



Panel Abstracts Booklet

Celtic Conference in Classics

Coimbra 2019

Faculty of Arts and Humanities
University of Coimbra
26th - 29th June 2019

Organization



Funding



Partners



[PANEL 17] THE MARITAL AND THE MARTIAL:
EXEMPLARY WOMEN BEYOND LUCRETIA

[Wednesday]

Slot 3: 3:40 - 4:30pm

Karen Hersch

Peregrina Tanaquil

If captive Greece fascinated its captors, it seems that Romans felt even more perplexed about the cultural inheritance of their Etruscan neighbors. This fraught relationship is most evident in portraits of Tanaquil, who was a prophet, mother, queen, woolworker, and healer. An Etruscan aristocrat, Tanaquil was commemorated as a foreigner even in death, as Livy (1.47) labels her *peregrina Tanaquil*.

Previous interpretations of Tanaquil have focused on her role as kingmaker (Hall 1985), goddess (Santini 2005, Boëls-Janssen 2006) and matron (Hersch 2007). Yet none have considered to what extent Tanaquil's self-imposed exile and pilgrimage to Rome are connected to her miraculous deeds, most notably her ability to provide healing relics, 600 years after her death, in the form of a miraculous statue in Rome. In this paper, I reevaluate the ancient accounts in light of scholarship on ancient and medieval queenship (Earenfight 2013, Gillespie 2018) to connect immigration, prophecy, and leadership in regal Rome.

Boëls-Janssen, N., "La déesse au fuseau et la sacralisation du *lanificium* matronal" *Mélanges H. Zehnacker* (2006) 55-70.

Earenfight, T., *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, 2013).

Gillespie, C., *Boudica: Warrior Woman of Roman Britain* (Oxford, 2018).

Hall, J., "Livy's Tanaquil and the image of assertive Etruscan women in Latin historical literature of the early empire" *AugAge IV* (1985) 31-38.

Hersch, K. K., "The Woolworker Bride" in eds. L. Larsson Lovén and A. Stromberg, *Ancient Marriage in Myth and Reality* (Cambridge, 2010) 122-136.

Myers, G., "Women and the Production of Ceremonial Textiles: A Reevaluation of Ceramic Textile Tools in Etrusco-Italic Sanctuaries" *American Journal of Archaeology* 117(2) (2013) 247-274.

Santini, C., "'Tanaquil vel Fortuna': una figura femminile nel percorso tra mito, testo e icona" *GIF 57* (2) (2005) 189-210

Marion Boos

Women and Religion in early Rome

The Roman calendar knows several religious festivals in which women played a leading role. Aside from their gender, their social status was of particular importance. The *Matronalia*, festivals in honour of Juno, were celebrated by free married women. The *Matralia*, in honour of Mater Matuta, were also mainly celebrated by Roman matrons, while slave girls were forbidden to even enter the sanctuary of the goddess. During the *Nonae Caprotinae*, on the other hand, slave girls were honoured in commemoration of a legendary episode after the Gallic War, when the Romans were threatened by the Latins to surrender some of their girls as brides; but they were saved from disgrace by slave girls who took the place of freeborn virgins and seduced the enemy soldiers, thus giving the

Romans the chance to overwhelm them. In the festivals dedicated to Venus Verticordia and Fortuna Virilis, taking place on the same day, both respectable matrons and women of ill repute were involved.

Apart from these recurring events, women were also called upon in individual, one-time religious actions, especially in the expiation of bad omens. All these reports show that women were an essential part of Roman religious life, thus sharing the responsibility of giving the gods their due with the Roman men. However, the deities – usually female – that required special attention from women are often conceptualised as “women’s goddesses” and thus marginalised as divinities with a focus on supposedly female concerns: home and family, fertility, birth and health. This paper will review some of these so-called “women’s goddesses” known from early Rome and look into the roles both women and men played in the cultic activities of these deities.

Slot 4: 4:40 - 5:30pm

Giambattista Cairo

Structural Anthropology and Women’s Role in the Legend of Roman Kings

What role did women play in archaic matrimony? What was the function of the dowry? When was *coemptio* introduced? Did ‘marriage by rape’ exist? Structural anthropology handles such questions persuasively and innovatively. Applying categories described by Lévy-Strauss to legends such as the rape of the Sabine women, I demonstrate that archaic Rome had a marital system of generalized exchange in the guise of restricted exchange. In such systems, women have value: movement from one group to another starts a recurring chain of credits and debits. Yet in generalized exchange, debt repayment falls to later generations. Marriage by *coemptio* was introduced to resolve this problem.

The dowry also helped the system function by providing a wife for individual groups, yet returning to its origin at the end of the cycle initiated by the marriage. The requirements for restitution of the dowry in the event of divorce falls outside of this system’s logic and were introduced later.

Camilla Tosi

Panegyris and Pamphila. Two sisters, two Wives

I would like to talk about the women in Plautus’ comedies, and in particular in the comedy of Stichus. I would reflect on their perspective after they have been left alone at home, without their husband. Senex wants them to remarry, but the two sisters oppose: they prefer waiting for the return of their two husbands. Roman law forces the two daughters to submit to the paternal will. However, in order for comedy to be resolved with a happy ending, the author must stage a family conflict. I explain then how the same father is incoherent: he himself wanted them to marry, and now that they are absent the senex wants to make them divorce, only in order to increase his own patrimony.

In my paper I discuss how, because of paternal potestas and the absence of husbands, the will of these two women is completely ignored. Their loyalty, though threatened by the power of the father, becomes a necessary element in the plot of this Plautine comedy. I try to explain how the female position during the Republican age is gradually changing.

Slot 6: 10:00 - 10:50am**Beatrice Polletti**

Female Sexuality and Political Change in the Early Books of Dionysius' Roman Antiquities: The Case of Hersilia and the Sabine Women

In a well-known episode of Rome's early history, King Romulus contrived and executed the mass abduction of Sabine women to provide wives for its male subjects. The ensuing war and reconciliation—promoted by the Sabine women themselves—resulted in the formal union of the Roman and the Sabine peoples. This union ratified the permanent alliance between Rome and its neighbours and the practice of intermarriage as a crucial political tool for Rome's growth.

In my presentation, I focus on the version of this episode transmitted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his history of Rome. His version is underrated in modern scholarship due to its lack of pathos and vividness compared to Livy's celebrated account. Yet, Dionysius' reconstruction proves extremely useful in understanding his attempts at negotiating Roman history and values for a mostly Greek readership. As I argue, Dionysius' preoccupation with female chastity and male virtue—the latter being evident in his description of Romulus, of the senators, and of the Roman citizens at large—supports idealized views of early Roman society and government and justifies not only Rome's subsequent victory over the Sabines and their allies but ultimately Rome's supremacy and right to rule.

Further, Dionysius ascribes unprecedented agency to the Sabine women in ending the conflict and consistently emphasizes their desirable female qualities as well as their masculine traits. These are especially manifest in the description of Hersilia, the true instigator of the reconciliation process. Unlike most Roman writers (including Livy), who conceived of Hersilia as the wife of Romulus—divinized as Hora Quirinis—Dionysius portrays her as the devout mother of one of the Sabine abductees and, notably, as a skilled and inventive orator, able to carry out the conferences with the Roman Senate and with the Sabine Councillors on her own initiative. As I show, Dionysius' narrative choices bear specific ideological significance, in that they seek to legitimize Roman power and conquest by exploiting, and to some extent subverting, common ideas about female expected behaviour and societal role.

Angeliki Roumpou, University of Nottingham [Angeliki.roumpou@nottingham.ac.uk]
"How can I prove my chastity?" Claudia Quinta and the end of the Hannibalic War in Silius Italicus' Punica

In the final book of Silius Italicus' *Punica*, the 2nd c. AD Roman epic on the Hannibalic war, Silius describes how Claudia Quinta, a Roman matron, facilitates the advent of a foreign deity, Magna Mater (Cybele) in Rome which, according to a prophecy, will expel the external enemy, Hannibal, from Italy (17.1-45). This episode serves two purposes: first, it redeems Claudia Quinta's reputation who had previously been accused for improper behaviour, and second, it ensures the expulsion of the invader, which corresponds to the military success at Zama, described later in the same book and concluding the epic. In this paper, I will analyse the different versions and adaptations of Claudia Quinta's character in literature, with particular emphasis on her appearance in the final book of

the *Punica*. Why does Silius decide to use a female character in a completely masculine epic to assist the Romans and give the final resolution of the poem? What does this episode reveal for the perception of female and chastity in Imperial times? Are there any implications behind the story of Claudia's alignment with a foreign deity connected with the Flavian ideology on territorial expansion and the subsequent removal from the city to the periphery?

Slot 7: 11:10 - 12:00am

Jeremy Swist

The Women of Regal Rome in Imperial Abbreviated Histories

Livy's first book features several women of exemplary agency. While Tarpeia and Tullia are largely negative exempla, they are outweighed by the positive exempla of the Sabine Women, Tanaquil, and Lucretia. This latter group effects positive change in the development of Roman society with persuasive speech and independent action. In the reception of Livy's text by non-Christian historians of the imperial period up through late antiquity, however, we find this exemplarity either scaled back, erased, or distorted. While the general process of abbreviation and epitomization necessarily condenses narratives and largely removes direct speech, I argue that these imperial breviarists carefully rewrote, selected, and omitted details from their sources on regal women in response to their own socio-political contexts.

I first examine authors of the middle Empire, namely Florus and Justin. Florus undermines the agency of several women, even negative ones like Tullia, while rather than forgiving Lucretia he treats her death as a just expiation of dishonor. Justin, in epitomizing the historian Pompeius Trogus who in turn drew from Livy, mitigates the violence and injustice of regal rapes, both of Rhea Silvia and the Sabine Women. In late antiquity, Eutropius restricts the exemplarity of the Sabines and Lucretia in line with recent legislation on rape and abduction marriages (see Evans-Grubbs 1989; Holden 2008). Aurelius Victor and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* recast Tanaquil as an exemplum of the dynastic scheming of empresses, arguably a reaction to the increasing power and visibility of imperial women in late Roman courts (see James 2001; Angelova 2015).

This survey aims to demonstrate two things: first, that imperial abbreviated histories were creative compositions consciously in dialogue with contemporary contexts; second, that the process of abbreviating history came at the cost of positive, feminine exemplarity, a phenomenon not unique to this specific time period.

Angelova, D. 2015. *Sacred Founders: Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome through Early Byzantium*. Berkeley.

Evans-Grubbs, J. 1989. "Abduction Marriage in Antiquity: A Law of Constantine (CTh IX 24.1) and its Social Context." *Journal of Roman Studies* 79: 59-83.

Holden, A. 2008. "The Abduction of the Sabine Women in Context: The Iconography of Late Antique Contorniate Medallions." *American Journal of Archaeology* 112.1: 121-142.

James, L. 2001. *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*. London.

Slot 8: 12:10am - 1:00pm

Jaclyn Neel

Tarpeia in metal

In this paper I re-analyze the coinage depicting Tarpeia. This coinage has previously been understood in one of two ways: scholars either believe that the iconography depicts Tarpeia as a deity (relying on the “astral symbolism” of star and crescent; see particularly Ercolani Cocchi 2004 and Mazzei 2005) or they argue that the images depict Tarpeia’s death by crushing in a manner similar to Livy’s description in *AUC* 1.11 (most recently, Welch 2015). While not rejecting either of these two arguments, my analysis focuses on the numismatic models for these Tarpeia coins in order to draw broader conclusions. In particular, I focus on the militaristic iconography and argue that this iconography relates to the Tarpeia who accompanies Camilla in *Aeneid* 11.655-664. A reader familiar with the iconography would be able to predict Camilla’s demise, while a viewer familiar with the *Aeneid* would understand the coins in two distinct ways.

Ercolani Cocchi, E. “*Aeternitas* e il crescente lunare in età repubblicana, ovvero: la riabilitazione di Tarpeia” in M. Caccamo Caltabiano et al. (eds.), *La tradizione iconica come fonte storica. Il ruolo della numismatica negli studi di iconografia*. Reggio Calabria 2004, 47-73.

Mazzei, P. “Iuno Moneta-Tarpea.” *RCCM* 47 (2005) 23-79

Welch, T. *Tarpeia: The Workings of a Roman Myth*. Columbus, 2015.