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# Roman Mater The Etruscan Influence On the Role of Roman Women

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Roman *Mater* The Etruscan influence on the role of Roman women.

Honors Bachelor of Arts Thesis

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## Introduction

During the early Roman Empire, the role of the upper class married women became a civic duty. Rome's culture and attitudes towards women developed from a synthesis of several other societies views. Traditionally, Athens has been credited with having the greatest influence over Rome's culture, but that is overlooking the Etruscans. The Etruscans dominated Italy for hundreds of years before Rome was founded, and even during the early years of the Roman monarchy. The Etruscan culture, as can be understood by the material remains, gave a higher status to women and their role in the family than did their Athenian contemporaries. The Romans eventually subsumed the Etruscan culture into their own and took on many Etruscan practices. While the Athenian culture did have a profound impact on the Romans, it is the Etruscan influence that accounts for the privileged role of upper class Roman mother and wife. Augustus made many laws that rewarded women who bore children, and punished both men and women who did not. Augustus' wife Livia became the model for upper class women on how to be both a mother and a wife. The view of the role of women as mother and wife in Rome did not come from the Athenian influence, but from the accumulation of several different influences. One of the largest influences on the views of women in Rome comes from the Etruscan culture.

The years leading up to the Empire in Rome, were characterized by internal and external conflict and uncertainty. The civil wars between Pompey and Caesar, divided Rome.<sup>1</sup> The strife that the Romans experienced left them with negative feelings towards foreign influences, corrupt government, and the perceived lack of morality of the upper class. Augustus tapped into these feelings of insecurity of the Roman people and created a moral and patriotic propaganda campaign to restore confidence in the Roman people. Under his influence the Roman artists and

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<sup>1</sup> (Dunstan 2010, 73-74)

authors explored Roman history and culture. This exploration of Roman culture and history, an interest into the Etruscan culture developed among the upper class.<sup>2</sup> Augustus used many aspects of Etruscan art in his own monuments, due to fact that many of the upper class Romans considered the Etruscan culture to have a close relationship with the early Romans. He moved away from strictly Athenian artistic ideals and tried incorporating more Italian influences.

The interest in the Etruscan culture accounts in part for the redefining role of women in the early Roman Empire. The Romans were very familiar with the Etruscans because the two cultures existed side by side for many years until the Romans eventually conquered the Etruscans in the late monarchy.<sup>3</sup> Etruscan influence can be found throughout Roman culture, significantly through religious and artistic influences. Etruscan women had a very public presence within their own culture, a fact that the Romans were well aware of.

The Etruscan culture placed a higher value on the role of women in the family than did their Athenian contemporaries. The higher value of Etruscan women is visible on the surviving grave evidence. The fact that most of the evidence of the Etruscan culture comes from grave materials does make the understanding of the Etruscan culture in its entirety, difficult. Examining only mortuary evidence can lead to misinterpretations and generalizations about a society because of the specific type of evidence examined. This type of evidence can indicate however how the society valued the deceased person and what kinds of things a society valued in general.<sup>4</sup> The images that were chosen to represent the deceased reflected the idealized version of them, or the idealized gender role of the society. Therefore an examination of the mortuary

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<sup>2</sup> (Severy 2003, 21-23)

<sup>3</sup> (Dunstan 2010, 101)

<sup>4</sup> (Morris 1992, 40-42)

evidence of the Etruscans reveals that the role of upper class women was valued within the family.

Comparing the common grave monuments for women of Athenian society which were primarily stele and *kore*, to the grave monuments for Etruscan women, which were family tomb paintings and sarcophagi, will expose the large differences between the two societies' views on women. Looking into the Roman culture, specifically the monuments and laws created by Augustus during the early Empire, will reveal the Etruscan influence on Roman society concerning women.

#### Athenian Society

During the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Athens experienced its greatest period of political, social, artistic, and philosophic movements. After the Persian Wars, Athens became the most powerful city state in Greece.<sup>5</sup> Their successes in the Persian Wars strengthened the Athenians beliefs in their own culture. Athenian culture was unique from other Greek city states as well as the eastern empires because of the emphasis on the individual importance of the citizen. Athenian democracy reflected and enhanced the value of the individual within the political and social community.<sup>6</sup> The democracy practiced in Athens allowed all male citizens to vote, regardless of whether or not they owned land. This type of democracy, while giving freedom to men of various backgrounds, placed those who were not considered citizens, namely women, at an even lower level. Women had no way to contribute to the Athenian government, nor were they even considered an actual part of the citizenship by the government.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> (Galinsky 1996, 27)

<sup>6</sup> (J. M. Toynbee 1971, 45-48)

<sup>7</sup> (Lewis 2002, 21)

The upper class Athenian men and women were separated in most of the activities of their daily lives. Athenian women attended to their duties at home, like raising their children, attending to their slaves, and participating in their religious duties. The few public activities that women could attend were events which were segregated from men. Women could participate in religious festivals such as the Thesmophoria, in which men would not attend. Athenian women could become priestess for the cults of women. Women also played an important and visible role during funerals.<sup>8</sup> The key difference between the Athenian women's participation in these activities from both Etruscan and Roman women's was the lack of interaction with the men. The religious activities of the sexes were completely separate in Athens. The funeral rituals included both men and women, but the women were around only male relatives.<sup>9</sup>

The Athenian focus on the male individual and the sense of separation of women is reflected throughout Athenian grave markers. In Ancient Athens the largest cemetery was the *kerameikos*. It was located outside the city walls and was used from around 1100 B.C. up through 200 B.C.<sup>10</sup> The Sacred Way went through the *kerameikos* and was lined with the tombs of Athens' elite. Athenians were always buried alone, either in a tomb, or a cist grave.<sup>11</sup> During the 6<sup>th</sup> century the graves of the wealthy were often marked with large stone stelai, *koroi* and *korai* statues, or with large earthen mounds.<sup>12</sup> Around the time of the development of democracy in the 5<sup>th</sup> century large tombs and monuments were outlawed and the graves of the wealthy became more subdued. The sumptuary laws that were passed during this time reflected the shift in attitudes of the Athenians about ostentatious displays of personal wealth. Eventually Athens saw a resurgence of lavish tombs and grave monuments after 425 B.C. that continued until the

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<sup>8</sup> (Ogden 2010, 12)

<sup>9</sup> (Ogden 2010, 13)

<sup>10</sup> (Camp 2001, 5)

<sup>11</sup> (Camp 2001, 7)

<sup>12</sup> (Arnold 2006, 42-43)

sumptuary laws passed in 317 B.C. which severely limited the size and decoration of the tombs.<sup>13</sup>

During the periods that Athenians were not subjected to sumptuary laws, the value of the individual is clearly reflected in grave decorations. The images that the Athenians used in their grave decorations indicate that the Athenians had gender roles that were defined in terms that kept the genders completely separate from each other. Men were valued for the service in the public sphere and women were valued for their abilities in the domestic sphere.<sup>14</sup> Inscriptions, though rarely found, praised the women for having qualities that demonstrated that the men in their lives had control over their womanly passions. Women were rarely called mother, or shown with their children, they were usually referred to as wife and daughter. Men on the other hand were rarely called father, husband, or son but are always called by their own personal name.<sup>15</sup> Grave markers without inscriptions used images to convey that the deceased women were wealthy as well as passive, pleasant homemakers.

Unmarried deceased women were often represented with *korai* statues. These statues like their male counterpart the *koroi* were lifelike representations of the ideal human figure.<sup>16</sup> The female versions of these statues were always clothed and were highly stylized.<sup>17</sup> One of the most well known *kore* that was used as a grave marker is the *kore* of Phrasikleia.<sup>18</sup> This *kore* was commissioned sometime during the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century and marked the grave of Phrasikleia.<sup>19</sup> The statue represents Phrasikleia as wearing a long sleeved chiton or tunic and a wreath of flowers.

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<sup>13</sup> (Camp 2001, 14-15)

<sup>14</sup> (Arnold 2006, 45)

<sup>15</sup> (*Ibid*)

<sup>16</sup> (Morris 1992, 23)

<sup>17</sup> (Arnold 2006, 47)

<sup>18</sup> Image 1

<sup>19</sup> (Cohen 1989, 32)

She is holding a lotus bud in her left hand and her right hand is pulling the bottom of her garment. The inscription that accompanies the statue reads “the sign of Phrasikleia. Girl I shall be called forever, having received this name from the gods in exchange for marriage.”<sup>20</sup> The inscription and the statue itself suggest the eternal virginity of Phrasikleia. She was given the name *kore* by the gods because she died before she was married. She is holding a lotus bud, which represents her unfulfilled role as wife. The imagery and words are meant to evoke compassion from the passerby at the woman who was so unfortunate to die before she was married or before her life had any meaning.<sup>21</sup>

Upper class Athenian women who died after they were married were represented with stelai that depicted scenes supposedly from the deceased woman’s daily life. According to the scenes, the upper class Athenian woman’s daily life consisted of attending to the slaves, examining jewelry, weaving and spinning, or family duties.<sup>22</sup> Women were never depicted in any setting outside of the home or with any man not in their immediate family.<sup>23</sup> The Stele of Hegeso which was erected sometime during the late 5<sup>th</sup> century or early 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E, exemplifies the ideals of the married Athenian woman.<sup>24</sup> This stele depicts a scene of a seated married woman examining a piece of jewelry from an open box which her female slave is holding. The inscription reads “Hegeso, daughter of Proxenos,” which tells us who the person is and to what male she is related . Her identity is important only in terms of the male in her life. The fact that Hegeso, the subject of the scene, is seated indicates that she is in an interior space, most likely her home. The slave girl is depicted as gazing at her mistress in admiration. Both the

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<sup>20</sup> (Cohen 1989, 33)

<sup>21</sup> (Arnold 2006, 52)

<sup>22</sup> (Cohen 1989, 40)

<sup>23</sup> (*Ibid*)

<sup>24</sup> Image 2

presence of the slave and the jewelry demonstrates the wealth and free status of the seated woman.<sup>25</sup> The box most likely represents the dowry her father provided for her marriage.<sup>26</sup>

The stele of Pausimache is another example of a typical Athenian woman's grave stele.<sup>27</sup> The inscription tells the passerby that the stele was dedicated by the grieving parents of Pausimache and praises their daughter for her goodness and good sense.<sup>28</sup> The image however shows Pausimache standing and looking at herself in the mirror. The image seemingly has nothing to do with the inscriptions and the qualities she supposedly possessed. Her relaxed pose indicates that she was wealthy enough to be able to live an easy and relaxed life. Pausimache's stele is a public monument of the wealth of her father. Pausimache is given this large memorial that shows her engaging in an activity that signifies her wealth and easy life. This memorial praises Pausimache for being a daughter who brings honor to her father.<sup>29</sup>

The representations of Athenian women on grave markers stand in strong contrast to the representations of Athenian men. The images used on male Athenian stelai are typically those of public service, such as military service or political activities.<sup>30</sup> The Dexileos found in the *Kerameikos* cemetery in Athens, exemplifies a typical upper class Athenian male grave marker. This stele was commissioned by the parents of Dexileos who was killed during the Corinthian War.<sup>31</sup> The scene on the stele shows Dexileos stabbing his enemy with a spear as his horse

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<sup>25</sup> (Kleiner 2009, 120)

<sup>26</sup> (*Ibid* 121)

<sup>27</sup> Image 3

<sup>28</sup> (Leader 1997, 693)

<sup>29</sup> (Blundell and Williamson 1998, 76)

<sup>30</sup> (Arnold 2006, 49)

<sup>31</sup> Image 4

tramples him. Dexileos was honored for his sacrifice to Athens in war.<sup>32</sup> This stele celebrated the public service of Dexileos and does not indicate anything of his role as husband.

The surviving grave monuments found in Athens point to a society that valued women primarily for their role in the domestic sphere. Women were separated from the men, in both their daily lives, as well as in their religious duties. The images used to decorate the grave monument of Athenian women demonstrate that Athenian women were valued for their role as wife, and that this role was isolated and secluded from men.

### Etruscan Society

The Etruscans valued women in a way that is markedly different from the Athenian society, and this view is reflected throughout Etruscan grave decoration and architecture. The Etruscan society, as can be understood by the surviving mortuary materials, placed a high value on the family. The Etruscans buried their dead in large family tombs in necropolises outside of the city. In the earliest phases of Etruscan society, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E., the deceased's remains were placed into hut ossuary urns shaped like Etruscan homes and buried in clusters of cist graves.<sup>33</sup> These urns indicate that the Etruscans were family oriented from the beginning of their civilization. During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, the tombs became monumentalized and the necropolises became much more organized.<sup>34</sup> These tombs were a change from the cist, single person graves from the earlier graves. The family tombs were much larger to entomb several generations of family members and were filled with objects representing the family's great wealth. Despite the changes to the structure of both the tombs and the necropolises, the deceased

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<sup>32</sup> (Humphreys 1980, 98)

<sup>33</sup> (Banti 1973, 67)

<sup>34</sup> (Torelli 2000, 210)

were nearly always buried in family tombs. The tombs were built to resemble Etruscan homes so that the family could remain together even in death.<sup>35</sup>

The imagery that the Etruscans decorated their tombs with emphasized the value that they placed on the family as well as religion. The majority of the images and artifacts that the Etruscans placed into their tombs are connected to both their religion and their family.<sup>36</sup> In the family tombs men and women were presented equally which is a striking difference from the Athenian focus on separation of the sexes. The tomb was decorated like the inside of a home, with furniture carved out of the stone. The deceased person, if they were not cremated, was placed either directly onto the stone beds or into a sarcophagus. The sarcophagi were often decorated with images of married couples and the activities that married couples would have participated in together. One sarcophagus, The Ruspoli Couple found in Cerveteri is a good example of the typical Etruscan couple sarcophagi.<sup>37</sup> The couple is shown reclining under the same blanket on the banquet couch. The woman is shown to be holding something such as perfume to be poured onto her husband or some other liquid used in banqueting.<sup>38</sup> It is clear that this is a husband and wife, because the woman is clothed. If the woman was naked it would suggest that she was a prostitute or entertainer, rather than a respectable woman of upper class society.<sup>39</sup> It would be highly unlikely that an Etruscan man would have commissioned an expensive sarcophagus, in which he would be placed for eternity, which would depict him lying with a prostitute at a banquet.

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<sup>35</sup>(Torelli 2000, 333-334)

<sup>36</sup>(L. Bonfante, Etruscan life and afterlife: a handbook of Etruscan studies 1998, 34)

<sup>37</sup> Image 5

<sup>38</sup>(Nielsen 2009, 83)

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*

Besides the image of reclining married couples at banquets on sarcophagi, there were also images of married couples in bed together. A famous example of this type of sarcophagus is the sarcophagus of Larth Tetnie and Thanchivil Tarnai found at Vulci.<sup>40</sup> This sarcophagus was constructed in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and included an inscription that named the subjects of the sarcophagus, as well as the parents of the deceased.<sup>41</sup> The lid of the sarcophagus shows the husband and wife embracing naked under the blanket on top of their matrimonial beds.<sup>42</sup> This intimate scene is striking for several reasons. It shows a married couple in a very private moment of their marriage. The wife is shown naked except for some pieces of jewelry including a bracelet typically worn by males. Ingrid Rowland suggests that even though the wife is nude, the wealth of the couple is still shown through the jewelry and the lavishness of her hair.<sup>43</sup>

The Etruscan couple sarcophagi portray marriage in a way that was not present on Athenian grave decorations. Etruscan's are shown together with their spouse embracing or participating together in public activities. On Athenian stelai, husbands and wives were not often shown together, and when they were, it was in a domestic, private setting. The Etruscan couple sarcophagi show that the Etruscans valued the participation of their wives in both private and public activities.

The couple sarcophagi also indicate that the Etruscans viewed a married woman's ideal role as being beside their husband. The Etruscan's used the couple motif throughout their grave decorations which indicates that the idea of the married couple was something that the society highly valued. This emphasis on the togetherness of the married couple is very different than the images used to depict the Athenian woman. The Athenian's ideal form on grave monuments was

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<sup>40</sup> Image 6

<sup>41</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan Couples and their Aristocratic Society* 1981, 59)

<sup>42</sup> (Rowland 2008, 151-152)

<sup>43</sup> (Rowland 2008, 151)

a woman, usually without her husband or children in the home attending to domestic duties. The Etruscans commonly portrayed, on sarcophagi as well as tomb paintings, and other grave goods, their women as being alongside their husband at both public and private events.

#### Etruscan women's grave goods

There is further evidence of the public presence and elevated status of Etruscan women found in their tombs beyond the sarcophagi. Many upper class women were buried with women's tools and Athenian style pottery that have inscriptions written in the Etruscan language.<sup>44</sup> This suggests that upper class women may have been educated enough to read and to understand some aspects of Greek culture to consume their pottery. Some of the oldest known Etruscan inscriptions have been found on women's objects.<sup>45</sup>

Many of these objects that have inscriptions for women were used by women in their everyday lives. These objects include spindles, distaffs, spools, loom weights, and whorls, all objects used in the spinning and weaving.<sup>46</sup> Weaving and spinning were clearly common activities for upper class women in Etruria, as they were in Athens and Rome. The ability to weave seems to have been held in reserve for the female of the family.<sup>47</sup> The tradition of upper class women learning to read could have come from weaving because of the ability needed to comprehend and create connections on the cloth.<sup>48</sup> Whatever the reason women learned to read it is clear that they had some type of literacy because of the frequency which upper class women's objects are engraved with language.

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<sup>44</sup> (Bonfonte 1980, 3)

<sup>45</sup> (Torelli 2000, 134)

<sup>46</sup> (Izzet, *The Archaeology of Etruscan Society* 2007, 35)

<sup>47</sup> (Torelli 2000, 135)

<sup>48</sup> (*Ibid*)

Mirrors are found frequently in upper and middle class Etruscan women's burials. What makes these mirrors indicative of the higher status of women in Etruria, is the fact that the mirrors have illustrations of Greek myth with the names inscribed in the Etruscan language. Etruscan women must have had some type of familiarity with Athenian mythology whether through attendance of the theater, an oral recitation, or through some type of education. Etruscan mirrors typically were made of bronze with one side highly polished to be reflective, and the other with the engraved mythological scene or a scene of everyday life in Etruria.<sup>49</sup>

Many of the illustrations found on Etruscan mirrors have scenes that seem to have come from, or been inspired by Greek mythology, but were adapted to an Etruscan market.<sup>50</sup> One Etruscan mirror, the "Getty Mirror," is a prime illustration of the type of mirror typically found in Etruscan tombs.<sup>51</sup> This mirror has an engraving of four figures identified by names written in the Etruscan language along the sides of the mirror. The subject of the engraving is of four figures, three young males, identified as Menelaus, Prometheus, and Palamedes and one woman, the goddess Minerva.<sup>52</sup> The figures identified as Menelaus and Prometheus are depicted wearing Trojan clothes, a blatant inaccuracy, which would suggest that these mirrors were made outside of Greece. The four figures are not part of any scene from Greek mythology, but simply just a group of mythological characters.<sup>53</sup> The Etruscan inscription and the many inaccuracies on the mirror make it obvious that the mirror was not made in Greece, but most likely made in Etruria for an Etruscan person.

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<sup>49</sup> (Bonfante 1980, 147)

<sup>50</sup> (Bonfante 1980, 148)

<sup>51</sup> Image 6

<sup>52</sup> (Bonfante 1980, 148)

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid* 148

Several other mirrors similar to the “Getty Mirror” have been found throughout both middle and upper class tombs.<sup>54</sup> Mirrors with these types of engravings were not luxury items only for the elite. Larrissa Bonfante suggests that these mirrors were so popular because the women were familiar with the characters from the theater.<sup>55</sup> There are several popular themes of the scenes on the mirrors including divine births, nursing, toilette activities, and the Etruscan version of the judgment of Paris.<sup>56</sup> These types of scenes relate specifically to women and things they would be interested in. There were similar types of scenes found on Athenian pottery in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century, but those scenes contained women only. What makes the scenes on the Etruscan mirrors unique is the fact that men and women appear frequently participating together in various activities. Men and women are shown bathing and dressing together. Older women are frequently surrounded by younger men as either lovers or as mother and son.<sup>57</sup> These types of scenes would not be found on Athenian pottery. This makes it clear that these mirrors were manufactured for Etruscan women, who were not only educated in Greek mythology, but able to influence the types of images on the mirrors.

The inclusion of these everyday objects reveals several things about Etruscan women. The mirrors, weaving objects, and spinning materials were common objects that women would have used on daily basis. Etruscan women, like Athenian women were praised for their accomplished domestic skills like weaving and spinning. However Athenian women were praised for remaining in the home and attending to domestic activities only; Etruscan women were depicted in the most idealized way participating with men in public events. If this type of

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<sup>54</sup> (Bonfante 1980, 149-150)

<sup>55</sup> (Bonfante 1980, 151)

<sup>56</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan life and afterlife: a handbook of Etruscan studies* 1998, 240)

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid* 240-241

activity did not occur in Etruscan society they would not have included it in their funerary decorations.

These mirrors and other toilette objects found in women's burials provide more information about Etruscan society than just about the education of Etruscan women. Etruscan women were buried with items of adornment including mirrors, perfume bottles, cosmetic materials, and jewelry.<sup>58</sup> Etruscan women were valued for their beauty. One of the most popular scenes from mythology depicted on the mirrors is the Etruscan version of the judgment of Paris which was a contest of beauty. One Etruscan mirror given to a mother from her son as the inscription reads, provides a prime example of the idealized versions of the male and female roles. This mirror, the "Northampton mirror" was given around the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., probably before the mother was deceased.<sup>59</sup> The subject of the image is Turan and Atunis who are the equivalent of the Greek goddesses Aphrodite and Adonis respectively. These figures are the idealized form of male and female beauty and are an appropriate subject for a mirror. They are embracing each other in the center of the mirror. There are two other figures on the sides of the couple, Menrva, who is similar to Athena stands next to Atunis, and an unidentified female attendant stands next to Turan.<sup>60</sup> The mirror is clearly divided by male and female traits. On the male side there is the male form of beauty, warfare represented by: Menrva holding her shield. Interestingly, the inscription from the son to his mother is placed on the one piece of weaponry in the image. On the female side there is idealized female beauty and fertility. The idealized female figure is depicted wearing elaborate clothes, jewelry, and hair while the idealized male is nude.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> (L. Bonfante 1994, 12)

<sup>59</sup> Image 7

<sup>60</sup> (Izzet, *The Mirror of Theopompus: Etruscan Identity and Greek Myth* 2005, 7-9)

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid* 12-13

This concern with adornment is closely related to the Etruscan elites' desire to display their wealth. Their beauty was associated with the expensive jewelry, clothes and hairstyles. A woman who was beautiful according to Etruscan standards must have been able to afford the perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry, and slaves who were necessary to make her attractive.<sup>62</sup> The fact that many of these tools of adornment were decorated not only with written language and Greek mythology further show that the women were wealthy enough to be educated.

The evidence for Etruscan female literacy has not convinced everyone, including Vedia Izzet, that Etruscan women held a more elevated place in society. Izzet suggests that these richly adorned women were status symbols for their husbands.<sup>63</sup> Upper class Etruscan women's bodies were objects to be decorated and paraded around as walking examples of wealth. She believes that Etruscan women were not valued for their individual qualities, but rather as trophies for the men in their lives. Izzet interprets the evidence for female literacy and knowledge of Greek myths as ways in which wives could be give useful knowledge to their husbands.<sup>64</sup>

Vedia Izzet makes some strong points that Etruscan women may have been glorified trophy wives for their husbands, but she does not take into consideration the fact that Etruscan women, unlike Athenian women, were a common feature at mixed gender public events. The public events that Etruscan women were able to participate in were activities associated with the upper class funeral rituals.<sup>65</sup> Etruscan men and women participated in all aspects of the funeral rituals together as equals. Athenian women were able to participate in funeral rituals, but those rituals were different from Etruscan rituals because Athenian rituals were more private events.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan Couples and their Aristocratic Society* 1981, 13)

<sup>63</sup> (Izzet, *The Archaeology of Etruscan Society* 2007, 72)

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid* 73

<sup>65</sup> (Izzet, *The Archaeology of Etruscan Society* 2007, 73)

<sup>66</sup>

Athenian women's participation in funeral rituals is characterized by their wild lamentations and disorderly conduct.<sup>67</sup> Pottery made in Athens depicting these funeral scenes depict the men mourning in an orderly controlled manner, while the women are given wild out of control poses.<sup>68</sup> The funeral scenes serve to illustrate that women were unable to control their emotions and would act in a way that would be inappropriate for a man to act.

The behavior of men and women at Athenian funeral rituals was very different than that of the Etruscans. The funeral rituals of the Etruscans seemed to be a public event in which many members of the community participated beyond the extended family.<sup>69</sup> The funeral events do not seem to have been as somber as the funeral rituals of the Athenians. Athenian funerals were smaller and attended by primarily family members, rather than community members.<sup>70</sup> After the funeral the Etruscans participated in other activities consisting of banqueting, athletic competitions, and dancing.<sup>71</sup> The activities were intertwined with Etruscan religious practices in which both sexes took part. The banquet funeral ritual was held in order to honor the dead and to provide offerings to the dead. The athletic games were held as a way to offer blood sacrifices to nourish and replenish the dead.<sup>72</sup>

The athletic games and banquets were attended by members of the upper class to celebrate the deceased.<sup>73</sup> Scenes of athletic games are found most often in Tarquinian tombs. A painting in the Tomb of the Chariots from about 480 B.C. shows men and women sitting and

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<sup>67</sup> (Blundell and Williamson 1998, 113-115)

<sup>68</sup> (Cohen 1989, 56-58)

<sup>69</sup> (Torelli 2000)

<sup>70</sup> (Arnold 2006, 48-49)

<sup>71</sup> (Banti 1973, 74-76)

<sup>72</sup> (Barker and Rasmussen 2000, 247)

<sup>73</sup> (Steingraber 2006, 69)

reclining with each other at a chariot race.<sup>74</sup> The upper class men and women, identified by their rich clothes are sitting in wooden stands under a canopy and the lower class audience members are reclining nude under the stands. One woman, is shown with her arms raised signaling the charioteers, possibly even acting as the official.<sup>75</sup> Another tomb painting, found in the Tomb of the Olympics, depicts a scene of three women upset over an overturned chariot.<sup>76</sup> Dancers and musicians are shown dancing among the men and women in the audience. These scenes focus on the spectators rather than the athletes. The emphasis seems to be on the upper class audience and what they would have experienced as they were watching.

The scenes on the tombs of Etruscan banquets are intertwined with the Etruscan religious rituals. These banquets consisted of sharing a meal, possibly at the gravesite, with extended family and other members of society, at which the deceased person's life was celebrated. The imagery of the banquet could also have been what the Etruscans believed would happen in the afterworld. It seems most likely that the living Etruscans did gather at an actual banquet as part of the funeral ritual.<sup>77</sup>

The imagery of these banquets from the tombs suggests that this banquet was intended to be a joyful celebration full of music and dancing.<sup>78</sup> The upper class men and women often are shown joining in with the entertainers in dancing and playing instruments. Absent from these depictions of banqueting in the tombs, are scenes of an overt sexual nature or excessive drunkenness, like those found on Athenian depictions of symposiums. The Etruscan banquet was a religious ritual concerned with celebrating the deceased person's life. The family of the

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<sup>74</sup> Image 8

<sup>75</sup> (Brendel and Serra 1995, 266-268)

<sup>76</sup> (*Ibid*)

<sup>77</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan life and afterlife: a handbook of Etruscan studies* 1998, 207)

<sup>78</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan life and afterlife: a handbook of Etruscan studies* 1998, 207)

deceased might have gathered together on the anniversary of the deceased one's death in order to remember and honor them.<sup>79</sup>

The earliest surviving depictions of Etruscans' banqueting show the diners seated, instead of the later representations which show them reclining similar to the Greek style of dining. One of the oldest surviving representations of banqueting comes from Cerveteri in the Tomb of the Five Chairs from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In this tomb five chairs were carved from rock and terracotta figures were placed on the chairs in front of tables as if they were dining. Three of the figures were male and two were female determined from the styles of clothing the figures were carved with.<sup>80</sup> From the earliest parts of Etruscan society dining scenes were tied to funerary contexts and both men and women were shown participating.

In the "Tomb of the Leopards" from Tarquinia a painting of a banquet covers the entire wall of the inside chamber room.<sup>81</sup> Three couples are shown reclining while dancers and musicians are on the opposing walls entertaining them. The diners are eating outside as evidenced by the appearance of trees and bushes surrounding the couches. The women are painted a lighter color than the men. The women are heavily dressed which suggests that these women are the wives of the men, rather than prostitutes, who would have been depicted wearing more revealing clothing.<sup>82</sup> The men, women, and entertainers are all celebrating joyfully. One of the male banqueters is shown holding an egg which symbolizes regeneration. The focus of the painting is clearly on the couples' experience of banqueting. Each married couple appears to be engaged with each other rather than with the entire group. [poikuytrewq

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<sup>79</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan life and afterlife: a handbook of Etruscan studies* 1998, 208)

<sup>80</sup> (Tuck 1994, 618)

<sup>81</sup> Image 9

<sup>82</sup> (Small 1994, 87-88)

Another banquet tomb painting is found in the Tomb of the Shields in Tarquinia. This tomb contains two scenes of banquet with the same man as subjects in both paintings.<sup>83</sup> The first relief shows a single married couple reclining together on a dining couch in the position of honor.<sup>84</sup> They are embracing each other intimately showing obvious affection for each other. They are surrounded by slaves, and various dining utensils, all lavishly decorated. This display of slaves and possessions is a very obvious representation of wealth. The second relief shows the same man dining with an older woman, most likely his mother.<sup>85</sup> The older woman is handing an egg to the man. The fact that it is an older woman, the man's mother, who dines with the man in the afterworld, indicates the high value placed on mothers in Etruscan society. The Etruscan aristocratic values are shown through the depiction of the married couple. Both the husband and wife are of equal importance in the image of the wealthy couple on the tomb painting.

The images found in Etruscan tombs indicate that married upper class Etruscan women were very much a part of the funeral rituals. The funeral rituals were interconnected with their religious beliefs as evidenced by the inclusion of images of priests in the scenes of funeral revelry in the tombs. Women were not separated from the men during these religious and public activities and were active participants. The fact that the Etruscans choose to decorate their tombs with these types of religious and family scenes indicates that the Etruscans valued these rituals and activities beyond all else, because they chose to be buried surrounded by scenes of their family.

## Roman Society

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<sup>83</sup> Image 10

<sup>84</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan Couples and their Aristocratic Society* 1981)

<sup>85</sup> Image 11

The Etruscan culture was eventually overtaken by the Romans during the Roman monarchy, but its influence lasted much longer. The Romans borrowed many things from the Etruscan culture, including ideas from Etruscan religion, architecture, and social customs.<sup>86</sup> The Romans respected the Etruscan religion, and many Roman authors credit the Etruscans for providing the sources for Roman religious practices. The mythical founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus was thought of as being influenced by Etruscan practices.<sup>87</sup> The Etruscans had a great influence over Rome's culture, art, and social values.

The evidence for the idealized roles of women in the Athenian and Etruscan society has mainly come from materials associated with death and burials. In Roman society however, the evidence for the idealized role of women comes from several different sources including grave materials, Augustan propaganda, and the life of Livia. The evidence from these three sources makes it clear that, during the early Empire, the idealized role of women was that of mother and wife; compared to the idealized role of Athenian women which was as wife. The role of the upper class married woman developed into a valued role; that was given political incentives, due to the laws enacted by Augustus and the example set by Livia.

The period leading up to Augustus' rule, provides the most surviving grave evidence for women. The grave evidence demonstrates that the role of women during this period was similar to the role of Athenian women. Throughout the Roman Republic, large mausoleums were common for the upper class. The deceased was often inhumed in an elaborately decorated sarcophagus. The tombs are similar to the Athenian practices of honoring the individual in the grave monument. There were several large grave memorials and tombs commissioned for

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<sup>86</sup> (Hall 1996, 38-39)

<sup>87</sup> (*Ibid*)

women during this time. The most famous of these memorials is the tower tomb of Caecilia Metella which was built on the main road out of Rome on the Via Appia. The Via Appia was the road where many prominent tombs and monuments to the upper class Roman citizens were constructed. The fact that Caecilia Metella was given her own tomb on this road means she came from an extremely wealthy family. The inscription which accompanies her tomb tells the passerby that she is an extremely well connected woman politically as her father was Quintus Caecilius Metellus a consul, and her husband was Crassus, son of another consul. She was honored with a large death monument not only out of respect for her life but also to act as a public display on the very public road and record of her family's wealth and political power.<sup>88</sup> In many ways Metella's monument is similar to the Athenian women's grave *stelai*, because it highlights Metella's relationships with her husband and father, rather than her role as a mother. The grave monuments of the late Republican period indicate that the role of an upper class Roman woman was closely related to the male she was related to. There was an emphasis on political power and relationships during this period, which is why the inscription on Metella's monument highlights her political pedigree. Political power was particularly important during this period due to the uncertain political environment in Rome.

During the period leading up to the rule of Augustus there were larger social and political problems happening in Rome, such as the civil wars and unstable government that was creating some malaise in the general population about the state of Rome. Many people in Rome, including prominent authors felt that it was the upper class' crumbling morality that was creating the problems in Rome. Some Roman authors used women as scapegoats for many of the problems of Rome. Women were frequently the target for the author's attacks. The authors had

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<sup>88</sup> (Rosenstein and Morstein-Marx 2010, 337)

various motivations and reasons behind their attacks and accusations against women. The authors' purpose for writing about women seems to be a rhetorical way to speak about another issue. The literature from the late Roman Republic depicts a culture that is in turmoil due to the lack of morality of the aristocracy. Roman authors believed that women having too much power and freedom contributed to the moral degradation of Rome because if Roman men were falling under the influence of their wives, then they would certainly fall under the power of outsiders.<sup>89</sup>

Those authors who wrote political works, such as Cicero and Horace used women as a scapegoat for the uncertainty in Rome.<sup>90</sup> They used women to speak indirectly about political figures or situations. Horace in *Ode 3.4* blames female unchastity and effeminate men for the civil wars. Cicero in his *Philippics* blames Marc Antony's moral corruption by a woman as the cause of the internal strife of Rome. Cicero in *Phillipics 2.41* 104-105, says of Cleopatra's influence over Marc Antony saying "Oh, the disastrous fecundity of that miserable woman! With the marks of such wickedness as this did that fellow stamp every municipality, and prefecture, and colony, and, in short, the whole of Italy."<sup>91</sup>

Livy in *Ab Urbe Condita* in his address to Cato the Elder, speaks of husbands' lack of control over their wives as reason why Rome's society was in decay.<sup>92</sup> Livy chastises Roman men for being afraid of their women who have a feminine lack of self control saying,

If each of us, citizens, had determined to assert his rights and dignity as a husband with respect to his own spouse, we should have less trouble with the sex as a whole; as it is our liberty, destroyed at home by female violence, even here in the Forum is crushed and trodden underfoot, and because we have not kept them individually under control, we dread them collectively.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> (Severy 43)

<sup>90</sup> (Rosenstein and Morstein-Marx 2010, 99)

<sup>91</sup> (Younge 1903)

<sup>92</sup> (Rosenstein and Morstein-Marx 2010, 54)

<sup>93</sup> (Heinemann 1935, 34.2 1-3)

Livy, however, does include a list of times in which Roman women have intervened in Roman politics for the benefit of Rome. These interventions usually involved self sacrifice of the women on behalf of Rome. Livy used the stories of the self sacrificing women to illustrate that the sacrificing to the state is the highest good.

Roman authors also detailed the legal attacks that upper class women faced during the period of transition in the late Republic. It seems that during this period, upper class women's independent wealth was constantly under threat by the government. Livy's address to Cato the Elder in the *Ab Urbe Condita* is over the gathering of women in the forum to protest the *lex oppia* which was a law that limited the display and ownership of jewelry; a law that only affected women.<sup>94</sup> This law was created to fund the civil war going on in Rome by taxing the wealth that married women had from either their dowries or from family wealth. In the speech Cato warns the men what will happen if they repeal the law saying "if you suffer them to seize these bonds one by one and wrench themselves free and finally to be placed on a parity with their husbands, do you think that you will be able to endure them? The moment they begin to be your equals, they will be your superiors."<sup>95</sup>

Valerius Maximus in *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* relates a speech supposedly given in 42 B.C.E. by a wealthy woman named Hortensia, who spoke in front of the triumvirs in protest of proposed tax on wealthy women to support the civil war. In the speech she argues that women should not be taxed because they have no real political power and should not have to bear the punishment for the actions of their husbands. Hortensia also argues that Roman women's only

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<sup>94</sup> (Finley 2002, 45)

<sup>95</sup> (Heinemann 1935, 34.3 2)

source of power and safety is in their jewelry and dowry and they should not be forced to support civil wars they do not condone.<sup>96</sup>

The literature from the late Republic, no matter the genre, portrays female power as dangerous and against Roman values. The Roman authors used stories about the corrupting power of women as a way to explain the instability in Rome, instead of actually blaming political figures or the mistakes made by the government. The blame put on women indicates a larger issue, struggling with lost identity, among the upper class. The upper class seems to have been struggling to figure out what their identity was. There was much discord among the upper class due to the political uncertainties caused by the civil wars. It seems that the Roman authors were looking for any other source to blame for the decline of Rome than themselves.

#### Augustus

The status of women and of the aristocracy in general during the late Republic was threatened due to the uncertain political atmosphere. This uncertainty set the stage for Octavian to come in and redefine the morality of the upper class. When Octavian gained power it became his mission to restore the morality of Rome. He wanted to re-establish the distinctions between male and female and public and private.<sup>97</sup> The Roman authors seemed to believe that Rome once had a moral society made powerful by strong families. Augustus consciously used these elite beliefs about society in his presentation of himself as the *pater* of Rome, and enacted many laws that gave him and the state powers that had been typically reserved for the fathers of families. He meticulously calculated his image so that he would be perceived as having the values that he was trying to reinstall in the Roman people.

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<sup>96</sup> (Maximus n.d., 8.3.3)

<sup>97</sup> (Severy 2003, 43)

There were different stages to Augustus' moral propaganda campaign. In the first stage, Augustus attempted to separate himself from the previous rulers, who were perceived as being morally corrupt. Augustus did not want to be perceived as being morally corrupt or weakened by the females in his life. He wanted to reestablish the old ways and traditions that were associated with the Republic.<sup>98</sup> During the next period of his propaganda, several public monuments such as the *Ara Pacis*, were built that displayed the peace and prosperity that Augustus had brought back to Rome. The monuments also depicted scenes of his family behaving in ways that demonstrated their superior morality and virtue.<sup>99</sup> The next part of the Augustan propaganda campaign was the legacy Augustus left behind after his death. He built a large mausoleum that was constructed to house several generations of his family. He made several provisions in his will concerning Livia, which allowed her to carry on the moral and social principles that he had established when he was living.

When Octavian first came into power he attempted to portray himself as having control over his female family members' passions. This perception would later be modified when his wife took on a more public role. He wanted his family to be the model family that all Roman families should follow. Octavian was directly addressing the common complaints levied by the Roman authors against the Roman government and the aristocracy in general. He demonstrated his ability to be a strong leader who would not fall to outside forces by being able to control his women. Suetonius wrote stories from this period of Octavian's wife, Livia, remaining at home, weaving and spinning his clothes, as well as of the control that Augustus had over his daughter

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<sup>98</sup> (Severy 2003, 47-48)

<sup>99</sup>(Bauman 1994, 117)

Julia's education and manner.<sup>100</sup> These stories served to illustrate that Augustus had complete control over his women's feminine passions.

In addition to his campaign for his family's morality he also enacted several laws that aimed to control the aristocracy's morality. Augustus was defining how a properly ordered society should function and what the individual's responsibility to state should be with the creation of these social laws.<sup>101</sup> These laws concerned issues of marriage and outlawed adultery, encouraged marriage and childbearing, and regulation of public behavior.<sup>102</sup> The morality laws assisted in redefining what the individual and family meant in terms of the state.

The law concerning marriage the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* was the law that most affected upper class women and men. This law gave legal benefits to married couples who bore children and punished those who did not comply. Members of classes were forbidden from marrying anyone from another class. Unmarried citizens were forbidden from to attend public games. Marriage and childbearing became a civic duty for both men and women in order to be a full member of Roman society.<sup>103</sup> Men were forbidden from marrying women with any type of negative reputation. The number of children a couple had directly related to the privileges they received. The more children a man had the younger he could be to become a magistrate. Women as well as men were required by law to adhere to the Augustan morality if they wanted to receive the full benefits of being a Roman citizen. A free woman who bore three children was exempt from her guardianship which meant that she was no longer subjected to the legal control of their husband or father.<sup>104</sup> Being free from guardianship meant that the free woman had legal control

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<sup>100</sup> (Bauman 1994, 109)

<sup>101</sup> (*Ibid*)

<sup>102</sup> (Severy 2003, 50)

<sup>103</sup> (Bauman 1994, 110)

<sup>104</sup> (Severy 2003, 51)

over her life.<sup>105</sup> Augustus made marriage and childbearing a civic duty of all Roman people, but primarily that of the upper class. With the creation of these laws, Augustus made himself the *pater* of the Roman people. He made the state, which was an extension of his own power, the ultimate judge concerning private family matters that had been previously determined by the father of the family.

In the next part of the Augustan campaign, there was a great focus on creating the public image of himself and his family. He became a very generous patron of artists and authors. It was under his influence that an interest in looking into Roman history took hold among Roman authors and artists.<sup>106</sup> The interest in the history of Rome was influenced by the general beliefs concerning the corrupted morality of the upper class. There was a rhetorical movement calling for the return to the old ways of the early Republican Romans. This fascination with Roman history during this time could have also piqued the interest into the history of the Etruscans, since many Romans believed that the Etruscans influenced the early Romans.<sup>107</sup> Under the reign of Augustus, the Etruscan history and culture became a common fixture of Roman authors.

One member of his court, Maecenas a major patron for the poets of the period, was influential in the revival of Etruscan ideas in Rome.<sup>108</sup> One of Maecenas' clients Vergil describes in his work the *Aeneid* the Etruscans religious, governing and military practices in detail. The Etruscans are described in positive terms in the ways that they allied themselves with Aeneas during the founding of Rome. Another Augustan client, Vitruvius, describes in his works on

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<sup>105</sup> (Bauman 1994, 116)

<sup>106</sup> (Galinsky 1996, 76)

<sup>107</sup> (Hall 1996, 67)

<sup>108</sup> (Bonafonte 1986, 19)

architecture, the proper way to build an Etruscan style temple.<sup>109</sup> It seems that during the rule of Augustus interest in the Etruscans grew due to the increased interest in the origins of Rome.

In addition to the revived curiosity surrounding the history of Rome, there was also an attitude of rejection towards the Greek culture. The theme of rejection of Greek culture had been around for a while before Augustus came into power, but developed even further due to the patriotic fever of the early empire. One of the most notable examples of anti Greek movement in Rome was recorded by Plutarch who wrote about Cato the Elder's hatred of the Greek culture. He rejected Greek philosophies, doctors, and education because he felt they were contributing to the weakening of Roman culture. Plutarch in his work *The Parallel Lives* wrote about Cato saying "It was not only Greek philosophers that he hated, but he was also suspicious of Greeks who practiced medicine at Rome." Pliny the Elder accused the Greeks of being the parents of all vice. These negative attitudes towards the Greeks and towards foreigners in general, reflected a common view held by many of the upper class Romans, who were seeking reasons for why their culture seemed to be in a state of upheaval.<sup>110</sup>

Augustus was well aware of negative views towards foreign influences. It would not be too far of a stretch to assume that he deliberately chose artistic styles that were considered Italian in origin for the decoration of his public monuments. The art and architecture that Augustus commissioned were aimed at establishing a public persona of himself and of his family as the model Roman family. His family was depicted on these public monuments with qualities such as piety, chastity, and service to the state. One of the best examples of this is the *Ara Pacis* which

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<sup>109</sup> (Hall 1996, 77)

<sup>110</sup> (Galinsky 1996, 98)

was erected in 13 B.C.E. The *Ara Pacis* was built to commemorate the triumphal return of Augustus from Spain.

The imagery and subject matter on the *Ara Pacis* is very similar to the scenes of funeral processions found in Etruscan tombs. The imagery on the *Ara Pacis* show the imperial family doing their duty to the state by offering sacrifices to the gods. The north and south friezes of the *Ara Pacis* resemble the figures and processional images found in several late Etruscan tombs, but most closely resemble the painting found in the Tomb of the Typhoon in Tarquinia.<sup>111</sup> The Etruscan and Roman images portrayed very similar ideals of family and society. On the *Ara Pacis* and the Etruscan scenes of funeral processions, family is the main focus. In the Etruscan scenes of funerary processions, family is shown participating in the rituals of society. The themes of family and duty to the state are apparent on the *Ara Pacis* in the scenes of the highest family doing their duty and offering sacrifices to the gods. In both the Etruscan scenes and *Ara Pacis*, men and women are participating equally in the duties associated with ritual. It is one of the first monuments built by a ruler in Rome that featured women and children in an endearing and realistic way.<sup>112</sup> The children are depicted acting as real children do, squirming and looking bored. The realistic scenes call to mind the scenes such as those found in Etruscan art, of women acting scared during the funeral games.<sup>113</sup> Absent from the scenes on the *Ara Pacis* are the stagnant, perfect bodies found in Athenian art. Augustus and his artists created scenes on the altar that were designed to capture reality while also teaching Roman people how to act as a family.

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<sup>111</sup> (Conlin 1997, 10)

<sup>112</sup> (Hall 1996, 110)

<sup>113</sup> (*Ibid*)

The imagery on the *Ara Pacis* was politically motivated and idealistic but it still appealed to the Romans. After its construction, middle and upper class Romans started incorporating the artistic style and subjects of the *Ara Pacis* onto their own funerary monuments. A popular scene found on women's funerary monuments found outside of Rome, was of children tugging on the clothes of their mother. This scene was not seen before the *Ara Pacis*.<sup>114</sup> The scenes call to mind Athenian stelae of mothers with their children but are dissimilar because of the informal and realistic style of the characters, similar to the Etruscan style of art. It seems that the Roman public accepted with enthusiasm the iconography of the ideal Roman mother that Augustus helped create.

Augustus' largest and most influential construction was his mausoleum.<sup>115</sup> Augustus began construction on his mausoleum before he was even given the name Augustus. He had multiple motivations for building his tomb so early in his life, but one of them was that he wanted to emphasize that he was completely loyal to Rome. Marc Antony had expressed his desire to be buried in Alexandria, even if he died in Rome, which did not exemplify Roman patriotism.<sup>116</sup> Augustus wanted to distance himself from his connection to Marc Antony and send a clear message to the Roman people that he would never abandon Rome. This desire to appear completely Roman could explain why he chose an Etruscan style tumulus tomb, rather than a Greek style. There are some cases of Athenians using stone tumulus tombs, but in general it was an Etruscan practice which the Romans copied throughout the Republic in small family tombs.<sup>117</sup> One of the Etruscan tumulus tombs that the Romans were familiar with was found in the

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<sup>114</sup> (Galinsky 1996, 152)

<sup>115</sup> Image 12

<sup>116</sup> (Kleiner 2009, 80)

<sup>117</sup> (Hall 1996, 224)

Banditaccia Cemetery in Cerveteri.<sup>118</sup> Despite the claims by J. Reeder and others who argue for a Hellenistic origin for the design of Augustus' tomb, it seems unlikely that Augustus would have chosen a design that did not originate in Italy since he was trying to portray himself as the restorer of the *res publica*.<sup>119</sup> Augustus wanted to connect himself to the ancient traditions of Rome and by choosing a family style tumulus and he effectively used an old Roman and Etruscan tradition. Augustus mausoleum was built to house several members of his extended family in the same way that the Etruscan tombs had been built and used. His family would remain unified even in death as a final testament to his commitment to the social and familial morality that he tried to implement in Rome.

Livia

After Augustus' death in A.D 14, it was his wife Livia who continued the Augustan propaganda most significantly. Both during Augustus' life and after his death, Livia was influential in both the propaganda and governing of Augustus. Livia can be compared to the Etruscan wives in the way that she was both a constant fixture in both the public world of her husband as well as the private world. She attended the public banquets and religious festivals, like the Etruscan wives. Livia was also alleged by authors such as Tacitus, to have had a strong influence over her husband's political decisions. Like the Etruscan wives, Livia was well respected by her husband and given many privileges and religious honors that previous Roman ruling wives had not. Augustus granted her freedom from her guardianship despite not meeting the legal qualifications which were established by her husband. She was also adopted into the Julian family and given the name Augusta as per Augustus' instructions in his will. Livia was not

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<sup>118</sup> Image 13

<sup>119</sup> (Hall 1996, 230)

a submissive wife like the idealized wives of the Athenians, but a powerful and visible wife like the Etruscan wives.

Livia's public persona and reception was mixed both during her time and after her death. She was given many public honors by her husband, the senate, and by various Roman authors, but she was also attacked by some Roman authors and by her own son Tiberius for being too powerful and conniving.<sup>120</sup> Tacitus was very outspoken in his displeasure with Livia, frequently referring to her power using words like *potentia*, which is associated with improper power. Tacitus relates a story in his *Annals* of Livia's abuse of power, in which she is accused of shielding her Etruscan friend, Urgulania, from prosecution.<sup>121</sup> All of the negative stories surrounding Livia's abuse of power, whether true or not, just serve to illustrate the freedom and power that Livia had. Livia was accused by Tacitus of having too much power over her husband, just like the Etruscan women were characterized by Roman authors as having too much power over their husbands.<sup>122</sup>

Livia received much public recognition throughout her life. She, like the Etruscan women, were depicted participating in public activities with her husband and family. Livia was the first Roman woman depicted and honored on Roman coin. Roman coins were extremely visible and public objects. The fact that Livia was put onto a coin would have made the image of the ideal Roman women very accessible for the Roman people. One of these coins<sup>123</sup> honors Livia's son Tiberius on one side and on the other side has a carriage inscribed which was dedicated to Livia. The inscription on the side of the carriage reads *SPQR Juliae August*, which indicates that the senate gave Livia the right to travel in a carriage, an honor that had traditionally

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<sup>120</sup> (Barrett 2004, 240)

<sup>121</sup> (Tacitus n.d., Book 4)

<sup>122</sup> (L. Bonfante, *Etruscan Couples and their Aristocratic Society* 1981, 12)

<sup>123</sup> Image 14

been given to aristocratic priestesses.<sup>124</sup> This was a public recognition by the senate, as emphasized by the inscription, of the political role played by Livia, that had not been done before in Rome. Another coin dedicated to Livia features the bust of a Livia with the inscription *Salus Augusta*.<sup>125</sup> The coin celebrates Livia as the protector of the health of the state by using the feminine noun *salus* which means health. This coin is indicative of the public role of Livia since she was considered as the protector of the state on such a public and common object as a coin. After her death the senate made plans to honor her with a triumphal arch that had been traditionally reserved for honoring the military careers of men. Although this arch was never built due to her son's desire to distance himself from his mother, the fact that the senate made plans to honor her with a triumphal arch indicates the public and political importance of Livia.<sup>126</sup> All of these honors had previously only been reserved for men who had accomplished great military or political achievements. The fact that Livia, a woman who had only served her country by attending to her duties as mother and wife was honored with some of the highest honors of Rome, indicates the emphasis placed on the civic duty of the Roman mother.

Livia became in many ways the *mater* of Rome like her husband was the *pater*. Livia resembled the Etruscan mothers and wives who were honored by their family. This was due in part to Augustus' desire to make his family seem to be the perfect Roman family, but it is a testament to the political savvy of Livia herself, that the senate continued to recognize her as an important figure after the death of Augustus. Livia had a very public presence and was able to indirectly influence the political sphere of Rome through her son Tiberius ruling after her

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<sup>124</sup> (Severy 2003, 240)

<sup>125</sup> Image 15

<sup>126</sup> (Severy 2003, 240)

husband. Her time as the imperial mother of Rome marks a change in the public attitudes towards women that was due in part to Augustus' moral campaign.

### Conclusion

The attitudes and roles of upper class married women during the early Roman Empire were influenced by more sources than just the Etruscan culture, but there is significant evidence that Etruscan society played a large part in shaping Roman women's roles. During the Roman Empire upper class women were given privileges and respect that Athenian women did not have. This can be traced back to the influence the Etruscans had on the shaping of Roman society as well as the influence they had on Augustus' artistic and moral reforms in Rome during the early Empire.

This paper has been an exploration of the ideal roles of upper class women in the societies of Athens, Etruria, and Rome. The grave evidence, primarily the *stelai*, from Athens reveals that the ideal role of women was to remain at home attending to the duties associated with being a wife. The Etruscan grave evidence indicates that the ideal role of women was that of mother and wife, who participated in public events with her husband and family. The evidence from Roman society reveals that the ideal role of women during the early Empire was that of mother, wife, and attending to their duties for the state. The role of mother and wife in Rome became a civic duty due to the legal incentives created by Augustus.

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