1 | Family Life

This chapter deals with women's various roles within the family and household, starting with their central position as wives (section I), to be followed by mothers (section II), daughters (section III), grandmothers (section IV), siblings and other relations such as nieces and aunts (section V) and, finally, their roles in foster families and stepfamilies (section VI). In this chapter, differences between women due to class are not highlighted (see Chapter 2).

I | Marriage and the Traditional Virtues of Wives: Variations on a Theme

Roman women were often praised for a repetitive list of traditional female virtues, such as modesty (*modestia*), chastity (*castitas*), sexual purity (*pudicitia*) frugality (*frugalitas*), compliance (*obsequium*), dutifulness (*pietas*) and dedication to their homes and families. These virtues were visually expressed in sculpture with heavily draped figures in the long *tunica* (tunic) and a voluminous *palla* (cloak). In visual art and more markedly in the literary sources, the virtues of the *matrona*, the respectable married citizen woman, were symbolised also by the *stola*. This traditional garment had gone out of fashion in the imperial period and was worn only on formal occasions. Yet, it kept its strong moral connotations and was valued for the pristine Roman virtues it stood for. Some funerary reliefs draw attention to several female qualities at once by including jewellery boxes and mirrors to emphasise a woman's beauty, while a spindle and a wool basket suggest her domesticity. Wool working, especially spinning, was seen as a mark of a woman's domesticity and devotion to her home and family. It symbolised a woman's industry for the benefit of the household. Moreover, keeping women occupied was thought to prevent wrongdoing, particularly adultery, as is exemplified by the legendary story of Lucretia (Livy 1.57–9).

In the Roman West, lists of feminine virtues are mainly found on women's tombs. Unlike in the Greek East, these are extremely rare in honorific inscriptions and wholly absent from dedications and building inscriptions. Most Latin epitaphs are brief, recording merely the name, and sometimes the age, of the deceased, the name of the dedicator and the family connection between them, but some record the full list of wifely virtues. A particular set of virtues or extraordinary traits ascribed to the deceased may throw light on an

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individual relationship – or rather on how the dedicator, or dedicators, wanted to present that relationship – and perhaps give a glimpse of the life and personality of the deceased. In the course of the first century AD, marital ideals such as mutual concord (*concordia*), fidelity, loyalty, love and affection are increasingly expressed by reliefs showing the husband and wife clasping their right hands (*dextrarum iunctio*) as an emblem of their marital harmony. Some inscriptions express romantic love between the partners and passionate grief at the death of one of them. They intend to bring across that the harmony and love between husband and wife that were valued as ideals were also experienced in reality, in spite of arranged marriages, which were common among the upper classes.

Obviously, funerary inscriptions present social ideals and gendered values, but norms and ideals also shape actual relations, and the open expression of feelings of romantic love or grief influences the experience of such emotions. As the following inscriptions show, such ideals and emotions are expressed by all classes of society from the ruling families to freed slaves, but because of their greater numbers and social aspirations the latter are overrepresented in our evidence, especially in Rome and Italy. Since women's legal status will be one of the main themes of Chapter 2, some overlap between these two chapters is inevitable.

Further Reading

Carroll (2011a) 180–208; Davies (2018); Dixon (1992b); Langlands (2006); Rawson (2011); Scholz (1992); Treggiari (1991)

1 A dutiful wife

CIL 6, 26192 = *ILS* 8398
Rome. 40–20 BC

This verse epitaph was carved on a marble plaque under a portrait bust of the deceased. It was found in a richly decorated tomb, which is now lost. Judging by her Greek *cognomen*, Sempronia Moschis may have been a freedwoman.

Here lies Sempronia Moschis, dutiful (*pia*), frugal (*frugi*), chaste (*casta*) and pure (*pudica*). Thanks are rendered for her merits by her husband.

2 Wool work as a symbol of matronal virtue

CIL 1, 1930
Ancona, Italy (10). Late first century BC

A relief on a partly preserved limestone stele (Figure 3) shows a crude portrait of the deceased dressed in a mantle that covers the back of her head (*capite velato*). Her name is lost. Next to her portrait a wool basket (*calathus*) is depicted, a symbol of her industry and wifely virtues. The letter L on the basket indicates that it contained wool (*lana*). Under the relief, there is a brief verse epitaph addressed to the passer-by.

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Figure 3 Limestone stele showing the portrait of the deceased and a wool basket. Ancona, Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche.
Photo D-DAI-ROM-81.2213 (Helmut Schwanke).

[*Above the wool basket*] I took care of the wool basket(?).

[*On the basket*] Wool.

[*Under the relief*] Stranger, stand still and look at this eternal home. In return for her merits the husband erected this for his wife and for himself.

3 Love and loyalty: fragments of the *Laudatio Turiae*

Extracts from *CIL* 6, 41062: column I, 27–34 and column II, 31–40
Rome. *c.* 9 BC

A long funeral eulogy of an unknown woman who is conventionally called Turia (because of a superficial resemblance between her life and that of Turia in Appian's *Bellum Civile* 4.44 and Val.Max. 6.7.2) was carved on two large marble plaques on her tomb. The text, of which substantial parts have been preserved, narrates her highly eventful life. As an unmarried girl she avenged the death of her parents by bringing their murderers to justice and successfully defended her and her sister's inheritance against a

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challenge to her father's will. During the civil wars she more than once saved her husband's life and successfully pleaded for him with the men in power. Though her extraordinary courage and steadfastness in the public arena take up most of the surviving inscription, the husband also pays attention to more conventional topics, such as the harmony of their marriage, his wish that he had died before her, and her traditional female virtues. Their relationship is characterised by mutual love and loyalty. When their marriage remained childless against their wishes, the husband describes her selfless offer to make room for another wife (an offer which he rejected). The translation follows that by Josiah Osgood with some adjustments.

[*Column I, 27–34*] Rare are marriages as long as ours – marriages ended by death, not cut short by divorce. It was granted to us that ours lasted into its forty-first year without any wrongdoing (*sine offensa*). I wish that our long-enduring union had been altered by something happening to me, not you; it would have been more just for the elder partner to yield to fate. Why should I mention the virtues of your private life (*domestica bona*): your sexual purity (*pudicitia*), your obedience (*obsequium*), your considerateness (*comitas*), your reasonableness (*facilitas*), your wool work (*lanificium*), your religious devotion free of superstition, your unassuming appearance and sober attire? Why should I talk about your love and devotion (*pietas*) to family? You cared for my mother as well as for your own parents and attended to her with the same disposition as you did to your own people, and you have countless other things in common with all married women (*matronae*) who cultivate a good reputation.

[*Column II, 31–40*] You were despairing of your fertility and pained by my childlessness. So that I would not, by keeping you in marriage, have to put aside any hope of having children and become unhappy on that account, you mentioned the word 'divorce'. You would, you said, turn our house over to another woman's fertility, but your plan was that in keeping with our well-known marital harmony (*concordia*), you would find and arrange a suitable match worthy of me; you insisted that you would regard the children born as shared, and as though your own; nor would you require a separation of our property, which up until then we had shared, but it would still remain in my control and, if I wished, under your management; you would hold nothing apart, nothing separate, and you would henceforward fulfil the duties and devotion of a sister or mother-in-law.

Further Reading

Hemelrijk (2004a); Osgood (2014)

4 Praise of traditional virtues: the epitaph of Amymone

CIL 6, 11602 = *ILS* 8402
Rome. Mid-second century AD

The inscription commemorating Amymone was carved on the side of a large sacrophagus. Within the sarcophagus there was a smaller chest without an inscription. Both are lost.

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Here lies Amymone, the excellent and most beautiful wife of Marcus. She spun wool (*lanifica*) and was dutiful (*pia*), pure (*pudica*), frugal (*frugi*) and chaste (*casta*); she stayed at home (*domiseda*).

5 Mausoleum of Postumia Matronilla

CIL 8, 11294 = *ILS* 8444
Near Thelepte, Africa Proconsularis. Second century AD

This inscription shows that, within the family, women's work was much valued. Since the inscription does not specify a profession (see Chapter 3), we may assume that Postumia Matronilla was praised for her industry and care for her home and family. This usually meant hard work – in families of modest means probably with little help from slaves – bearing and raising children, cleaning, preparing food, spinning, weaving, washing and mending the clothing of the family and performing innumerable other household chores. In addition to the more common praise for a woman married only once (*univira*), Postumia is also praised for her marital fidelity: she was a woman of 'one bed' only (*unicuba*). In the last line she is addressed as *matrona* (a respectable married Roman citizen woman), which alludes to her *cognomen* Matronilla and also suggests pride in her Roman citizenship.

Dedicated to the spirits of the departed. Here lies Postumia Matronilla, an incomparable wife, good mother and most devoted (*piissima*) grandmother, pure (*pudica*), pious (*religiosa*), hard-working (*laboriosa*), frugal (*frugi*), efficient, watchful, full of care, true to her one and only husband (*univira* and *unicuba*), a *matrona* full of industry (*industria*) and trustworthiness (*fides*). She lived fifty-three years, five months and three days.

6 A hard-working wife

CIL 9, 1913 = *ILS* 8437
Beneventum, Italy (2). Second or early third century AD

Like Postumia Matronilla (no. 5), Octavia Crescentina is praised on her tomb for her industry as well as for her old-fashioned virtuousness.

To the departed spirits of Octavia Crescentina, who lived an old-fashioned life (*antiqua vita*), most venerable for her trustworthiness (*fides*) and industry (*diligentia*). Gaius Valerius Januarius, her husband, together with their children, set this up for her, because she deserved well.

7 A virtuous wife

AE 1987, 179
Ostia, Italy (1). Late second–early third century AD

This epitaph was carved on a marble plaque in a tomb. Besides enumerating her conjugal virtues, her husband praises their marriage and expresses the wish to have

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died before his wife. Such sentiments are found also in other epitaphs and are to some extent stock themes, but this does not mean that they were not sincere.

To the spirits of the departed. Here lies [. . .]nia Sebotis, daughter of Publius. Quintus Minucius Marcellus, son of Quintus, of the voting tribe Palatina, set this up for his dearest spouse, a most dutiful (*pientissima*) and chaste (*castissima*) wife, who never wanted to go out in public without me, either to the baths or anywhere else. I married her when she was a virgin of fourteen and had a daughter from her. I saw with her the sweet time of life; she made me happy. However, I would prefer that you were alive: it would have been my delight, if I had left you behind surviving me. She lived twenty-one years, two months and twenty-one days.

8 Putting the husband first

CIL 3, 7436
Nicopolis, Moesia Inferior. Late second–early third century AD

This verse epitaph is carved in a *tabula ansata* (rectangular inscription panel with triangular handles) on a large marble sarcophagus that was later re-used as part of a fountain. Fronto was *dispensator Augustorum* (treasurer of the Augusti) of Moesia Inferior, a financial and administrative function for an imperial slave or freedman. His poetic praise of his deceased wife, which contains literary allusions to Virgil, Catullus and Sallust, resembles that of Allia Potestas (Chapter 2 no. 53) in its combination of romantic love and traditional female virtues. Apart from her sexual purity and chastity, she is praised for her obedience, frugality, industry and wool work, but also for her sharp mind and good advice. The poem contains some metrical and grammatical errors and was probably composed by the husband himself.

To the spirits of the departed and to her blessed memory. Fronto, *dispensator* of our Augusti in Lower Moesia, set this up.

[*In verse*] May the limbs of my dear Aelia, now enclosed in this tomb, at least rest amid lovely flowers. Queen of the great king Dis (i.e. Proserpina), I beg you for this, for she deserved much from me for her praiseworthy deeds. Though she did not deserve it, you quickly cut the thread of the goddesses, unwinding the knot of the Fates (*Parcae*), who govern all. If I could describe her way of life, how pure (*pudica*) she was, I would move the spirits of the underworld with my cithera. First, she was chaste (*casta*) – you will hear this with pleasure – as the world and the royal palace of the underworld know. I beseech you to bid her dwell in the Elysian Fields and to crown her hair with myrtle and her temples with flowers. Once she was my home, my hope, my one and only life. She wanted what I wanted, and what I did not want, she also spurned. She had no secret that was unknown to me. She did not eschew hard work, nor was she inexperienced in wool work. Thrifty was her hand, but she was generous in her love for me, her husband. Without me, she did not care for food nor for the gifts of Bacchus. She was admirable in her advice, sharp-witted and of noble reputation. Owner (i.e. of the land where she was buried), I pray you look

favourably on these verses and annually adorn the site of this tomb. I beg you to cherish this eternal monument bedecking it, according to the time of the year, with red roses or the pleasant flowers of the amaranth and all sorts of fresh fruits of various kinds, so that it is taken care of at all times of the year.

9 Female virtues

CIL 12, 1972 = *ILN* 5, 1, 163
Vienna, Gallia Narbonensis. Late second or third century AD

A fragment of the front of a sarcophagus contains the epitaph of a woman in a *tabula ansata* (rectangular inscription panel with triangular handles). The coarse surface of the text and traces of previous letters suggest that the sarcophagus was re-used and that an earlier inscription was removed to make room for the present text. The words *matrona honestissima* suggest that the deceased belonged to a family of decurial or equestrian rank.

To the departed spirits and eternal memory of Julia Severina, most distinguished matron (*matrona honestissima*), dearest (*karissima*) wife, most dutiful (*pientissima*) mother and sweetest (*dulcissima*) (grand)parent. Priminius Placidus set this up together with his daughters because of her merits [. . .].

10 Epitaph of Aufidia Severina

CIL 6, 12853 = *CIL* 6, 34060
Rome. Third century AD

In this verse epitaph, a husband praises his deceased wife for her traditional virtues and marital love and expresses the wish that he had died before her. Though a conventional topic in epitaphs (see also nos. 3, 7 and 17), it was probably no less heartfelt.

[*Above*] To the spirits of the departed.

[*In verse*] Here lies Aufidia Severina, nicknamed (*signum*) Florens, who lived twice fifteen (i.e. thirty) years of life. In chaste faithfulness (*casta fide*) she always cherished her marriage-bed. Sober (*sobria*), no adulterer, honest and with a benevolent mind she was devoted to her husband alone and knew no other (*ignara alienum*). Basileus made for his only, incomparable, sweet consort (*compar*) what he wished was made by her (i.e. a tomb).

11 A fertile marriage

CIL 3, 3572 = *TitAq* 2, 745
Aquincum, Pannonia Inferior. Third century AD

A limestone sarcophagus (Figure 4) with a verse epitaph in elegant letters presents the deceased as speaking. In accordance with traditional ideals, Veturia was married only once, which is expressed by the words *unicuba* (of one marriage-bed) and *uniiuga* (of one marriage), both variations of the more common *univira* (wife of one man). She married very young, at eleven or probably twelve (the minimum legal age for Roman

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Figure 4 Limestone sarcophagus of Veturia from Aquincum, Pannonia. Budapest National Museum inv. RD 132; 19.1868.1. Lupa.at/3019.
Photo Ortolf Harl.

girls to marry), and gave birth six times before she died at the age of twenty-seven. Only one child survived her. Flanking the inscription, two figures with Phrygian caps may represent Attis and symbolise immortality.

Here I lie, a married woman (*matrona*). By descent and name I am Veturia, the wife of Fortunatus, born from Veturius, my father. Sadly, I lived for thrice nine (i.e. twenty-seven) years and was married for twice eight (i.e. sixteen) years, a woman of one marriage-bed (*unicuba*) and one marriage (*uniiuga*). After having given birth six times, I died. Only one child survives me. [*In prose*] Titus Julius Fortunatus, centurion of the *Legio II Adiutrix Pia Fidelis*, made this for his incomparable wife, a woman of extraordinary devotion (*pietas*) towards him.

12 The joys of marriage

CIL 13, 1983 = *ILS* 8158
Lugdunum, Gallia Lugdunensis. Third century AD

On the top of a funerary altar two *asciae* (axes) are depicted between the letters *D(is)* and *M(anibus)*. The expression 'dedicated under the axe' was common in Gallia of the second and third centuries AD and may have placed the tomb under divine protection. The last sentence reveals that bathing together had been one of the joys of the couple's married life.

To the departed spirits and eternal memory of Blandinia Martiola, the most blameless (*innocentissima*) girl who lived eighteen years, nine months and five days. Pompeius Catussa, citizen of the Sequani, a plasterer, set this up for his

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incomparable wife, who was most kind to him. She lived with me for five years, six months and eighteen days without any foul reproach. He had this made during his lifetime for himself and for his wife and dedicated it under the axe. You, who read this, go bathe in the baths of Apollo, as I did with my wife. I wish I still could.

13 Sweet Urbana

CIL 6, 29580 = *ILS* 8450
Rome. Third century AD

This funerary inscription on a marble plaque identifying the urn highlights the harmony and love between the partners, which the husband credits to his wife.

Dedicated to the spirits of the departed. To Urbana, sweetest (*dulcissima*), chastest (*castissima*) and most extraordinary (*rarissima*) wife. I am certain that nothing was more excellent than she. She deserved to be honoured by this inscription, since every day of her life she lived with me with the greatest loveliness and simplicity, in marital love (*adfectio coniugalis*) just as much as in the industry of her habits (*industria morum*). I added this so that readers may understand how much we loved each other. Paternus made this for his well-deserving wife.

Harmonious Marriages and Romantic Love

The Roman ideal of marital harmony (*concordia*), symbolised by the couple clasping hands (*dextrarum iunctio*), is reflected in numerous inscriptions. Some epitaphs celebrate that a couple lived together without any quarrel (*sine ulla querella*), reproof (*sine reprehensione*), strife, discord (*sine lite*, *sine discordia*) or the like (see no. 12 above), or record that the deceased never gave any cause for grief except by dying. Though to our eyes this may seem a bit negative (as the absence of strife), such expressions probably had more positive overtones than they might have today. Apart from this, some inscriptions stress the equality of the spouses and their equal devotion to each other. Others record the decision of the surviving partner to remain a widow or widower for the rest of their lives and express the wish to have died before, or instead of, the deceased, or the hope that, eventually, they will be reunited in the tomb. Though some of these are standard themes displaying conventional ideals of marriage, they must also have given words to a heartfelt grief and an experience of marital love and harmony.

Further Reading

Treggiari (1991) 229–61

14 A long and harmonious marriage

CIL 6, 33087 = *ILS* 8401
Rome. 100–50 BC

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A large marble plaque from a communal tomb (*columbarium*) on the Esquiline contains a verse epitaph for a freed couple. Quintus Pompeius Bithynicus, the former owner of the husband, was legate of Bithynia in 74 BC, which gives an indication of the date of the inscription. For the frequent formula 'this monument will not pass to the heir', see the Introduction and the Glossary.

Quintus Pompeius Sosus, freedman of Bithynicus, and Satriena Salvia, freedwoman of Publius, his frugal (*frugi*) wife, graciously and harmoniously made this on the Esquiline at some distance from the water reservoir for themselves, their relatives and those who are worthy of it. When life flourished, we lived sixty years in harmony together. We made this during our lifetime so that we would have a grave monument when overcome by death. [*In prose*] Studium and Acme, our freedwomen, made a burial chamber in it, so that we could bury them together with us. This monument will not pass to the heir.

15 Dialogue of a harmonious couple

CIL 6, 9499 = *ILS* 7472
Rome. *c.* 80–50 BC

This large travertine plaque (Figure 5) with a relief flanked by inscriptions was once part of a funerary monument of a freed couple: the butcher Aurelius Hermia and his wife Aurelia Philemation (or Philematium). In the verse inscription, the husband and wife address the passer-by. Both focus on their virtues and mutual fondness. Though Aurelius Hermia was older than his wife and had been her protector from an early age (when she was seven years old), she died before him. It seems that the couple was childless. The lettering of the inscription is somewhat crude. For lack of space, the letters are squeezed at the right-hand side and at the bottom. On the relief between the inscriptions the couple is shown facing one another: the wife holds her husband's right hand in both her own and raises it to her lips as if for a kiss (an allusion to her name Philemation, from the Greek *filema*, 'kiss'). This tender gesture is a sentimental variation on the traditional theme of the married couple clasping hands (*dextrarum iunctio*) as a symbol of their marital harmony (*concordia*). As appears from their names and from the inscription, the couple had been fellow slaves of the same owner, Lucius Aurelius, and may have been manumitted together (for slaves and freedwomen, see Chapter 2). Possibly, she worked together with her husband in the butchery, as the last lines about her duty (*officium*) suggest (see Chapter 3 for women's work). Their traditional Roman dress (the *toga* for the husband and *tunica* and *palla* for the wife) and the adoption of Roman values and marital ideals demonstrate the couple's pride in their Roman citizenship.

[*Left*] Lucius Aurelius Hermia, freedman of Lucius, butcher at the Viminal Hill. She, who by fate preceded me in death, chaste in body, my one-and-only wife, who fondly took possession of my heart, faithful (*fida*) to her faithful husband she lived with equal affection. She never failed from her duty (*officium*) because of selfishness. Aurelia, freedwoman of Lucius, [*here the text breaks off*].

[*Right*] Aurelia Philemation, freedwoman of Lucius. Alive, I am called Aurelia Philematium; chaste (*casta*), modest (*pudens*), unfamiliar with the common

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Figure 5 Funerary relief of Aurelius Hermia and Aurelia Philematium from the Via Nomentana in Rome (British Museum inv. 2274).
Photo Roger B. Ulrich.

crowd (*volgei nescia*), faithful to my husband. My husband (*vir*), whom I now miss, alas, was my fellow freedman by the same man and was in fact and in truth more than a parent to me. When I was seven years old, he took me to his bosom. At the age of forty, I am overcome by death. Because of my unremitting sense of duty (*officium*), he flourished in all [*here the text breaks off*].

Further Reading

Davies (2018); Koortbojian (2006)

16 United in death

CIL 6, 19008
Rome. Imperial period

In a verse epitaph on a marble plaque a son honours the long and harmonious marriage of his parents, who are now united in death.

To the spirits of the departed. To these bones of Geminia Cauma, his everlasting wife, Caius Billienus Fructus gave his bones. Those whom life had once brought together now lie united in death. They lived together for fifty-two uninterrupted years without irksome strife (*sine lite molesta*). Their son set up this inscription full of devotion (*pietas*) to his parents.

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17 Marital harmony

CIL 13, 2205
Lugdunum, Gallia Lugdunensis. Imperial period

A husband set up a tomb for his wife wishing that they had died together. A relief of an axe on one of the sides of this funerary stone confirms what is said in the inscription: that it was dedicated 'under the axe' (*sub ascia*), see no. 12 and the Glossary.

To the departed spirits and eternal memory of Matia Vera, who lived with me for thirty-six years, three months and ten days without any mental hurt (*sine ulla animi laesione*). A long love has perished, snatched away by ravaging death. Oh, would fate have covered us both! Pusinnonius Dubitatus had this set up for his incomparable wife from whom I never experienced any pain apart from her death, and dedicated it under the axe (*sub ascia*).

18 Equal partners

CIL 11, 654
Faventia, Italy (8). Imperial period

In this verse epitaph, the deceased wife, Prima, is presented as speaking about the harmony and equality of her marriage. She and her husband shared the same love and devotion towards each other. Their single names and the fact that they address each other as companion (*sodalis*) instead of spouse (*coniunx*) suggest that they were not Roman citizens. They may have been slaves.

To the departed spirits of Prima. [*In verse*] I was an exceptional, worthy (*digna*) wife for my deserving companion (*sodalis*). One love endured between us and an equal, faithful life. If he felt pain for anything, I myself also joined in his distress. I was his equal, for as long as I was able. Sweet companion, farewell my dear. [*In prose*] She lived twenty-one years, two months and twenty days. Chrestus made this for her who deserved well.

19 A beloved wife

CIL 10, 1951
Puteoli, Italy (1). Imperial period

A *procurator* (an administrator or manager of an estate) with the un-Roman *cognomen* Porresmus set up a tomb for his wife recording their harmonious marriage.

For Lollia Victorina, my sweetest wife. Lollianus Porresmus, *procurator*, bought this (tomb) for his well-deserving wife, with whom he lived for twenty years without any reproof (*sine reprehensione ulla*) on either side – that is having loved!

20 Longing for a deceased wife

CIL 6, 7579 = *ILS* 8190
Rome. First half of the first century AD

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A marble funerary plaque from the Via Appia voices a husband's complaints about the death of his wife. The last lines warn the visitor not to do any damage to the tomb.

To the departed spirits of Mevia Sophe. Gaius Maenius Cimber set this up for his most venerable (*sanctissima*) wife and keeper, my soul's desire, who lived with me for eighteen years, three months and thirteen days. During this time I lived with her without any quarrel (*sine querella*). Now I complain to her divine spirits (Manes) and I importune Zeus to give me back to my wife, who lived with me so harmoniously (*concorde*) until her final day. Mevia Sophe, if the spirits of the departed exist, bring it to pass that I no longer suffer so vicious a separation. Visitor, may the earth rest lightly upon you after your death as long as you have not damaged anything here. Or if someone has done any damage, may he not have the approval of the gods in heaven nor may the infernal deities receive him and let the earth be heavy on him.

21 Learned Pedana

CIL 6, 17050
Rome. Late first century AD

A richly adorned marble funerary altar with a verse epitaph containing allusions to Virgil disappeared around 1750 and was known for some time only from drawings. Later it was rediscovered in the collection of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight (Figure 6). Discrepancies between old drawings of the altar and its present state confirm traces of modern reworking. The verse inscription (in elegiac distichs) was set up by Donatus for his young wife, Pedana. It mourns her early death, probably just after their marriage. The relief above the inscription shows a couple gazing at each other at a funerary banquet: the husband reclines and the wife sits close to him on the couch. He lays his hand tenderly on her shoulder. On the front, framing the inscription, there are burning candelabra supported by eagles; at the sides, laurel trees and birds. The lyre, mentioned in the inscription, accords with Pedana's qualification as a *docta puella* of Roman elegiac poetry. It is not depicted on the altar, which may have been of earlier date than the inscription. Also, the sarcophagus mentioned in the last line is surprising. If not referring to an actual sarcophagus in the tomb, it may be used in a figurative sense: a coffin of forgetfulness. (The word *Lethaeus* refers to Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in the Underworld.)

To thankless Venus I promised gifts as a suppliant, when you lost your virginity, wife. Pale Persephone envied our vows and took you away in a premature death. Donatus carved a last verse-offering, and an altar and a lyre pleasing to you, learned (*docta*) Pedana. Love now torments me. For you, sad care has departed. You lie buried in a sarcophagus of forgetfulness (*Lethaeus*).

Further Reading

Hemelrijk (1999); Roller (2006) 133–5; Vout (2014) 301–12; Waywell (1982)

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Figure 6 Marble altar with verse epitaph for Pedana. Port Sunlight (UK), Lady Lever Art Gallery inv. H 278.
Photo Arachne archive FA2106–00_25417,01.

22 Embalming and venerating a deceased wife

CIL 6, 30102
Rome. AD 50–100

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The upper part of a marble funerary plaque is lost together with the first lines of the verse inscription. The surviving lines of the inscription praise the deceased wife for the standard qualities: her beauty, chastity and devotion to her husband, but then goes on to reveal that, instead of burning her corpse on the pyre, he embalmed it, applying unguents and perfumes and worshipping her like a deity (cf. the next inscription). Embalming was highly unusual in Republican Rome, but became more of a fashion in the imperial period in order to preserve the beauty of the deceased, a well-known example being Nero's wife Poppaea (see Tac. *Ann.* 16.6.2, who remarks that it was not a Roman habit). In the remaining years of his life, the husband wishes to regularly visit her tomb, in which he left a lamp burning, to lay garlands on her body.

[. . .] and a rare faithfulness (*fides*) to the marital bed. Though she charmed many because of her superb beauty, she remained pure (*pudica*), united to her fond husband. Now in return for her merits and careful of her worth, he rightly and chastely (*caste*) worships as a divine power (*numen*) her body, which he was able to deny to the fire, having filled it with unguents, leaves of nard and rose petals. You, girl, I pray, spare your husband, spare him, so that for very many years he can give you the appropriate offerings that he has vowed together with garlands and so that the lamp sprinkled with nard may always watch over the tomb.

23 Portrayed as a goddess

CIL 6, 15592–4 = *ILS* 8063a–c
Rome. Early second century AD

A large marble epistyle, a marble plaque and an adorned altar with elegant letters come from a tomb at the Via Appia. They show that Claudia Semne, wife of a freedman of the emperor Trajan, is commemorated with a tomb, a garden and funerary statues depicting her in the guise of deities (*in formam deorum*), namely Venus, Spes, and Fortuna. The altar is decorated with attributes of Fortuna and Venus. The habit of commemorating one's wife with a statue combining a portrait head with the body of a goddess (often Venus, Ceres or Fortuna) is known mainly from tombs of imperial freedmen and freedwomen in the area around Rome between *c.* AD 90 and 140, and may have been inspired by the deification of empresses. By their association with the deity, these deceased women were presented as sharing that deity's virtues. Cf. Stat. *Silv.* 5.1.231–5 on funerary statues of Priscilla, the wife of the imperial freedman Abascantus, depicting her as Ceres, Diana, Maia and Venus.

[*On the lintel*] For Claudia Semne, sweetest wife, Marcus Ulpius Crotonensis, freedman of the emperor, set this up.

[*On the marble plaque*] For Claudia Semne, his wife, and for his son Marcus Ulpius Crotonensis, (Marcus Ulpius) Crotonensis, imperial freedman, made this. To this monument belongs a garden, in which there are arbours, a vineyard, a well and shrines containing statues of Claudia Semne in the guise of deities (*in formam deorum*). All this was surrounded by me with a wall. This monument will not pass to the heir.

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[*On the altar*] Dedicated to Fortuna, Spes, Venus and to the memory of Claudia Semne.

Further Reading

Hemelrijk (2015) 303–5; Wrede (1971) and (1981)

24 An Alcestis to her husband

IGUR 322 = *IG* 14, 1368
Rome. AD 150–250

This Greek epitaph from the Via Appia near Rome was carved in two columns on a marble plaque that is now broken into two parts. It was set up by a man with the Roman name Claudius Maximus for his Greek wife Alcestis and their daughter Hermione. Alcestis was born in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor. As is implied by the inscription, she migrated to Rome (see Chapter 4 for women's travels and migration), where she died at the age of twenty-four. The myth of Alcestis, wife of King Admetus, who sacrificed herself for her husband by dying in his place, was popular in funerary inscriptions for women, symbolising their self-effacing devotion to their husbands. In this case, where the name of the deceased was Alcestis, the comparison with her mythological namesake is particularly appropriate.

Alcestis is my name. Having lived for twenty-four years, I lie in this tomb together with my daughter Hermione. My hometown is Aphrodisias in Asia. Because of my devotion (*eusebeia*), a trait to which I did credit, I have become that husband-loving Alcestis of old times, to whose temperance (*sophrosyne*) gods and mortals have borne witness. But for me my husband is a better witness than they are: he also showed complete devotion (*eusebeia*) towards me. May the gods reward him in return for our righteousness. Claudius Maximus made (this tomb) in commemoration of his own wife and daughter.

25 An oath to remain a widower

CIL 11, 1491 = *ILS* 8461
Pisae, Italy (7). First half of the second century AD

On a small rectangular marble urn, which is richly decorated, an inscription is carved on a *tabula* above a portrait shield held by *erotes*. The shield shows the portrait busts of the couple.

To the departed spirits of Scribonia Hedone. Quintus Tampius Hermeros made this for his dearest wife, with whom he lived for eighteen years without quarrel (*sine querella*). Because of his longing for her, he swore not to have another wife after her.

26 A pledge to remain a widow

CIL 6, 35050
Rome. Second century AD

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On a marble funerary plaque a bereaved wife promises never to remarry. Due to differences in age between the partners, many women were widowed at an early age. Remarriage was the norm and became compulsory for women in their childbearing years under the Augustan marriage laws. Nevertheless, the traditional ideal of marrying only once was valued as a virtue for women (*univira*; see nos. 5 and 11 above) as well as a romantic ideal for both sexes. The last line warns against desecration of the tomb.

To the spirits of the departed. For Lucius Cornificius Philargyrus, who lived twenty-four years. Articuleia Iris set this up for her well-deserving, dearest husband, to whom I swore that I did not wish to have a husband after his death. The tomb is also for his freedmen and freedwomen. Witness and you, entrusted heir, beware of evil.

27 The wife lives on in the memory of the husband

CIL 6, 11082 = *IGUR* 310
Rome. Second century AD

This Latin funerary inscription contains a few words of farewell in Greek (spoken by the children to their mother), which may be explained by the background of the family: judging by some of the names, they may have descended from Greek freedpeople.

Marcus Aemilius Januarius, son of Marcus, set this up for Catilia Marciana, his incomparable, sweetest (*dulcissima*), most dutiful (*pientissima*), chastest (*castissima*) wife, who lived thirty-two years, six months and five days, and with whom I lived for thirteen years with great pleasure. Dedicated to eternal sleep. Their children Marcus Aemilius Agathemer(us), Marcus Aemilius Marcianus and Aemilia Ingenua, who is also called Marciana, also made this for their most devoted (*pientissima*), sweetest (*dulcissima*) and most venerable (*sanctissima*) mother.

[*In Greek*] Good courage, mother. Nobody is immortal.

[*Below*] Dedicated to eternal sleep. They also made this for their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. [*In verse*] Envious one, why are you happy? She here, my dead wife, shall live. She will always be golden before my eyes. [*In prose*] Also for the freedmen and freedwomen of Quintus Mucius Eutactus and Quintus Mucius Julianus and their descendants.

28 Hoping to be reunited in death

CIL 6, 18817 = *ILS* 8006
Rome. Second century AD

This inscription on a marble funerary plaque shows a wife mourning her husband. They were bound to each other by love from childhood onwards, but their marriage was cut short by his early death: they were separated by 'an evil hand'. She expresses the hope of seeing him at night in her dreams (for this sentiment, see also *CIL* 6, 18385) and joining him quickly in death.

Dedicated to the venerable soul and the spirits of the departed. Furia Spes set this up for Lucius Sempronius Firmus, my husband most dear to me. As soon

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as I became acquainted with him, as boy and girl, we were equally bound by love. I lived with him for a very brief time. We were separated by an evil hand at a time when we should have lived together. Thus I beg you, most holy spirits of the departed, that you take care of my dear one entrusted to you and that you are willing to be most indulgent towards him, so that I may see him in the hours of night, and that he may be willing to persuade Fate that I, too, can come to him sweeter and sooner.

29 Posthumous assimilation to a legendary queen

IG 14, 499 = *SEG* 58, 1044
Catania, Sicily. Second–third century AD

This Greek epitaph on a marble plaque (now lost) commemorates Epagatho, a Greek woman in Sicily who died a horrible death: an unnamed man, possibly a robber, killed her by throwing stones at her. Her mourning husband here identifies her with the legendary Persian queen Rhodogune, thus underlining the super-human courage of his wife at her tragic death. In the last lines, the wife is presented as addressing the passer-by.

You see the tomb, traveller, of far-famed Rhodogune, whom a terrible man unjustly stoned to death. Avianius lamented his wife and solemnly buried her. He also presented her with this stele as a modest thanksgiving. Formerly everyone called me by my name Epagatho, but now I am named after Queen Rhodogune.

30 Ideals of romantic love

CIL 8, 27380 = *MAD* 1541
Thugga, Africa Proconsularis. Late second–early third century AD

A marble funeral altar with an inexpert verse inscription (in incomplete elegiac couplets) was found in an unroofed rectangular burial area. The epitaph expresses the conventional notion of a couple united in death as they were during their lifetime. The word *longe* can be taken in the temporal or spatial sense (or perhaps it is deliberately ambiguous), implying that their tombs were not far from each other and/or that they died soon after each other.

This tomb is dedicated to the spirits of the departed. It holds the bones of dutiful (*pia*) C[. . .]a Numisia Marcellina, daughter of Vibius, wife of Quintus. [*In verse*] Their graves, so closely connected, testify how harmoniously (*concordes*) they passed their lives. Even cruel death that, alone, can sever those who love each other could not separate them for long (*longe*).

31 True love

CIL 8, 7427 = *ILAlg* 2, 1, 1244
Cirta, Numidia. Late second–early third century AD

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A double funerary altar is decorated with a *tabula ansata* and three inscriptions commemorating a husband, who died at the age of eighty, his wife of fifty-seven and their young son aged eleven. The epitaph of the wife is partly in verse. They are reunited in the tomb.

[*On the tabula ansata*] Lucius Julius Episucus lived eleven years.

[*On the left altar*] To the spirits of the departed. Lucius Julius Kandidus lived eighty years. He truly lived. May your bones rest in peace.

[*On the right altar*] To the divine spirits of Sittia Spes. [*In verse*] Following this example, may every wife who loves unite with her beloved. That is the sweet little solace (*solaciolum*) of life. She departed to the heavenly gods with our dearest son Episucus. She lived fifty-seven years. She lies here.

32 Killed by witchcraft

CIL 8, 2756 = *PCV* 41
Lambaesis, Numidia. Late second–early third century AD

A large altar with a verse epitaph was set up by a military tribune for his wife, whose premature death from a wasting illness was, according to her husband, caused by witchcraft (see Chapter 4). From the reign of Hadrian onwards, the *Legio III Augusta* was based in Lambaesis (in present-day Algeria).

The testimonies of her past life are now publicly proclaimed by this last writing. For these are the consolations of death, where the eternal memory of name or lineage is preserved. Ennia Fructuosa lies here, my dearest wife of proven sexual purity (*pudicitia*), a *matrona* praiseworthy for her kind compliance (*obsequium*). When she was fifteen years old, she received the name of wife, but she was not allowed to live with it for more than thirteen years. She met a fate of death she did not deserve: bound down by spells, she lay ill for a long time, in such a way that her spirit was wrested from her by force rather than returned to nature. The spirits of the Underworld or the heavenly gods will avenge the crime that has been perpetrated. [*In prose*] Her husband, Aelius Proculinus, tribune of the great *Legio III Augusta*, set this up himself.

33 A long and stable marriage

IMS 3, 2, 46 = *ILJug* 3, 1303
Timacum Minus, Moesia Superior. Late second–early third century AD

In a verse epitaph on a limestone stele with adorned rim a veteran commemorates his wife with whom he lived for fifty years without interruption. The words 'in stable marriage' (*conubio stabili*) may allude to Virgil (Verg. *Aen.* 1.73: *conubio iungam stabili*).

To the spirits of the departed. Titus Julius Saturninus, former *decurio* of the *cohors II Aurelia* of the Dardanians, made this for himself during his lifetime and for his dearest wife (*coniunx karissima*) Ovidia Pudentilla, [*in verse*] with whom he pleasantly lived for fifty years without separation in stable marriage.

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34 A loving couple

CIL 6, 10281
Rome. *c.* AD 270

A marble sarcophagus in the anteroom of the abundantly decorated tomb of the Pancratii at the Via Latina in Rome portrays a married couple (Figures 7a and b). The husband is dressed in the *toga contabulata* (banded *toga*) popular in their days. The wife is shown tenderly embracing her husband and gazing at him. Her drapery slipping off her shoulder refers to the beauty of Venus and probably also to the love between the couple. The sarcophagus was probably bought from stock by the husband for his wife and eventually also for himself, but the heads have not been worked into portraits. In agreement with the spelling of the time the family name of the wife, Vibia, is spelled as Vivia. The name Pancratius (probably the name of an association or family group using the tomb in the late third century) is also found elsewhere in the tomb (*CIL* 6, 10279/80) and lent it its modern name.

Gaius Servienius Demetrius, husband, made this for Vivia Severa, my most venerable (*sanctissima*) wife and for myself. She lived with me for twenty-two years, nine months and five days, during which I always had a good time with her. Pancratius here.

Further Reading

Huskinson (1998)

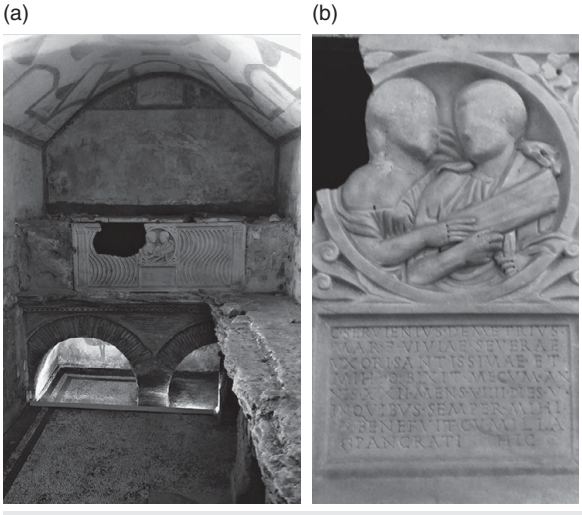

Figure 7 Anteroom and sarcophagus in the tomb of the Pancratii at the Via Latina in Rome.
Photos author.

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35 Visiting her husband's tomb

CIL 5, 2108 = *ILS* 8453
Acelum, Italy (10). Third–fourth century AD

A now anonymous husband died abroad in northern Italy. His wife travelled fifty days from Gaul to visit his grave and set up an inscription to commemorate him, of which several fragments have survived. The approximate indication of the age at death agrees with early Christian epigraphic habits. For women's travels and migration, see Chapter 4.

[*First part lost*] who lived about forty years. Martina, his dear (*cara*) wife, who came from Gaul by a fifty-day journey to honour the memory of her sweetest husband. Rest softly, my sweetest husband.

Second (or Third) Wives

The frequency of death or divorce, and subsequent remarriage, in the Roman world means that husbands might put up epitaphs for a second or even a third wife, and vice versa. In some cases, successive spouses were buried in separate tombs, but often they were buried together.

36 Divorce and remarriage

CIL 12, 4949
Narbo, Gallia Narbonensis. Mid-first century AD

A gravestone, which was re-used in a wall, shows a relief of a couple with clasped hands, the symbol of marital harmony, and a dog, a symbol of fidelity. The inscription shows that an earlier name had been erased to allow the name of the present wife to be engraved over it and on the line below. We may suppose that the first wife was divorced and therefore excluded from the tomb, and that the husband inserted the name of his second wife over it.

Gaius Livanius Auctus, freedman of Maximus, set this up during his lifetime for himself and for <<Cornelia Maxuma, daughter of Sextus>>, his wife.

37 Two wives buried together

CIL 11, 1471 = *InscrIt* 7, 1, 47
Pisae, Italy (7). First century AD

A decorated marble stele (Figure 8) was set up by a husband for his two wives and his son, presumably after the death of the second wife. The husband must have been a mason as the right side of the relief shows utensils that symbolise his trade. On the left side, several articles testify to women's lives, such as sandals, a mirror, a comb, a hairpin and a perfume flask symbolising their beauty.

Publius Ferrarius Hermes set this up for Caecinia Digna, his dearest wife, for Numeria Maximilla, his well-deserving wife, and for his son Publius Ferrarius Proculus and for their descendants.

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Figure 8 Funerary stele for a husband and his two wives (Florence, Museo Archeologico Nazionale inv. 1914).
Photo D-DAI-ROM-80.1138 (Werner Eck).

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38 A tomb for three wives

CIL 14, 5026 = *IPOstie-A*, 182
Portus, Italy (1). Mid-second century AD

On a marble funerary plaque, attached above the entrance of the tomb, a husband commemorates his three wives using different terms for each relationship. The first, to whom he was married for twenty-four years, is called his legitimate wife (*coniunx*). The second was his *marita*, which also suggests a legal union. But the third, Annia Laveria (or Laberia), may have been a slave or non-citizen, since the word *contubernalis* is usually employed for an unofficial partnership with a slave or non-Roman partner. Her name must have been added later, since an earlier text (probably praising the second wife) was erased to make room for it.

Lucius Mindius Dius made this for himself and for Genucia Tryphaena, his incomparable wife (*coniunx*) with whom he lived for twenty-four years and three months, and for Lucceia Januaria, his wife (*marita*) <<and for Annia Laveria, his most venerable partner (*contubernalis sanctissima*)>>, and for his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. This monument will not pass to an external heir. [*Dimensions of the tomb*] 30 feet wide, 41 feet deep.

39 True to two husbands

CIL 5, 7453
Vardagate, Italy (9). Second–third century AD

This verse epitaph is dedicated to Statilia Tigris, who died at the age of thirty-six, after having been married twice. Her tomb was made by her second husband, to whom she had been married for sixteen years. Euphilus (well loved) and Simplicius (unaffected) are possibly nicknames (*signa*) of the couple.

To the departed spirits and memory – Simplicius, greetings – of Statilia Tigris, who lived for thirty-six years. [*In verse*] O, all too beautiful and always pure (*pudica*) you lay with two husbands in two marriage beds, where you bore two children of love. If he, who was your first, had been able to overcome fate, he would have set up these words of praise for you. But I, unhappy man, now miss such a woman after having enjoyed sixteen years of your chastity (*castitas*) and love (*amor*). [*In prose*] Publius Vibius Verissimus set this up while alive for his incomparable wife and himself. Euphilus to Simplicius.

Unhappy Marriages

Most epitaphs set up by husbands for their deceased wives emphasise the happiness and harmony of their marriage. Obviously, unhappy marriages occurred as well, but this was not likely to be recorded on a tomb. The following inscriptions are exceptional in recording marital discord and even murder. They were set up by relatives of the deceased wife.

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40 Thrown into the Tiber by her husband

IPOstie-A, 210 = *ISIS* 321
Portus, Italy (1). Second century AD

On a marble funerary plaque engraved with crude letters the bereaved parents commemorated their daughter, who was killed by her husband. Judging by the fact that both parents had the same name (Restutus/a), they were probably freed slaves. The single names of the daughter's husband and that of her relative December (if not *cognomina*) suggest that they were slaves or peregrines. If so, they were not lawfully married.

Restutus Piscinensis and Prima Restuta made this for Prima Florentia, their dearest daughter, who was deprived of her life by Orfeus, her husband, and thrown into the Tiber. December, her relative, set this up. She lived sixteen and a half years.

41 Murdered by her husband

CIL 13, 2182 = *ILS* 8512
Lugdunum, Gallia Lugdunensis. Early third century AD

This epitaph on a funerary altar commemorates a woman who was murdered by her husband. It was set up by the brother and son of the victim, who stress her blamelessness and deliberately fail to record the name of her 'most cruel' husband. The altar was dedicated 'under the axe' (*sub ascia*), which probably placed it under divine protection (see Introduction and Glossary).

To the departed spirits and the eternal rest of Julia Maiana, a most venerable (*sanctissima*) woman, who died before her fated time, murdered by the hand of her most cruel husband, with whom she had lived for twenty-eight years and whom she had borne two children: a son of nineteen and a daughter of eighteen years old. Oh faith (*fides*), oh dutifulness (*pietas*)! Julius Maior, her brother, had this erected for his sweetest sister, and Ingenuinius Januarius, her son (for his mother). They dedicated it under the axe (*sub ascia*).

II | Mothers

As mothers, adult women gained a position of respect within the Roman family and in society at large. Traditionally the relationship between parents and children was characterised by *pietas*, a heavily charged moral term expressing the dutifulness and affection due between parents and children. Though a Roman mother was expected to show love and tenderness towards her children, she also had an important disciplinary role, supervising their education and teaching them the traditional virtues. In families who could afford it, slave childminders (nurses, *paedagogi* and other attendants) were employed for the

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daily care of small children. When the child grew older, the mother's role increased. Nevertheless, also in elite circles, a mother's personal care of babies and small children, for instance in breastfeeding, was valued highly and advocated by philosophers and medical authors.

Further Reading

Dixon (1990)

42 Providing an example for her daughter

CIL 8, 8123 = *ILAlg* 2, 1, 281
Rusicade, Numidia. Imperial period

A funerary stele with verse epitaph commemorates Pompeia Chia. The Greek *cognomen* of the deceased and the fact that she uses *vir* (man) instead of *coniunx* (lawful spouse) suggest that she was a freedwoman.

Pompeia Chia, who lived twenty-five years, lies here. I hope that it falls to my daughter's lot to live chastely (*caste*) so that from our example she learns to love her husband (*vir*).

43 Praise of a mother: the *Laudatio Murdiae*

CIL 6, 10230 = *ILS* 8394
Rome. Early first century AD

A large marble tablet once inserted in a grave monument contains part of the funerary eulogy for Murdia (*Laudatio Murdiae*); the left-hand tablet with the first part of the inscription and the last lines of the right-hand slab have been lost. In the part that has been preserved, her son by her first marriage praises his mother for the fairness of her will. She had made him and his half-brothers by her second marriage equal heirs to her estate (her daughter received a legacy), apart from giving him a prior legacy from his father's patrimony. The legal and financial technicalities demonstrate her knowledge of such matters and her legal capacity to act independently as a mother of three children (*ius liberorum*, see Chapter 2). The son extensively justifies his enumeration of her conventional female virtues, which he feels he cannot omit for fear of blemishing her reputation, but he is quick to add qualities that were traditionally considered masculine, such as *virtus* (courage) and hard work (*labor*). Unfortunately, the text breaks off at this point.

[*The left part of the heading is lost*] of Murdia, daughter of Lucius, my mother.

[*The left-hand column is lost*] But let them sustain other things by their own strength, so that these will be stronger and more commendable(?). She made all her sons equal heirs, having given a legacy to her daughter. Her motherly love is manifested in her affection for her children and the equality of the portions. She left her husband a specified sum so that his right to her dowry was enhanced by the honour of her judgement. Recalling my father's memory and taking this

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into consideration in accordance with her loyalty, she made an estimation of her property and, in her will, bequeathed certain things to me beforehand. This was done not with the intent to prefer me to my brothers because of some reproach of them, but in memory of my father's generosity. She decided that what she had taken from my inheritance by the judgement of her husband should be returned to me, so that this, safeguarded by her use, would be restored to my ownership. In this, she remained true to herself, as she had preserved the marriages to worthy men arranged by her parents in obedience (*obsequium*) and uprightness (*probitas*). Therefore, as a married woman, she was held dearer by her merits, more beloved by her loyalty (*fides*), and she remained more distinguished by her judgement. After her death she was praised unanimously by her fellow citizens, since her apportionment of shares reveals her grateful and loyal attitude towards her husbands, her fairness towards her children and her justness in truth. For these reasons, since the praise of all good women tends to be simple and similar, because their natural qualities over which they keep guard do not require a variety of language, and since it is sufficient that all show the same behaviour to earn a good reputation, and since it is hard to find new forms of praise for a woman, as their life undergoes less variation, it is necessary to honour the virtues they hold in common so as not to omit any of these just principles and thus debase what remains. Therefore, my dearest mother earned all the greater praise, because with respect to her modesty (*modestia*), uprightness (*probitas*), sexual purity (*pudicitia*), obedience (*obsequium*), wool working (*lanificium*), industry (*diligentia*) and trustworthiness (*fides*) she was equal and similar to other good women and, more particularly, she was second to none as to her courage (*virtus*), hard work (*labor*), and wisdom (*sapientia*) in the face of dangers [*the text breaks off*].

Further Reading

Gardner (1990), (1993) 85–109 and (1995); Hemelrijk (2004a).

44 A mother and a daughter drowned at sea

CIL 6, 20674
Rome. AD 160–70

A huge marble funerary altar shows the portrait busts of Cornelia Tyche and her daughter Julia Secunda (Figures 9a and b) framed by an *aedicula* (small temple). They are dressed in a *tunica* and *palla*. The complicated 'crown' hairdress of the mother is contrasted with the simpler hairstyle of the unmarried daughter. The altar, which was later recut as a *tabula*, was found in the Campus Martius in Rome but is now in Paris. Its interpretation has been much discussed, some even holding it for a falsification (unconvincingly, to my mind). It was set up by their husband and father, Julius Secundus. His wife and daughter had died together in a shipwreck off the coast of north-east Spain. The relief shows their portrait busts: Cornelia Tyche is depicted on the right and her daughter Julia Secunda on the left. On top (from left to right): a quiver, a bow, two empty chairs, a cornucopia, a torch, a rudder on a globe and a wheel.

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(a)

(b)

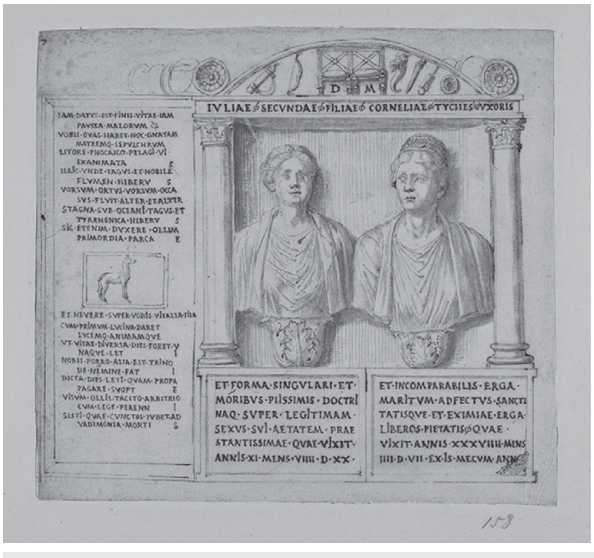

Figure 9 Altar of Julia Secunda and Cornelia Tyche (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. MA 1331; photo William Chevillon) and anonymous sixteenth-century drawing in the Codex Coburgensis of the altar of Julia Secunda and Cornelia Tyche.
Photo Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Germany, inv. Hz.002.Nr.158.

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The attributes of the goddess Fortuna (rudder, wheel, cornucopia) are a pun on the mother's name, Tyche (Fortune); the bow and quiver are the attributes of Diana, patron goddess of young unmarried girls. These symbols suggest that the deceased women are posthumously represented as Fortuna and Diana. This is supported by the *aedicula*, the empty chairs (a symbol of death) and the acanthus leaves from which the busts spring. This kind of 'private deification' of the deceased was popular among freed persons in Rome in the second century AD (see also above no. 23). Judging by her Greek *cognomen*, Cornelia Tyche may indeed have been a freedwoman. Since she had been married for eleven years, we may deduce that she married late, when she was twenty-eight, probably after gaining her freedom. The verse inscription on the right-hand side of the monument is now largely missing due to the re-cutting of the stone, but has come down to us through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drawings. The first letters of each line of the verse epigram spell the name 'Julius Secundus' (a design now known as an acrostic).

[*On top*] To the spirits of the departed.

[*On the frieze above the relief*] Of Julia Secunda, his daughter, and of Cornelia Tyche, his wife.

[*Below the bust of Julia Secunda*] She was outstanding by her singular beauty, her most dutiful way of life and her erudition (*doctrina*) beyond what is to be expected from her age and sex. She lived eleven years, nine months and twenty days.

[*Below the bust of Cornelia Tyche*] Her affection towards her husband and her moral purity (*sanctitas*) were unmatched as was her extraordinary devotion (*pietas*) towards her children. She lived thirty-nine years, four months and seven days, of which eleven years with me.

[*On the right side of the monument*; *in verse*] Now the end of life has been granted you and the end of evils, daughter and mother, whom this tomb holds. You were deprived of life by the violence of the sea off the Phocean coast, from which the Tagus and the noble river Ebro flow, the one to the East and the other to the West: the Tagus into the waters of the Ocean and the Ebro into the Tyrrhenian Sea. For thus the Fates (*Parcae*) once drew the first beginnings and spun the life-threads for you, as soon as Lucina (the goddess of birth) gave you the light and soul of life, so that the first day of your life should be different but the day of your death the same. For me some other day of death in the future has been predestined by the triple thread of Fate. They decided to postpone this day according to their silent judgement with the unfailing law that orders all to present themselves at their fixed appointment with death.

[*First letters of each line of the verse epigram*] Julius Secundus

Further Reading

D'Ambra (2008); Huskinson (2011)

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45 A mother breastfeeding her children

CIL 6, 19128 = *ILS* 8451
Rome. Second or third century AD

A marble sarcophagus was set up by an imperial freedman for his (freed) wife, Graxia Alexandria. The fact that maternal breastfeeding is explicitly recorded suggests that it was relatively uncommon among classes that could afford to hire a wet nurse, despite the fact that it was highly valued by traditionalists. This freed couple thus set an example of 'traditional' Roman morality (see also no. 46).

For Graxia Alexandria, an eminent model of sexual virtue (*pudicitia*), who even nursed her children with her own breasts. Her husband Pudens, freedman of the emperor, set this up for his deserving wife. She lived twenty-four years, three months and sixteen days.

46 A nursing mother

RIU 5, 1153 = *ILS* 9169
Intercisa, Pannonia Inferior. AD 240–260

A large limestone stele set up near the cavalry camp at Intercisa in Pannonia by his wife and a second heir for Aelius Munatius depicts the couple in indigenous dress with three small children and a swaddled baby at its mother's breast (Figure 10). Though the inscription does not mention the children by name, the relief emphasises family affection. The name Aurelia Cansauna shows the wife to have been a Roman citizen of local descent. She was married to a soldier from Samosata in Syria, who served for twenty-eight years as a medical attendant in the Syrian auxiliary unit at Intercisa. Having four children they profited from the Augustan *ius liberorum* (see Chapter 2). The couple manifestly adhered to the cultural ideal of breastfeeding that was both Roman and local. However, the depiction of Aurelia's bare breast is highly unusual in Roman funerary art.

To the spirits of the departed. For Aelius Munatius from Samosata, medical attendant of the auxiliary cohort of Emesans, of twenty-eight years of service. His wife Aurelia Cansauna made this monument together with the standard bearer Antonius Bassus, his second heir, for her most revered husband together with herself and their children, in memory.

47 A mother of three

AE 1985, 355
Ricina, Italy (5). Third century AD

A marble stele with triangular top contains a verse epitaph for a woman who died at the age of eighteen (or after eighteen years of marriage), leaving a husband and three children behind. In the central part of the inscription, the wife is presented as addressing the passer-by.

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Figure 10 Funerary stele from Intercisa in Pannonia portraying a couple with their four children, the mother breastfeeding her youngest child. Budapest National Museum inv. 22.1905.3. Lupa.at/3513.
Photo Ortolf Harl.

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To the spirits of the departed. Here lies Herennia Cervilla, daughter of Lucius, my wife. [*The wife speaks*] I lived for eighteen years and thirty days. Leaving three children behind I ended my life in pain. My dear husband set this up for me as a memorial during his lifetime in the hope that receiving such an inscription would be beneficial in my final hour. Gaius Carrenas Verecundus set this up for his incomparable and well-deserving wife.

Giving Birth

Giving birth was one of the most dangerous events in a woman's life, an event that many women, and their babies, did not survive. Several inscriptions testify to the risks of childbirth and graffiti show relief at successful childbirth.

Further Reading

Carroll (2018) 51–81; Rawson (2003)

48 Dying in childbirth

IKoeln 414
Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, Germania Inferior. *c.* AD 20

A limestone stele of nearly 2 metres high (Figure 11) shows a portrait of the deceased with a swaddled baby in her arms, suggesting that she died in, or shortly after, childbirth. The inscription, however, does not record the cause of her death. Relief and text thus complement each other. Her single name and that of her husband, the non-Roman name of her father and the fact that her husband uses *vir* (man) instead of *coniunx* (husband under Roman law) show the indigenous background of the family. The specification *Remae* (of the tribe of the Remians) reveals that she was an immigrant from northern Gaul. This emphasis on her ethnic identity goes hand in hand with the adoption of a Roman form of commemoration by a grave stele, a sculpted bust clad in Roman dress (*tunica* and *palla*) and an inscription in Latin (see also Chapter 2, section II).

For Bella, daughter of Vonucus, of Remian birth. Longinus, her husband (*vir*), dutifully made this.

49 Relief at successful childbirth

CIL 4, 8820
Pompeii, Italy (1). AD 77

A graffito in the atrium of the house of Trebius Valens (III.2.1) records that Ursa, judging by her single name a female slave, gave birth on 23 January. Combined with the day of the week, the date indicates that she gave birth in AD 77.

Ten days before the Kalends of February (23 January), Ursa gave birth on the day of Jupiter (Thursday).

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Figure 11 Limestone funerary stele of Bella with her swaddled baby. Römisch–Germanisches Museum in Cologne inv. 62.274.
Photo courtesy of the museum.

50 Announcement of birth

CIL 4, 294
Pompeii, Italy (1). AD 77

A graffito in charcoal (VII.3, in a small room, now lost) shows a drawing of a baby in a circle flanked by the name Juvenilla (Figure 12). Like in the previous graffito, the combination of the date and the day of the week suggests that she was born in AD 77, two years before the eruption.

Juvenilla. Born on Saturn's day (Saturday) at the second hour of the evening, four days before the Nones of August (2 August).

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Figure 12 Graffito of Juvenilla, from V. Hunink (2014). *Oh Happy Place! Pompeii in 1000 Graffiti*, Sant' Oreste: Apeiron.

51 Death after four days of labour

CIL 3, 2267
Salona, Dalmatia. Imperial period

Despite the fact that she is addressed as *coniunx* (legally wedded wife), Candida's single name suggests that she was not a Roman citizen, and the fact that Justus presents himself as her fellow slave confirms that she was a slave. Her age is only approximately known, as is the duration of her partnership with the dedicator of the stone.

To the spirits of the departed. For Candida, my well-deserving wife (*coniunx*), aged about thirty, who lived with me for about seven years. She was tortured during labour for four days and did not give birth. Thus, she died. Justus, her fellow slave, set this up.

52 Death during the fourth pregnancy

CIL 6, 28753
Rome. Imperial period

A verse epitaph on a marble plaque marked the tomb of Veturia Grata, who died when eight months pregnant with her fourth child. The first letters of the twelve verses of her epitaph together form her name. The last line contains a pun on her *cognomen* Grata (beloved).

[*First letter of each verse*] Veturia Grata.

You who pass by, now stand still and linger for a while. Read the misfortune of a mourning man. Read what I, Trebius Basileus, her grieving husband, have

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written so that you may know that the writing below comes from the heart. She was adorned with all good things, unoffending (*innocua*) to her dear ones, guileless (*simplex*), a woman who never committed any wrongdoing. She lived twenty-one years and seven months and bore me three sons, whom she left behind when they were small children. Pregnant with her fourth child, she died in the eighth month. Stunned, now examine the initial letters of the verses and willingly read, I pray, the epitaph of a well-deserving woman. You will recognise the name of my beloved (*grata*) wife.

53 Mother and daughter dying during childbirth

CIL 6, 10971 = *IG* 14, 1983 = *IGUR* 1147
Rome. Second–third century AD

A bilingual (Greek and Latin) verse inscription on a sarcophagus (now lost) testifies to the death in childbirth of Aelia Sabina, along with her baby daughter. Her commemoration by means of a Greek and a Latin epigram suggests that she (or at least the commissioner of the tomb), was cultured and well versed in both languages.

[*Latin*] To the departed spirits.

[*Greek*] To the deities of the Underworld. Having lived for twenty-six years and four months, then for another eleven days, I, Sabina, lie in this coffin together with my daughter, who pursued me (in death) in accordance with the decisions of the Fates (Moirai), showing a mother-loving affection.

[*Latin*] Here lies the lifeless Aelia Sabina in her tomb together with her daughter, the newly born child she brought forth herself. O Fortuna, how great a trust you have malignantly altered: the child she bore the mother keeps with her in the home of Dis (god of the Underworld).

The Natural Order Reversed

Despite high child mortality in the ancient world, it was strongly felt that parents should not survive their children. Children should bury their parents, not the other way round. In some tomb inscriptions a mother or father who had to bury a child was called 'cruel' and burying a child was called a crime. This was so common a notion that it could be inverted again as an expression of unusual grief.

54 A mother longing for her daughter

CIL 9, 4933 = *CIL* 1, 1837
Trebula Mutuesca, Italy (4). Mid-first century BC

A verse epitaph on a richly decorated funerary monument expresses the longing of a mother for her deceased daughter. Posilla Senenia was the freeborn daughter of a

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freedwoman, Quarta Senenia. Judging by his name (Quartus), the father of the deceased girl was either the former owner of her mother, a Gaius Quartus Senenius, or a fellow slave freed by him.

Posilla Senenia, daughter of Quartus, and Quarta Senenia, freedwoman of Gaius. Stranger, stand still and read meanwhile what is written: a mother was not allowed to take pleasure in her only daughter. Some god, I believe, envied her life. Since her mother was not allowed to adorn her during her lifetime, she made amends in the end after her death: with this monument she honoured the daughter she had loved.

55 A mother burying a daughter

CIL 9, 4255
Amiternum, Italy (4). Imperial period

Together with her granddaughter and her sons, Claudia Quartilla erected a tomb for her deceased daughter. Since mother and children share the same family name (Claudius/a), the mother and the unamed father may have been freed by the same owner.

To Claudia Fortunata. Claudia Quartilla set this up for her sweetest (*dulcissima*) daughter, Julia Foebe for her mother and Claudius Felix and Claudius Fortunatus for their most dutiful (*pientissima*) sister. Oh unworthy crime: a mother made a tomb for her daughter!

56 A dialogue between a deceased mother and her son

CIL 8, 9513 = *ILS* 8144
Caesarea, Mauretania Caesariensis. Imperial period

The inscription on a marble funerary plaque records an imagined dialogue between a deceased mother and her mourning son. In an inversion of the common notion that a parent should die first, her son expresses the wish that his mother should have made the tomb for her children.

[*On top*] Sweetest (*dulcissima*) mother.

Sallustius Honoratus has erected for Claudia Extrikata, my dearest mother, what you should have made for me or for those whom you left unhappy and orphaned. When I wrote this, I diluted the writing ink with my tears. The sweetest mother says farewell to her children: 'Why do you stand and read aloud the inscription of my tomb? I lived forty-five years for you. In the forty-sixth year I died, when my time had come.'

57 Sorrow for the death of a son

AE 1911, 72 = *AE* 1913, 70 and *CIL* 4, 9160
Pompeii, Italy (1). Before AD 79

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At her own cost Mulvia Prisca built a decorated tomb for her son who died at the age of twenty-two. Because of his civic office (he was an *aedilis*), the local council donated the burial place and contributed 2,000 sesterces to the costs of his funeral. On the tomb a touching graffito close to the urn testifies to his mother's grief for the death of her son.

[*The tomb inscription*] For Gaius Vestorius Priscus, aedile. He lived twenty-two years. The place for his burial and 2,000 sesterces for his funeral have been given by decurial decree. Mulvia Prisca, his mother, set this up from her own money.

[*Graffito on the tomb*] Mulvia Prisca, who frequently pours out her grief here and has no peace.

Further Reading

Bernstein (2007)

III | Daughters

Infants and Toddlers

Compared with the high infant mortality in the ancient world, grave inscriptions for children who died under the age of one are relatively rare. This has sparked a debate as to whether the relationship between parents and their young children was less intimate in antiquity than today, the parents protecting themselves from an emotional attachment to their newborns whom they might lose prematurely. As the inscriptions below show, this conclusion is too one-sided. Not only are there numerous other ways to express one's grief that leave no trace in our evidence, but also quite a few parents did express their love for their deceased infants and their mourning at their death by putting up an inscription in stone. Note the numerous endearments, expressions of grief and other emotional language used in these epitaphs. Also, there may have been regional differences in the expression of emotions, as is suggested by funerary reliefs from Pannonia emphasising affectionate family relations.

Further Reading

Boatwright (2005); Carroll (2018); Golden (1988); King (2000); Mander (2013); Rawson (2003)

58 Flavia Athenais

CIL 6, 34114
Rome. Late first century AD

A verse epitaph on a marble funerary altar commemorates a girl who died before she was nine months old. Her family was of servile birth: her mother was a freedwoman and

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her father a sub-slave (*servus peculiaris*) of the emperor Domitian. A *servus peculiaris* was a slave who belonged to the *peculium* of a person incapable of owning property (for instance, a slave or a man or woman *in potestate*).

To the spirits of the departed. For Flavia Athenais. Apollonius, sub-slave (*servus peculiaris*) of the emperor Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, and Flavia Pallas, her parents, made this for their dearest daughter. She lived eight months and twenty-six days.

[*In verse*] Snatched from her mother's breast, the unhappy child lies here before she had lived through nine full circles of the moon. The grieving father and mother cried over her who lies here and enclosed her small body in a marble tomb.

59 Hateria Superba

CIL 6, 19159 = *ILS* 8005 = *RICIS* 2, 501/0201
Rome. AD 100–110

A large marble funerary altar outside the Porta Flaminia shows a standing girl in a niche framed by torches. She is dressed in a tunica and the *toga praetexta* of citizen children and crowned with a wreath by winged cupids, suggesting an association with the divine. She is flanked by a dog and a bird, and she has a bunch of grapes and a bird in her hands. The ornament in the centre of her hair decorated with pearls may symbolise an identification with Isis. She is portrayed as older than the one-and-a-half-year-old girl she was at her death. Possibly her parents (judging by their names ex-slaves) wanted to present her as a very precocious child.

To the departed spirits of Hateria Superba, who lived one year, six months and twenty-five days. Her most unhappy parents Quintus Haterius Ephebus and Julia Zosime made this for their daughter and for themselves and theirs.

[*Under the relief*] To the spirits of the departed. The place occupies 7 feet in width and is 4 feet deep.

60 Two Greek girls dying around the age of one

IGUR 544 = *IG* 14, 1609
Rome. Imperial period

A Greek epitaph on a funerary plaque from Rome (now lost), testifies to the early death of two girls. The single Greek names of mother and daughters and the fact that the inscription is in Greek suggest that the mother was a Greek immigrant, possibly a slave or a freedwoman.

To the spirits of the departed. For Euposia, who lived for one year, eleven months and seventeen days, and for Zosime, who lived for eight months. Their mother Zoe made (this tomb) for her sweetest children.

61 Aemilia Donativa

CIL 8, 16572 = *ILAlg* 1, 3165
Theveste, Numidia. Imperial period

This verse epitaph for a girl of a little over one year old reflects the sorrow of her parents. Judging by their Latinised names, the father, (Aemilius) Turbo, may have been a Roman citizen, but the legal status of the mother is unknown.

To the spirits of the departed. Aemilia Donativa lived one year, four months and thirteen days. She lies here. She lived sweeter than a rose. Turbo, her father, and Designata, her mother, made this for their daughter.

62 Cornelia Anniana

CIL 14, 2482 = *ILS* 8488
Castrimoenium, Italy (1). Imperial period

An epitaph on a grave stele paints an endearing picture of a one-year-old girl.

To the departed spirit of Cornelia Anniana, our daughter who was already babbling when she was not yet two years old. She lived one year, three months and ten days. The parents made this with their own money for their sweetest (*dulcissima*) daughter.

63 Anthis Chrysostoma

CIL 6, 34421
Rome. Imperial period

Apart from her parents, three freed persons and two slaves, who were involved in her upbringing, contributed to the erection of the marble funerary stele of Anthis Chrysostoma. Judging by the single Greek names of her parents, they may have been (former?) slaves.

For Anthis Chrysostoma, sweet chattering little bird, babbling, who lived three years, five months and three days. Her most unhappy parents, Faenomenus and Helpis, made this inscription for their dearest daughter with her honey-sweet little voice, who deserved well. Porcius Maximus, Porcia Charita, Porcia Helias, Sardonux and Menophilus, who nursed her until the day of her death.

64 Better not to be born

CIL 13, 7113 = *CSIR* D 2, 6, 88
Mogontiacum, Germania Superior. Mid-second century AD

This large sandstone stele, broken at the top, shows a relief of a playing infant holding a rattle in her left hand (Figure 13). With her right hand she reaches out for a basket filled with flowers, which is tipping over. At the sides, laurel trees are depicted. In the verse

Figure 13 Sandstone funerary stele of a small girl from Mogontiacum (Mainz). Landesmuseum Mainz, inv. S 996.
Photo GDKE, Landesmuseum Mainz (Ursula Rudischer).

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epitaph the grieving parents express pain for the early death of their daughter of six months, wishing that she had never been born rather than leaving them so quickly. There is a remarkable emphasis on the mother, who is named first and in larger letters, whereas no names are recorded of the husband and of the deceased girl herself. The name Telesphoris suggests that the mother was of Greek descent, perhaps a freed-woman, whose partner may have been in the Roman army at Mogontiacum (modern Mainz). At the end of the text, the baby girl is compared to a rose that blooms briefly and then quickly withers. Another sandstone stele, set up by Telesphoris and her unnamed husband for their deceased daughter, shows the same relief (*CIL* 13, 7114).

To the spirits of the departed. Telesphoris and her husband, the parents, set this up for their sweetest (*dulcissima*) daughter. One cannot but complain about (the death of) this sweet little girl. Would that you had never been born, if at birth you – so dear to us – were to return so quickly to the place from which you were brought forth to us, a reason for grief for your parents. She lived half a year and eight days. Like a rose she flowered and immediately withered.

Young Girls

Girls dying in (or slightly before) their teens were often praised not only for their sweetness and charm but also for their matronal qualities. The parents grieved not only for the loss of a child but also for the promise of marriage and adulthood that was cut short by their premature deaths. In some cases, sorcery was suspected as the reason for their early deaths (see also Chapter 4).

65 On the death of a young girl

CIL 5, 6808 = *CIL* 1, 2161
Eporedia, Italy (11). First century BC

The stone on which this verse epitaph for a young girl was carved is lost. She was a (freeborn?) daughter of the freedman mentioned as the owner of the tomb, Gaius Pagurius Gelos. Despite her age, she is praised for adult qualities such as her dignified behaviour and her wool work.

Of Gaius Pagurius Gelos, freedman of Gaius. Traveller, stand still and look at this lofty burial mound (*tumulus*), which contains the bones of a girl of tender age. Here I lie buried, still in the spring-time of my life. I showed dignity (*gravitas*) as to my sense of duty and in my wool work (*lanificium*). I complain about this so undeserved and heavy blow of fortune. If you ask for my name, the name Salvia will resound. Farewell, traveller, I hope you will be happier.

66 A daughter dying at the age of seven

CIL 6, 21846
Rome. Imperial period

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An epitaph on a large marble plaque with neat letters commemorates in learned verses the death of an accomplished girl, Magnilla, who died when she was seven years old (in her eighth year means that she was not yet eight). Though not mentioned by name, we may suppose that it was set up by her parents. The verses allude to heroines of Greek mythology, such as Hecuba, queen of Troy, the symbol of the aged sorrowful mother mourning her children, and Penthesilea, the young unmarried Amazon queen killed by Achilles.

Secure rest of the shades and praised spirits of the pious, who guard the holy places of the Erebos, lead innocent Magnilla through the woods and plains directly to your Elysian fields. She was snatched away in her eighth year by the pressing Fates, while she plucked the time of her tender childhood. She was beautiful, admirable as to her judgement, learned (*docta*) beyond her age, decent, sweet, and pleasing in her charms. Such an unhappy girl who is deprived of her life so quickly should be mourned with perpetual lament and tears. Or should we rather call her happy since she has evaded wretched old age? Thus Penthesilea cried less than Hecuba.

67 Dying just before her wedding day

CIL 3, 2875
Nedinum, Dalmatia. Imperial period

Death just before marriage was considered especially bitter: cf. Pliny's letter on the death of Minicia Marcella (*Ep.* 5.16).

For Opinia Neptilla, daughter of Marcus, fourteen years old, maiden (*virgo*) without hope, who died just before her wedding day. Marcus Opinius Rufus and Gellia Neptilla, her parents, set this up.

68 The early death of a daughter and a cursed wife

CIL 6, 20905
Rome. *c.* AD 80

A richly decorated marble funerary altar with separate verse inscriptions on the front and on the back was set up for Junia Procula, who died at the age of almost nine. The altar shows her portrait-bust in a medaillon on the front. Her father, Marcus Junius Euphrosynus (judging by his name, a freedman), built the tomb for himself, his daughter, and, probably, his wife, whose name has been erased. This unusual *damnatio memoriae* may be connected to the inscription on the rear side, which curses the freedwoman (Junia) Acte, who had deceived Marcus Junius Euphrosynus. We may reconstruct that she had been freed without payment in order to marry her former patron (see Chapter 2) and that they had a daughter, Junia Procula. Some time after the daughter's death, Acte eloped with a lover and two of her husband's slaves, after allegedly poisoning her husband, who – we may assume – died of a slow disease. The deceived patron–husband curses her, wishing her 'rope and nail' to hang herself and burning pitch to consume her evil heart. Thus, his curse was meant to take vengeance on her as well as humiliating her. By inscribing his curse on the back of the funerary altar, Marcus Junius Euphrosynus appealed to the supernatural power of his prematurely

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deceased daughter to carry the curse to the appropriate deity (see Chapter 4) and thus take vengeance on his faithless wife.

[*On the front*] To the departed spirits of Junia Procula, daughter of Marcus. She lived eight years, eleven months and five days. She left her pitiable father and mother in mourning. Marcus Junius Euphrosynus made this for himself and for [*name erased*]. You, allow the bones of daughter and parents to rest together. [*To a wrongdoer, perhaps his former wife*] Whatever you have done to us, may you expect the same for yourself. Believe me, you will pay for it yourself.

[*On the back, in verse*] Here are engraved the eternal marks of disgrace of the freedwoman Acte, a treacherous, deceitful, and hard-hearted poisoner. I wish her nail and rope made out of broom, that she may tie around her neck, and glowing hot pitch to burn her evil heart! Though manumitted without payment, she deceived her patron by eloping with an adulterer, and she abducted his servants – a maid-servant and a boy – while he was lying in bed, so that he pined away, a lonely, abandoned, and wrecked old man. And the same marks of disgrace for Hymnus and for those who went off with Zosimus.

Further Reading

Evans-Grubbs (2002a); Graf (2007)

69 Blaming a freedman for the death of a daughter

CIL 6, 12649
Rome. First or second century AD

The marble plaque which contained this funerary inscription is lost, but part of the text has been preserved in a manuscript copy. The bereaved father curses the murderer of his daughter wishing him 'rope and nail' to hang himself.

[*First lines missing*] Her father, born unhappy, had a dreadful life. Day and night he was in tears, longing for his daughter. I ordered that when I am dead, I am to be buried here too with the mourning equipment I prepared when alive: a couch, coverings, clothing for lying in state, a cloak, all black. I also ordered that my bones will rest in the altar together with those of my daughter. This will be a comfort for me. Around the altar there will be burial places for my freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants and for those to whom they will have given permission, on this condition that each time any of them places wreaths on the tombs of their relatives, they also wreathe our altar. For the freedman Atimetus, by whose treacherous wrongdoing I lost my daughter, I wish 'rope and nail' from which he may hang himself.

70 A girl who looked like a boy

CIL 6, 19007
Rome. Second century AD

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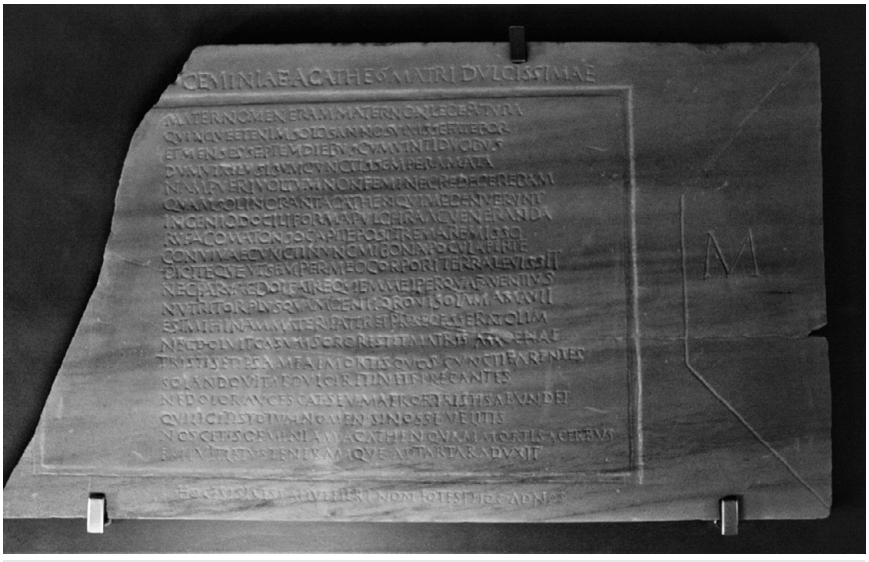

Figure 14 Marble plaque with verse epitaph for Geminia Agathe. Rome, Capitoline Museums CE 795.
Photo author.

The inexpert verse epitaph on this marble plaque (Figure 14) seems composed by an amateur. The speaker is Geminia Agathe, nicknamed Mater, who died at the age of five. Her epitaph expresses pride that she resembled a little boy in her countenance and in her hair, which was cropped short at the front like that of a boy and not tied up in a knot at the back of her head. She was mourned by her mother, aunt and, possibly, a stepfather, her father having died before her. The epitaph also addresses a wider group of relatives and banqueters at her funeral banquet, asking them to console her family.

[*On top*] For Geminia Agathe Mater, the sweetest.

[*Flanking the text*] To the spirits of the departed.

[*In verse*] Mother (*Mater*) was my name, but I will never be mother (*mater*) by law: I'll admit that I have lived only five years, seven months and twenty-two days. As long as I lived, I played and was always loved by everybody. For, believe me, I had the face of a boy, not of a girl, and only those who brought me forth knew me as Agathe. I had a gentle character, a pretty and venerable appearance and red hair cropped short on top and hanging loose at the back. You, banqueters, now all raise your cups to bless me and pray that the earth may always rest lightly upon my body. May Faventius, who reared me more than my father and who loved only me, not mourn exceedingly over the repose of my small body. For I have a mother; my father preceded me in death long ago and did not mourn my fate. There is also my lovely mother's sister, who is herself mournful at my death, too. You, all my relatives, please keep them in

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sweet life by consoling them, praying that their pain may not increase nor their bitter grief overflow. If you, who read this, wish to know my full name, know that I was Geminia Agathe, whom bitter Death has snatched away and led her to Tartarus at a tender age.

[*Lower margin*] This is (what I have to say). Thus it is, it cannot be otherwise. So much for us.

71 A daughter dying at the age of ten

CIL 13, 2108
Lugdunum, Gallia Lugdunensis. Second century AD

A funerary altar with elegant letters marks the tomb of a ten-year-old girl. A plaster cast of her death mask was found in her grave showing her face after death. Since she had her mother's family name (Claudia, suggesting the family's acquisition of Roman citizenship during the reign of Claudius), she may have been an illegitimate child. Her mother set up the altar and dedicated it 'under the axe' (*sub ascia*), which is confirmed by a relief showing an axe at the right side.

To the divine spirits and the memory of Claudia Victoria, who lived ten years, one month and eleven days. Claudia Severina, her mother, made this for her sweetest (*dulcissima*) daughter and herself while alive and dedicated it under the axe (*sub ascia*).

Further Reading

Carroll (2011a) 24–5 and 39 with fig. 13

72 Deceiving the hopes of her parents

CIL 10, 2601 = *LIKelsey* 152
Misenum, Italy (1). Second–early third century AD

On a marble funerary plaque from a cemetery in Misenum, her parents mourn their deceased daughter, calling her *virgo deceptrix* (deceiving virgin) since by her early death she had deceived their hopes.

To the spirits of the departed. Julia Marulla, sweetest (*dulcissima*) to her parents, who lived fourteen years, eight months and four days. Farewell maiden, who has deceived our hopes (*deceptrix*).

73 A girl murdered for her jewellery

CIL 3, 2399 = *ILS* 8514
Salona, Dalmatia. Late second–third century AD

An epitaph on a funerary stele relates the fate of a girl killed for her jewellery. For the notion that jewels could attract robbers (and adulterers), see also *CIL* 6, 5302 lines 5/6: 'Be indulgent to her with clothes but suppress lustrous jewellery. Thus, the robber will stay away nor will there be an adulterer.'

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To the divine spirits of Julia Restuta, a most unhappy girl, killed at the age of ten for her jewels. Julius Restutus and Statia Pudentilla, her parents, set this up.

IV | Grandmothers

Grandmothers are much rarer in inscriptions than wives and mothers, but some inscriptions record women's successive roles throughout their lives, including that of grandmother (*avia*). Because of the early death of the parents, some grandmothers raised their grandchildren, as we know from the literary sources (e.g. Pliny's letter on Ummidia Quadratilla: see Chapter 6). In exceptional cases, a grandmother even buried a grandchild, which was regarded as a cruel inversion of fate. We have to keep in mind that, due to the early age at marriage of Roman girls, a grandmother might be relatively young.

Further Reading

Rawson (2003) 239–41

74 A grandmother raising her grandchild

CIL 5, 3710
Verona, Italy (10). Imperial period

An inscription on an adorned stele (now lost) suggests that Cavarasia Faustina had lost her mother at an early age and was nursed by her paternal grandmother, Postumia Paulina.

To the spirits of the departed. Marcus Cavarasius Secundus set this up during his lifetime for Postumia Paulina, his incomparable wife, who lived with me for thirty-seven years without any discord (*sine quaerrella ulla*), and for himself, and Marcus Cavarasius Maximianus and Marcus Cavarasius Aurelianus made this for their well-deserving mother and Cavarasia Faustina for her grandmother (*avia*) and nurse (*nutrix*).

75 A grandmother burying a granddaughter

CIL 6, 18282b
Rome. Imperial period

A marble funerary plaque is set up by a grandmother for her deceased granddaughter. She refers to the unnatural inversion of fate that a grandmother should bury a granddaughter.

To the departed spirits of Flavia Apollinaris, her granddaughter (*neptis*). She lived eight years. The grandmother (*avia*) dedicated to her blessed granddaughter what the granddaughter should have made for her grandmother.

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76 The parents and grandmother together burying a girl

CIL 6, 27259
Rome. Second century AD

An epitaph on a marble funerary plaque shows parents setting up a memorial for their three-year-old daughter, together with her grandmother and a male pedagogue or childminder. The latter is affectionately indicated as 'daddy' (*tata*), which may be the term the little girl used to address him.

To the departed spirits of Terentia Spes. She lived three years. Her most dutiful parents made this together with her grandmother (*avia*) and her 'daddy' (*tata*).

Further Reading

Bradley (1991) 76–102 on '*Tatae* and *Mammae* in the Roman Family'

V | Siblings and Other Relations

Due to the high mortality in the ancient world we sometimes find brothers and sisters commemorating each other where we would have expected parents or spouses to have done so, or even more distant relatives such as cousins, uncles/aunts and in-laws taking care of the burial of relatives. It testifies to the continuing bonds between members of the extended family, but does not necessarily mean that they actually lived together in daily life. Slave and freed childminders and pedagogues, however, lived with their charges in the same house and were affectionately addressed as *mamma* (mummy) and *tata* (daddy); see further Chapter 3.

77 Two sisters

AE 1981, 442
Altinum, Italy (10). AD 1–30

A rectangular stone urn was made by a freedwoman for herself and for her sister, who judging by her name had been freed by the same owner.

Popillia Aemoena, freedwoman of Publius, made this during her lifetime for herself and for Popillia Musa, freedwoman of Publius, her sister.

78 Siblings

AE 1973, 46
Rome. Early third century AD

A fragmentarily preserved marble *strigilis* sarcophagus was commissioned by a brother for his deceased sister.

To the spirits of the departed. For Sossia Marcia, sweetest (*dulcissima*) and well deserving. Heraclida, her brother, set this up for his dearest sister.

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79 Aunt and mother-in-law

CIL 2, 4476 = *IRC* 2, 50
Aeso, Hispania Tarraconensis. Second century AD

The statue base on which the inscription was carved is lost. Since the younger Porcia Catulla married the son of her father's sister, the deceased Porcia Catulla was both her aunt and her mother-in-law.

For Porcia Catulla, daughter of [. . .]. Porcia Catulla, daughter of Marcus, set this up for her excellent aunt (*amita*) and mother-in-law (*socrus*).

80 A sister/cousin dying after childbirth

CIL 3, 14352 = *TitAq* 2, 625
Aquincum, Pannonia Inferior. Late first–early second century AD

A broken limestone stele from Aquincum (Figure 15) shows a woman with a swaddled baby, which may indicate that she died shortly after giving birth. Her name suggest that her family acquired Roman citizenship under the Flavians; her *cognomen* Aiulo shows her local allegiance, which accords with her local dress.

Flavia Aiulo, twenty years old, lies here. Gallio set this up for his most dutiful sister (*soror pientissima*) and Avitus for his most dutiful cousin (*consobrina*).

81 A niece

CIL 6, 10566
Rome. Late first century AD

A coarse marble stele from the Via Appia with a triangular top showing the bust of the deceased girl was set up by Acuvia Polla for her niece.

To the spirits of the departed. Acuvia Polla set this up for the well-deserving daughter of her sister, Marcia Bassilla, who lived twelve years.

82 A girl's pedagogue and her 'mummy'

CIL 6, 2210 = *ILS* 4999 = *IGUR* 707
Rome. Mid-first century AD

This bilingual epitaph (in Latin, with two words in Greek) on a large marble funerary altar was commissioned by a Claudia Quinta for her pedagogue and teacher, who had also been her guardian (*tutor*) from the time she was orphaned (which in Roman law means that her father had died). Judging by his name, he was a Greek freedman, and he may have taught her Greek literature. The two words in Greek may be taken as a tribute to his teaching and background. His duties as a warden of the temple of Diana Planciana on the Quirinal may have been performed alongside his guardianship. He is praised by his former ward for his trustworthy fulfilment of his guardianship, which means that he administered her property well and considerately looked after her interests. Their relationship stayed close until his death, as she also provided for the burial of his brother

Figure 15 Limestone stele from Aquincum, Pannonia, showing the deceased with a swaddled baby. Aquincum Museum Budapest inv. 64.10.10. Lupa.at/2854.
Photo Ortolf Harl.

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and his female relative or fellow freedwoman (as she shared his family name), who had served as Claudia's 'mummy' (wet nurse).

To the propitious gods. Claudia Quinta, daughter of Tiberius, made this for Gaius Julius Hymetus, temple warden of Diana Planciana, her pedagogue [*in Greek*:] and teacher (*kai kathegetes*), as well as her guardian since she was an orphan (*tutor a pupillatu*) because of his most trustworthy performance of his guardianship over her. Also for his brother Gaius Julius Epityncanus and for Julia Sporis, her 'mummy' (*mamma*), and their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants.

Further Reading

Gardner (1990) 5–29; Morrell (forthcoming)

83 'Mummy' and 'daddy'

CIL 6, 36353 = *ILS* 8548
Rome. Imperial period

This epitaph for the three-year-old Silvia was set up by her freed parents together with a freed and a slave childminder. For the function of *mamma*, see nos. 82 and 93 and Chapter 3.

To the departed spirits of Silvia, who lived three years, two months and nine days. Claudius Protomachus and Claudia Damale set this up for their daughter together with Salonius Epictetus, her 'daddy' (*tata*), and Aphrodisia, her 'mummy' (*mamma*).

VI | Foster Families and Stepfamilies

In Latin epitaphs we frequently find commemorations of foster children (*alumni/alumnae*). Foundlings, orphans, poor relatives, or even favoured slave children could be raised as foster children by childless couples, but we also find couples raising a foster child – in some cases an illegitimate child from a previous union – together with their own legitimate children. Foster children could be taken in for various reasons, including self-seeking ones (for instance, as an apprentice or as a support in old age), but funerary inscriptions show foster parents mourning the deaths of foster children with great affection, similar to feelings expressed at the death of a biological child.

Further Reading

Bellemore and Rawson (1990); Rawson (1986) 173–86

84 Commemorated by the husband and foster parents

CIL 9, 4755
Reate, Italy (4). First century AD

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On a lost tombstone Ancharia Nice is commemorated by her husband and her foster parents. She shares her family name with her husband, which suggests that they were relatives or that both were freed by the same owner.

For Ancharia Nice, who lived twenty-one years and six months. Gaius Ancharius Martinus made this for his well-deserving wife and her parents for their most dutiful foster daughter (*alumna pientissima*).

85 Mourning the death of a foster daughter

CIL 11, 3771
Careiae, Italy (7). Second century AD

In a verse epitaph on a marble funerary altar a foster parent commemorates his beloved foster daughter, who died at the age of almost ten. He finds comfort in imagining her face and in the idea that soon they will be reunited in death.

To the spirits of the departed. Publius Terentius Quietus set this up for Terentia Asiatica, daughter of Publius, his foster daughter (*alumna*). [*In verse*] Here lies the lifeless body of my beloved foster daughter, an innocent girl whom the Fates have plunged into a bitter death, for she had not yet completed her tenth year. The cruel Fates have made my old age a grievous one. For I will always search for you, my foster daughter Asiatica, and while mourning I will constantly envisage your face and it will be a consolation that I shall see you very soon, when after death my shade shall be reunited with yours.

86 A young foster daughter

CIL 6, 12402
Rome. Mid-second century AD

On a marble funerary plaque a freed couple mourned their foster daughter, who has the same family name as the wife.

To the departed spirits of Arria Januaria, who lived seven years, seven months and seven days. Tiberius Claudius Polybianus and Arria Augustalis made this for their dearest foster daughter (*alumna carissima*), for themselves and for their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. Titus Aelius Treptio, freedman of the emperor, made this for himself and his well-deserving wife, Aelia Capriola.

87 A freed slave raised as a foster daughter?

CIL 11, 1029
Brixellum, Italy (8). Second century AD

The marble grave altar of Julia Graphis was set up within the funerary enclosure of her foster parents. Since she has the same family name as her foster father, she may have

been their freed slave raised as an *alumna*. Her father was a prominent *Augustalis* and probably a freedman.

To the departed spirits of Julia Graphis. She lived fifteen years, two months and eleven days. Quintus Julius Alexander, *sevir Augustalis* and twice *magister Augustalis*, and Vaccia Justina set this up for their dearest foster daughter (*alumna karissima*).

88 Buried by her daughter and her foster father

CIL 6, 23605
Rome. Second century AD

A travertine funerary plaque was set up for Ostoria Satria Eubulis by her daughter and her foster father, with whom she remained in touch during adult life.

[*Flanking the inscription*] To the spirits of the departed.

Ostoria Satria Eubulis, daughter of Gaius, lived for twenty-eight years, nine months and nineteen days. Fonteia Messalina, daughter of Decimus, set this up for her most dutiful (*pientissima*) mother and Titus Flavius Vitalis for his foster daughter (*alumna*).

Stepdaughters

Due to divorce or the early death of a parent, numerous children grew up with a step-parent and step-siblings. Stepchildren are usually indicated as a *privignus/privigna* or, more rarely, as a *filiaster/filiastra*, though the latter word may also be used for illegitimate children. The distinction between these two categories may be blurred. Many inscriptions recording stepchildren were set up by men and women of freed families, and some of their children may have been born before both partners were freed. These illegitimate children received the family name of the mother, if free when giving birth, or were born as slaves and received the name of the master when freed. In individual cases it is hard to decide whether a child bearing the name of the mother was the stepchild or the illegitimate natural child of the dedicator.

Further Reading

Watson (1989)

89 Caninia Pia

IPOstie-A, 277
Portus, Italy (1). AD 117–61

A marble plaque on a family tomb records that Marcus Vibennius Donatus built the tomb for his wife and legitimate children and for his stepdaughter, whose name – the same as that of her mother – suggests that she was her illegitimate daughter.

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To the spirits of the departed. Marcus Vibennius Donatus, veteran of the emperor, made this for himself, his wife Caninia Pia, his children Vibennius Maximus and Vibennia Quartula, his stepdaughter (*privigna*) Caninia Pia, and for his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. The burial place or area and the crypt is conceded him by Lucius Munatius Marinus with the right of passage, entrance and circuit.

90 Calliope

AE 1974, 140
Along the Via Praenestina, Italy (1). Second century AD

Because of her single name, Calliope may have been born a slave. Their shared name suggests that her (step)parents were freed by the same master.

To the spirits of the departed. For Aurelius Sulycianus, who lived sixty years, five months and ten days. Aurelia Gamice, his wife, and Calliope, his stepdaughter (*privigna*), set this up for him who deserved well.

91 Aelia Ulpia

CIL 6, 14289
Rome. Second century AD

This inscription on a marble funerary plaque records a complex family with a stepdaughter and a foster son.

To the spirits of the departed. Lucius Calvius Tergestinus made this for Ulpia Hieronis, his most venerable wife, with whom he lived for twenty-one years without quarrel (*sine querella*), and for his dearest stepdaughter (*privigna carissima*) Aelia Ulpia and for himself and his descendants. The burial place is conceded by Pomponius Rufus, his foster son (*alumnus*).

92 Aelia Nebris

CIL 14, 3744 = *InscrIt* 4, 1, 296
Tibur, Italy (4). Second–third century AD

An inscription on the front of an adorned marble urn commemorates Aelia Nebris, the stepdaughter of Tiberius Claudius Chares. She may be the daughter of his wife from a previous relationship.

To the spirits of the departed. Tiberius Claudius Chares set this up for Aelia Nebris, his deserving stepdaughter (*filiastra*). She lived sixteen years.

93 Claudia Saturnina

CIL 6, 15585 = *IMCCatania* 438
Rome. Second century AD

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An epitaph on a now incomplete marble plaque commemorates Claudia Saturnina. She probably was the freeborn daughter of the freedwoman Claudia Syntyche from a previous union or from her common-law marriage to Flavius Proculus. She nursed her home-born slave and freedman Faustus, who affectionately calls her 'mummy', and was 'married' to the imperial slave Castor. Despite the word *coniunx*, her marriage to a slave was not recognised by Roman law.

To the spirits of the departed. For Claudia Saturnina, stepdaughter (*filiastra*) of Flavius Proculus and Claudia Syntyche. Faustus, her home-born slave (*verna*) and freedman, set this up for his 'mummy' (*mamma*) and Castor, home-born slave of our emperor, for his well-deserving and excellent wife (*coniunx*).

Stepmothers

Since children legally continued the paternal line, they stayed with their father when their parents separated and were part of his new family upon remarriage. Thus, stepmothers were more common than stepfathers, which may have contributed to the stereotype of the wicked stepmother in ancient literary sources. Inscriptions testify to more cordial relationships, however. In inscriptions, the word *noverca* (stepmother) is very rare and always employed in a neutral or positive sense.

Further Reading

Watson (1995)

94 A stepmother setting up a tomb for a stepson

IPOstie-A, 10
Portus, Italy (1). Second century AD

This inscription on a marble plaque is set up by a stepmother for her stepson.

To the spirits of the departed. Albia Urbica made this for her sweetest stepson (*filiaster*) Marcus Octavius Aerius, who lived ten years, seven months and nineteen days.

95 A dutiful stepmother

CIL 2, 5008
Olisipo, Hispania Lusitania. Imperial period

This inscription on a marble plaque is set up for a 'dutiful stepmother' with the partly indigenous name Julia Severa Audalea.

For Julia Severa Audalea and Gaius Fabius, the son of Gaius. Gaius Fabius Tuscus set this up for his excellent son and his dutiful stepmother (*noverca pia*).