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Female Archetypes of the Collective Mind. Ancient Latin Literature

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Keywords: archetype, woman, femininity, sexual dimorphism, collective mind, religion, gods, fashion, elegiac poetics, theater, invariants of comedy, tragic heroine, epic, cultural and ideological habitus, novelistic universe, matrona, virgin, slave, courtesan, maternal/erotic, femina bona, femina mala, idealized femininity versus subversive femininity, virtus, pudicitia, familia urbana/familia rustica, emancipation, femina imperator, simbonim, realonim, literary onomastics.

The study *Female Archetypes of the Collective Mind. Ancient Latin Literature* proposes a holistic approach to feminine invariants at the intersection of the psychology of the imaginary, literature, anthropology, religion, and the morphology of culture, bearing in mind that any creative process represents both the expression of a personal ontology and the reflection of a mode of thinking shaped by the ideological and cultural habitus specific to a historical epoch and by the regime of conceptual significance within an ethnic collectivity. In this context, literary writings become revealing indices of power relations, reflections of collective memory, and expressions of aesthetic and social identity.

We address this topic starting from the premise that the supremacy of patriarchal discourse has marginalized and distorted the image of woman over the centuries, and that writings handed down from Antiquity are the result of masculine preconceptions and androcentric societies—facts that compel a reconsideration of ignored voices and a critical endeavor to re-signify femininity. Conscious that a hegemonic culture and politics granted primacy to male power, we do not aim to analyze the ancient world through a modern lens, nor to circulate theories of gender egalitarianism; rather, we propose an exegetical re-articulation of social prescriptions concerning the roles of the two sexes and of the ways these prescriptions are reflected in the everyday life of ancient Rome and in literature.

We regard the subject as topical and fertile, especially now, when sex differences are no longer viewed as a norm of socio-professional conduct and efforts are being made to regularize gender dimorphisms. The topic of the study is therefore not merely a historical exercise but an act of critical memory capable of facilitating an understanding of political, social, and cultural dynamics and deconstructing mechanisms of legitimizing authority. In this sense, Antiquity becomes not only a mirror of the past but also a reflection of present challenges.

The work's hermeneutic and exegetical trajectory traces the two dimensions of character—the archetype and the specificity conferred by distinctive features, originality, and aesthetic value—alongside the conventional level mapped between the two dimensions: reality and fiction. The methodological novelty lies in a multidisciplinary treatment, since most studies on this theme offer a historical systematization of traits of the feminine cultural model without detailed literary analysis and without highlighting the feminine symbolism born of the constancy of archetypal modes of thought and manifestation. In our analysis, we have attempted to inscribe the female characters of classical Latin literature within concepts defined by Corin Braga, adopted from Boyan Manchev yet with much broader epistemological openings—archetype, anarchetype, and eschatype.

Our study includes descriptive analysis as a preliminary and systematic investigation to gather information by surveying the preliminary bibliography necessary for familiarizing ourselves with and understanding the sociopolitical processes of ancient Latin society and the works of Latin authors. The scientific undertaking is deepened through exploratory research, with the objective of identifying and formulating hypotheses relevant and pertinent to continued investigation of the proposed theme. This stage involves rigorous selection of information, the outlining of analytic directions, and the elaboration of original interpretations.

The methods deployed include problematization, comprehension, synthesis, description, analysis of literary texts, and the drafting of a study grounded in viable, sustainable, and resilient scientific procedures. The interdisciplinary approach entails orientation toward research techniques in multiple reference domains: the history of Latin literature and culture; the cultural context and conceptual interferences relating to feminism and the role of women in society; studies of literary onomastics; and the anthropology and psychology of the imaginary.

The work is structured into ten chapters, the first four constituting a general, more theoretical framework meant to provide conceptual foundations for the research and to analyze the condition of women in society, family, and religion. The final six chapters are applied in character and concentrate on the analysis of literary works relevant to the theme of the feminine. The selection of authors and artistic creations is not guided by a chronological criterion but by a comprehensive approach to aesthetic perspectives on women in the three literary genres—epic, lyric, and dramatic.

The first chapter*, Conceptual Delimitations: Archetype, Anarchetype, and Eschatype*, follows diachronically the configuration and re-signification of the concept of archetype, which has generated a broad interpretive tradition, based on the idea that the dynamics and tensions of the collective and individual unconscious are converted into aesthetic structures. Etymologically, the word derives from Latin *archetypum* (a Latinization of the Greek noun *archetypon*), denoting an original model or type, borrowed via French from *archétipe* (DLR 2021, I: s.v.; DEX 1998: s.v.). In current semantic usage, the archetype is understood as a primordial form of expression, a generative pattern reflected in aesthetic creations, a node of transcultural meanings.

The primordial experience of religious beliefs and mythic imagination constitutes the first form of archetype-generation, with reality being subjected to a universal model of consciousness. According to Plato (2010: 215–227), ideas are a priori manifestations of pure mind, belonging to a superior, intelligible world that concentrates the essence of all things, knowable through the soul's ascent. Plato's successor, Aristotle, asserts the existence of substance as "the unitary genus of what is" (2005: 83), whose meaning is matter representing the universal; it is potentiality, while species becomes the realization of potentiality in act. The Stoics analyze the *ratio seminalis*, those indestructible *logoi*, matricial seeds according to which matter is constructed.

Porphýrios (2002: 17), articulating his ideas on genera, considers that there is a beginning of the origin of all things and that everything deriving from it contains within itself its substance, an "essential predicate" that can be asserted of a single thing or of many, being common in the constitution of genera, species, differences, and accidents. The problem of universals is also debated by Boethius, while Porphýrios draws the distinction between the essential predicate (the constitutive essence of things) and accidents, seen as contingent attributes.

The Neoplatonist Plotinus (*apud* Munteanu 2008: 18) maintains that the supreme One is a being, generator of Being, dwelling in atemporality, and that it includes will, the spirit of humans, and being. In patristic gnostic literature, the genesis of the world is grounded in an archetypal matrix called *Pleroma*, found in all things and phenomena—a pattern enabling the mirroring of a transcendent reality, the *Unu*, in everything created.

Averroes (apud Aquinas 2008: 40–43) holds that in every being there exists an identical, archetypal intellect, while Duns Scotus (2007: 42–43) postulates that universal forms remain fundamental models realized in the singularity of the individual.

Interest in archetypes is amplified by empirical discoveries discussed by depth psychologies; Freudian theory posits perspectives on behavioral templates, analyzing concepts

such as *Eros* and *Thanatos*, the Oedipus complex, Ego and Superego, etc. Melanie Klein, Friedrich Wilhelm J. Schelling, J. G. Fichte, Carl Gustav Carus, and Eduard von Hartmann develop the idea of the metaphysical unconscious—"the unitary metaphysical being in the cosmos, with the attributes of unconscious will and unconscious representation" (see Zamfirescu 2003: 80)—which molds human acts, constituting an archetypal matrix of thought.

The other two concepts, *anarchetype* and *eschatype*, were introduced relatively recently into literary exegesis by Corin Braga, who extends the semantics of these terms previously defined by the Bulgarian-born philosopher Boyan Manchev. In order to sketch the epistemological model of postmodernist literature, the Romanian philologist operates with two original notions, placing the anarchetype in syzygy with the archetype; the former manifests itself an-archically in relation to the central model imposed by the invariant. If the archetype organizes itself systemically around a central nucleus, the anarchetype possesses no such center; it is diffuse and does not coagulate around a focal point. The eschatype represents a structure in which the pattern is not detectable at the outset but is sketched gradually, being an inversely symmetrical configuration relative to the archetype.

The second chapter, *Feminine Archetypal Dimensions Anchored in the Collective Mind: Historical, Social, Political, and Religious Perspectives*, explores the relationship between the matrix of societal thinking and the image of woman in ancient Greece and Rome. The analysis follows the role assigned to women within the family, their participation in public life, and their involvement in the religious sphere, highlighting the ways these dimensions reflect social and cultural structures specific to the epoch. Ancient Roman society has often been labeled misogynistic, and the primacy accorded to men cannot be denied, whether in social or political roles. Objective analysis entails distancing oneself from modern moral clichés and contemporary sensitivities in order to achieve a contextualized understanding of the cultural and social phenomenon, with precise roles in defining masculine and feminine identities, power, and community hierarchies.

The Roman woman appears in both legislation and the collective imagination as the archetype of an ideal image or, conversely, as a symbol of moral decline. She is respected as *matrona*, guaranteeing family stability, or else suspected and marginalized—in satiric and literary discourses—because she generates impulses, desires, or ethical disruptions in men, reflecting masculine anxieties related to sexuality, power, and social control, as well as the social and cultural norms specific to the age. Most philologists (André Bonnard, Jérôme Carcopino, Guy Achard) consider that the Roman woman enjoyed greater economic and juridical autonomy than the Greek woman, as she could inherit, manage property, and conclude certain contracts, and she occupied a visible role in social and religious life. In ancient Greece, women were confined to the domestic sphere and had far more limited legal rights and minimal social interaction. Nonetheless, some researchers, such as Indro Montanelli, Robert Flacelière, and Theodor Mommsen, contest this view and claim that women occupied a more important place among the Greeks. Serge Berstein and Pierre Milza highlight the privileged status of women in Cretan society, due to an optimistic religion that valued the earth's fertility, associated with motherhood. Roman women did not enjoy advantages comparable to those of men, but—unlike those in ancient Greece—they were never secluded in a *gynaicon* and had access to all areas of the house; they could participate in ritual activities, festivals, family business, visits, and shopping. Toward the end of the Republic, women appear at social gatherings appropriate to their social standing.

Oliviu Felecan (2004: 176–178) notes that among the Greeks, poor *matronae* could freely perform fieldwork or go shopping and could work as merchants. The wives of metics could engage in tailoring or shoemaking. Although forced to support their families, women who worked in the agora or on the streets "were perceived negatively compared to men and were

immediately suspected of immorality" (Felecan 2004: 176). Women could be physicians, though most chose to practice as midwives, nurses, or sisters. After the Roman conquest, the roster of feminine occupations expanded: priestesses, architects, painters, or poetesses. By contrast, Roman women had greater freedom to choose occupations according to social status. In both peoples, spinning and weaving were pursuits in which *matronae* personally engaged. In families without a flourishing economic situation, most wives opted to be hairdressers (*ornatrix*), as well as wet nurses (*nutrix*), midwives (*obstetrix*), or weavers, producing fabrics and garments. Some women engaged in commerce, and slaves or freedwomen worked as innkeepers, cooks, or street vendors.

Generally, elites did not engage actively in the labor field and were in the minority relative to those of lower condition, though there were women who managed *latifundia* or traded goods produced in their own households. Heavy labor was performed by slaves.

The Roman family must be analyzed through lenses different from the modern one; its dynamics were ensured by relationships among members belonging to the same lineage, with younger branches grouping around the nucleus of the eldest stock, akin to dynasties. Religion played an important role in family relations; thus each lineage had its own cult.

It should be noted that the term *familia* implies a broader semantic sphere, including all those subject to a *pater familias*: wife, children, relatives, but also city slaves (*familia urbana*) and those at rural estates (*familia rustica*). The only independent member (*sui iuris*) was the head of the family; the others were considered dependent and subject to him (*alieni iuris*). Among the Greeks, *oikos* designated not only members of a nuclear family but also relatives living in the household, slaves, the household economy, and property.

Family in ancient Rome was monogamous, but men could have sexual relations with slaves, courtesans, or concubines; they could not, however, commit adultery with a married woman. Legal marriage (*iustum matrimonium*) required the consent of both spouses and demanded that the woman be free; slaves had no juridical access to marriage, only to a form of union called *contubernium*.

Romans had different forms of marriage, *cum manu* and *sine manu*. The former admitted the husband's total authority over his wife (*convenire in manum mariti*), while the latter preserved the matron's subordination to her father rather than her husband. Marriage *cum manu* allowed three forms of formalization: *usus* (imposing continuous cohabitation for one year), *confarreatio* (requiring a religious ceremony and ten witnesses), and *coemptio* (realized through the symbolic sale of the woman in the presence of five witnesses). Marriage *sine manu* gradually prevailed for economic, pragmatic, and cultic reasons: the woman came from a lineage distinct from her husband's, might venerate different *lares*, and could not be religiously integrated into the new family. Moreover, marriage free of the husband's authority granted the woman the right to paternal inheritance, affording her a measure of independence. Romans imposed exogamy, unlike the Greeks who permitted endogamy, though history records exceptions among Romans as well—Claudius married Agrippina, his brother's daughter, creating a precedent for unions between uncles and nieces.

In ancient Greek and Roman societies, the age of marriage reflected social and legal norms as well as concerns with family continuity, economic stability (transfer of inheritance), and the securing of political alliances. Girls were generally married much younger than boys, between twelve and fifteen. The Roman wedding took place only on auspicious days, excluding major religious festivals; the favorable period was the second half of June, under the patronage of the goddess *Iuno*. *Dies nefasti*, as Ovid (1965: 80–81) also shows, were those dedicated to the infernal deities—*Lemuria* in May and the *Parentalia* in February—as well as the *ides*, *kalends*, and *nones*.

The nuptial ceremony was marked by a sacrifice to the hearth fire and included various rituals such as the joining of hands by the *pronuba*, the recitation of solemn formulae, and the bringing of the bride to the husband's house, accompanied by boys bearing torches. The Greeks had a full marital ritual as well, beginning with the betrothal (*enghýesis*), continuing with *pompé*, an initiation marking passage to the new family hearth, and *télos*, conducted before the husband's gods; auspicious wedding days were full-moon periods in winter, especially in January, the month *Gamelión*. Though conjugal love was subject to empirical and rational judgments that enabled Roman hegemony, we do not exclude genuine affection between spouses, as evidenced by Cicero's letters to Terentia, Paulina's desire to die with Seneca, or Pliny's authentic feelings for Calpurnia. The supreme expression of conjugal loyalty is Arria's gesture—wife of the senator Caecina Paetus—who ended her life before her husband condemned to death to instill courage in him.

Concubinage was a tolerated bond but could not be validated juridically or religiously. Co-habitation (*matrimonium iniustum*)—when the couple did not wish or did not meet the conditions required for *connubium*—was not illegal; the two lived in *contubernium* or *concubinatus*, which was not socially stigmatized. Men legally married yet engaged in a constant extramarital relationship might also be in *concubinatus*, not classified morally or juridically as adultery. For women, however, the same type of concubinage fell within the conventional definition of infidelity. Concubinage was much practiced in the ancient centuries of Athens; the *concubina* held an intermediate status between wife and courtesan. Among the Hellenes, the difference between marriage and concubinage could be marked by whether a dowry was granted. Because the Peloponnesian War caused massive male depopulation, men were permitted to take a second wife—even a foreigner—whose children became legitimate. In 4th-century BCE Greece, many Athenians had concubines (*pallakai*); in the next century, the couple Pericles and Aspasia violated marriage norms. Pericles, married to a relative with whom he already had children, left his wife for the beautiful Milesian, whom he could not marry because she was not Athenian and did not belong to cities with the right of *epigamia*.

Divorce among the Greeks was largely theoretical and could occur by the father's decision to dissolve the marriage (*aphaeresis*), by abandonment of the conjugal home (*apoleipsis*), or by repudiation (*apopempsis*), upon petition. A husband could repudiate his wife without reason, even if she was pregnant; yet in cases of adultery, repudiation was obligatory. Separation obliged the husband to return the dowry. In both peoples, a coherent ground for repudiation or divorce was female sterility, given the principal function of marriage, that of having heirs. For the man, separation was performed formally; the woman had to appeal to an archon before whom she presented, in a letter, the reasons for her petition. The gravity of these reasons remained at the magistrate's discretion; it seems infidelity was not deemed serious, since the Greeks promoted male sexual freedom. Among the Romans, divorce took several forms: by mutual consent (*divortium comuni consensus*); via loss of liberty (*capitis deminutio maxima, media,* or *minima*); divorce based on personal reasons (*divortium bona gratia*); divorce for the fault of one party (*divortium ex iusta causa*), which could be sought in cases of infertility or impotence. Aulus Gellius relates the 231 BCE divorce of Spurius Carvilius, surnamed Ruga, who renounced his wife despite real feelings because she was infertile. If spouses were married by *confarreatio*, separation required a *diffarreatio* ceremony; the two rejected the sacred bread and uttered curses in the presence of a priest. Likewise, a marriage of the *coemptio* type had to be dissolved by *remancipatio*, the woman being symbolically "sold back" to her family of origin. Divorce did not necessarily discredit the wife, especially if she possessed considerable wealth; she could be sought after for a new marriage, given that she already had an established network of relations.

In the Roman collective mind, religion was perceived a-metaphysically, and anomalies or accidents of any kind were attributed to the gods' anger; hence the normative and ideological model is founded on preserving harmony and the stability of nature's cycles, considered primordial for maintaining cosmological and social order, while avoiding perturbations of the annual equilibrium. Wonders did not exist unless observed and deciphered by cult professionals; thus the proliferation of divinatory techniques and the attitude of respect mingled with fear that conferred prestige on *haruspices*, prophetesses, and oracle readers.

The crises unleashed by life's three rites of passage—birth, marriage, and death—were resolved by recourse to divinity. Marriage unfolded under the auspices of domestic and chthonic divinities—Tellus, Ceres—and later under the protection of *Iuno*. Funerary rites and ceremonies held nine days after the burial rite found continuity in the steady cult of deceased ancestors (*divi parentes*) and of the *Manes*. Religion took the form of convenience or mingled with superstition, accumulating a series of dispersed cults superposed upon Rome's ancient or modern doctrines, to which were added Persian, Egyptian, and Chaldean occultism, in a syncretism from which Roman pragmatism and ritualism invariably emerged.

The private domain of a Roman citizen constituted a sacred chronotope because every family had its own gods. The *pater familias* enjoyed a protective spirit called *Genius* and, beginning with the imperial era, a *Iuno* joined the family pantheon to protect the mistress of the house. The master's *Genius* represented his energy, strength, and aptitudes, venerated by all members of the family and portrayed as a crested serpent or a man with a staff. Raymond Bloch and Jean Cousin (1985, I: 272) consider that *numina* from the vegetal and everyday spheres merged into a generic *numen* that becomes personalized as *Genius* or *Iuno*, with all the onomastic variants—*Covella, Lucina, Moneta, Regina, Caprotina, Veridica, Iuga, Sospes, Curritis*.

Women did not occupy a primary role in conducting religious rituals; however, alongside male priests there existed assistants of the female sex, such as *camillae* (attendants at sacrifices), *tibicines* (flute players), *tympanistriae* (players of *tympana*), *cymbalistriae* (players of cymbals), *aedituae* (caretakers), and *canistrariae* (basket bearers), to which were added *ministrae* ("priestesses"), *magistrae* ("female priests"), and *matres sacrorum* ("sacred mothers"). To be an imperial priestess, a woman had to belong to elite families—a necessity also reflected in the high fee (*summa honoraria*) required to enter sacred office; thus the role pertained less to vocation than to financial and social status. The importance of female priestesses is evident in the fact that they were appointed by a local council and, at times, public consultation was undertaken. The activities of female sacerdotes—*ministrae* or *magistrae*—consisted in managing temple functions (receiving the faithful, supervising the sacred space, offerings) and performing sacred prayers (see Damian 2019: 283). They organized festivals, processions, and ceremonies dedicated to idolized gods. Female priests could be very young—beginning at six years of age (the Vestals)—whereas men were invested with religious functions only at twenty. Vestments were distinctive: white or purple dresses; fabrics could have patterns or richly colored bands; on their heads they wore a crown, band, or diadem. The most important officiants of Roman religion remained the Vestals, who were obligatorily of patrician origin, native, under *patria potestas*, without humble origins, ignoble occupations, or physical or mental disabilities; both mother and father had to be alive and never to have been slaves.

In late Roman religion, oriental cults such as that of the goddess Cybele and the mysteries of Isis and Serapis acquired a privileged place, offering the faithful mythical experiences and the promise of personal salvation, distinct from the traditionalism of civic cults.

Despite the superiority of male power in Roman religious life, there were a series of cults and ceremonies destined exclusively for women, with important roles played by the Lupercalia,

Bona Dea, Fenta Fauna, Bacchanalia, Pudicitia, Venera Cloacina, the cult of Fortuna Primigenia, and that known as Mater Matuta, goddess of grain ripening. The main feminine religious festivals were held in the Forum Boarium, a market in which the most important temples were erected.

The appetite for prophecy is evident among both Romans and Greeks, since they transformed it into a veritable religion and placed it at the basis of any undertaking. Even Roman ethnogenesis is grounded in signs interpreted by augurs: Romulus and Remus sought counsel of the gods for founding the City by observing the flight of hawks. Plutarch often mentions people's recourse to oracles. In the chapter devoted to Phocion, he recounts that the oracle at Delphi declared that the latter thought differently from the rest of the populace, being a promoter of peace (see 1960, I: 19). He also tells that another oracle given at Dodona ordered the Athenians to leave the extremities of the city to the goddess Artemis (Plutarch 1960, I: 35). The oracle at Delphi played a significant role, where divine epiphany offered mortals solutions or revealed the gods' wishes. Oracles were hosted in several sanctuaries and temples, but for those in the Eastern Mediterranean, Delphi was of prime importance, interweaving the adoration of Apollo with Dionysiac beliefs.

An important place in Roman religion is occupied by the allegorical goddess *Pietas*, since her name is linked to one of the principal Roman virtues. The lexeme *pietas* has multiple connotations but presupposes primarily a humble, submissive respect toward a person or the fatherland—civic honesty (*pietas erga patriam*). In relation to the divine it signifies devout faith; with respect to the profane, *Pietas* illustrates devotion to state, fatherland, and family. A deity of interest to Roman women was Hymenaeus, who conducted the bride to the nuptial bed. Hymenaeus was a Greek deity often present in Hellenic epitaphs of unmarried youths, noting that the deceased are improperly conducted by Hades when they should have been escorted by the god of marriage, thereby highlighting their premature death.

The next chapter, *Women's Dress between Coquetry and Social Identity*, examines the connection between women's fashion and mechanisms of social or gender segregation, implemented through codes governing the choice of clothing, jewelry, makeup, and hairstyle. The use of expensive materials such as purple dye, precious stones, and elaborate hairstyles served as emblematic indicators of privileged social position and wealth, reflecting exclusivity and the wearer's power. Clothing was specific by gender and social class: Roman men wore the *toga*, while *matronae* wore the *palla* and *stola*, vestimentary elements distinguishing them from slaves, freedmen, or *dediticii*. The cut of certain garments intended for women resembled male attire (cloak or tunic), though they were longer and of finer materials. Aulus Gellius, in *Noctes Atticae* I.V.1, illustrates how dress could influence social perception, reporting that the orator Demosthenes was slandered by rivals and deemed less manly because of the elegant cloak and fine tunics he wore—elements that occasioned contempt and insults from his adversaries.

In the first century CE, Roman women abandoned the *stola*, though it was still used at times, more as a symbol of the wearer's modesty. A preferred garment was the *palla*, a long rectangular shawl of over three meters, worn draped over the left shoulder or like a cloak with a hood, since respectable *matronae* did not go out bareheaded. A woman dressed thus was "unavailable"; therefore prostitutes and adulteresses were prohibited from wearing these garments and were obliged to wear the *toga*. At night the Roman *matrona* was not scantily dressed; she kept on her tunic, *strophium*, and belt (*capetium*), and often—especially among the powerful—had a separate bedroom from her husband. In the morning, Jérôme Carcopino (1979: 210) notes, the *matrona* donned an *amictus* and prepared for the very important bath, the *cura corporis*. Under her garment, the woman wore a *strophium* or a *mamillare*, a kind of archaic brassiere consisting of a strip of cloth supporting the breasts. Young girls had a *toga praetexta* embroidered or edged in red, a color believed to have apotropaic properties. Around

their necks they wore a *bulla* serving as an amulet; their hair was tied back. Despite luxurious garments, colors were fairly subdued. Toward the end of the Republic and in the imperial era, women also emancipated vestimentarily; in Capua workshops were established to dye fabrics in various colors, while white remained the color of mourning. The Romans' appetite for refinement and sensuality is evident in the development of centers producing perfumes, and the art of adornment became more stylized. Gradually, beauty preceded honor, and the elegance of courtesans became a model for emancipated *matronae* eager to wear styles inappropriate to their condition—far more provocative.

Roman women paid special attention to cosmetic ritual and used a wide range of natural products: powders and creams to whiten the complexion; charcoal, ash, and cuttlefish ink to accentuate the gaze and shape the eyebrows, sometimes painted with soot obtained from burning shells. Malachite was also used for eye makeup, producing a green color. Rosy cheeks were obtained from tannin extracted from wine. Cosmetics were kept in an elegant wooden casket containing small ointment boxes preserved in fine ceramic (*terra sigillata*) and alabaster; wealthy women owned solid silver cases (*capsa*) and ivory carvings. Martial, in *Epigramma* XIV.12, transfers social discrimination to jewelry chests: the one inlaid with ivory houses gold, while the wooden casket bears only silver (1961: 407). Ovid (1969: 85–86) offers women several beauty recipes in *Medicamina faciei femineae*, such as one for whitening the face, recommending barley brought "from Libyan shores," mixed with vetch and ten eggs dried in the wind, amalgamated with powder from the first shed antler of a stag, peeled scallions, mallow flowers, tree sap, and Etruscan spelt. Perfumes were made from alum mixed with olive oil, iris, and rose petals.

Clothing was made of cloth, wool, or linen; wealthy women possessed garments of much finer cotton and sometimes silk. Alexandra Croom (2010: 23) underscores that although extremely expensive and worn by both sexes, silk symbolized decadence. By the third century CE it had come to cost its weight in gold. To reduce price, silk was mixed with wool or linen. Its value was so great that in 169 CE Marcus Aurelius financed his war by selling his wife's gold and silk garments. Purple dye, priced highly, was found in the luxurious wardrobes of the wealthy. Mary Beard (2013: 395), examining various epitaphs recording occupations, mentions one Caius Pupius Amicus, a slave skilled in "purple dyeing," and notes that the dye was extracted from the shell of certain crustaceans and used to color the garments of the emperor and senators. Pliny mentions that certain shells (*pelagiae, taenium, lutense*) produce *corollarium*, used in dyeing purple garments, the liquid being the color of a dark rose. The red-violet (*hysginum*) was prepared from cochineal-colored products to which Tyrian purple was added. The most important red pigment was extracted from Galatian cochineal (see Pliny 2001, II: 133). The imperial color and that of officials or high-ranking women was purple, obtained from the snails of Tyre.

Footwear for the two sexes presented similarities, differing in color and the quality of the raw material. Women's footwear could be personalized with jewelry or other accessories, had more vivid colors—usually gold or red—and finer leather. The *stola* was worn with the *calceus*, a kind of high leather ankle boot with a fairly thick sole; behind it was attached a leather strip rising toward the calf. Rough leather was used to make rudimentary moccasins called *pero*, fastened with straps, or clogs (*sculponeae*) with wooden soles. In intimate spaces, Roman women wore *sandalia* or *soleae* (sandals) consisting of simple soles tied to the foot by straps (*amentum, habena,* or *obstragulum*). *Matronae* invited to other women's homes sent these sandals with their slaves or brought them themselves if they could not afford a slave at their disposal.

Most feminine ornaments consisted of earrings (*pendentes* or *inaures*), usually very large and pendulous; necklaces; or fibulae used to fasten the cloak; and hairpins (*discriminales*) made

of gold and adorned with precious stones or carved with erotic or mythological scenes. The feminine arsenal also included hairpins of ivory, bronze, silver, or wood, with adornments acquired according to means.

Mourning excluded adornment. Courtesans and slaves did not bedeck themselves with jewelry; their garments were simpler in cut, but they compensated for this lack of feminine allure by exposing the body more strikingly. Once Romans penetrated Hellenistic eastern lands, they brought back a multitude of stones and jewels; the taste for gold and diamonds became exacerbated. Nicolae Lascu (1965: 204) notes that Caligula's wife came to wear jewelry valued at forty million sesterces.

Hairstyle and hair care in ancient Rome involved a normative component; complex rituals were associated with women, but for both sexes hair was an index of social and individual identity. For men, hairstyles could indicate adherence to a cultural or political ideology[1]; for women, they constituted a form of seduction and authentication of status as mothers, wives, or members of great imperial families. Girls wore their hair long, cascading down the back, whereas women braided or wrapped their hair with bands, consisting of woolen nets (*vittae*), sometimes set with precious stones. Wigs executing pharaonic coiffures were in great demand, especially in the Flavian dynasty, and were worn at banquets.

In rites of passage, hair ornamentation forms an integral part of the ceremony. The bride wore a yellow-orange-to-red veil like a flame (*flammeum*), signifying acceptance of marriage and suggesting fecundity. Her hair was arranged in six braids (possibly similar to the Vestals' coiffure), woven with bands of wool (*infulae vittae*) used also during sacrifices, both for the victim and the sacrificer. The young woman's head was adorned with a wreath of flowers. Widows replaced the *palla* with a mantle called *ricinium*; they wore no ornaments, and disheveled hair signaled grief. Women with sacerdotal roles had specific vestments—white or purple dresses; the fabric could include patterns or richly colored bands—and wore a crown, band, or diadem.

In Roman literature, feminine beauty is treated ambivalently: Lucretius (1981: 169–170) denounces it as an expression of ostentation and material waste; Ovid values it as a sign of refinement in an advanced society; while Juvenal (1986: 87) satirizes it, reducing excessive adornment and towering hairstyles to manifestations of artificiality and vanity. Beauty thus becomes a terrain of confrontation among morality, aesthetics, and satire.

Chapter four, *The Exploitation of Female Sexuality—Rape and Sacred Prostitution*, presents the rape and abduction of the Sabine women as a pretext for Roman ethnogenesis—as recounted by historiographers such as Titus Livius or Plutarch—and discusses other acts of aggression against women motivated by demographic strategies and by the legitimization of a political and social order. Domination, force, and control over the female body are converted into interethnic alliances and a factor of social cohesion, and the woman becomes an instrument of symbolic mediation in the annulment of conflicts and the restoration of civic harmony. The rape and suicide of Lucretia take shape as the final expression of royal corruption and abuse and serve not only as a model of the Roman woman's virtues but as a symbol of the decadence of a political regime, instrumentalized by the republican position. The chapter also addresses the norms instituted by Octavianus Augustus, *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, which makes transparent the tension between female autonomy and social control during the Principate. Promulgated in 18 BCE, the law sought to regulate family conduct, encourage marriages to increase birth rates, and combat adultery. By including the man within the sphere of juridical responsibility for adultery, the *Lex Iulia* marks a shift in perspective on gender relations,

[1] Elizabeth Bartman notes that the unkempt appearance of the beard and the length of the hair represented the emblem of the intellectual concerns of the great Greek philosophers (cf. 2001: 1).

limiting the unilateralism of old norms and offering the woman a somewhat more equitable position.

A subchapter focuses on Ovidian paradoxes regarding the poet's treatment of the relationship between love and aggression, analyzing passages from poetic works relevant to the theme. We cannot categorically assert that the anti-adultery law later influenced Ovid's poetics, but it is certain that his vision was adapted to his age when he employs the elegiac interest in presenting women's experiences. Although the poet engages topics of sexual morality—"I lend charm to Venus, mother of wanton love" (1996: 35)—unlike Titus Livius, he presents the pain and anguish of assaulted women and eroticizes violence. He gives precedence to the psychological dimension and to the consequences of aggression on female behavior over the moral element, reorganizing the hierarchy of traditional values because he accords primacy to love and interiorized feelings.

Another issue addressed is amorous life in Rome, regulated by a blend of traditional values (*castitas, pudicitia, fides*, etc.) and social or legislative norms. Despite a moral decadence much alleged in modern scholarship, in Rome the virtues of *matronae* and conjugal fidelity acquired civic value. Prostitution was legalized, and the erotic and the sacred intersected in certain rites and religious beliefs. Sexuality in Rome was perceived phallocentrically, more as a dynamic between passive and active roles; preferences could be hetero- or homosexual, but the woman was always associated with the passive model. A man who did not conform to the Priapic type was considered effeminate; the passive role was therefore destined for slaves. Anthony Blond (2005: 25) notes that Sulla had a convenient relationship with an actor—socially perceived as the equivalent of a male prostitute—and emphasizes that love between men constituted a viable option, not a perversion.

Paul Veyne considers that Roman sexuality was constituted around different markers from contemporary ones—passive versus active attitudes, conjugal exclusivity or amorous freedom, and the condition of slave or free man: "To sodomize your slave was an innocent deed, and even severe censors did not concern themselves with such a minor matter" (Veyne 2009: 179). The French historian notes, however, that homophilia was accepted in relationships between master and slave as long as the latter was beardless; once he began to mature, it was not advisable to subject him to an undignified treatment. Nonetheless, libertines might continue an indecent relationship with the slave, now *exoletus*; Seneca himself, the philologist adds, expressed indignation at those who imposed epilation on a beloved past adolescence (see 2009: 185–186).

Prostitution in the ancient world had a certain social function and cannot be viewed solely as indecent behavior, all the more so since it served as a means of supplying the state treasury. Romans clearly distinguished between *matrona* and *meretrix*; the latter brought fullness to men's lives. Sexual exploitation entailed several archetypes and feminine or masculine hypostases, playing a precise role in the dynamics of intimate relations. *Meretrices* were prostitutes registered in public records, but there was also illegal practice of this occupation by *prostibulae*. Oliviu Felecan (2004: 178), analyzing various designations for prostitutes—*lupae, meretrices,* or *prostibulae*—draws a semantic distinction: *meretrices* practiced their trade at night in better-regarded places with earnings considered more honorable, whereas *prostibulae* worked day and night in cheap establishments for much less money.

The next chapter, *Social Masks and Feminine Stereotypes in Latin Theater*, begins with a historical contextualization of the Roman theatrical tradition and seeks to identify and interpret feminine archetypes—*matrona, puella, ancilla, meretrix*—in the comedies of Plautus and Terentius, with a view to configuring literary and social identity portraits. *Matronae* exemplifying negative stereotypical traits include Cleostrata in *Casina* or Dorippa in *Mercator*:

they are eager to gossip and divulge their husbands' secrets and intimacies. The angry (*irata*) and dowered (*dotata*) wife is most dangerous: she does not allow her husband his own view, resorts to shouting and tears, spies, is proud, bellicose, abusive. In *Aulularia*, Eunomia underscores the disjunction between woman and silence, while Megadorus, the older suitor, lists a series of disadvantages arising from marriage to a woman with a dowry: exacerbated pride, an expensive wife conscious of status, fearless before male authority. Plautus, however, also illustrates the archetype of the faithful, ideal *matrona* through Alcmena in *Amphitruo*, a true model of chastity. Deceived by *Iuppiter* in the guise of her husband, the Theban general Amphitruo, she bears twins, one of whom is Hercules. The jealous wife is personified here by Junona, who sends two serpents to kill the infants; they are slain by Hercules, who proves his strength from the cradle. Beyond comic effects generated by lively dialogue and *quiproquos*, Alcmena remains an exemplar for Roman women. Yet she is hard to classify, being a composite of three comic female roles: modest girl (*pudica puella*), obedient wife (*matrona morigera*), or passionate friend (*amans amica*). Faithful wives of husbands abroad are portrayed in *Stichus* through the sisters Panegyris and Pamphila. The play attests information regarding the married woman's status: she had the right to revoke a marriage after three years of absence or silence. Eunomia (*Aulularia*), Phanostrata (*Cistellaria*), or Philippa (*Epidicus*) prefigure, through biographical notes, the sinuous destiny of women abused in youth and who lose a daughter later rediscovered. The potential restoration of family beside them changes men's violent behavior and establishes the women as exemplary *matronae*.

A feminine archetype is the virgin projected onto the horizon of ideality, totally under paternal domination or that of a tutor who disregards female anxieties and desires. Handed over to her husband, the woman passes from paternal constraints to conjugal authority; her personality, physical presence, or consent is irrelevant to the comedy's development. Her qualities reflect the image of a good wife in the Roman collective mind: beauty, chastity, dowry, and silence. This archetype is identified in the figure of Phaedra, the abused daughter of the rapacious old man in *Aulularia*, whose future is decided in her absence; consequently, she cannot contribute significantly to the conflict's evolution. In *Persa*, for the first time the playwright stages a convincing female character—a *virgo*, a freeborn girl, the daughter of the parasite Saturio—noble in character, courageous, and honorable, who animates a minor role.

Another pattern of the virgin follows an analogous narrative scheme: stolen in childhood from a good family and raised to become a *meretrix*, she discovers her true origin at the comedy's end. Once the past and superior genealogy are restored, the girl marries a free youth previously inaccessible. This category includes Planesium (*Curculio*), Palaestrum (*Rudens*), Selenium (*Cistellaria*), Telestis (*Epidicus*), Casina in the eponymous play, or Adelphasium and Anterastilis rescued by the young Agorastocles from a *leno* in *Poenulus*. These characters synthesize moral and social clichés: they possess the fragility and vulnerability inherent in youth and inexperience, but also the courtesan's assets, able to dominate through the tactical games of femininity and beauty.

The courtesan appears in three distinct hypostases. One is the archetype of the young, inexperienced woman with manners (Philaenium in *Asinaria*, Pasicompsa in *Mercator*, Philematium in *Mostellaria*, Phoenicium in *Pseudolus*), loved by a youth drawn to her conversation, modesty, loyalty, and innocence, eager to ransom her freedom. The two are reunited at the end, creating the illusion of a permanent bond, even though any relationship with a courtesan is destined to rupture because of the discrepancy in social position between the two lovers. This type of character associates two feminine invariants—the innocent virgin and the tempting, sensual courtesan.

Another hypostasis is the woman at mid-career who offers sensuality sincerely—Erotium in *Menaechmi*, Acropolis in *Epidicus*, Lemniselenis in *Persa*, Phronesium in *Truculentus*,

Acroteleutia in *Miles gloriosus*. The third hypostasis of the courtesan is the *lena*, at the end of her career: a faded, cynical, harsh, rapacious matron who initiates girls into worldly experiences, devoid of depth and love, always craving material gain. She teaches young lovers to be egocentric and to secure financial safety. Such a character is Cleaereta in *Asinaria*.

The *ancilla* ("maidservant" or "slave") is more versatile although she does not approximate the importance of her male counterpart; she lacks his intellectual resources and vitality. Slave women or maidservants are inventive and intriguing, act in their own interest, or have incidental importance in the action's development. Among them stand out Milphidippa in *Miles gloriosus* and Astaphium in *Truculentus*—the former for her ability to conspire and mislead, the latter for supporting the amorous policy of the courtesan Phronesium; she acts as gatekeeper who filters access to her mistress, receives gifts, ensures strategies of seduction are fulfilled, and manages the beauty's love affairs.

Older women are sketched schematically and unidimensionally, patrolling the obscure zones of lower classes—either as slaves (Staphyla in *Aulularia* or Syra in *Mercator*) or as priestesses of Venus (Ptolemocratia in *Rudens*).

Terentius continues the Plautine comedic tradition, but his female characters are more complex and nuanced, possessing a more pronounced interior reality marked by an appetite for sentiment; their language is refined, at times precious, yet lacks the vigor of his predecessor's humor. Terentius humanizes the image of the courtesan: no longer merely a figure of commercial transaction and desire, she becomes a character with psychological traits, emotions, and altruistic motivations. For example, in *Eunuchus*, the *meretrix* Thais strives to find Pamphila's family—the girl having been abducted in childhood—and temporarily sacrifices her relationship with Phaedria. Still, she blends the beauty of love with the obstinate rooting of the negative portrait in the collective consciousness, where she is not granted moral credit. In *Heautontimorumenos*, Bacchis explains to Antiphila the lack of male consideration for a *meretrix*, beloved only so long as she maintains her luster, then abandoned when it fades: "Honor becomes you; our lovers do not allow it to us./ They love and cherish us only for our beauty" (Terentius 1975: 237). Bacchis, the courtesan in *Hecyra*, is loved by Pamphilus; the youth leaves her at his father's urging, being compelled to marry a freeborn girl of good standing named Philumena. Introduced only in Act V, the courtesan shows loyalty and empathy when Pamphilus' father, Laches, asks her to confess before the young wife and his own wife that the boy visited her no more after the marriage. Terentius adds to the acknowledged mercantilism of these women a human dimension, authentic frenetic passion, and the thirst for erotic fulfillment.

As in Plautus, Terentius sketches the portrait of the young woman whom fate has placed in tragic circumstances—lost by her family and forced to prostitute herself or live in penury (Pamphila in *Eunuchus*, Phanium in *Phormio*, Antiphila in *Heautontimorumenos*). The archetype of the slave/servant (Doria in *Eunuchus*, Phrygia in *Heautontimorumenos*, Canthara in *Adelphoe*, Mysis and Archylis in *Andria*) develops dynamically in Terentian comedies and, despite their secondary role, these characters act as agents of amorous intrigues and as the motor of action. Though socially precarious, they can influence the destiny of the privileged; they are cunning, procedurally shrewd—an invariant of Greek and Roman comedic conventions—captured in the refined style of the Latin playwright.

The *matrona* archetype is less prominent in Terentian plays; representative are Sostrata (*Adelphoe*) and Myrrhina (*Hecyra*), individualized through maternal love manifested in real fears for their daughters' futures. Sostrata in *Hecyra*, unjustly accused that her daughter-in-law left the house because of her behavior, embodies the honest, prudent *matrona* misunderstood by her partner: "Ah, it is unjust that we should all be seen badly by our husbands,/ Because some wives cast shadows upon us" (Terentius 1976: 141).

The last subchapter explores the complex relationship among *hybris*, love, and *furor* in shaping the behavior of Seneca's tragic female characters. The wounded women of tragedy are enslaved by revenge; their deeds terrify, given that their consequences are death and—generative—love. Incapable of detaching themselves from punishing the guilty, they are prepared to sacrifice everything, even personal happiness. They abandon themselves to Até's baleful energy[2]; hatred surpasses even maternal love. The Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus* shows the protagonist as victim of Deianira's erotic insecurity; he dons the poisoned shirt given by Nessus to his wife and commits suicide on Mount Oeta when the agony of the fatal substance and thanatic languor become unbearable. The female figure experiences paroxysmal tension, a split between sentimental vulnerability, conjugal love, and involuntary guilt.

In *Agamemnon*, Seneca imagines a passionate heroine driven by resentment and illicit love for Aegisthus; blinded by vindictive impulses, she assumes a destructive destiny. She commits *hybris*, feeling entitled to decide upon her husband's life and death, disregarding divine and moral law.

Another feminine figure charged with tragic significance is Cassandra, presented by Seneca in symbolic register and described by Clytaemnestra in negative terms: "A captured wife and a king's whore" (Seneca 1979: 145). Humiliated and enslaved, the Trojan senses death's approach but cannot avoid it. Her rapid, chaotic prophecies and sacred frenzy highlight a moral rift between truth and the world, intensifying emotion and dramatic tension. Though not an active presence, Helen is often evoked by the chorus or other characters. As the pretext for hostilities between Greeks and Trojans, she is perceived as a symbol of disorder and suffering.

Carmen Dărăbuș underscores that Clytaemnestra's deviation from maternal love in favor of the erotic cannot be forgiven by either Orestes or Electra: "For the former, the departure from the maternal stirs the danger of non-representation[3], while for the daughter it portends her own betrayals" (2004: 29). Accordingly, Electra appears ready to destroy herself, to renounce maternal feminine identity; her sole raison d'être remains the death of her father's killers: "Aegisthus reigns in the house the adulterer ruins" (Seneca 1979: 140). A similar explanation is found in Mihaela Paraschiv (2011: 9), who notes that fear of the erotic-feminine exceeds filial love.

Phaedra in Seneca's eponymous play possesses a personality torn between ethical conscience and guilty passion, marking her as a tragic character. Her inner tensions drive her to irrationality when she accuses her stepson of incest, yet her moral principles triumph after Hippolytus' unjust death; she self-accuses before her suicidal act. In Stoic spirit, the Latin tragedian demonstrates that uncontrolled passion is destructive and that one's struggle is most often not with external forces but with oneself.

The eponymous Medea is likewise dominated by violent love and passion-driven reactions; erotic impulse exceeds normality and defies maternal feeling. Oscillating between anger at her husband's betrayal and tenderness for her children, the balance of affects tilts toward vindictive action; love that defines the woman-mother is perverted into destructive deed, the heroine becoming executioner of her offspring.

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[2] Até personifies the idea of fatality in Hellenic mythology, being the daughter of Zeus, a goddess of vengeance who delighted in clouding the human mind, provoking impulsive or reckless actions. This deity was associated with destruction and illusion, which lead to the obscuring of truth and to *hybris*, blinding above all the man full of arrogance, who does not know or accept his limits (cf. Ferrari 2003: 116).

[3] Starting from Frédérich de Scitivaux's theory, Carmen Dărăbuș (2004: 28) shows that the maternal feminine can be identified by reference to an ideal self, an ancestral archetype with a strong idealizing charge, initially associated with the image of the mother, which functions as a symbolic prefiguration of the moral instance, a mythical prototype of the superego. In this context, Clytaemnestra's immorality cannot represent the ethical identity to which the son relates.

In the partially preserved *Phoenissae*, Jocasta represents an active maternal voice placed in the position of mediating between her sons, Polynices and Eteocles, condemned to witness helplessly the brothers' hatred. The character is a moral instance and a touchstone for indicting family flaws, thirst for power, and fratricidal war in a world marked by fatality and cruelty.

A woman-victim is Octavia in Seneca's play of the same name, considered the only preserved *praetexta* (see Cizek 1966: 25) and the only original tragedy centered on Roman politics during Nero's reign. The heroine—daughter of Claudius and wife of Nero—is repudiated because of the emperor's feelings for the ambitious and beautiful Poppaea.

Chapter six, *Identity Hypostases of Women in Latin Lyric*, addresses Latin elegiac lyric and accentuates themes and stereotypes related to love, erotic torments, and the ideal woman, specific to the genre. It analyzes verses by representative poets—Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid—for whom Latin elegy is not merely a manifestation of ardent passion but a space for negotiating power relations, artistic identity, and the era's erotic norms. From the analysis of normative options expressed by the elegists, one can configure a general poetics by assembling, in a confrontational manner, themes, literary motifs, allegorical images, and symbols that reflect metamorphoses in the Roman mental universe; the woman extends her influence beyond the *domus*, managing somewhat to transcend patriarchal patterns and old stereotypes. The obedient, chaste, modest woman is offered an alternative by the elegists—more modern, eluding preconceptions, endowed with culture, worldly, with a certain individual autonomy—a *matrona* with courtesan's aspirations. Even if she proves impudent and unfaithful, she is adored despite reproaches and accusations.

Through elegiac lyric, four great ardent loves remain famous in Latin literature—eminent muses of expressive, vibrant poets: the celebrated Clodia (Lesbia) of Catullus; Cynthia (Roscia), a graceful, elegant mistress for the melancholic Propertius; Delia (Plania), Tibullus' seductive young lover; and, for a limited time, Corinna for Ovid—the beloved who captivated him and inculcated lessons of libertinage. The inspirational subject metamorphoses in the grammar of love discourse, creating a fictive mistress that conforms to the aesthetic program. The image of the wife in Ovid's *Tristia* differs from the woman of his early verse volumes and aligns more closely with the archetype of the authentic *matrona*, faithful to her husband.

The seventh chapter, *Female Representations and Mythology in Vergil's Epic*, explores mythological invariants as actants in the poet's work. It analyzes the three women who marked Aeneas' existence and becoming: Creusa—conjugal love and tragic past; Dido—passionate love and conflictual present; Lavinia—the eros necessary to ethnogenesis and historical future. The heroines represent a triad of symbols of Aeneas' personal life and founding destiny: sacrifice, duty, and the genesis of the City. Liviu Franga (2007: 124) notes that, in a connotative reading of the epic from a political perspective, Aeneas' three relationships with women of royal lineage confer power over three zones—East, Africa, and West—founding Rome's vocation for hegemony and the desire that it govern the world.

Other deities and mythological figures considered include Iuno, Venus, Sybilla, Andromacha, and Camilla. Wrathful Iuno is the principal divine antagonist of the hero, whom she dislikes because of his destiny as future founder of an empire that will destroy her favorite city, Carthage, and because in the Trojan War she sided with the Greeks. Mădălina Strechie (2015: 196–197) judges Iuno a personification of discord and division that fostered civil and fratricidal wars—Augustus himself taking part in the last of them. The scholar considers her a possible representative of Greek hostility, viewing with resentment and aversion Roman hegemony and domination of the Mediterranean, or a Cleopatra who influenced Rome's political scene and provoked civil war, making Antony and Augustus enemies. Venus occupies a distinct place in the epic's plot: her image surpasses the conventional literary canon of a goddess of voluptuousness and takes on maternal capacities, aiding her son Aeneas' progress.

The goddess's actions may be motivated by maternal love and by consciousness of guilt for having provoked the Trojan War; thus her effort may be read as expiation.

Veiled in the impenetrable mystery of prophecies, Sybilla projects a substantial feminine figure in terms of her role in Aeneas' destiny. Leading him into the Underworld, she accomplishes a sacred *catharsis* through which the protagonist consciously and lucidly assumes his role and ends his psychological oscillation between individual feeling and that of the founding hero. Vergil's Andromacha represents the archetype of the grieving mother and wife; she joins the mothers who lament Troy's fall and, like the ancient chorus, underscores the tragedy of losing family and home and the carnage of war. Personal mourning thus acquires collective value; the Trojan women's sacrifice is the prelude to exceptional achievements erected upon sacrifices and renunciations.

Camilla stands out through her capacity for sacrifice for her country, constituting an anarchetype of the Roman woman, since raised by her father she learned more the craft of arms than of the distaff. For the hero, the woman represents Italic force—an obstacle to be overcome to take power over Latium.

Chapter eight, *The Pattern of the Royal-Bearing Woman and Female Typologies in Latin Historiographical Literature*, addresses the ways Tacitus, Suetonius, and Titus Livius relate to the multiple social, political, and moral valences instituted by female authority. Tacitus associates the great empresses—Livia Augusta, Valeria Messalina, Iulia Agrippina, Sabina Poppaea—with seduction, exacerbated ambition, male manipulation, and with victims of a violent, changeable political milieu. Suetonius concentrates on courtly titillation where women are active characters often involved in scandalous events. Titus Livius presents woman as a guarantor of founding, continuity, and social and historical stability—a moral pillar necessary to civic concord. A subchapter analyzes the conservative moralism of Sallust and the portraits of Sempronia, Aurelia Orestilla, and Fulvia, wife of Quintus Curius.

Women instrumentalized in Tacitus' work exemplify departure from the traditional paradigm of obedience before the masculine, exercising significant power even by modern standards. The panoply of female portraits is offered for moralizing purposes, most as negative examples; the historian laments forgotten virtues and the age's decadence: "His creation becomes a weapon in this personal civic effort to restore loftier times" (Ceia 2021: 59).

Imperial female figures in Tacitean narrative organize taxonomically into three recurring archetypal categories that reflect the mismatch between the Roman civic ideal postulated by Tacitus and the immoral reality of Principate politics: empress-mothers, wives, and mistresses—their actions decoded as modes of imposing female power through male manipulation. Latin historiography captures women as mirrors of moral decadence; Tacitus and Suetonius focus on their capacity to infiltrate the sphere of imperial power. Empresses of the Principate years are portrayed negatively, being considered destabilizing factors in the fierce struggle for public authority and catalysts of court intrigues. Thus the woman becomes a symbol of an era's morass, eroded by departure from old republican virtues and by power captured through intrigue and corruption. A symbolic figure of imperial Rome was Livia Drusilla, third wife of Octavianus Augustus, renowned for her subtle influence and ability to shape from the shadows the destiny of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Another *imperatrix* who has gone down in history as radically diverted from ethical norms by her extreme desire to rule and to impose herself on Rome's political stage is Iulia Agrippina, descendant of Germanicus and Agrippina Maior, mother of the future emperor Nero and niece of Claudius: "Like her mother, she was a true successor of Julia—greedy, cruel, immoral, and despotic" (Tudor 1972: 254). Both Livia Drusilla and Iulia Agrippina represent the dominant maternal archetype, harnessing intelligence to control their children and guarantee succession. Ferrero Guglielmo (1911: 290) sees Agrippina's rationale as favoring her son rather than wishing to eliminate Britannicus. By

officializing Nero's possible succession, Agrippina seeks to ensure the augustan family's supreme authority through two pretenders in a historical period when death could strike at any step.

An image of decadence and debauchery, Messalina has taken shape in the collective imagination as an archetype of the domineering woman and unscrupulous mistress who negatively impacted the lives of many men, victims of her excesses, cruelty, and manipulation. Guglielmo Ferrero (1911: 251) argues that Valeria Messalina's name became synonymous with the most condemnable vices and behavioral deviations, yet the woman's infamous reputation must be connected to the hostile opinions of the enemies of Augustus' family and can only be analyzed within the context of highly subjective political passions. He concedes, however, that this reckless, capricious, and beautiful *imperatrix* possessed an appetite for existential pleasures, opulence, and influence and did not hesitate to abuse the weaknesses of an abulic husband, seduce him, and manipulate him.

Another archetype of the empress-wife is Sabina Poppaea and Claudia Octavia, both sharing the same man—Nero—but not the same character: if Poppaea was beautiful and cruel, driven by ambition, Octavia was gentle, virtuous, modest, and little involved in the struggle for power. Octavia's simplicity contrasted sharply with the other's eccentricities. Poppaea Sabina appears as a controversial figure; Tacitus (1995: 360) considers that she possessed all qualities except honor, and outwardly seemed full of propriety though in reality she was dissolute. Nero's love for the beautiful woman ignited when the emperor was only twenty; Poppaea was five or six years older—an advantage that reveals her unimaginable erotic attraction over Nero, to the point of prompting him to kill his mother.

A remarkable figure was Iulia, daughter of Octavianus Augustus by Scribonia—a beautiful, intelligent woman with literary and artistic inclinations. Fond of luxury, she embraced opulence as form of self-assertion with fervent passion and defiant disregard for imperial court conventions. Such behavior opposed not only Livia's rigor but augustan austerity promoted in *lex Iulia sumptuaria*. Flanked by paternal and marital austerity and by the sobriety of Octavia and Livia, Iulia became increasingly hostile to mores upheld by her own family and was exiled to Pandateria. Iulia Minor, Augustus' granddaughter, copied her mother's immoral and luxuriant life and was exiled to Trimerus.

Temperamentally and characterologically contrasted with her frivolous sister Iulia Minor, Agrippina Maior stands out for chastity, fidelity, and fecundity—she bore her husband nine children before turning twenty-six. Yet a fatal *fatum* left only three alive, and she too was touched by the ill star of Augustus' house. Despite her honorable character, Tacitus accuses her of making her honesty a motive for arrogance and of exceeding in thoughtless ambitions and an unmeasured nature. Living in a society infected by the disease of moral decadence, her ostentatiously displayed intransigence became irritating. Impetuous, she became Germanicus' shadow and imposed herself in matters deemed exclusively masculine; her ambition recalling that of great *imperatrices*.

The Tacitean *Annales* examine trials of women, some aristocrats, implicated in cases involving witchcraft in the context of conspiracies or sexual offenses. Recourse to magical practices may be read as literary tropes—metaphorically suggesting ritualized cruelty—and as the most convenient means to rid oneself of a troublesome woman against whom no evidence of other crimes existed. Latin historiography registers two feminine archetypes—witch and murderess. Tacitus often recounts the use of magic in political attacks; yet it should be noted that the semantic field of the witch overlaps with that of a specialist in preparing poisons. The Latin historian invariably incriminates women as practitioners of *artes magicae*. Two important *veneficae* mentioned by historians are Martina and Locusta. Martina appears to have conspired with Munatia Plancina, her husband Piso, and Augusta to kill Germanicus. Locusta is

presented as one of the most skilled *veneficae* in first-century CE Rome—the household witch of Agrippina Minor and Nero—executed by Galba (see Cassius Dio 1985, III: 180).

Another intriguer is Munatia Plancina, whom Tacitus accuses of conduct improper to femininity—an *impotentia muliebris*—rival to Agrippina Maior, moral author of rebellions and insubordination and cause of Germanicus' death.

The typology of Tacitean womanhood is completed by other presences with essential or tangential roles in the forces that coagulated or threatened the Roman Empire. Some are of modest condition; others belong to peoples with whom Romans had bellicose contacts or alliances. Acte is among them, a Greek *liberta* belonging to Claudius and later the faithful lover of Nero until his death. Within strategies and maneuvers in the struggle for power, Acte functions as Seneca's instrument for increasing his influence and as an affective counterweight to Agrippina's prior supremacy over Nero.

The slave Epicharis, actively involved in the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero, is presented as virtuous and faithful to her cause; the Latin author portrays her positively. Though at first Tacitus calls her "a certain woman" and wonders how she learned of the plot, he ultimately admires her moral integrity: despite severe torture, she did not betray her accomplices (see Tacitus 1995: 438–439; Cassius Dio 1985, III: 218). In this sense, Epicharis is the archetype of the slave capable of transgressing condition through honesty and strength of character, placed in stark contrast with the ruling class.

The Armenian Zenobia, wife of Radamistus, enjoys a positive characterization and is called queen. Radamistus concluded an alliance with Mithridates but lured him into a grove to seal the pact with blood (according to custom), then chained him and killed his entire family. Claudius sent a legion under Helvidius Priscus to take necessary measures in turbulent circumstances. Radamistus consolidated authority in Armenia, but the palace was besieged and the king fled with Zenobia, who could scarcely bear the horses' speed because she was pregnant. Unable to sustain the flight, the woman asked her husband to kill her to avoid humiliating slavery through an honorable death.

Boudicca, wife of Prasutagus and queen of the Britons, becomes a symbol of bravery and love of nation. Though she fought against the Romans, Tacitus acknowledges that the worthy woman led men from a chariot, determined to avenge not lost wealth but stolen independence, endured humiliation, and physical abuses. Cartimandua—whose name would translate "glossy little horse" (see Enache 2017: 669)—is mentioned as queen of the Brigantes, faithful to Rome and uninvolved in Boudicca's revolt. Tacitus (1995: 314) presents her as an influential figure under Roman protection along with her husband.

Using the paradigm of moral values, Titus Livius classifies female typologies into the binomial *exempla* or *antiexempla* and grants primacy to gender stereotypes in presenting women's status. A positive example is Lavinia, who manages the newly founded city until Ascanius is old enough to assume leadership. The selflessness of Aeneas' wife contrasts with the empresses of the new order—eager to keep power for themselves. Titus Livius expresses a generalized view in the collective mind: the woman of royal families plays an important role not for herself but to ensure a man's—husband or son's—power. Another exemplary woman is Hersilia, on whom Livius dwells less. Daughter of the Sabine king Titus Tatius and wife of Romulus, she persuaded her husband to accept the Antemnates into the city, though they had previously attacked the Romans, moved by the pleas of the abducted wives who wished to see their parents. She convinces Romulus that the state can be stronger by replacing conflict with harmony.

Women considered *antiexempla* are Tanaquil and Tullia. Titus Livius (1976, I: 61) underscores that the latter decisively contributed to the assassination of her father, Servius Tullius, to satisfy her desire for power alongside her brother-in-law, Tarquinius—himself

enflamed by similar ambitions and by the passion that dominated his heart. The Etruscan Tanaquil secured her husband Lucumo's reign (who became Tarquinius Priscus) and, after his assassination, supported her protégé Servius Tullius. The woman commits *hybris*, motivated by personal ambition rather than service to the fatherland. Even so, the historian's attitude toward Tanaquil seems somewhat ambiguous, as she acts within a destiny's framework, heedful of augural portents regarding the grandeur of Etruscan men.

In *De coniuratione Catilinae*, Sallust lists feminine virtues deemed vanished—*pudorem* ("modesty"), *pudicitiam* ("chastity")—and highlights masculine faults through traits considered the province of women: *corpus animumque virile effeminat*. Associating men with these characteristics is especially pejorative and aligns with the immorality of their acts and with greed, the principal cause of personal and civic decay. The Latin historian does not grant special attention to the feminine factor except as a symbol of indirect influence on men's deeds and of human vulnerability. Woman reflects either Rome's decadence or morality but does not appear autonomously as a principal actant in history. Presenting Catiline's iniquities, Sallust mentions that he violated sacred vestal laws and loved one of them; then he was consumed by intense passion for Aurelia Orestilla—"a woman in whom, apart from beauty, no decent man ever found anything to praise" (Sallust 1965: 62). Another feminine image in the historian's work is Fulvia, wife of Quintus Curius—a secondary character in the conspiracy plot—used as pretext to highlight, by contrast, her husband's negative traits, accused of a feminine defect, that of *luxuria*. The central female figure in Sallust's work is Sempronia, wife of Scipio Aemilianus. Though she is attributed masculine characteristics (*virilis audacia*), pejorative when associated with a woman, Sallust shows she is an accomplished *matrona*, underlining her erudition (*matrona docta*).

The ninth chapter, *Woman in the Novelistic Epic of Petronius and Apuleius*, captures feminine identities reflected in the novelistic imaginary of the two writers. In novelistic literature, Petronius and Apuleius craft two distinct aesthetic perspectives on the feminine image: the former associates it with the burlesque register—up to caricature—while the latter correlates it predominantly with magic. Both assign women dominant roles erotically; the plot's actants are often hypersexualized and involved in scenes of violence and perversion. Although the two novelists' aims differ—satiric vs. initiatic—dominant women reflect the inverted values of a society in crisis. The novelistic universe indicates a spiritual topos likely to assail male will and eluct male supremacy. Populated by priestesses, thaumaturges, and witches, the novelistic humanity oscillates between fascination and terror, logic and contradiction, visible and invisible, *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

A Petronian character, Quartilla, is *matrona* and priestess of Priapus—a wealthy, independent libertine who promotes obscene spectacle and dissolute ceremonies into which the heroes of this adventure are drawn. Another significant female figure is Quartilla's servant Psyche—her name an ironic allusion to myth and epic. Through the ambiguity of her attitudes as servant and mistress, Psyche follows the same constructional scheme as her patrona, Quartilla. She prepares the youths for love, binds their hands and feet with ribbons torn from her breast, provokes them erotically and bacchically, tortures their cheeks with a hairpin, assails them with unwanted kisses and throbbing charms. Together with Quartilla she keeps vigil to Priapus, offering the magic of Falernian wine and a sumptuous banquet. No erotic manifestation knows interdictions; they follow only the art of intense living, elaborate games devoid of *pudicitas*.

Fortunata, wife of Trimalchio—a former slave brought from Asia, steward, then freedman who amassed wealth through usury and trade—represents the archetype of the vulgar woman. Defined by the phrase *haec lupatria* ("this she-wolf"), Fortunata is characterized doubly: a dominant, imposing, and authoritative nature who once belonged to the ranks of

prostitutes. Through these characters, Petronius embeds the novel's action in a social reference system that satirically captures the freedmen's ascent while remaining tributary in behavior to their earlier status. Implicitly, the author slyly mocks the Stoic vision that sought to valorize slaves in human terms.

The corruption of aristocratic young women, venality, and obscenity are illustrated by Tryphaena and Circe. Tryphaena is extraordinarily beautiful, traveling for frivolous reasons and eager to experience pleasure. Characterized by Encolpius as abusive and wicked, she shares psychological and behavioral similarities with priestesses of Priapus and serves Petronius as a pretext to satirically explore themes common to erotic novels—possession, desire, rivalry. Circe appears pathologically marked by the vicious world she inhabits; Petronius underscores her preference for slaves, opposed to the taste of her maid Chrysis, who prefers aristocrats.

Oenothea—Priapus' priestess and healer—emerges as a woman dominated by cupidity. Intending to cure Encolpius' impotence, she inflicts humiliating treatments and has her elderly assistant administer painful cudgel blows until the instrument is smashed, while the unfortunate man is flooded with tears.

The witch archetype in Apuleius' novel is configured through two complementary female characters that illustrate different facets of magic in the ancient world—Meroe and Pamphila. Meroe, old and monstrous, represents the terrifying, grotesque, destructive aspect of witchcraft, associated with collective fears and the perception of magical acts as agents of cosmic and social disorder. Pamphila, seductive and dangerous, embodies the erotic and fascinating dimension of magic, where sexual attraction becomes an instrument of manipulation and the exercise of occult power.

Photis, Pamphila's apprentice, lacks her mistress's malevolent forces; Lucius' attraction to her is provoked by sensual elements: the supple movement of her hips; skin softer than down and white as milk; abundant hair loosely coiffed, tied atop the head and flowing in curls; nimble, beautiful hands seen whirling a little pot in rhythmic motion; a graceful sway; and a playful, cheerful nature—completing the portrait of a woman able to arouse masculine desire. Yet the scene of erotic abandon between Photis and the hero implies certain artifices of seduction that may include magical practices: she throws bouquets of roses onto the bed, her bosom full of petals later scattered across the man's body; she gives him a cup of warm water and wine to drink, not before sensually moistening her own lips while gazing into his eyes. She repeats the ritual until Lucius' mind is unsettled and his soul stirred.

Unlike other women in the novel—most associated with black magic—Byrrhena is presented distinctly; their meeting does not unsettle Lucius but produces a modesty or shyness born of respect. Characterized as a distinguished lady accompanied by many servants, Byrrhena's attire signals superior status—adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones. Her conduct suggests nobility; her house exhibits luxury; she is a conventional *matrona*, mistress over slaves, who hosts sumptuous banquets and gathers an upper-class, aristocratic society.

In Apuleius, beauty serves as pretext to explore a feminine world of sensual delights yet false, since the woman annuls a man's conscience, clouds his reason through charms, and often rescinds his decisional power or even brings about his death. Invasion by the sensory creates an illusory universe of denounced feelings. Apuleius painted profound carnal passions to highlight the evil wrought by instinctual living, and erotic scenarios unfold more as confrontations between two disproportionate forces consecrated to the struggle between the sexes—entailing not only love games carried to vulgarity but also the woman's subtle psychological maneuvers that dominate the man's life. When husband or lover cannot be manipulated through feminine stratagems, recourse to magic remains the last resort. Though most women in the novel fit this archetypal matrix, Charite stands out for sincere love for her

husband; yet she too possesses a capacity for cruel revenge, somewhat justified since the culprit attacked her authentic marital bond and caused her spouse's death.

The final chapter, *Feminine Theonyms and Sexual Dimorphism in the Onomastics of Latin Literature*, proposes an interdisciplinary reading by focusing on the motivations for literary onomastic attribution and on the social, aesthetic, and semiotic mechanisms involved in feminine anthroponyms, with the aim of articulating cultural valences and gender identity.

The Latin onomastic system designates a matrix of the collective mind, functioning as a social and juridical entity that underwent gradual changes over time—changes correlatable to the evolution of society and to female emancipation. If Rome's legends display a single name (Romulus, Remus, Faustulus) or a binominal system imposed by Sabine models (Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius), documents from the Republic show that men of the Roman aristocracy bore three names; the tripartite system did not apply to women. Hence the widely held view that ancient Roman society was profoundly patriarchal, with gender roles reflected in onomastics since women were not granted a forename. Minors were differentiated by attributes referring to birth order (Prima, Secunda, Tertia, or Maior, Minor, Maxima, Paulla[4], etc.), while adult women bore their father's gentile name in feminized form and, at marriage, received the husband's name (see Felecan 2010: 69). Boys, in contrast, were allowed an individual name (*praenomen*) alongside the *nomen* and *cognomen*[5] inherited from the father. Male citizens were registered in official nomenclators also with the name of the tribe to which they had voting rights. *Tria nomina* applied to male descendants[6]; yet the central element—membership in a *gens*—was essential for feminine anthroponyms as well; thus woman was integrated into a family but lacked personal identity, given that the name individualizes in social and juridical referential relations. The *andronym*[7] added to married women highlights male superiority and the view of the wife as the consort's "property" (*Marcia C. f. Crispi*—"Marcia, daughter of Gaius, wife of Crispus"). The patronymic was indicated by the genitive form, followed by the letter *f* (for *filia*), and the name taken from the husband—also in the genitive—without further specification. Among elites, the name of a famous family or *gens* had to be preserved, even through adoption. Telling here is the adoption of the victor at Pydna's son, Paulus Aemilius, by the famed P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus (see Bohîlţea 2009: 36).

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[4] In the case of male given names as well, there was a tendency for them to indicate the place occupied by birth order within the family (*Secundus, Quintus, Sextus*, etc.), or the moment of coming into the world (*Lucius* meaning "born at dawn," *Marcus*, "born in March," *Manius*, "born in the morning"), or even the child's legal status (*Spurius* designates the illegitimacy of the son, "born without a legal father") (cf. Lascu 1965: 278).

[5] The *cognomen*, initially regarded as a nickname reflecting a personality trait or a physical characteristic, became a heritable element during the Republic and the Empire, imposing itself on posterity. Thus *Cicero* derives from *cicer* ("chickpea"), associated with the facial growths of his ancestor; *Lentulus* from *lens* ("lentil"); *Caligula* highlights the youthful pleasure of Gaius Iulius Caesar Germanicus in wearing military sandals called *caligae*; *Fabius* from *faba*, meaning "bean" (cf. Lascu 1965: 278). It should be noted that onomastics differentiates between the *sobriquet* and the nickname. Vasile C. Ioniță, citing I.-A. Candrea, points out that the nickname is a form of sanctioning a person's flaws, whereas the *sobriquet* refers to a generalization of the nickname, adopted by all members of a group or family, later becoming an onomastic auxiliary, a means of identifying the individual (2002: 40). Daiana Felecan (2014: 33), following the analysis of anthroponymic constituents recorded by Ionescu Pérez, observes that the given name, having a unique referent, stands in dichotomy with the *sobriquet*, understood as a "functional category of specific (though not obligatory) constituents of a person's unofficial formulas." The nickname, in Daiana Felecan's view, is "the result of the process of converting official names (the attribution of a name subsequent to the one received by the subject through the act of baptism), functioning as a substitute for the individual's official name" (2014: 35).

[6] Very rarely does the *tria nomina* appear in the case of girls, Nicolae Lascu (1965: 279) giving as an example G. Valeria Candidilla.

[7] Vasile Ioniță defines the andronym as a subclass of the anthroponym, given to a woman after the nickname, sobriquet, or name of her husband. Its opposite is the gyneconym, when a man is designated by the name of his wife (2002: 46).

In Latin literature, the possibility of etymological decryption of anthroponyms exemplifies a form of discursive knowledge wherein the relationship between reality and individual is mediated by language. The names of female characters become signifying structures reflecting social typologies, character traits, or dramatic functions; understanding them therefore presupposes interpretation filtered through linguistic and symbolic codes.

We consider that, without surmounting masculine preeminence, over decades and political regimes Roman women succeeded in recalibrating gender relations and, stepping out from the shadow of the *domus*, penetrated symbolic zones of authority, redefining traditional preconceptions and subtly reconfiguring the limits imposed by patriarchal thought.

Our study does not attempt to impose a feminist insurgency; it seeks instead to capture epistemically the role, condition, and impact of women in Antiquity. To this end, we have summarized the views of established exegetes and philologists and added our own analyses and ideas.

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