



Beyond the Roman Aristocracy

Women in Antiquity | Meeting #12

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Upcoming Dates

- Monday, December 8
Position Paper Due
- Tuesday, December 16
Final Exam
- Sunday, November 30
Responses for Week 12 Due

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Five things today

- The Principate
- Patrician and Plebeian
- Slavery
- Freedmen and women
- Rome vs. the provinces

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Quiz #9 | Beyond the Roman Aristocracy

1. In relation to gender, the Twelve Tables established all of the following [EXCEPT](#):
 - a. Women were not allowed to cry at funerals
 - b. Women remained under guardianship into adulthood
 - c. Sons could be sold into debt slavery up to three times, but daughters could not
 - ☒ d. Women could escape *unuscipio* (marriage) by drinking the husband's blood three nights in succession every year
2. Marriage among slaves in Rome
 - a. was formally acknowledged and legally valid
 - ☒ b. resulted in free children if the mother was free
 - c. was dislited and discouraged by masters
 - d. sometimes involved multiple wives or husbands
3. Stories related in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* include all of the following [EXCEPT](#):
 - a. Daphne, a nymph pursued by Apollo
 - b. Heruba, queen of the destroyed Troy
 - ☒ c. Unhappy lovers Icarus and Juliette
 - d. Calisto, the son nymph beloved of Actis and courted by Polyphemus, the Cyclops
4. A female Roman slave could achieve manumission (release from slavery) through all of the following [EXCEPT](#):
 - a. Bearing four children to become her master's slaves
 - ☒ b. Fasting for 60 days during the festival of the Good Goddess
 - c. Repaying her purchase price with her personal savings from tips and gifts
 - d. Marriage to a free man, which involved her prior manumission
5. According to Plutarch, most freedmen were
 - a. dependent on gifts from lovers or the state
 - ☒ b. skilled workers (shopkeepers, artisans) or domestic servants
 - c. no longer in contact with their former owners
 - d. initiates in a secret cult, the *Ilortinoe* gaudules

Extra Credit

EC. What aspect of the life of Roman slaves, freedmen, and freedwomen surprised you or stood out to you?

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Responses

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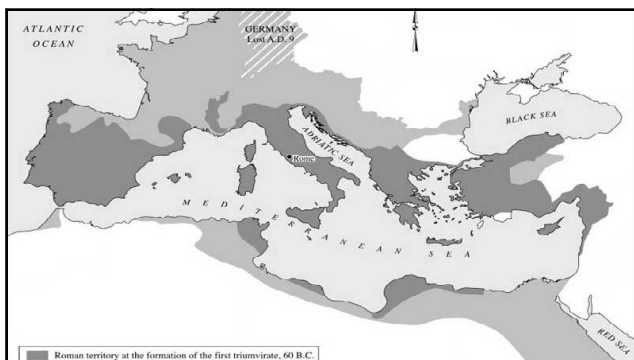
Questions about whatever



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The Roman Empire

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Secondary Source Reading

Larissa Bonfante Warren
"The Women of Etruria"

- Roman attitude toward public participation of women is a reaction to the older culture of the Etruscans
 - Divorces an identity complex by creating their own identity
 - Rejecting those elements of Etruscan and Greek influence that they can easily disown
- Etruscan culture empowers not women but couples
 - Men appear on both of the husband and wife side by side
 - Joint public and private responsibilities
- Foreign to Indo-Europeans
- Romans were fascinated by Etruscans, but increasingly set aside Etruscan ways
 - Leads to a distinctive Roman sense of the masculine



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The Principate

- Republic devolves into a series of civil wars
- Last warlord standing is Octavian, the great-nephew of Caesar
 - He becomes "princeps" = first citizen
 - Family name becomes Caesar Augustus

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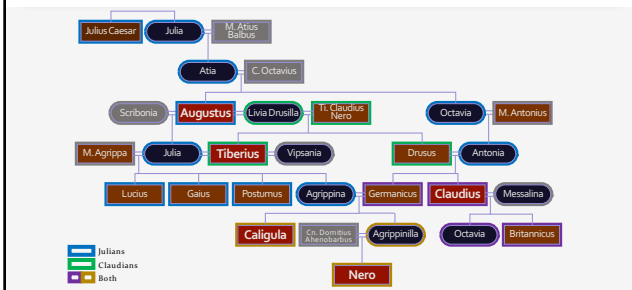


Livia

- Augustus shared power with his wife
- Livia took on "private" aspects of the principate
 - Network of matrons, vestals, etc.
 - Intelligence gathering among the nobility
 - Notes written in a secret code no one had access to
 - Moral review of the senate
- Given the name Augusta

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The Julio-Claudians



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"Male Power and Legitimacy Through Women: The Domus Augusta under the Julio-Claudians"

- Shortage of men and an excess of women
- Legitimacy of rule through women
 - Marriages
 - Adoptions
- Danger posed by women
 - Often more popular than the male rulers
 - Seen by public as honorable and admirable
 - Much harder to act against
- Domus Augusta was a closed circle entered through via women



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Beyond the Aristocracy

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Patricians


- Romans must consult the gods before any act of the state
- Empowers those few families who control the priesthoods
- Patrician families control Rome
 - The state religion
 - All offices with imperium
- Plebeians (non-patrician families) deprived of voice and agency

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Primary Source Reading

Fragments The Twelve Tables

- Six decades in, patrician abuses were worsening
 - Excessive interest on loans
 - Corruption in deciding court cases
- Demands for reform
- 10 lawgivers create a public law code
 - Justice is shared and transparent
 - Reinforcement of shared identity



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Finding the Roman lower classes

- Emphasis is on family
- Roman census
- Roman info tends to come from sources oblique to lower classes
 - Legal records
 - Accounts of elite families and individuals

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Finding the Roman lower classes

- Anomaly:
 - Large quantity of everyday Roman citizens hidden, but
 - Classes lower than that (slaves and freedmen) are within the household
 - Info about them in terms of contact with higher classes within household
- Presence of gender inconsistent
 - Collective presence in forum and in demonstrations

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Secondary Source Reading

Matthew Roller "Horizontal Women: Posture and Sex in the Roman Convivium"

- Romans reclined to eat (on left, eat with right)
- Traditional formal version: women do not recline with the men but would sit in a chair opposite
 - Not an actual rule
 - If a woman reclines, it is indicative of a sexual relationship
- Seated in a chair = attempting to avoid sexuality (and therefore promiscuity)
 - Most ideal and virtuous of women
- Reclining = sexual freedom
 - Men always recline — meaning: men always have sexual freedom



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Roman economy

- Wealthiest economy — Very high standard of living
 - To be a Roman citizen is to stand out
- Drives Rome's pursuit of dominion
- Drives Romanization
- Result: Roman society expands because the Roman economy rapidly expands

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Rome and the Empire


- Romanization via colonies and other Roman cities
- Miniature Romes become Roman in culture but mixed in ethnicity
- Less of a physical difference between lower and upper classes
 - In Rome, slaves are foreigners
 - In the rest of the empire, the distinction may be less obvious
 - The divide is different, and not necessarily in predictable ways

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Secondary Source Reading

Liisa Savunen
"Women and Elections in Pompeii"

- Can directly discuss female participation in the political scene
- Graffiti and posters include endorsements of prominent women valuable
- Women participating in the political process in a tangible way
 - Can assume vote-getting, corraling, family influence



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Roman slavery

- Romans depend on slaves and freed slaves
 - Most Roman military engagement is about keeping or protecting the lands they have
 - Large numbers of prisoners of war who enter into the slave system
- Skilled laborers and professionals from expansion into the Hellenistic east (doctors, teachers, midwives, etc.)
 - Performed skilled functions within households as slaves
 - Very likely to be freed and able to operate as freedmen in what they did

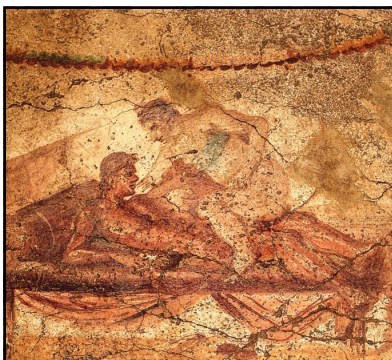
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Slavery in the household

- Considerable presence of slaves and ex-slaves in Roman aristocratic households
 - Women more likely to end up as domestics
 - Men might end up in households, fields, mines, etc.
- Domestics used as indicators of family's status
- Children growing up in aristocratic family would have constant contact
 - Intimate knowledge of what it is like to be a slave woman or a freedwoman

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Exploitation

- Limited number of restrictions on men exploiting female slaves
- Normal to have mistresses because of arranged marriages
 - Also true for women with male slave
- Virtue precluded cruelty against women

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Secondary Source Reading

Leo C. Curran
"Rape and Rape Victims
in The Metamorphoses"

- Metamorphoses
 - Ovid telling all the most interesting stories of mythology
 - Lyrical, kind style - provocative and colorful, readable, and resonant
- Most focused on transformations
 - Often encounters between male gods and female mortals (sometimes the reverse)
 - Abduction of Io by Zeus taking form of bull; Takes form of swan with Leda
- Ovid fascinated not by violation (rape) but what the victim has to endure after
- Transformation of identity that takes place in a rape victim


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Freedmen and
freedwomen

- Generous with manumission
 - Can accumulate savings over time toward purchase
 - Gain after many years of service or after the master retires
- Large population of ex-slaves, male and female a crucial part of the Roman economy
 - Low-level managerial in businesses and factories
 - Household staff of an aristocrat includes a number of freedmen and women

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Freedmen and freedwomen

- Best-known example: Julio-Claudians
 - Romans have no civil service
 - Governors used their own household staff - their own freedmen
 - Emperors had to do the same thing
- Large population of freedmen/women as important layer of society
 - Member of household as a sort of adopted noncitizen
 - Freedman takes the name of his old master's family
 - Part of society even if not a citizen, depending on patronage of family

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Secondary Source Reading

Judith P. Hallett
"The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-Cultural Feminism"

- Subjective, emotional, intimate and personal
 - E.g., Catullus (modeled himself after Sappho)
- Kind of woman presented
 - Exalted
 - Role reversal - male exhibits loyalty, trustworthiness; mistress's flaws and infidelities
- Ideal woman differs from Roman ideal woman (assertive responsibility)
 - Fortright self-sufficiency, unmaterial of Roman male



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Marriage for the underclass

- Slaves: Not "official" but done with permission
- Freedmen/women: recognized and binding
- Child can be citizen
 - Only possible if born to two free parents within precincts of Rome
- Mostly domestics within city household or rural estate (not mines or harvesting gangs)

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