippinam, cum decus patriae, solum Augusti sanguinem, unicum antiquitatis specimen appellarent versique ad caelum ac deos integram illi subolem ac superstitem iniquorum precarentur.

(3.4)

Decus patriae, unicum antiquitatis specimen remind the reader of those qualities that Lucretia represented; the opposition of the virtuous matron to the tyrant can also be applied to the contrast between Agrippina and Tiberius. Ironically, the "tyrant" Tiberius vainly tried to harmonize the reality of the principate with the old-fashioned

republican ideal so dear to history writers like Tacitus and Livy. Agrippina's children, on the other hand, Caligula and his sister Agrippina, turned out to be scourges for Rome.

6. Conclusion

Women as uncontrollable, savagely ambitious, bent on affirming themselves over the community, unable to tolerate equality--this is the standard image projected by Roman historians, satirists and even poets. The vitia commonly attributed to women, lack of modesty and chastity, unruliness, arrogance, luxury, do not appear to be a source of so much concern as the virilis audacia and curae of the women who, by all other evidence, seem to conform most closely to the male standards of the feminine ideal. Fulvia's reputation discounts the uneventful years spent as mother and wife (which account for most of her life) and is based instead exclusively on her political activity. Agrippina is viewed with ambivalence, despite her proven virtue, because of her imperious and ambitious nature. This deep undercurrent of distrust of women, perceived as eroding the principles on which the community and the empire had been built, invests even the virtuous, when she is suspected of personal ambition. This is, along with the commonly acknowledged motives (rhetorical topoi, political invective, satire of customs), an essential element recognizable in the foundation of the myth of Livia.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. B. Förtsch, Die politische Rolle der Frau in der Römischen Republik (Stuttgart 1935) p. 56. Appian B. C., 4.32, regarding lack of solidarity among women: Fulvia's rude behavior toward the delegation of women protesting the Triumvirs' unfair taxation.
2. Cf. P. Slater, The Glory of Hera (Boston 1968), pp. 237-240, for a cross-cultural comparison of distrust of women and fear of retribution in Greek and Arab society, and 255 n. 13 on myths of "primeval matriarchy"; pp. 244-247 on Arab obsession of wives' affairs with African slaves; pp. 251-253 on Arab wife seen as a sorceress, and p. 254 on the more destructive character of the sorceress in Greek myth (Medea).
3. Livy, 34.1-4. The adjective is often used in conjunction with words like mores (in vobis resident mores pristini, Plaut. Truc. 7), virtus (uti suae pristinae virtutis memoriam retinerent, Caes. Gal. 2.21.2), gloria (quem pulsi pristina Turni . . . gloria tollit, Verg. Aen. 10.143) in a positive connotation.
4. A. Astin, Cato the Censor (Oxford 1978), pp. 25-26.
5. Tac. Ger. 33.
6. J. Hellegouarc'h, Le Vocabulaire Latin des Relations et des Partis Politiques sous la République (Paris 1963), pp. 95-96, 135-137.
7. Livy, 39.8-19.
8. Hellegouarc'h (above, n. 6), p. 515; populus refers generally to the entire population, without class distinction, although at times Livy uses it as a synonym for plebs.
9. Ad Herennium 4.16.23; Quint., Inst. Or. 5.11.39: equation of poisoning with adultery; cf. also F. Santoro L'hoir, The Rhetoric of Gender Terms (Leiden 1992), p. 41 n. 36. Tac. Ann. 3.22, on Aem. Lepida, and 4.52.2 on Cl. Pulchra. Cic. In Cat. 2.4.7, 2.10.23 on poisoners among Catilina's accomplices.
10. Livy, 8.18.5-10.
11. Livy, 39.8.8.

12. R. Briffault, The Mothers (New York 1927) vol. 1, pp. 485-489 on women surgeons and doctors in various societies ancient and modern. M. Alic, Hypatia's Heritage (Boston 1986), pp. 30-32 on women's medical expertise in ancient times. Cf. also J. A. Scutt, "Schemers, Dragons, and Witch-esses: Criminal Justice and the Fair Sex" in Stereotypes of Women in Power, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York 1992), p. 191. S. Treggiari "Jobs in the Household of Livia," PBSR 63 (1975), pp. 48-77, esp. p. 56.
13. Cic. In Cat. 2.3.5; 2.4.7; 2.5.10; 2.10.22-23; 2.11.24-25. Cf. the consul's statement regarding the Bacchanalian adepts in Livy 39.15.8-10.
14. R. Syme, Sallust (Berkeley 1964), pp. 133-135; B. Weiden Boyd, "Virtus Effeminata and Sallust's Sempronia," TAPA 117 (1987), pp. 183-201, esp. pp. 183-182 nn. 2, 4 and 5 on the puzzle of Sempronia's characterization, and pp. 185, 197-199 on her value as moral exemplum.
15. Sall. B. C. 24.4 on the task of women conspirators. Cic. Pro Caelio 23.57 on Clodia. CIL 6.1527, laudatio Turiae on women who protected their husbands. Cic. In Cat. 2.11.24 on effeminate and whores. See also B. Weiden Boyd (above, n. 14), pp. 188-190 on effeminate youths.
16. B. Weiden Boyd (above, n. 14), p. 193 on luxury as emasculating. Livy 8.18; Juv. 1.69-72, 6.610-26, Tac. Ann. 2.69-75, 3.7, 3.13, 3.17, 3.22, 4.52, on poison as a feminine weapon.
17. Livy 34.2.13-14. Tac. Ann. 3.33. Appian, C. W. 4.32. Dio, 48.10.4.
18. Vell. Pat. 2.74.3, Florus, 2.16.2, Cic. Phil. 2.3, Plut. Ant. 10.30 for a negative assessment of Fulvia. See also C. Babcock, "The Early Career of Fulvia," AJP 86, 1, pp. 1-32 and B. Förtsch (above, n. 1) p. 111; Appian CW 48.4.2.
19. Dio, 48.4.1-5: "It was Fulvia herself who seemed to be giving the spectacle, employing him as her assistant." See also Förtsch (above, n. 1), p. 111.
20. Dio, 48.10.4. With respect to triumphing by proxy, Livia was symbolically present to her family's triumphs, since the men of her family used wreaths taken from her "miraculous" laurel (Suet. Galba 1).
21. Appian, B. C. 4.32.

22. Tac. Ann. 3.33: Caecina Severus' speech. Dio, 57.12.3: Livia's discretion.
23. F. Santoro L'hoir (above, n. 9), pp. 124-126: Tacitus' approval of the subordinate and supporting role of the German women, in war as well as in peace, is indicated on the rhetorical level by his use of the word femina (noble woman, both in terms of class and of character) more often than mulier (general term).
24. Besides the many anti-Eastern tirades and remarks in the Aeneid (for instance, 4.193-194, 9.598-620, 11.768-777) see also Georg. 2.172, Appian B. C. praefatio 9, Dio, 50.24.6.
25. Dio, 50.5.2-51.6.
26. Dio 50.27.4 (γυναικεῖως θρυπιτόμενον), 27.7.
27. Plut. Tib. Gr. 8.5, App. B. C. 1.20.83.
28. Tac. Ann. 1.41.
29. Tac. Ann. 1.33.3, 4.52.2, 6.35.2-3; cf. Livy, 34.3.3.
30. See D. Hurley, "Gaius Caligula in the Germanicus Tradition," AJP 110 (1989), pp. 316-338.
31. Tac. Ann. 1.69.
32. Tac. Ann. 2.55.6.

Chapter Seven

Livia's Legend: The Poisoning Noverca

By way of conclusion, we return to the problem contained in the title of this study. Concentrating on the negative portrayal of Livia by Tacitus, this chapter examines the linkage between the Roman literary representation of threatening female conduct (examined in the previous two chapters) and the legend of Livia, noverca and poisoner.

The strands that compose the legend are diverse; one element in particular, namely the ambivalent relationship between the upper-class Roman male and his mother (exemplified by the conflict of Tiberius with Livia, of Nero with Agrippina) remains to be examined in its social and literary implications. Allowing for cultural differences between Greeks and Romans, ambivalent mother-son relationships in Rome share general features with those examined and discussed by P. Slater between their Greek counterparts.¹ Rome was, like Greece, a patriarchal society in which the authority vested in most of the magistracies--with the exception of the tribunate--derived from and was modelled on that of the paterfamilias. The political competence and skills of upper-class women could not find an outlet in public office, but were deflected onto other networking activities (match-making, patronage), which were essential to the political success of their family.

This networking degenerated on occasion into intrigue, hence the misogynist rhetoric of Cicero against Clodia and Fulvia, of Sallust against Sempronia and, in imperial times, of Tacitus against Livia, Agrippina the Younger, Poppea and many other ambitious upper-class females.² The desire to support, advance and protect her own son(s) may often have driven an elite Roman mother to extremes, both in terms of demands on her own son(s) and with respect to her treatment of competing members of her husband's family. Thus, "the protecting mother was all too often found to be simultaneously acting the wicked step-mother."³

The stepmother, already at a remove from the natural order, and thus an apt object of suspicions not readily cast on the natural mother, begins a sequence of shadings that include the witch and the poisoner. The notorious queen of "Snow White," a stepmother who transforms herself into a witch and delivers a poisoned apple--all this to prevent her stepdaughter's accession to her rightful throne--embodies the fluidity with which one of these figures migrates into another. The crimes of stepmothers in Roman literature also have as their aim the disinheritance of the legitimate heir, not to mention the appropriation of the unsuspecting husband's property. Poison, the insidious instrument of such aims, makes explicit an ambivalence vis-à-vis food, which in turn reflects back on the primary source of nutrition--the mother (figs and mushrooms were suspect in

the deaths of Augustus and Claudius respectively). A similar bifurcation applies to medicine, given that the preparation of medicaments and poisons were the province of a common art (and originally the vocation of witches). The lanificium and veneficium, seemingly contradictory components of Livia's historiographical representation, are in fact symptoms of this same ambivalence. The following pages examine 1) the ambivalent mothers in Roman historiography with a focus on Livia and the Agrippinas, 2) mother-figures in the context of Livia's iconographical representations as Ceres-Demeter and Cybele, and 3) the traditional figure of the noverca in Roman literature, and the witch, often linked to the noverca.

1. Good Mothers, Bad Mothers, Dangerous Mothers

The common ground between Livia and Agrippina the Younger lies in their own ambition, which manifested itself in a desire to control their respective sons, for whose sake they had intrigued, committed crimes and, in Livia's case, even gone through fire. In both cases, the relationship between mother and son quickly became intensely antagonistic and resulted in abandonment for Livia, death for Agrippina. Yet, despite these extreme instances, motherly ambition was expected and encouraged by the Romans, since the mother was supposed to be her son's first and foremost mentor in matters of virtue and family tradition. Moreover, Roman girls as well as boys were likely to be influenced by their

ancestors' achievements and by the sight of their busts and masks, displayed in the atrium and paraded at funerals. Children sometimes attained primacy among their peers on account of their mothers' lineage as well as that of their fathers.'

Womens involvement in their family's key political decisions was a matter of course, provided the advantage of the family was sought, not the gratification of personal ambition and pride. Given the fluidity of most upper-class marriage arrangements, it was mainly through her son(s) that a woman could reach beyond the limitations of her social condition and play an active role in politics. Augustus' beloved sister Octavia had been active in politics, but her personal goals had been subsumed by those of her husband and brother. In the midst of her rather boring perfection, however, a fissure appeared: signs of personal ambition, to be realized through her son Marcellus, were frustrated by his untimely death. They were openly revealed by her undignified mourning and, especially, by her bitterness toward Livia and her sons.⁵

If Octavia's ambition manifested itself clearly only toward the end of her life, that of Agrippina the Elder soon became evident, and justly suspicious, particularly her cultivation of the army's favor through her own person and those of her children. Some of her children were born or raised on the Northern frontier and in the camps, and Gaius

in particular was carried around dressed as a tiny soldier. After the aborted revolt of the German legions a number of stories began to circulate, probably with Agrippina's approval, concerning her own adventures and those of little Gaius/Caligula, as well as those of Germanicus. In addition to having occasionally usurped the prerogatives of male officers, she clearly used her little son, as well as her husband, and the memory of her father and grandfather to amass considerable goodwill among the soldiers: her male relatives were clearly the means by which she could reach beyond her feminine condition into the male world of command. Despite her wifely virtues, she recalled in this and in her unfeminine nature the notorious Fulvia.⁶

By contrast, Antonia was unanimously considered a model of virtue as a wife and mother, despite her lack of love for poor Claudius. Unlike Livia, whose house she shared and with whom she lived in harmony until Livia's end, Antonia demonstrated no excessive political ambition for her children. This was probably because the two most promising, Germanicus and Livilla, were both close to the peak of the dynasty, while Claudius was out of contention. The death of Germanicus did not elicit from Antonia extravagant manifestations of grief. Her inexplicable absence from the funeral rites caused Tacitus to imply coercion on the part of Livia and Tiberius, who were also absent. N. Kokkinos claims, contrary to commonly held views, that Antonia had

accompanied her son and his family to the East, had witnessed Piso and Plancina's behavior and, as such, was able to help avenge Germanicus' death, for which she received official thanks along with Tiberius, Livia, Agrippina and Drusus (and eventually also Claudius).

According to Kokkinos, Tacitus' statement about Antonia's absence is incorrect: epigraphic evidence discovered in Baetica mentions Antonia's involvement in the preparations for the funeral.⁷ Yet Tacitus' allegedly "incorrect" information concerning her absence seems to me noteworthy. Despite the author's innuendo, Antonia shared the traditional outlook of Livia and Tiberius--witness her severity toward her own errant daughter Livilla. Tacitus insinuates that Tiberius and Livia's official excuse for not attending the funeral (a public display of their private grief would have diminished their majesty) was a lie to better conceal their joy. Yet Livia's exemplary reputation had been enhanced by the strength and serenity demonstrated on the occasion of her son Drusus' death. Her control over her own feelings was well-known, admired by some, misinterpreted by others as dissimulation. In reality, it represented the ancient republican ideal of moral strength exemplified by Lucretia and Brutus. The excuse quoted by Tacitus seems compatible with Livia's "mask," which Antonia may have adopted as a model of proper behavior for women in their position.⁸

Antonia's loyalty to Livia and Tiberius is especially noteworthy in view of their association--in popular opinion --with Germanicus' reputed murderers, Piso and Plancina. Her closeness to Livia did not seem diminished either by the Augusta's special plea to save Plancina or by the subsequent disgrace of two of Antonia's grandsons (Drusus and Nero) and of her daughter-in-law Agrippina. Perhaps in the latter cases she saw Sejanus as the real culprit (hence her severity toward Livilla), perhaps she disliked Agrippina's overbearing ambition.⁹ At any rate, Antonia was portrayed by Tacitus in an entirely positive manner, not only for her acknowledged virtue, but--I believe--especially for her lack of personal ambition in contrast with the other driven mothers of the dynasty, namely Livia, Agrippina and Livilla.

Octavia, Agrippina the Elder, and Antonia exemplified Roman ideals of wifely and motherly virtue; yet, while Antonia avoided censure, Octavia and Agrippina could also be presented negatively because of their undisguised ambition. Neither became queen mother, that is, mother of the reigning sovereign. As for Agrippina the Elder, her rule might not have differed much from that of her daughter Agrippina the Younger, had the gods granted her wish. It is thus possible to assume that the literary representation, by the major historians, of these mothers might not have been very different from that of Livia by historians, had any of them ever become Augusta. Vilification of political opponents

and of their relatives--especially of their womenfolk--had been the only "equal opportunity" field in republican politics, and some of the best orators had distinguished themselves by tarnishing the reputations of their rivals' women by means of outrageous stories and innuendos. Tacitus' portrayals of Livia and Agrippina follow an established tradition.¹⁰

By extreme irony of destiny, the unambitious Antonia eventually achieved the state of Augusta; the title was granted to her by her grandson Gaius, along with all the privileges that Livia had received. Antonia, however, apparently refused the title, which was again conferred on her posthumously by her son Claudius. How much she would have been able to influence Gaius' rule it is impossible to tell, since she died six weeks after his accession, some said, at his urging.¹¹

The theme of motherhood as a profoundly ambivalent representation of life and death is common to many mythologies and religions, including the Greek and the Roman, which assign great importance to maternal divinities who are life-sustaining and protective, but also potentially destructive, vindictive and castrating. Slater has drawn attention to the presence in Greek mythology and literature of fearsome and destructive females represented as mature/maternal, and to the prevalence of maternal bogies (Lamias) and witches in Greek folklore.¹² Roman religion

and mythology, heavily influenced by the Greek, presented similar characteristics; in particular, some of the divinities usually associated with Livia, Hera-Juno, Ceres-Demeter and the Great Mother Cybele are highly ambivalent mother-figures.

2. Divine Mothers

Hera-Juno is the divinity whose characteristics most remind one of Tacitus' definition of Livia, gravis mater, gravis noverca: she was a harsh mother to her own son Hephaestus, whom she had produced without the help of Zeus and whom she "discarded" in anger because of his ugliness. She was also known as a ruthless and vengeful step-mother who persecuted the offspring of Zeus' many affairs. She maintained these characteristics when she was assimilated to the Roman Juno, but paradoxically she was also regarded as the goddess of marriage and childbirth. Despite her poor performance as a divine mother, Hera-Juno symbolized the woman's generative power and oversaw the various stages of childbirth.¹³

Ceres-Demeter, on the other hand, had mostly positive connotations as a goddess promoting prosperity and fertility in all its manifestations, as well as marriage and its fruits. She was a loving mother, depicted holding a cornucopia or wearing a crown of poppies, both of which symbolize the earth as a vessel and a womb from which sprout the seeds of food and civilized life. R. Briffault has

collected a staggering amount of evidence of the maternal origins of agriculture; since it required peaceful and stable conditions, agriculture was considered the foundation of civic life and civilized society. Even gentle Demeter, however, had threatening associates, Persephone queen of the underworld and Hecate, goddess of the witches; both were aspects of Mother Earth in her quality of devourer and destroyer of life. Demeter herself, when angered at her daughter's disappearance, refused to let the seeds grow and hindered life.¹⁴

By far the most ambivalent maternal divinity associated with Livia was Cybele, the Great Mother: originally a goddess of wild nature, regeneration and fertility--like Ceres-Demeter--and even of medicine, in Rome she was associated with protection and victory against external enemies. This is symbolized by her mural crown which--like the cornucopia of Ceres--was also a symbol of containment and protection, attributed to the archetypal Mother. Her cult, orgiastic and ecstatic in origin, was recast in a more suitable form by republican authorities, purged of those characteristics that were inappropriate for a protectress of the Roman state, namely the ritual self-mutilation of her devotees. Significantly, the cult of her maimed lover Attis became official only under Claudius.¹⁵ Nevertheless, despite the more positive Roman connotations, the Great Mother remained a powerful and potentially threatening

maternal figure. The ambivalence with which her cult was regarded is evident even in the Aeneid, which strives to present Cybele as Aeneas' most helpful supporter; it is voiced by the Italian combatants usually in the form of taunts to the Trojans. The topographical situation of her temple in the religious and political heart of Rome, on the Palatine (across from Augustus' and Livia's houses) indicates the desire on the part of the patriarchal state to incorporate all-encompassing female power and exploit it for its own survival. The regulations imposed on the cult's performance, on the other hand, indicate the state's need to control and manipulate it in order not to lose its own privileged manhood. The position of the Great Mother in the state recalled to a certain extent that of the materfamilias: both were honored, respected and circumscribed.¹⁶

Livia was, by family tradition, associated with Cybele in a number of different ways and particularly by means of her public persona as Mother of the state/universe. Feared and honored by Tiberius, her energies and talent were--like the power of the goddess--at the same time circumscribed by him and channeled into activities in support of the dynasty. Yet, like the Great Mother, she could curtail her son's power, interfering, meddling, sometimes even embarrassing him, such as when she caused him to plead for the unpopular Plancina. The accounts of Tiberius' rule unanimously report

his frequent attempts to shake off his mother's influence or at least to limit it. Some modern scholars even seem to believe that Livia's death made Tiberius independent at last.¹⁷

Despite Livia's acknowledged potentia and her prodding and bullying of Tiberius, it was Agrippina the Younger, daughter of Livia's alleged victim, who was consistently portrayed as the worst example of a mother-figure. Unlike Livia, who was a demanding mother, Agrippina is consistently portrayed as castrating, alternately seductive and domineering.

3. Livia and Agrippina

The narrative of the Annales presents a clear progression of feminine tyrannical behavior from Livia to Agrippina the Younger. The latter seems to magnify and exaggerate some of the crimes and faults attributed by Tacitus to Livia, in a manner which recalls Livy's progression from Tanaquil to Tullia. Agrippina did what Livia was only suspected of having done, and flaunted the power that Livia had exercised discreetly. Publicly and privately she had none of Livia's comitas and facilitas; severitas, superbia and cupido auri immensa are the terms that frame her Tacitean portrait. While still married to Claudius, Agrippina had made it abundantly clear that she saw herself as socia imperii, receiving the homage and entreaties of captive princes, driving to the Capitol in her

carpentum, and--more significantly--appearing in public wearing a gold-threaded chlamys, a complement to Claudius' paludamentum. The use of the golden chlamys is instructive: a garment worn by men leading an active life (riding), it was also associated with military life and was distinctive of Hellenistic monarchs, whose privilege was the wearing of gold. This sartorial detail, combined with Nero's peculiar password to his guards ("the best of mothers"), and to Agrippina's certainty of her support among the praetorians, can be interpreted as an intimation that--at the most suitable opportunity--she would not hesitate to make herself sole ruler.¹⁸

Unlike Livia with Augustus, Agrippina obtained what she wanted from Claudius minis magis quam precibus, and jealously guarded her monopoly over husband and son. For this reason she persecuted and caused the death of perceived rivals. As for her relations with Nero, they consisted alternately of bullying, melodrama and seduction, extending well beyond the limits of Livia's heated arguments with Tiberius. Agrippina's modus operandi with her son was, usually, truci ac minaci: she could deliver the rule to him, but could not tolerate his command and made it clear to him, as she had to Claudius, that she expected the entire prize of her efforts. Since power was invested in the men of the family, she resorted to extreme means in order to maintain her hold over them, especially over Nero. Thus, this "vir-

ile" mother could, on occasion, employ typically feminine tricks: blandimenta and, as an extreme resort, lasciva oscula et praenuntias flagitii blanditias, being ready to commit even incest with her son. Her blatant attempt to appropriate her son's manhood to increase her own power was frustrated by the warning of Nero's mistress, that the army would not tolerate an incestuous ruler. Regardless of the army's moral sense, the underlying subliminal message was that the institution symbolic of Roman manhood would not accept a phallic woman as ruler.¹⁹

A number of observations need to be made at this point. First, Tacitus deliberately creates a link between the two Agrippinas by means of their shared characteristic, atrocitas. To both applies the description aequi impatiens, dominandi avida; however, in the case of the daughter (who behaved as social imperii already under Claudius), the desire for a one-woman rule is further stressed by the implication that Nero would be a puppet ruler (quae filio dare imperium, tolerare imperitantem nequibat). For this purpose Agrippina intended to pit him against Britannicus, the legitimate heir, to ensure Nero's compliance with her wishes. Here it is possible to detect ideological echos of the Livian simul pares esse coeperint, superiores erunt in the Oppian Law episode. This is also the main difference between Livia and Agrippina the Younger: for all of Livia's suspicious activities, one-woman rule could not be imputed to her,

probably because Tiberius had already gained considerable experience by the time of his accession to power. The next observation concerns Agrippina's use of feminine weapons (blandimenta, blanditiae, artes, insidias, inlecebrae) to further her own ends. In this respect, she is closer to Livia than to her mother: Tacitus stresses Livia's obscurae artes to discredit (the already disreputable) Agrippa Postumus and to ensnare the aging Augustus. However, in her use of sexuality for political ends, which included illicit affairs with freedmen, Agrippina again departs from Livia, recalling instead the themes of the Augustan propaganda against Cleopatra. The Egyptian's reputation was tarnished by the epithet regina meretrix, who debases herself with her slaves (famulos inter femina trita suos) and emasculates men. With Cleopatra, Agrippina shares also superbia, avarice, and the use of poison.²⁰ While superbia is one of the typical vices of a tyrant, the other two are the basic elements of the stereotype of the evil stepmother. Agrippina, therefore, even more than Livia is portrayed as a dangerous mother with stepmotherly characteristics.

4. The Stepmother and the Witch

Akin to the dangerous mother and to the evil stepmother is the witch, which completes the series of representations of maternal ambivalence. These characterizations suggest images of subversive deviance from patriarchal codes of moral feminine behavior and from the patriarchal order in

nature, family and--ultimately--state. The instrument through which these women perform their subversive deeds is poison, veneficium being the crime most commonly associated with stepmothers; their modus operandi consists of blandimenta and artes, shared with the witches. These elements constitute the connecting links between these deviant females and the others--also deviant--who aspire to political preeminence in the state.²¹

The tradition of the evil stepmother seems to have originated rather early and was well-established by the early empire. Both Gray-Fow and Noy remark on the surprisingly extensive use of the noverca stereotype by Augustan poets, especially by Virgil and Horace, who were close to the First Family. On the other hand, the First Family could proudly point to Octavia as a shining example of a good stepmother; as for Livia, her reputation of gravis noverca had not yet been established.²²

The stereotype can be traced to Greek mythological influences, in particular to stories concerning Hera, Phaedra and Medea. However, while the myths of Phaedra and Medea stress sexual aspects of the bad mother/stepmother stereotype, the jealous character of Hera--transferred to the Roman Juno--became the prototype of the stepmother who weaves intrigues against her stepsons for reasons other than rebuffed sexual passion. In Roman literature the evil noverca often appears in the context of economic or patrimo-

nial disputes. Thus the evil stepmother is, for Noy, "the product of Roman obsession with property and inheritance." Quintilian, in fact, complains about the plethora of rhetorical exercises on the subject at the expense of others of more contemporary interest. This, in turn, may be a reflection of the frequency with which controversial inheritance cases were heard in the courts. Noy's point is reinforced by Gray-Fow: the early origins of the noverca stereotype indicate that it became established in a period in which, legally, it may have been relatively easier for her to inherit her husband's substance than it was in later times.²³ This patrimonial aspect turns the Roman stepmother into the antithetical but complementary side of the elite Roman wife and mother, custos and preserver of the family's moral and material patrimony.

Stepmotherly blandishments were responsible for altering a father's will to his children's disadvantage on the grounds that they were unworthy or immoral. Often a stepmother's designs were motivated by her desire to improve the position of her own children, in which case--as mentioned above--the devoted mother and the evil stepmother coincided. There was also a further, more radical dimension to the stepmother's potentially destabilizing effect on the family: taking possession of a man's wealth is closely related to usurping his social and political power and--symbolically--his manhood. Avarice is, therefore, a vice

common to stepmothers and female usurpers.

The comments above seem partially relevant to the literary representation of Livia for which Tacitus is responsible. Her obscurae artes (disclaimed by Suetonius) were rumored to have discredited Agrippa Postumus and caused his relegation: according to Dio, Agrippa reviled Livia as a stepmother and accused Augustus of depriving him of his father's inheritance. Despite lack of evidence, some modern scholars even see Livia's hand in the discovery of Agrippa's mother's "crimes," as the alleged motives were retrospectively made to fit the final outcome of the dynastic struggle. Livia's supposed "stepmotherly" hatred for Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder, however, does not seem to fit the patrimonial model: Tacitus' use of the adjective novercalis conveys in this case rather the idea of "unmotivated animosity." On the other hand, in the case of Agrippina the Younger, the "patrimonial/economic" aspect of the stepmother's activities merges with the social and political more than in Livia's case. In fact Livia, who was extremely wealthy, never displayed the grasping frenzy of Agrippina, who purported to use for the benefit of the state the wealth she was hoarding for herself. Tacitus implies that, in reality, she was planning to use it to topple her uncooperative son. To Agrippina's artes were ascribed Claudius' most unpopular and unfair decisions, while her inlecebrae (a related concept) had enabled her to enslave

Claudius. In both cases popular gossip attributed to the stepmother's blandishments and traps the ruler's decision to modify the order of succession, although both stepsons (Tiberius and Nero) had been legally adopted.²⁴

The disinheritance of Agrippa, allegedly brought about by Livia's shady manoeuvres, and his suspicious and mysterious death at Tiberius' accession showcase Livia's talent as evil stepmother. However, the presence of the adjective obscurae referred to her artes enriches her literary image by introducing a further dimension, that of witchcraft and magic. This impression is supported by the occurrence of the verb devincire (to tie, chain, i.e., with spells) in close proximity, and by Sallustius Crispus' reference to arcana domus (the secrets of the ruling house) that must not be divulged. To these indications of Livia's role as a malevolent witch should also be added the suspicion that she poisoned Augustus with his favorite figs. Such suspicion is in turn openly expressed by Agrippina the Elder who, at a banquet with Tiberius and Livia, refused an apple offered by Tiberius for fear of being poisoned. Here one detects traces of folkloric and mythological themes (the figs were sacred to Demeter, but had also chthonian connotations; the apple--in this case--may recall the apple of discord at the banquet of the Olympians). The detail of Augustus' poisoning by figs has a bitterly ironical coloring: in addition to being sacred to Demeter, publicly

identified with Livia, a type of fig had also been named in her honor. Perhaps the most significant factor in Tacitus' subliminal assimilation of Livia to a witch is, however, her supposed involvement in Germanicus' death. She appears as the main culprit by virtue of her supposed "stepmotherly" antipathy toward him and of her closeness to Plancina, rumored to have procured his death through black magic and on intimate terms with a notorious poisoner, Martina.²⁵ Popular opinion, stirred by Agrippina's assumptions and by the seemingly inexplicable protection of Plancina by Germanicus' grandmother, pronounced Livia guilty by association, and in fact cast her in the role of the instigator. Thus the noverca became also the witch.

A very thin line of demarcation separated, in the ancient world, the doctor, the poisoner and the witch: these were kindred feminine vocations, derived from the magical abilities originally attributed to priestesses and queens. Sites of cultic activity were often also places of healing: the Temple of Bona Dea, with whom Livia had special ties of devotion, functioned also as a pharmacy. As "managers" of the family's property, including the human property, matrons probably needed some medical knowledge, if not expertise, as implied in Livy's narrative of Rome's first case of mass poisoning. The women of the First Family experimented with medicinal remedies, quoted in a few ancient medical publications, while Cleopatra was interested in a variety of

medical studies, ranging from anatomy to cosmetology to the effects of different poisons.²⁶ Thus, states N. Purcell, these legitimate activities and interests of matrons could be used to imply their opposite, in the Livian tradition of the matronae veneficae. In Livia's case in particular, they were used in combination with the stereotypes of the noverca and of the witch to underline the especially malevolent character of her usurpation of power and its destructive consequences for the dynasty and the state. The immediate model for the Tacitean Livia was, however, Agrippina the Younger. In addition to the thematic and structural analogies examined by R. H. Martin and M. P. Charlesworth, the present discussion is meant to highlight further elements of Agrippina's portrayal that appear, even if somewhat weakened, in Tacitus' interpretation of the Tiberian principate.

Conclusion

N. Purcell states that the charges of poisoning against Livia's public image of Mother of the dynasty, developed from the Livian tradition of the matronae veneficae, were motivated by her public position as princeps femina. While this is generally undisputed, it does not sufficiently take into account the force of ambivalence in the relations within the family hierarchy and within the state with respect to the position of the materfamilias.²⁷

Such ambivalence is present in the cherished stereo-

type of the wool-spinning matron, which Livia consciously adopted: in addition to the connotations of ancient feminine virtue, spinning also represented the control over the destiny of man. Hence Livia the spinner is symbolically close to the Parcae, who spin out and measure the duration of men's lives. This suggestion underlies the anecdotes that feature Livia as guardian of the omens of her family's destiny (represented by the laurel bough she planted and the bird she saved). Spinning and weaving are also metaphors for intrigue, thus Livia the spinner is transformed into the crafty deceiver (Ulixes stolatus).²⁸

Conversely, poison can be a health remedy that does not work, hence it accomplishes the opposite. This definition presents a certain analogy to Augustus' dynastic schemes. The selection of Tiberius as a successor was intended to cure the endemic weaknesses of Augustus' new order, but it inflamed the virulent hatreds within the dynasty. Livia's function in this context was similar to that of the ministrator of the potion, always the first to be suspected if it did not work.

The combination of lanificium and veneficium in Livia's historiographical representation is therefore not as antithetical as it may seem. Both belong to spheres of feminine competence which had great potential for symbolic ambivalence. The same applies also to motherhood in a patriarchal society: the mother can support and protect her children,

especially the sons, but she can also demand from them unflinching allegiance, in order to realize her own thwarted aspirations. In elite Roman families this often meant the ability to influence political life. Since wealth usually accompanied power, the ambitious and supportive mother could be transformed into a stepmotherly figure for the benefit of her sons.

The pattern of ambivalence thus developed was based on the sanctioning, at state level, of the inequality existing within the family hierarchy. Enforced inequality, however, always brings with it a fear of subversion and retribution: along the metaphorical axis of male/female, this may imply a symbolic loss of manhood. These are, in my opinion, the themes underlying the historical myth of Livia, the poisoning noverca.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. The subordinate position of women in both societies, their official exclusion from public life, the potential instability of Roman political marriages and the virtual absence of Greek fathers from the early years of their sons' life, combined with the greater valuation of sons in both cultures, gave rise to conflicting attitudes on the part of upper-class mothers. The sons were the means by which many mothers could achieve goals vicariously where social custom prohibited their direct fulfillment. Hence the strong emotional bonds, but also the control and manipulation, demonstrated by some mothers. Yet the conflict between Roman mothers and sons seems generally less extreme, possibly due to the greater recognition, influence and authority which Roman mothers traditionally enjoyed.

2. P. Slater, The Glory of Hera (Boston 1968), on Greek mother-son relations. W. K. Lacey, "Patria Potestas," in The Family in Ancient Rome, ed. B. Rawson (Ithaca 1986), pp. 121-144, on the derivation of magistrates' authority from that of the paterfamilias. S. Dixon, "A Family Business: Women's Role in Patronage and Politics at Rome 80-44 B.C.," Classica et Mediaevalia 34 (1983), pp. 91-112, on women's political impact in patronage.

3. J. McNamara and S. Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe," in Women and Power in the Middle Ages, ed. M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (Athens, Georgia 1988), pp. 83-101.

4. Cf. Chapter Five of this study for general discussion of mother's importance. Plut. Cat. Mi. 3 on the primacy of Sulla's son among peers because of his mother Caecilia Metella. Suet. Tib. 6 on Livia going through fire.

5. Sen. Ad Mar. 2.4 on Octavia's bitterness.

6. Tac. Ann. 1.41, 44, 1.69, Suet. Gaius 9 on Agrippina's and Gaius' influence on the mutinous troops, Dio 57.5.6-7 on Germanicus' family taken hostage. Dio 57.6.3, Tac. Ann. 12.27.1 on Gaius' and Agrippina's birth-places.

7. N. Kokkinos, Antonia Augusta (London 1992), especially pp. 17-20, 23, 37-39. The evidence mentioned seems to me insufficient: Antonia's name appears in the enumeration of the relatives' statues to adorn Germanicus' arch. This, however, is no indication that she participated in the funeral rites.

8. Tac. Ann. 3 on Antonia's absence, 5.1.3 on Livia's dissimulation; Dio, 58.2.5 on Livia's control over jealousy; Sen. Ad Mar. 3.1-2 on Livia's admirable strength after Drusus' death; Livy 1.59.5 on Brutus castigator lacrimarum inertium querellarum.
9. J. Nicols, "Antonia and Sejanus," Historia 24 (1975), pp. 48-58: the story of Antonia's decisive action to discredit Sejanus is probably a Claudian or Flavian invention. If there was a conspiracy against Tiberius, Gaius was more likely to be its leader, since he was 19 at the time (the age at which Octavian made his bid for power).
10. Suet. Gaius 23, on Gaius' insulting and threatening treatment of Antonia, which accelerated her death. Cic. Pro Caelio (Clodia), Pro Cluentio (Sassia), Phil. 2.113, 3.16, 6.4, 13.18 (Fulvia).
11. Suet. Gaius 15 on honors granted to Antonia, Claudius 11 on Antonia's rejection of the title of Augusta, Dio 59.3.4-7, Suet. Gaius 23 on Gaius' unkind treatment of his grandmother, and on suspicions of poison.
12. P. Slater (above, n. 2), pp. 11-12, 63-68: as examples of threatening mature females one should count Hera (harsh mother and step-mother), Aphrodite (occasionally), Clytemnestra, Medea, Circe and the historical Olympias, mother of Alexander. Cf. also E. Neumann, The Great Mother (New York 1955), on archetypal representations.
13. Among the many specializations of Juno: Lucina, who makes the child see the light, Opigena, who brings help to the women in labor, Iuga, Pronuba, Domiduca, Cinxia. Juno was also the female equivalent of Genius.
14. E. Neumann (above, n. 12), pp. 45, 80, 148-149, 162-169, on Demeter/Hecate. Cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome (Cambridge 1967), pp. 3, 5, 7-8, 30, on the view that agriculture was the prerequisite for civilized society. Cf. R. Briffault, The Mothers (New York 1927), vol. 3, pp. 2-4 on agriculture as an originally feminine activity.
15. E. Neumann (above, n. 12), pp. 45-47, 283, on symbols of containment and nourishment, associated with feminine protection. Catullus 63, on horror at Cybele's bloody rituals; Verg. Aen. 9.617-620, 11.769-777, on the Trojans' effeminacy in the context of Cybele's cult.
16. Cf. R. McKay Wilhelm, "Cybele: the Great Mother of the Augustan Order," Vergilius 34 (1988), pp. 77-101 for Virgil's positive assessment of the goddess, and I. Becher,

"Der Kult der Mater Magna in augusteischer Zeit," Klio 73 (1991), pp. 157-170.

17. For a negative assessment of feminine influence, cf. E. Kornemann, Tiberius (Stuttgart 1960), p. 186: this scholar is so obsessed by the evils of the Frauenregiment that he disregards the reality of Tiberius' subsequent reign of terror.

18. Tac. Ann. 12.37.4 on Agrippina as socia imperii, 12.56.3 on the golden chlamys. Cf. also, on this subject, M. Kaplan, "Agrippina Semper Atrox," Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History 1 (1979), pp. 410-417, esp. p. 413 n. 12, and A. Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der Römischen Kaiser," MDAI Rom. Abt. 50 (1935), p. 50. Suet. Nero 9 on the password to the guard, and Tac. Ann. 13.14.3 on Agrippina's alleged favor among the pretorians.

19. Suet. Tib. 51, Tac. Ann. 4.57.3 on Livia's reproaches to Tiberius, 12.22, 12.64.3-65, 13.13 on Agrippina's jealousy of other women; Tac. Ann. 14.2, Suet. Nero 28 on attempted incest, and the power that Agrippina would have gained from it.

20. Tac. Ann. 1.3.4 on Livia's artes. Livy 34.3.3, on womens' arrogance. Tac. Ann. 6.25.2 on Agrippina the Elder's personality, (12.7.3) 12.65.3, 14.2.2 on Agrippina's use of sexuality, 12.7.3, 13.14 on her superbia, 12.7.3, 13.2 on her avarice. Propertius, 3.11.30 on Cleopatra.

21. M. J. G. Gray-Fow, "The Wicked Stepmother in Roman Literature and History," Latomus 45 (1988), pp. 741-757; D. Noy, "Wicked Stepmothers in Roman Society and Imagination," Journal of Family History 16 (1991), pp. 345-361; F. Santoro L'hoir, The Rhetoric of Gender Terms (Leiden 1992), p. 141, n. 78.

22. Virgil Ecl. 3.33 (unfair stepmother), Geor. 2.128-130, 3.282-283 (poisoning, witch-like stepmothers); Hor. Carm. 3.24.17-18 (Scythian stepmother's kindness, in contrast with Roman's cruelty), Ep. 5.9 (stepmotherly look=dirty look); Ovid Met. 1.147 (poisoning stepmothers).

23. D. Noy (above, n. 21), pp. 346-347, 350-353, 357; Gray-Fow (above, n. 21), pp. 753-755.

24. Tac. Ann. 1. 3.4 on Livia's artes; Suet. Tib. 21, for their disclaimer; Dio 55.32 on Agrippina's behavior toward her. Tac. Ann. 13.18.2 on the use of Agrippina's wealth, and 12.59.1 on Agrippina's artes responsible for Claudius' cruelty. D. Noy (above, n. 21), pp. 353-354 on stepmothers' intrigues. A. Ferrill, "Augustus and his Daughter: A Modern

Myth," Latomus 168 (1980), pp. 332-346, esp. pp. 333-334, on modern scholars overestimating Livia's involvement with Julia's case.

25. Tac. Ann. 1.6.3 on Sallustius' advice; 1.5.1, Dio 56.30.1 on poisoning of Augustus; Tac. Ann. 2.69.3, 2.71.2, 2.73.4, 2.74.2, 3.13.2 on Plancina suspected of witchcraft and poisoning, 2.82.2, 3.7.2 on death of Martina, 3.10.2, 3.15.1-2, 3.17 on Livia's involvement. Cf. F. Santoro L'hoir (above, n. 21), p. 141 n. 78 on terms referring to witchcraft, and C. Questa, "La Morte di Augusto secondo Cassio Dione," Parola del Passato 54 (1959), pp. 41-53, esp. pp. 48-49 nn. 19-20 on fruit symbolism. Pliny N. H. 15.70 on the figs named for Livia.

26. R. Briffault (above, n. 14) vol. 1, pp. 485-489 on the predominance of women doctors and surgeons also in modern non-European societies, and vol. 2, pp. 502-570 on religion's evolution from witchcraft. M. Alic, Hypatia's Heritage (Boston 1986), pp. 30-32 on women's medical expertise in the past. N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," PCPS 212 n. 32 (1986), p. 95 on a medical recipe attributed to Livia.

27. N. Purcell (above, n. 26), p. 95.

28. Neumann (above, n. 12), pp. 226-31, concerning the goddess of fate; Dio, 48.52.3 and Suet. Galba 1, on Livia and the omens; Suet. Gaius 23.2, on Livia-Ulysses; Iliad 3.125-28, on Helen weaving the deeds of Trojans and Achaeans; Odyss. 2.90-110, on Penelope's web. On the literary level, spinning and weaving are also metaphors for composition of songs and poems.

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