

## Classical Greek and Roman Women

Greece and Rome are the foundation of Western Civilization.

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And, especially Greece but also Rome, share a common history with the Middle East. There are aspects of that history and its outlook on women that would probably shock the modern Westerner. We will explore that history – it is never far away.

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**CLASSICAL GREEK AND ROMAN WOMEN**

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## Athenian Women

The sixth century Athenian lawgiver Solon regulated the walks, the feasts, the mourning, the trousseaux, and the food and drink of citizen women. He also established public brothels. The influence of Solon's laws continued in the classical period in Athens. Women are a source of friction among men. To strengthen and preserve the newly created democracy, Solon sought to keep women out of sight and limit their influence.

The Classical period held rigid distinctions between male and female roles. Different standards are held for different economic and social classes of both men and women.

Political duties were important to both Athenian men and women. Citizen women had the duty to state to provide legitimate heirs to the families of the citizenry. Women in families where the male line died out could perpetuate the family. The daughter was regarded as "attached to the family property", hence her name epikleros. The family property went with her to her husband and then to their child. It was the duty or privilege of the nearest male kinsman to marry the heiress. The disparity in ages of the resulting married couple was not a factor, as long as they were capable of reproduction. In Sparta only unmarried girls were subject as heiresses. In Gortyn an heiress could free herself of obligation to marry by giving away part of her inheritance.

Marriage and motherhood were part of a woman's duty in Athens. Citizen women were perpetually under the guardianship of a male. The father was the one who gave the woman in marriage and he retained the right to dissolve the marriage. A widow was protected in legal matters of guardianship by the archon, who could prosecute offenders in her behalf. Responsible fathers in Classical Athens did not raise female babies unless they foresaw a proper marriage for them at maturity. Marriage was done in terms of the dowry to be received. Some dowry-less citizen women may have been forced by that fact to become concubines.

Athenians were protective of their women. A woman's dowry was to remain intact throughout her lifetime, to be used for her support. The groom could use the principal but was to maintain his wife from the income of her dowry at eighteen per cent annually. Upon divorce, the dowry was to be returned to his ex-wife's guardian in full. A widow would thereby, especially if she had increased her property through inheritance, be an attractive candidate for remarriage.

Marriage arrangements were made on the basis of political and economic considerations. Girls were obliged to marry the man their male relatives selected for them. The purpose of marriage was procreation within the economic resources of the family. An ideal first marriage was of a girl fourteen to a man about thirty.

Divorce was easily attainable, either by mutual consent or by action on behalf of either spouse and there was no stigma

attached. Children were produced to perpetuate the father's house and therefore remained in his house when marriages were dissolved by death or divorce.

With the Peloponnesian War 400 B.C., fewer men are around to be husbands, therefore fewer legitimate sons are to be born. It was allowed that a man could father sons for another man. Citizenship comes from living Athenian parentage on both the male and female side. Bigamy was allowed at the time but the norm was for parentage on both male and female side.

The average adult longevity in Classical Greece was 45.0 for males and 36.2 for females. Homosexuality, anal intercourse, recourse to prostitutes and slaves or dislike of women and the preference for a sexually inactive wife continued to be adaptations for population control as the population of Athenian citizens rose. There was a high rate of infant mortality. Infanticide was practiced to limit the number of girl babies. Boys could be adopted by unmarried men. Girls were rarely adopted. Women were generally held to producing one girl for the supply of eligible brides. The Athenian population increased when citizenship laws were tight requiring citizenship on both male and female sides. The population was decreased by relaxing citizenship laws to requirements of only the male being a citizen, then more girl babies were killed. In normal times men outnumbered women as more males were raised than females.

In the late fifth century B.C., because of safety, urban living replaced farming. The effect of urbanization on women was to move their activity indoors, to make their activity less visible and hence less valued. Women supervised and when they wished pursued many of the tasks done by slaves. Slave and woman spent much time together and did the same work; strong bonds were developed. Women of all social classes worked mainly indoors and near the house in order to guard it. Marketing was the man's occupation. Women learned to manage the household and slaves.

Some prostitutes acquired wealth but few women became rich by working. Some women had considerable financial knowledge but male guardians nonetheless managed their financial affairs. Women could not directly participate in government. They could not hold public office, vote, or serve as jurors.

Men learned rhetoric and physical skills. Women were to be silent and submissive- the opposite of men. A woman married and had children at the age of fourteen while the man was continuing his education till the age of thirty. This led to a discrepancy of skills and age and a paternalism and lack of friendship, in the modern sense, in marriage. Athenian law regarded females as children.

Religion was the major sphere of participation in public life open to women. Priestesses had considerable power. Men and women comingled in religious ceremonies. There were groups of priestesses involved in the cult of Eunoipidae who lived together and had no contact with men. Women performed sacred dances. Women participating in fertility rituals were chaste for three days prior, yet they indulged in foul language and obscenities associated with fertility rituals. There were exclusively women's festivals. Perhaps they were a remnant

of a matriarchal period when all religion was in the hands of women. These were fertility connected often and it would be natural to link woman and fertility.

After the curbing of aristocracy by democracy women did not fare well. Among other reasons is that now the high born and wealthy had no one to look down on then women and slaves.

In describing the lives of women in Classical Athens it is easier to describe the activity of men and then say women did not do most of these activities.

Wealthier women were in the home most of the time. Poorer women had no slaves and had to do errands themselves. They formed more of a community. Community was formed at the well, washing clothes, borrowing utensils, etc. Wealthy women did none of these things.

It is not known for sure if women attended dramatic performances. But it is doubted.

There was a separation of the men's and women's quarters in the home. Women occupied the remote remote rooms away from the streets and public. Sexes were separated partially for the reason of restraining household slaves from breeding without the permission of the owner. In two story homes, women were upstairs. Free women were secluded so as not to be seen by men who were not close relatives. Women adopted a modesty against being seen by strange men.

Women's clothing served to conceal them from the eyes of strange men. The dress was simple. A shawl that could be used as a hood was worn. The Ionic chiton was used in public. A shorter tunic was worn around the home. Women removed their pubic hair by singeing and plucking. Cosmetics were used. White complexion was considered attractive as it showed that the woman did not need to work outdoors. Although dress was simple complicated hairdos and jewelry could be worn. The hair of slaves was worn cropped.

Deaths increased during childbearing years. Motherhood at an early age combined with a life spent indoors was disadvantageous to the health of Athenian women. Spartan women had well developed physiques compared to Athenian women as they were encouraged to exercise and partake in sports. Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle all believed that Spartan customs concerning women were more wholesome than Athenian.

The guardian of an unmarried woman who was caught in sexual behavior had the right to sell her into slavery. Both parties in adultery were severely punished for it interfered with the production of a legitimate heir. A woman raped or adulterous was to be divorced by her husband. This was compelled by law. She was then a social outcast. Marriage after this was difficult. The penalty for rape was less than for adultery to the male concerned. Access to the property of the spouse was involved in adultery therefore it was a more serious matter.

Athenian law dealt not only with what must be done but also with what ought to be done. The husband of an heiress ought to consort with her three times a month. Husbands often were away on military campaigns, enjoying homosexual relations, or consorting with prostitutes. After the needed number of

children were achieved they often slept with slaves rather than risk more children. An Athenian woman citizen's sex life was not that ideal. Adultery was not practiced to a great extent because of the severe penalties. Homoerotic relations between females were not easy in the atmosphere of Athens. Masturbation seemed an often used and acceptable outlet for women's sexual appetites. There were female homosexual relations in Sparta and Lesbos as there women could get together.

There were prostitutes in Athens. Hetairai were prostitutes with both physical beauty and intellectual training and artistic talents. There were state owned brothels. Married Athenian men were allowed to copulate with prostitutes. Men did not marry till thirty and had no opportunity for heterosexual activity besides prostitutes and slaves. Prostitutes were the only women in Athens with independent control of money. In the absence of male protectors the careers of prostitutes were hazardous. Prostitutes probably practiced a greater amount of infanticide than citizen women. They preferred girl children who could succeed them in their profession. This was social security.

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Demetria all that is suitable for a freeborn wife. We shall live together in whatever place seems best to Leptines and Heraclides, deciding together.

If Demetria is caught in fraudulent machinations to the disgrace of her husband Heraclides, she shall forfeit all that she has brought with her. But Heraclides shall prove whatever he charges against Demetria before three men whom they both approve. It shall not be lawful for Heraclides to bring home another woman for himself in such a way to inflict contumely on Demetria, nor to have children by another woman, nor to indulge in fraudulent machinations against Demetria on any pretext. If Heraclides is caught doing any of these things, and Demetria proves it before three men whom they both approve, Heraclides shall return to Demetria the dowry of 1000 drachmas which she brought, and also forfeit 1000 drachmas of silver coinage of Alexander. Demetria and those helping Demetria shall have the right to exact payment from Heraclides and from his property on both land and sea, as if by a legal judgement.

This contract shall be valid in every respect, wherever Heraclides may produce it against Demetria, or Demetria and those helping Demetria to exact payment may produce it against Heraclides, as though the agreement had been made in that place.

Heraclides and Demetria shall each have the right to keep a copy of the contract in their own custody, and to produce it against one another. Witnesses.

As the Hellenistic era progressed, the role of the bride's father diminished. Later contracts were simply made between a woman and a man agreeing to share a common life. A father could no longer dissolve a marriage. It was up to the woman whether to remain married or not. Divorce allowed equal opportunity for either husbands or wives to repudiate each other.

Women made economic gains greater than their legal gains. The Greek woman exercised control over slaves. Women engaged in land sales and borrowed money (assisted by guardians, at least as a legal fiction) Women rather than their husbands seemed responsible for their own debts. In Sparta women employed their money as they wished. They bought horses and won at Olympia, traditionally the sphere of men.

Aristotle influenced Athens not to change toward economic or legal emancipation. Pomeroy bases this on such statements as the following:

It is clear then that the case is the same also with the other instances of ruler and ruled. Hence there are by nature various classes of rulers and ruled. For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in a different way. And all possess the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways; for the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form. Hence the ruler must possess intellectual virtue in



in completeness (for any work, taken absolutely, belongs to the master-craftsman, and rational principle is the master-craftsman); while each of the other parties must have that share of this virtue which is appropriate to them. We must suppose therefore that the same necessarily holds good of the moral virtues; all must partake of them, but not in the same way, but in such measure as is proper to each in relation to his own function.<sup>3</sup>

Aristotle observed that the supervision of women was suitable for states that have leisure and property. Aristotle explained man's public role by analogy to his place in the individual family and this was as head of the family. Also leading to women's restriction in Athens was toward the democratic ideal. Restricting women restricted males from an extravagant display of wealth.

Philosophy tended to be restrictive toward women. Stoicism reinforced traditional roles for women. The Neopythagoreans were very restrictive of women. The Epicureans and the Cynics were for the emancipation of women but these philosophies were not in the mainline. Plato's Republic and similarly Zeno advocated the sharing of women- a community of wives. The Stoic doctrine of equality of man did not extend to women and Stoicism was adopted by the Romans. Pythagoras in the late sixth century had had many women followers admitted as equals.

Greek cities were becoming unpopulated due to reluctance to marry and exposure of unwanted children. There was a reluctance to raise children. The importance of family cults declining, poverty of some, and colonization were reasons for decline in raising children. There were better careers than being a father. Mercenary soldiers and adventurers wandered from city to city and found concubines less burdensome than a wife. As subjected people political power was no longer a reason to marry.

Education was opened to women by the Epicureans and the Cynics. There is evidence that in some parts of the Greek world women were given some education in athletics, music, and reading. There were amateur athletics in the classical period and professional athletics in the Hellenistic and Roman period. Women began to compete professionally in the First century B.C.

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods some women began to sign their names to contracts. There was a reemergence of poetesses in the Hellenistic period. The exposure of infants was probably practiced more in the Hellenistic period than in the Classical period.

A few prostitutes, companions (hetairai) mingled with the members of the Macedonian courts. They had to be very beautiful. The Ptolemies were especially susceptible to courtesans. Most prostitute clients were not wealthy citizens.

Women were probably more active in achieving their own sexual satisfaction in the Hellenistic period. Archaic sculpture has the male figure regularly nude and the female figure heavily draped. Greeks first stripped for calisthenics around 720 B.C. Pomeroy bases the preceding fact on the following:

The Athenians were the first to lay aside their weapons, and to adopt an easier and more luxurious mode of life; indeed, it is only lately that their old rich men left off the luxury of wearing undergarments of linen, and fastening a knot of their hair with a tie of golden grasshoppers, a fashion which spread to their Ionian kindred, and long prevailed among the old men there. On the contrary a modest style of dressing, more in conformity with modern ideas, was first adopted by the lacedaemonians, the rich doing their best to assimilate their way of life to that of the common people. They also set the example of contending naked, publicly stripping and anointing themselves with oil in their gymnastic exercises. Formerly, even in the Olympic contests, the athletes who contended wore belts across their middles; and it is but a few years since that the practice ceased.<sup>4</sup>

Some women seem also to have stripped for calisthenics, at least in Sparta. Plato in his Republic proposed that women exercise in the nude.

Erinna, of the Dorian island of telos, won high praise as a poetess. Erinna showed her originality in using the dactylic hexameter for a poem of lamentation- tradition called for the elegiac couplet or a choral meter. By the age of nineteen she had written "The Distaff":

You leaped from the white horses  
And raced madly into the deep wave-  
But "I've got you, dear!" I shouted loudly,  
And when you were the Tortoise  
You ran skipping through the yard of the great court.  
These are the things that I lament and  
Sorrow over, my sad Baucis- these are  
Little trails through my heart that are  
Still warm- My remembrances of you.  
For our former delights are ashes now.  
When we were young girls we sat in our rooms  
Without a care, holding our dolls and pretending  
We were young brides. Remember- at dawn  
The "mother", who distributed the wool  
To the attendant servants, came and called  
You help with the salting of the meat.  
And how afraid we were, when we were small,  
Of Mormo- she had huge ears on her head,  
Walked about on four feet,  
And was always changing faces.  
But when you mounted your husband's bed  
~~You forgot all about those things,~~  
All you heard from your mother  
When you were still a child,  
Dear Baucis, Aprodite set forgetfulness  
In your heart,  
And so I lament you and neglect my duties.  
For I am not so irreverent as to set foot out-of-doors  
Or to look upon a corpse with my eyes  
Or let my hair loose in lamentation-

But a blush of grief tears my (cheeks).<sup>5</sup>

We get an insight into the sexual life of the Hellenistic woman from the art of the time. Noticeable in the portrayal of the female figures on drinking cups are very prominent buttocks. Numerous occurrences of heterosexual anal penetration seem to have occurred, probably a transference from male's homosexual activities. After the Persian Wars more women are seen in vase paintings. Segregation of the sexes may have fostered a kind of voyeurism of women's activities by means of vase paintings. A sophisticated etiquette of romance developed to culminate in handbooks on the art of love. The greater amount of nudity to be seen in the art of the Hellenistic period may be interpreted as a move to open acknowledgement of woman's erotic impulses and their need for gratification. Sculptured female nudes are far more erotic and suggestive than are male sculptures. The women are seen crouching, stretching, etc.

The hermaphrodite-bisexual deity that began to be worshipped in later Hellenistic times shows the growth of the male and female ideal no longer exclusively male.

Private romance with a female which was of little interest in the classical period began to be fully explored in the Hellenistic period. It was now important how the woman felt and men became interested in the woman as a person. Intimacy developed. This can be attributed to the influence of philosophers, actions of royal women, but especially to the growing economic power of women. It is important how a person with power feels, whether male or female. Women now had something to give back to a relationship therefore they became persons. 6

### Hellenistic Queens

From the Macedonian wilds of northern Greece came Philip II, who conquered Greece in 359 B.C. This brought an end to the city state. Phillip's son Alexander succeeded him and extended the Macedonian empire further. Dynasties were set up: in Greece the Macedonians or Antigonids, in Asia Minor the Seleucids, and in Egypt the Ptolemies.

The relationship among mother and son was very important among ruling families. Polygamy was practiced and which offspring would succeed to the throne was never clear. Rivalry was intentionally fostered. Power seeking mothers plotted for their sons. The pattern of mother-son alliances was repeated in Roman culture but the Macedonian women were much more controlled in their use of sex as a weapon than were the Roman women. Marriages were political, with the purpose of cementing alliances.

The rise of woman's status was due to an interaction of the power and status of queens and rising power, especially economic, of the citizen woman. Let us look randomly at some queens from each of the three dynasties: Antigonid, Ptolemaic, and Seleucid. After looking at some queens at random let us look at the three queens who were most powerful of Hellenistic queens: Cleopatra VII, Olympias, and Arsinoe II.

### Ptolemaic Queens

Ptolemy I as other Macedonian kings was fond of women and had various mistresses. He married Eurydice in 324 B.C.

She was the fourth daughter of Antipater, the Regent. He previously seems to have married an Egyptian princess but later gave up the advantage of such a marriage. Later he fell in love with Bernice, daughter of Antepater's brother Cassander. Ptolemy preferred the son of Bernice to the son of Eurydice for succession. Eurydice was a rich heiress and might have married again.

Bernice I came to Egypt as a lady in waiting of Eurydice. She was a young widow with two children. Some believe Bernice was the mistress of Ptolemy from 316 B.C. and that he married her in 287 B.C., exactly when he married her is not clear. Bernice was with Ptolemy in Greece in 309 B.C. on campaign. Greek commanders usually did not take their wives with them on campaigns they did take their mistresses. Macedonian commanders did take their wives on campaigns. Macedonian women associated freely with men unlike the Greek women. Macedonian queens often ran before the troops at battle.

It is possible that Bernice was queen at the earlier date. Matrimonial arrangements were irregular among the successors to Alexander the Great. Greek custom was for one wife. Macedonian custom was Polygamy. Macedonian rulers felt the tension between these ideals. Power was not always considered but love was. In Egypt brother and sister married to rule together, sometimes this practice was adopted. Bernice was married not so much for her power, it seems to have been a matter of her personal charm and good sense.

Arsinoe I was married to Ptolemy. She was replaced with Arsinoe II, Ptolemy's sister. Arsinoe I was banished to Koptos in the Thebaid. Power tells the story of her divorce. She was the daughter of Lysimachus, the most powerful of surrounding monarchs. With his death there was no advantage to the marriage. There was no one to protect her rights and so Arsinoe I was banished. She was probably absolute monarch in Koptos.

### Seleucid Queens

Apame was the first Seleucid queen. She was one of the brides at the great wedding at Susa in 324 B.C., when Alexander took perhaps two Persian wives and gave each of his generals a Persian princess. Apame was the only one married at the feast to become ancestress of a line of Hellenistic kings. Seleucus and Ptolemy alone of the generals survived to found kingdoms. Ptolemy's Persian queen would be of no political use to him in Egypt. Apame was the daughter of Bacrian Spit- amenes. Apame was one of two wives of Seleucus, the other a Hindu was of little political account. Seleucus took a young wife to seal a treaty with Demetrius of Macedon. Apame lost her position of queen, but Seleucus later returned to Apame.

Seleucus in 293 B.C. gave his young wife Stratonice the daughter of Demetrius to his son. Stratonice had already bore Seleucus a daughter. Seleucus' son was now king and Stratonice

was proclaimed queen. Little is known of her life except that she was zealous in religious observance of rites. She died in 254 B.C. It is strange that she never calls herself wife of Antiochus but rather "daughter of King Demetrius" It is not clear if this was done for devotion to her father or because she had two men who were father and son for her husband and she did this to avoid confusion.

Laodice I is the first of the Seleucid queens to show political talent. She was the wife of Antiochus II. This was possibly the first brother-sister marriage among the Seleucids but this is not certain. In 252 B.C. after a long war with Ptolemy Philadelphus, Ptolemy gave his daughter to Antiochus. This meant that Laodice was divorced and her children no longer heirs. After some years Antiochus tired of the Egyptian Berenice and returned to Laodice. On his deathbed Antiochus named Laodice's oldest son, Seleucus, his heir.

Laodice was again queen and co-regent with her son. Laodice succeeded in getting adherents of hers in Antioch to kill Berenice, whose brother Ptolemy III was now king of Egypt, and her son. Berenice was killed before her brother who had marched from Egypt to save her, arrived. It was political realism on the part of Laodice to have Berenice and her son killed; she was protecting the rights of her sons. In the Laodician War she stirred up her younger son Antiochus against his brother and king Seleucus. It is probable that she was jealous of the power and prestige of her elder son Seleucus and thought she could control the younger Antiochus. In 236 B.C. the two sons are reconciled.

#### Antigonid Queens

Phila Antipater's daughter was married to Craterus the most promising of Alexander's generals to take Alexander's place. This was after Alexander's death. Craterus was too soon killed on the battlefield. Before the body was home, Phila who was thirty years of age married Demetrius who was eighteen. Demetrius the son of Antigonus became king of Macedon. Both Craterus and Demetrius were men of great handsomeness and charismatic leadership ability. Demetrius loved many women but remained loyal to Phila. Phila was exceptional among Hellenistic Queens in putting love beyond power. She sent her husband many fond letters and gifts while he was at war elsewhere. She did not interfere with Demetrius's mistresses- realist that she was. Political marriages did not bother her as much as mistresses like Lonia who sought to win Demetrius complete personal attention.

Perseus the last king of Macedon, son of Phillip, is said by Livy to have killed his first wife. His second wife, the last queen of Macedon, was Laodice, daughter of Seleucus IV. She was a Seleucid Princess. We hear little of her during her husband's ten years of reigning, not until his disastrous end. She went with him and their children on his flight to the island of Samothrace, for refuge in the temple of Deokonia. Perseus was lured out of the temple sanctuary on the pretext of a ship to take him to the safety of his sister, wife of king Teres. His children were taken and because of this Perseus yielded himself to the Roman conquerer, Aemilius Paullus. Laodice escaped to the court of her uncle Antiochus. She was offered in marriage to Ariarathes V of Cappadocia who rejected her for fear of the

Romans. Laodice was then married by her brother Demetrius Soter in 162 B.C. She bore him three sons. She was killed by the prime minister of Alexander Bolas after the death of Demetrius Soter in 150 B.C.

## Olympias

Olympias was probably born about 375 B.C. She was the wife of Phillip and the mother of Alexander the Great. She was descended from Molossian kings. She met Phillip when both were at a young age, on the island of Samothrace for initiation into the mysteries. The meeting of the two young barbarians held effect for the whole world. The marriage in 357 B.C. was possibly for love but most certainly political.

Phillip had a number of wives and their was much tension among them. Phillip had a son by another wife, Philemon, who Olympias is said to have undermined with drugs. This may not be true. Both Phillip and Olympias were strong of will. Phillip was gone much in the first years of marriage on military campaign and he left great power in the hands of his young wife- this laid the foundation of the queen's character.

Olympias brought snakes into the worship of Dionysus, Plutarch states.

Once when Philip used the excuse of witchcraft as to why he fell in love with a girl, Olympias, upon talking to the girl saw her to be of beauty, good sense and good breeding said to the girl that the magic was her not herbs and potions. Olympias had good sense.

Olympias had charge of Alexanders teaching. At the head of the teachers of Alexander she placed a noble kinsman of her own, Leonidas, a man of great austerity. Alexander ( and his sister Cleopatra) was taught to endure hardship, not to fear danger, and to avoid luxury. Tutors were chosen from Epirus and Acurmania, places less touched by the softness of civilization than Macedonia. Alexander and to some extent Cleopatra were trained in the ways of the wilds and in warfare.

Phillips son Arrhidaeia was to marry the daughter of Pxdarus, the rich Satrap of Coris. Olympias stirred Alexander to take the marriage. Phillip saw the marriage beneath him and banished his advisors- among them Ptolemy who was later to come to be king of Egypt.

After living with Olympias for twenty years, Phillip took a new queen. Olympias went to her native Molossia and stirred her brother- now on the throne to war against Phillip for the disgrace. No war came about.

Phillip aranged a marriage for Olympia's brother with one of his daughters. At the celebration, Phillip was forty-six years old, a man darted forward and stabbed Phillip. The assasin was killed at once. Olympias is thought to have planned the assasination.

At Phillip's death Olympias was in a good state. Her daughter was queen of Molossia and her son Alexander, king of Macedonia. She chose to live in Macedonia in the hope that her son would make her regent in his absence. Olympias was restored as queen. Olympias had the young queen and her son killed.

Phillip was murdered in 331 B.C., for the next five years Alexander was gone but Olympias kept strong influence on him through writing, but she failed to get the political power she adamantly pursued. She hated the regent Antipater and they were constantly at odds. Olympias lost the battle with Antipater and after allianating the Macedonian court she was ordered by Alexander not to meddle in Politics. Alexander understood his mother for she was much like him. Olympias left Macedonia at the rebuke by Alexander. Alexander placated her by promising to make her a goddess.

## Arsinoe II

Arsinoe II was calmer than Olympias and not given to pleasure as Cleopatra. She was the greatest of the three politically. She was a planner with definite political aims.

Arsinoe was married when only fifteen to the king of Thrace. The king had a son of twenty years old when the young queen came to Thrace. Arsinoe felt the son a better alliance and pursued Agathocles. She was put off by Agathocles and latter possibly part of the plot of poison that ended in Agathocles death. A war broke out between two old kings who as young generals had marched with Alexander. Agathocles young wife accusing wrong doing. Arsinoe's husband was defeated. Arsinoe escaped by dressing a maid in royal clothes and leaving her to be slain. She blacked her face and put on rags as a begger. She fled to Cassandrea.

Arsinoe hoped that her eldest son Ptolemy might get the kingdom of Macedonia with the help of her brother the king of Egypt. Knowing this the present king Cercunus who had defeated Arsinoe's husband asked marriage. Cunningly Arsinoe demanded marriage before the assembled army outside the city gates. After the marriage Cercunus slew two of Arsinoe's children as she tried to shield them in her arms. Her eldest son escaped. Arsinoe probably owed her life to Cercunus' fear of vengeance from Egypt. Cercunus was defeated and killed by the Gauls the following year. Arsinoe fled to Egypt.

Arsinoe married her brother in Egyptian fashion. She accomplished this by driving away her step daughter on the pretext of a plot against her husband, Ptolemy. Arsinoe received power no previous Macedonian woman had ever felt. She was queen and goddess. In her managing way she became the power of the government after the marriage. She was responsible for a dramatic improvement in military and political affairs in Egypt and the expansion of Egyptian sea power.

## Cleopatra VII

It was in Cleopatra VII that the Ptoemaic dynasty established by Alexander's friend and general, Ptolemy the Macedonian, had its final flowering. Cleopatra is the most famous of the Macedonian queens, not as being more beautiful or strong of character but because of her enchanting ways. She was queen not only of Egypt but mistress to the greatest Romans of her time. In 51 B.C. Cleopatra VII and her brother Ptolemy XIII inherited

the throne of Egypt. A feud between the heirs was settled by Julius Caesar. She lived as Julius Caesar's mistress in Rome for two years. On returning to Egypt she arranged the death of her brother-consort Ptolemy XIV and her sister Arsinoe.

Cleopatra was a Ptolemaic queen- shrewd, able, and ambitious. Her liaisons with Roman generals were shrewd political moves. Cleopatra was not a courtesan, an exotic plaything of Roman generals. Rather Cleopatra's liaisons with Romans must be considered to have been from her viewpoint legitimate dynastic alliances of the greatest possible success and profit to the queen and Egypt.

We will look further at Cleopatra in her relation to the Roman Marc Antony. Cleopatra leads us to the Romans and our study of the rise of the status of women in the Hellenistic period in the interaction of the growth in power and status of Hellenistic Queens and the rise in status of upper class Hellenistic women in general leads us into looking at the Roman woman. 7



## Hellenistic Women

There is a large amount of material on Hellenistic women—more than in previous periods. Women involved themselves in political and economic affairs in this period. They expanded their options with regard to marriage, public roles, education and conduct of their private lives. We also have more cultural artifacts from this period.

Philosopher's commentary mostly argued for retention of traditional female roles—this showed opposition to change.

The importance of women grew in the Hellenistic era. The main reason for this was the increased acquisition and use of economic power. Some women held political office. The existence of a female archon (magistrate) in the second century B.C. in Histria is recorded. In the first century B.C., Phile of Friene a female magistrate, constructed a reservoir and aqueduct. She was probably made magistrate because she promised to contribute to the public work. Men's privileges decreased as power decreased.

An evolution took place favorable to women in private law. This is especially seen in newly hellenized areas through Macedonian conquest. The expansion of married women's rights in a marriage contract of 311 B.C. between a Greek man and woman living in Egypt. The striking thing is that the rights of both the man and the woman are recognized. There were now codes of behavior for the man as well as for the woman:

In the 7th year of the reign of Alexander, son of Alexander, the 14th year of Ptolemy's administration as satrap, in the month Dios.

Contract of marriage of Heraclides and Demetria. Heraclides takes as lawful wife Demetria of Cos from her father Leptines of Cos and her mother Philotis. He is free; she is free. She brings with her to the marriage clothing and ornaments valued at 1000 drachmas. Heraclides shall supply to

Demetria all that is suitable for a freeborn wife.  
We shall live together in whatever place seems  
best to Leptines and Heraclides, deciding together.

If Demetria is caught in fraudulent machinations  
to the disgrace of her husband Heraclides, she  
shall forfeit all that she has brought with her.  
But Heraclides shall prove whatever he charges agai-  
nst Demetria before three men whom they both approve.  
It shall not be lawful for Heraclides to bring  
home another woman for himself in such a way to  
inflict contumely on Demetria, nor to have children  
by another woman, nor to indulge in fraudulent  
machinations against Demetria on any pretext. If  
Heraclides is caught doing any of these things, and  
Demetria proves it before three men whom they both  
approve, Heraclides shall return to Demetria the  
dowry of 1000 drachmas which she brought, and also  
forfeit 1000 drachmas of silver coinage of Alexander.  
Demetria and those helping Demetria shall have the  
right to exact payment from Heraclides and from  
his property on both land and sea, as if by a legal  
judgement.

This contract shall be valid in every respect,  
wherever Heraclides may produce it against Dem-  
etria, or Demetria and those helping Demetria to  
exact payment may produce it against Heraclides,  
as though the agreement had been made in that place.  
Heraclides and Demetria shall each have the right  
to keep a copy of the contract in their own custody,<sup>2</sup>  
and to produce it against one another. Witnesses.

As the Hellenistic era progressed, the role of the bride's  
father diminished. Later contracts were simply made between  
a woman and a man agreeing to share a common life. A father  
could no longer dissolve a marriage. It was up to the woman  
whether to remain married or not. Divorce allowed equal opportunity  
for either husbands or wives to repudiate each other.

Women made economic gains greater than their legal gains.  
The Greek woman exercised control over slaves. Women engaged  
in land sales and borrowed money (assisted by guardians, at  
least as a legal fiction) Women rather than their husbands  
seemed responsible for their own debts. In Sparta women  
employed their money as they wished. They bought horses and  
won at Olympias, traditionally the sphere of men.

## Roman women

The weakness and light-mindedness of the female sex ( infirmitas sexus and levitas animi) were the underlying principles of Roman legal theory that mandated all women to be under the custody of males. The power of pater familias, eldest male ascendant of the family, extended to the determination of life or death of all members of the household. Guardianship of females was theoretically in force until the time of Diocletian (reigned A.D. 285-305). In fact the power of guardianship diminished long before this time. By the late Republic (70 B.C.) guardianship was a burden to the men acting as guardians, but only a slight disability to women. The legislation of Augustus provided an exemption from guardianship. A freeborn woman who bore three children and a freedwoman who bore four (jus liberorum) were exempt from guardianship. A law of Claudius (1st century A.D.) abolished automatic guardianship.

A wife did not necessarily transfer from her pater familias to her husband's manus (power) when married. The guardian spirit of the pater familias and the mater familias were worshipped by the woman until and if she transferred to her husband's manus. The report as to how much power a husband had over his wife varies. It is uncertain whether the husband had the right to kill his wife, or merely divorce her, or kill her with the agreement of her male relatives. In 186 B.C. when thousands of men and women were sentenced to death for participating in Bacchic rites, often a wife was handed over to the husband to be killed in private. Whether it was ever a reality an ideal emerged that wives were totally under the authority of their husbands, marriages were more enduring. The Stoic and Augustinian authors propagandize this in their picture of marriage. Often the daughter was more under the control of her father and blood kin than her husband. By the late Republic marriage without manus was the common form. The wife remained under the authority of her father. Property would remain separate in marriages without manus. This accounted for the unstable marriages of the late Republic. The marriage without manus gave the woman more freedom. She was under authority of her father or guardian in another household.

while her husband had little authority over her.

As in Hellenistic courts, betrothals, marriage, and divorce were arranged among the upper class for political and financial profit. ~~Political marriages are nothing new. What was new~~ was that now women in the late Republic at times initiated marriage alliances and chose lovers carefully, with a view of benefiting their own families. When political situations were more stable and less could be served by marriage alliances divorces were fewer.

In the reign of Antonus Pius (138-161 A.D.), it was made illegal for fathers to break up marriages. The main concern in a divorce as it had been in Hellenistic areas was the return of the dowry.

With Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) women could make wills without difficulty. It was in this century that women became members of their husbands households no longer their father's. The Voconian Law of 169 B.C. restricted wealth inherited by upper class women. Women were to receive equal amounts as sisters, etc. The Roman lawyers found loopholes to allow women to inherit great wealth. Women had great amounts of wealth as early as the period of luxury in the second century B.C. In the Late Republic (100 B.C.) women controlled in fact large amounts of property and wealth.

Marriage and motherhood were the traditional expectation of well-to-do women in Rome. Most women were married at least once. Augustus established the minimum age for marriage at twelve for girls and fourteen for boys. The first marriage for girls usually was between ages twelve and fifteen, sometimes before puberty. Sometimes the future bride lived with the groom before she had reached the minimum age and such unions were often consummated. Social climbing males provided the dowry sometimes for upper class girls without dowry. The desire to find virginal brides was strong. Because of lack of females due to childbirth, female infanticide, etc., some men of the upper class in the Late Republic were marrying women of the lower classes.

Augustus enacted marriage legislation and it was reinforced by Domitian (81-96 A.D.) and in the second and third centuries. The legislation penalized the unmarried and childless.

Contraception and abortion were used. An author of the Early Empire collected a list of contraception used. Rhythm method was used but at the wrong time. Magic and useless potions were used. Effective techniques used were occlusive agents, which blocked the uterus, the bladder of a goat as an early version of the condom, possibly coitus interruptus. Abortion was accomplished by drugs and surgical methods. Greek midwives and male physicians for the wealthy helped in childbirth, contraception, and abortion.

Women, even wealthy women with access to physicians, continued to die in childbirth. Early marriages with childbearing by immature females was a factor. Kieth Hopkins found the median age for death of wives to be 34; of husbands 46.5.<sup>8</sup> L.L. Angel studying skeletal remains in Greece under Roman domination shows adult longevity 34.3 for females and 40.2 for males.<sup>9</sup> Roman women had greater fortunes than Classical Athenian women

and more and more competent slaves. Their slaves did the work commonly done by Athenian women. Roman women still had the duty of the house- this was a matter of slave management. The Roman matron was not a housewife in the sense of the Athenian woman. The Roman woman moved freely in the world outside the home. Virtuous Roman women could visit, go shopping, attend festivals and recitals, and supervise their children's education.

Upper class women were sufficiently cultivated to be to participate in the intellectual life of their male associates. Verginia daughter of a lowly plebian centurion attended elementary school- apparently it was not unusual. 10 Both daughters and sons of well-to-do families had private tutors. Fliny the Younger a senator around the first century A.D. gives us this portrait of a girl who died at thirteen, just before she was to be married:

How she loved her nurses, her preceptors, and her teachers, each for the service given her. She studied her books with diligence and understanding. 11

Unlike boys, girls did not study with philosophers or rhetoricians outside the home, for girls were married at the age boys were still pursuing higher education. Some girls attained higher learning from their fathers. For instance Cornelia gained her literary knowledge from her father Scipio Africanus, noted for his philhellenism. The eloquence of Laelia and Hortensia was a tribute to their fathers, who were leading orators. Education and accomplishment were thought to enhance the Roman woman. Plutarch, in a lost work, discussed the education of women. He writes complimentarily about women, for instance he wrote of Cornelia, last wife of Pompey that she was well read, could play the lyre, and was adept at geometry and philosophy; and this made her particularly charming. 12 Quintilien recommended that for the good of the child both parents be highly educated. The Stoic Musonius Rufus called for philosophy for women.

Romans saw no essential connection between freedom and education, but it was obvious many cultivated women were also enjoying sexual liberty. Sempria for example of whom Sallust says, "her sexual desires were so ardent that she took the initiative with men far more frequently than they did with her...she possessed intellectual strengths which are by no means laughable: the skill of writing verses, cracking jokes, speaking either modestly or tenderly or saucily- in a word, she had much wit and charm." 13 The women addressed by the elegaic poets were beautiful but also learned. They could be of any class, courtesans or freedwomen or upper-class wives, widows, or divorcees. The poets were drawn to women who could understand and appreciate their poetry crammed with erudite literary allusions from Greek literature. These women were free to make liaisons with whomever they chose.

Some women were authors themselves. Among prose writers were Cornelia, and the younger Agrippina, who wrote her memoirs. Cynthia was a poet. Sulpicia the daughter of Cicero's friend Servius Sulpicius Rufus wrote poetry when at most twenty years of age.

Love has come to me, the ind I am far more ashamed  
To conceal than to reveal to anyone.  
Cytherea, won't over by my Muses' prayers,  
Has brought him to me and placed him in my arms,  
Venus has fulfilled her promises. Let my joys  
Be told by those said to lack joys of their own.  
I won't entrust my thoughts to tablets underseal  
For fear that someone may read them before he does.  
But I'm glad I've erred; falsely posing disgusts me;  
Let me be called worthy, him worthy as well.<sup>14</sup>

In general female poetesses did not produce the quality  
of poetry that male poets did. This is not surprising  
considering the lower level of education of the female population.  
Lesbia, Sulpicias, and the Empress Julia Domna (died A.D. 217)  
are known to have organized or been members of literary solons.  
This is one of the most important developments in women's intell-  
ectual history. It can be supposed that many existed. These  
were the grounds on which women developed their personalities;  
here they could grow their potential. They took various form:  
from Lesbia's coterie of amateurish bohemian aristocrats of the  
Late Republic, to the splendor and elegance characteristic  
of the Court of the Flavian empresses, to the settled respect-  
ability of the circle of Julia Domna.

Female orators were unknown to the Greeks but not to the  
Romans. Valerius Maximus gives three examples from the first  
century B.C. Maesia Sentia, who surrounded by a crowd, success-  
fully defended herself against some unknown charge. Afrania,  
wife of a senator, became infamous for her lack of modesty in  
pleading cases before the praetor. Hortensia, daughter of a  
famous orator, praised for a speech she delivered in 42 B.C.  
Hortensia spoke on behalf of 1400 wealthy women whose male  
relatives had been proscribed and who were themselves being  
taxed to pay the expenses of the Triumvirs. We still see some  
of Hortensia's thoughts mirrored in speeches of women  
today. The women forced their way into the Forum and Hortensia  
spoke on their behalf:

You have already deprived us of our fathers, our sons,  
our husbands, and our brothers on the pretext that they  
wronged you, but if, in addition, you take away our  
property, you will reduce us to a condition unsuitable  
to our birth, our way of life, and our female nature.

If we have done you any wrong, as you claimed our  
husbands have, proscribe us as you do them. But if we  
women have not voted any of you public enemies, nor  
torn down your house, nor destroyed your army, nor led  
another against you, nor prevented you from obtaining  
offices and honors, why do we share in the punishments  
when we did not participate in the crimes?

Why should we pay taxes when we do not share in the  
offices, honors, military commands, nor, in short, the  
government, for which you fight between yourselves with  
such harmful results? You say "because it is wartime."  
When have there not been wars? When have taxes been im-  
posed on women, whom nature sets apart from men? Our

when danger threatened your entire empire and Rome itself. But then they contributed willingly, not from their landed property, their fields, their dowries, or their houses, ~~without which it is impossible for free women to live,~~ but only from their jewelry....

Let war with the Celts or Parthians come, we will not be inferior to our mothers when it is a question of common safety. But for civil wars, may we never contribute nor aid you against each other.<sup>16</sup>

The triumvirs were angry that women should hold a meeting but public support was with the women and the next day the tax was ~~withdrawn from most the women.~~

Groups of women were involved in political and religious actions in the earliest events of Roman history. Roman women were not sequestered as were Athenian women. They were accustomed to all female gatherings for religious purposes. Gatherings with political concern grew out of this tradition. Livy tells of the Sabine wives of the early Romans, whose intercession prevented war between their husbands and fathers and brought about a profitable alliance. Of the deputation of women who persuaded the traitor Coriolanus not to make war on Rome. And of the women in the Forum who supported Verginius Claudius.<sup>17</sup> Women gathered in 195 B.C. to demand the abrogation of the Oppian law- the first women's demonstration.

Thousands of well to do Roman men were killed by Hannibal around 215 B.C. As the men died their property was apportioned among the surviving members of the family. Some of the Romans died intestate, according to the laws of intestate succession sons and daughters shared equally. As their fathers and brothers were eliminated by Hannibal women's portion of wealth increased. The war continued for thirteen years.

One may wonder who exercised authority over women when their male kin were deceased. Guardians were probably appointed. They would not as the women's male relatives did, think of these women as extensions of themselves. Livy recounts that in Rome at this time in the absence of men they dared mingle in the Forum with crowds of men, and even to make entreaties of the Senate.<sup>18</sup>

The Oppian Law forbade women's display of wealth. Passed in the time of war and windfall for women it continued in effect twenty years. It continued beyond the defeat of Hannibal. In 195 B.C. the repeal of the law was proposed and women demonstrated in the streets. Having lost their fathers and husbands and under the authority of a relatively uninterested guardian, women were freer to mill around in the streets and to make demands of the government. With the loss of men in the Second Punic War it is likely that many women did not find new husbands.

The absence of men, which was an abiding feature of history as Rome conquered and governed distant territories, encouraged independence among women and unstable marriages. Tacitus reports (from which Pomeroy gained information):

During this debate Severus Caecina proposed that no magistrate who had obtained a province should be accompanied by his wife. He began by recounting at length how harmoniously he had lived with his wife, who had

borne him six children, and how in his own home he had observed what he was proposing to the public, by having her kept in Italy, though he had himself served forty campaigns in various provinces. "With good reason," he said, "had it been formerly decided that women were not to be taken among our allies or into foreign countries. A train of women involves delays through luxury in peace and through panic in war, and converts a Roman army on the march into the likeness of a barbarian progress. Not only is the sex feeble and unequal to hardship, but, when it has liberty, it is spiteful, intriguing and greedy of power. They show themselves off among the soldiers and have centurions at their beck. Lately a woman had presided at drill of the cohorts and the evolutions of the legions. You should yourselves bear in mind that, whenever men are accused of extortion, most of the charges are directed against their wives. It is to these that the vilest of the provincials instantly attach themselves; it is they who undertake to settle business; two persons receive homage when they appear; there are two centers of government, and the women's orders are the more despotic and intemperate. Formerly they were restrained by the Oppian and other laws; now, loosed from every bond, they rule our houses, our tribunals, even our armies."<sup>19</sup>

Roman women sought status by dress and ownership of valuable slaves and costly vehicles. The style differed little from men but without the socially approved goal of furthering their political careers.

The usual purpose of honoring women was to exalt the men to whom they were mothers, wives, or sisters. Women of an emperor's family appear on coinage as extensions of the emperor. They appear as Concordia, Justitia, Pax, Securitas, or Fortuna. In their lifetime both Livia and Julia, the wife and daughter of the first emperor, were termed divine in the provinces. It was a most extraordinary honor to be a goddess. A number of empresses were deified after death to strengthen the belief that their descendants, the reigning emperors, were divine. Imperial women were assimilated to Ceres, Vesta, occasionally Juna or Venus or less, Diana.

The female members of influential families were honored by the erection of statues and buildings. In Rome the practice was mostly held to members of the imperial court or Vestal Virgins. In the provinces wives of provincial governors were commemorated with statues. There were decrees of honor of various women, including athletes, Musicians, and physicians.

The ideal of fecundity was perpetuated during the Empire. Coinage often commemorated the fecundity of imperial women. The implicit lesson- all women should do the same. Inscriptions on the coins of imperial women refer to traditional virtues Romans sought in women: Pietas, loyalty to the traditional religion; Fides, faithfulness to one man, and Pudicitia, that their sexual conduct was beyond reproach.



In actuality women did not always conduct themselves to the ideal. The historical accounts of women show certain patterns of marital polarity. We see in the wives of Marc Antony the paradigms; Fulvia, the evil wife; Octavia, the virtuous wife, ~~Cleopatra, Antony's last wife - the unique wife.~~ Fulvia was the daughter of Sempria. Married highly twice before Antony. She did not inherit her mother's charm but attracted three husbands by her wealth. Fulvia was described as female in body only - like her mother. Fulvia's "masculinity" consisted in entering spheres reserved for men, Fulvia engaged in political manipulation in behalf of her husband. The antagonism she aroused is a measure of the real political power women like her wielded. Fulvia did not care for spinning or housekeeping; ~~rather, she preferred to accompany her husband even to army camps.~~ She was as cruel as Antony during the Proscription. Fulvia died in 40 B.C. She was devoted to her husband's career till her death, even after Antony had begun his liaison with Cleopatra, Fulvia with Antony's brother maintained Antony's interests in Italy against Octavian.

Octavia newly widowed was available for a marriage alliance with Antony. Octavian and Antony agreed on the marriage in 40 B.C., known as the treaty of Brundisium. While Fulvia's policy had been to steer Antony against Octavian, Octavia sought to mediate between the two men. Octavia bore two children to Antony in the years they lived together, but he grew bored with her sober intellectual character. In 37 B.C. Antony married Cleopatra, and in 36 B.C. their son Ptolemy was born. Since Cleopatra was not a Roman citizen, Octavia viewed their marriage as not legitimate. She continued to aid Antony against her brother's wishes. In 32 B.C. Antony formally divorced Octavia and the insult gave Octavian a reason to declare war. After Antony's death Octavia raised her children by her two marriages and Antony's children by Fulvia and Cleopatra.

In 41 B.C. Antony summoned Cleopatra to meet him in Cilicia. Cleopatra had not been able to persuade Caesar to abandon his respectable Roman wife, but she lured Antony from both Fulvia and Octavia. Cleopatra was not so beautiful as some earlier Macedonian queens, but she possessed a magical charm and a beautiful voice. She was well educated and spoke many languages. Since Antony did not have intellectual aspirations, Cleopatra entertained him in Oriental luxury. Cleopatra played the exotic companion to Antony's pleasure. She remained a sound ruler and Egypt never questioned her competence. Roman's feared Cleopatra as they had feared only Hannibal. Cleopatra resembled Alexander the Great in her ability and quest for world empire. She had the only living son of Caesar, Caesarion, Marc Antony - a triumvir and famous general who was widely popular among troops and aristocracy alike, and riches and resources of Egypt at her command.

Pomeroy says of Roman women, "Roman women dined with their husbands and attended respectable parties, games, shows, and even political gatherings. Thus I believe that the notorious part of their lives has been exaggerated by historians who write of the silent seething, repressed women taking out their fury in antisocial desecrations of tradition, in debauchery, and in cruelty at the games."<sup>20</sup>

## Roman Woman's Daily life

A Roman woman's underclothing consisted of a light sleeveless under-tunic, a shift (intusium) and a fascia or stropium, her brassiere. Over this was worn a tunica (stola from the first century B.C.) and a palla. Girls once wore the toga but this habit stopped by the time of the Early Empire. In the Early Republic women showed none of their body and were hooded in public. The stola extended to the ground. The palla was pulled up over the head. By Augustus' time it was no longer pulled over the head but left on the shoulders. This form of dress persisted till the 3rd century A.D. It is startling to us who see in modern times women's dress change so rapidly and often that Roman women dressed in the same-rather dull-way in the 2nd century as three hundred years earlier. Most probably there was a variety to women's clothing but in texture of material and its color rather than cut and shape. Silk was expensive and looked on as thin, delicate and un-Roman. Cloth was usually woolen-thick for winter use and thin for summer. The dyes were shell-fish and vegetable and mineral dyes. Certain colors were thought too startling for a lady and as the toga were worn only by prostitutes. Prostitutes also had their feet exposed and could wear jewelled anklets.

The arranging of a Roman woman's hair occupied a large part of time and thought. The ladies of the court set the fashion for hair-style in the empire. Hair styles changed in upper society. In the middle and lower ranks of society there were greater divergences of hair style. In the Republic younger women dressed their hair in a simple style, drawing it to the back of the head in a simple knot and holding it with a pin. Women sometimes wore an ornamental net (reticulum) over their hair. An old fashioned method of hair dressing had coils of hair bound in fillets and massed at the top of the head in the shape of a cone. Simple strips of wood, emblem of chastity and symbol of honor due unmarried women, was originally enclosed in the mass of the cone. The wood changed to linen or silk ribbons, gold buckles embroidered with pearls or other precious stones. Though styles changed there were broadly two styles; 1. two parallel partings of the hair, 2. simple parting in the center. Julia, the daughter of Titus brought in the piling of curl on curl. Hours would be spent with the curling tongs. In the second century the style was simple; this gave way in the third to a helmet like style set by Julia Domna. Young girls do not dress their hair like elderly women and often went their own way apart from the style of the courts which their mothers imitated.

Cultus included make-up and scents (mundus) and jewellery (ornatus). These constituted the center of interest in the lives of a very great number of women. As a foundation for make-up a substance derived from the sweat of sheep wool was used. A break pack was often used at night. Women used white lead (cerussa) to whiten their faces. The Roman woman used rouge (purpurissum). A black substance was used for the eyelids and to lengthen the line of the eyes. It is assumed women also colored their lips. Purchased scents came either from the East or, in Italy, from Copua. Sephasia was the perfume market in Copua.

Rich Roman women under the Empire possessed a tremendous wealth of gold and precious stones. Stones and gold were imported from the east after Sull's return in the first century B.C. In the Empire rich women possessed- opals, sardonyx, sapphires, emeralds, beryl, jasper, carbuncles, topaz, onyx, diamonds (largely from India and since they could not be cut were used largely in rings) and above all, pearls. Jewels were worn in ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, broches, diadems in the hair and by the non respectable matrons- in anklets. Women spent more money on their ears, in the purchase of pearl ear-rings, than on any other part of their body. Ear rings were often very heavy and, through wearing them, women sometimes distorted the shape of their ears.

People probably washed too little in the early Republican Rome, in the days of the Empire they may well have washed too much. Baths improved from being dark and gloomy to being well lighted, with large windows. There were home baths and public baths. The Romans borrowed the idea of public baths from the Greeks. Often cold baths were taken in the hot Mediterranean summer. The earliest public baths seem to have been constructed in two sections, one for the men, and one section for the women. It is interesting that in the Stobin baths in Pompeii, the hot chamber was kept at a lower temperature than the men's. Women's baths never seem to have had the spacious palaestra (in which men could exercise or lie in the open air). Women's baths had beauty parlours and the similar. Women might be attended in the baths by male slaves, and male slaves were employed to massage them afterwards. Women wore a "two-piece" (subligar) in the baths. Women paid twice as much as men. Where there was only one set of baths, hours were staggered. There seem to have been baths where men and women bathed together. It seems that though authority disapproved of mixed baths popular taste was in favor and they were common from the early Empire. In some baths men and women bathed naked.<sup>21</sup>

### Women of the Roman Lower Classes

There is a new trend in Roman historical studies to find out about the lower classes and to integrate them into an understanding of Roman life. How can we know about the lives of lower class women- slaves, ex-slaves, working women, and the poor. Literature tells us the ways the lower classes pleased or displeased their social superiors. Sepulchral inscriptions tell us something.

The Roman household included slaves. They were part of the family. The complexities of Roman slavery were such that a woman might gain more prestige by marrying a slave than a free person. Many slaves enjoyed more education and economic security than freeborn poor.

Some women were enslaved in adulthood by conquest or kidnapers. Many well educated Greek men were made slaves. At most a Greek woman, owing to the limitations of women's education, might be a midwife, an actress, or a prostitute. Most women did not have any training beyond the traditional household skills. In slavery as in freedom, they could work as spinners, weavers, clothesmakers, menders, wetnurses, child nurses, kitchen help, and general domestics. Female slaves in wealthy Roman homes were given special training and worked as clerks, secretaries, ladies maids, clothes folders, hairdressers, haircutters, mirror holders, masseuses,

Some female slaves were attendants to enhance the splendor of the mistress's entourage when she went out of the home. They would clear the way for their mistress. They would assist at their mistresses' litter. ~~They might carry a parasol on a walk.~~ Their function would be different on a rural estate.

Women were always employable for sexual purposes, either in addition to their domestic responsibilities, or as a primary occupation. The master had access to all his slave women. Scripio Africanus favored a certain slave girl, when he died, his wife Aemilia, rather than being vindictive, gave the girl her freedom. Cato the Censor, who was an authority on Roman virtue, was visited nightly by a slave girl. The Roman emperors Augustus and Claudius consorted with numerous slave girls with their wives explicit approval.<sup>22</sup>

Employment in the sex trade brought great profit to the owners of female slaves. Women worked as prostitutes in brothels or in inns or baths open to the public. Some actresses appeared nude and performed sexual acts on the stage.

Slavery disqualified a person from entering a formal Roman marriage, but two slaves might have an informal marital arrangement known as "cohabitation". The arrangement had no legal validity. But to the slaves they were valid. With permission a slave might marry a slave from another familia or a free person. Sepulchral inscriptions show that many slave marriages survived over long periods of time.

It was alright for a freedwoman to marry a slave after he was freed. However, a freeborn woman who freed a slave who was male was disapproved of and finally outlawed by Septimus Severus (reigned A.D. 193-211).

Motives for a freeborn woman to marry a slave were prestige and economic security. Male slaves held important administrative posts. Also there was the fact of burial in an imperial or aristocrat family- this was important to Romans. The free woman who married a slave of a high family improved her state as he improved his. Female slaves in upper class families were less likely to marry above their status. Females did not hold positions of influence. In lower class families a slave woman could be freed to marry her former master. This was illegal for senatorial or imperial relations.

That there were wealthy freedwomen is shown in the expensive burial places they constructed for themselves. Most freedwomen were not wealthy but comprised a large part of the Roman working class, sewing, as shopkeepers or artisans, or continuing in domestic service. Working class women worked wool and were joined by some men. Laundry work was done by men and women. Coming from the East, freedwomen often sold exotic luxury items. They sold merchandise items. They worked as butchers and even as fisherwomen- afterwards selling their catch. Women's names stamped on pipes and bricks show their involvement in building activities. Upper class women owned construction companies. Lower class women made building materials and did construction work.<sup>23</sup>

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(Many dates are approximate)

(all dates are B.C.)

BRONZE AGE	3000 1200	
DARK AGE	800	1184 Traditional date of the fall of Troy
ARCHAIC	700	1000-900 Fall of Mycenae 900-700 Protoegeometric Pottery Geometric Pottery Phoenician alphabet Homer 700 Hesiod Semonides Sappho 594 Archonship of Solon 545-510 Tyranny of Pisistratids
CLASSICAL	500	490-479 Persian Wars 458 Aeschylus <i>Oresteia</i> 451/450 Citizenship Law of Pericles 441 Sophocles <i>Antigone</i> Aspasia 431-404 Peloponnesian War 411 Aristophanes <i>Lysistrata</i> 405 Death of Euripides 459-380 Lysias 429-347 Plato 428-354 Xenophon Demosthenes, Aristotle 359-336 Philip II of Macedon Praxiteles Aphrodite of Cnidus regnum 336-323 Alexander
HELLENISTIC	323	316 Death of Olympias 270 Death of Arsinoë II 30 Death of Cleopatra VII
ARCHAIC	753	753 B.C. Traditional date of the founding of Rome by Romulus
REPUBLIC	509	509 B.C. Expulsion of Kings, founding of Republic 493 B.C. Cult of Ceres on the Aventine 451-450 B.C. Traditional date of the Twelve Tables 264-241 B.C. First Punic War 234-149 B.C. Cato the Elder 218-201 B.C. Second Punic War 195 B.C. Repeal of Oppian Law 167 B.C. Voconian Law

## LATE REPUBLIC

133 B.C.	Tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus, beginning of one hundred years of civil discord
106-43 B.C.	Cicero
95-46 B.C.	Cato the Younger
84-54 B.C.	Caullus
70-19 B.C.	Virgil
44 B.C.	Propertius, Tibullus, Sulpicia, Livy
43 B.C.-A.D. 17	Assassination of Julius Caesar
42 B.C.	Ovid
31 B.C.	Oration of Hortensia
31 B.C.	Defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium
27 B.C.-A.D. 14	Augustus (formerly known as Octavian)

(all dates are A.D.)

regnum 14-37	Tiberius
29	Death of Livia, widow of Augustus
	Valerius Maximus
37-41	Gaius (Caligula)
41-54	Claudius
50-120	Plutarch
54-68	Nero
59	Assassination of Agrippina, mother of Nero
61-112	Pliny the Younger
69-79	Vespasian
79-81	Titus
79	Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum
81-96	Domitian
	Tacitus
	Juvenal
96-98	Nerva
98-117	Trajan
	Soranus
117-38	Hadrian (wife, Sabina)
	Apuleius
138-61	Antoninus Pius (wife, Faustina the Elder)
	Aulus Gellius
161-80	Marcus Aurelius (wife, Faustina the Younger)
	Commodus
180-92	Septimius Severus
193-211	Caracalla
211-17	Death of Julia Domna
217	Elagabalus
218-22	Death of Julia Soaemias
222	Severus Alexander
222-35	Death of Julia Maesa
226	Dioecletian
285-305	Constantine
306-37	Constantine
323-65	Justinian

## EMPIRE

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(Many dates are approximate)

(all dates are B.C.)  
3000  
BRONZE AGE  
1200

Greece

- 1184 Traditional date of the fall of Troy
- Fall of Mycenae
- 1000-900 Protogeometric Pottery
- 900-700 Geometric Pottery
- Phoenician alphabet
- Homer
- Hesiod
- 700 Semonides
- Sappho
- 594 Archonship of Solon
- 545-510 Tyranny of Pisistratids

800  
DARK AGE

ARCHAIC

500

- 490-479 Persian Wars
- 438 Aeschylus *Oresteia*
- 451/450 Citizenship Law of Pericles
- 441 Sophocles *Antigone*
- Aspasia
- 431-404 Peloponnesian War
- 411 Aristophanes *Lysistrata*
- 405 Death of Euripides
- 459-380 Lysias
- 429-347 Plato
- 428-354 Xenophon
- Demosthenes, Aristotle
- Philip II of Macedonia
- Praxiteles, Aphrodite of Cnidus
- regnum 336-323 Alexander

CLASSICAL

323

HELLENISTIC

30

Rome

- 316 Death of Olympias
- 270 Death of Arsinoë II
- 30 Death of Cleopatra VII
- 753 B.C. Traditional date of the founding of Rome by Romulus

753

ARCHAIC

509

- 509 B.C. Expulsion of kings, founding of Republic
- 493 B.C. Cult of Ceres on the Aventine
- 451-450 B.C. Traditional date of the Twelve Tables
- 264-241 B.C. First Punic War
- 234-149 B.C. Cato the Elder
- 218-201 B.C. Second Punic War
- 195 B.C. Repeal of Oppian Law
- 169 B.C. Voconian Law

REPUBLIC

LATE REPUBLIC

27

(all dates are A.D.)

- 133 B.C. Tribune of Tiberius Gracchus, beginning of one hundred years of civil discord
- 106-43 B.C. Cicero
- 95-46 B.C. Cato the Younger
- 84-54 B.C. Catullus
- 70-19 B.C. Virgil
- Property, Tibullus, Sulpicia, Livy
- Assassination of Julius Caesar
- 44 B.C. Ovid
- 43 B.C.-A.D. 17 Oration of Hortensia
- 42 B.C. Defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium
- 31 B.C. Augustus (formerly known as Octavian)
- regnum 27 B.C.-A.D. 14 A.D. 14

- regnum 14-37 Tiberius
- 29 Death of Livia, widow of Augustus
- Valerius Maximus
- regnum 37-41 Gaius (Caligula)
- regnum 41-54 Claudius
- 50-120 Plutarch
- regnum 54-68 Nero
- 59 Assassination of Agrippina, mother of Nero
- 61-112 Pliny the Younger
- regnum 69-79 Vespasian
- regnum 79-81 Titus
- 79 Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum
- regnum 81-96 Domitian
- Tacitus
- Juvenal
- regnum 96-98 Nerva
- regnum 98-117 Trajan
- Soranus
- regnum 117-38 Hadrian (wife, Sabina)
- Apuleius
- regnum 138-61 Antoninus Pius (wife, Faustina the Elder)
- Aulus Gellius
- regnum 161-80 Marcus Aurelius (wife, Faustina the Younger)
- Commodus
- regnum 193-211 Septimius Severus
- regnum 211-17 Caracalla
- 217 Death of Julia Domna
- regnum 218-22 Elagabalus
- 222 Death of Julia Soaemias
- regnum 222-35 Severus Alexander
- 226 Death of Julia Maesa
- regnum 285-305 Diocletian
- regnum 306-37 Constantine
- regnum 324-63 Justinian

## References

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