

Where the Old Meets the New and the New Meets the Old

Fulvia, Octavia, and Female *Auctoritas* 44-31 BCE

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Abstract

Women played a prominent part in the politics, alliances, and daily life of the Triumvirs, none more so than Fulvia, the wife of Mark Antony, and Octavia, sister of Young Caesar. Taking the chronological approach, this thesis begins with Fulvia at the time of her marriage to Mark Antony in 47/46. By using a historiographical method it is possible to remove the inherent bias against women in the evidence and re-interpret her role and actions as an independent woman, displaying rational agency. This thesis suggests that she was instrumental in the planning and execution of Caesars funeral in 44, by drawing parallels to the burial of Clodius, her first husband, nearly a decade earlier. Fulvia was a highly capable political thinker and strategist and with her union with Antony they in effect became a power couple. As the political climate changed in 44 Antony was declared a public enemy of the state. Fulvia had deployed all her wits and traditional ways of interceding in order to obstruct the vote, but ultimately failed. Not until the establishment of the Triumvirate in 43 did she ascent to the unprecedented influence and power that would be her downfall. This thesis argues that she may have played a part in the proscriptions but the evidence may have been partly manufactured deformation by later narratives. Fulvia's downfall came in 41/40 as she lobbied against Young Caesar along with Lucius Antonius, Antony's younger brother. Prior scholarship has placed the guilt for the following war in Perusia on Fulvia; however, this thesis shows that she did not instigate the war, and that she was forced to follow Lucius' lead as their goals diverged. She was an instrumental part in the propaganda war, and once more showed her talent for planning and lobbying, while Lucius campaigned against Young Caesar. The year 41/40 showed Fulvia's influence, *auctoritas* and power, which reached an unprecedented height, not seen again until the time of Empresses. This thesis argues that Fulvia was a woman with skill, that her experience from *ante bellum* Rome along with the conditions of civil war, allowed for her to use her influence and *auctoritas* in a new manner.

As Fulvia died, we turn to Octavia, the elder sister of Young Caesar, and soon-to-be wife of Antony. With her the historiographical method is used to remove the bias from Augustus. Unlike other women, Octavia is portrayed as a dutiful wife, *matron* and a pawn in the game of politics. However, this thesis strongly suggest that she was as capable as her brother and understood civil war politics and deployed her influence in order to safeguard her family, husband and brother. In 40 she became the visible symbol of *concordia* and peace between the two Triumvirs, following Fulvia's death and Octavia's betrothal and marriage to Antony. In 37 her skills was put to the test. She scolded her impatient and angry brother for wanting war, and instead secured the Treaty of

Tarentum, where she arbitrated between the two Triumvirs and secured peace, and the renewal of the Triumvirate's assignment. Her actions served herself, her family and the *res publica*. She was far from submissive and pleading; rather she was firm and curbed her younger brothers' anger and impatience. In 35 she was elevated in status, due to several honours, including the inviolability of the tribunes. Contrary to existing belief this thesis argues that these honours had little to do with Antony, and was not a ploy to trap Antony. Though Young Caesar later used Antony's insults against Octavia in 35 against him, they were not intended as such. In that same year Octavia used her influence for the last time with success. Octavia never saw Antony again, and he divorced her in 32. Octavia could have avoided the war had she met with Antony and Young Caesar, but events prevented her from doing so. Octavia would continue her role as advisor to the Emperor, but she was in effect the last civil war *matron*. This thesis argues that she derived her influence and *auctoritas* from her experience and relation to Young Caesar and Antony and that she used it to mediate and arbitrate between the two colleagues and rivals. She was far from the submissive sister and wife; rather she was an independent woman who manoeuvred triumviral politics with skill and flair in a very different manner than her predecessor Fulvia.

Glossary

- **Ante Bellum** – “Before the war”, a period of breakdown that leads to war.
- **Auctoritas** – Influence, indirect power, guarantor, authority.
- **Consules Suffecti** – Replacement consuls.
- **Contiones** – Public speeches, usually given at the Rostra in the Forum.
- **Cursus Honorum** – Ladder of offices. The traditional political career path.
- **Dignitas** – Honour, dignity, prestige, charisma.
- **Domus** – House, family (in the more modern sense).
- **Familia** – Family, including slaves and household, wife/mother secluded.
- **Gens** – Clan.
- **Homo Novus** - New man. A man without ancestors of senatorial rank. The first to hold Roman office.
- **Hostis** – Enemy, enemy of the state.
- **Imagines** – Death Masks of ancestors, displayed in the Atrium of a Roman villa.
- **In Perpetuum** – To hold forever.
- **Incestum** – Violating the holy, an act of transgression against the gods, a severe crime.
- **Master Equitum** – Master of the Horse (second in command).
- **Mater** – Mother.
- **Materna Auctoritas** – Influence of a mother.
- **Matrona/ae** – Honourable married woman.
- **Nobiles** – Families with consular ancestry, nobles.
- **Ordo Matronarum** – Order of honourable wives.
- **Pater** – Father.
- **Pater Familias** – Father of the family.
- **Patria Potestas** – Power of a father.
- **Polemos** – Greek: War.
- **Potestas** – Power, power from a magistrate or public office.
- **Rostra** – Speaking platform in the Forum Romanum. Ship's head.
- **Salutiones** – A form of holding court in Republican Rome to maintain client-patron relations.
- **Sorore Auctoritas** – Influence of a sister.
- **Sui Iuris** – “In one's own right”, legally independent woman.
- **Transitio ad Plebem** – “Transition to plebeian”, a legal act transferring from one order to another.
- **Tutor** – Legal guardian.

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	3
Glossary	5
Contents	6
Introduction	7
<i>Female Auctoritas</i>	8
<i>Civil War and Female Agency</i>	11
Methodology: Approaches, Evidence and the Problems	13
<i>Fulvia, Octavia, and the Evidence</i>	14
Trends in Moderns Scholarship	16
The Old meets the New	21
<i>Fulvia and A Civil War Spectacle</i>	21
<i>The Makings of a Woman with Agency</i>	30
<i>Off with His Head! From Power to Downfall 44-40 BCE.</i>	32
<i>The Proscriptions: Fulvia's Cruelty Unveiled?</i>	35
<i>The Last Italian War Against Rome: Fulvia and the Perusine War.</i>	39
Inter Uxores	45
The New Meets the Old: Octavia	48
<i>An Expected Journey: Octavia's Youth, Education, and Early Influence</i>	48
<i>Octavia as concordia Between the East and the West</i>	54
<i>Tarentum: Octavia's Agency and Auctoritas</i>	57
<i>The Years 35-31: New Honours and Old Insults</i>	61
Conclusions	69
Bibliography	73

Introduction

In the twilight of the Late Republic, several influential women became prominent and vital for the decisions that ultimately led to civil war and the establishing of the principate. Two of these women were Fulvia, the wife of Marcus Antonius (Antony henceforth), and Octavia, sister of Octavian – the later emperor Augustus (Young Caesar henceforth). In recent years, the last century of the Republic has undergone substantial research by a number of scholars.¹ Much of this scholarly work concentrates on the male protagonists of the historical narratives, such as Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, Antony and Young Caesar. However, women have increasingly become a subject of investigation by many. Studies vary from biographies of women like Servilia,² Livia,³ and Terentia,⁴ to studies of the Roman *matronae* in general and their lives, habits, and daily doings.⁵ It is on this work that this thesis builds and seeks to push the limits of the present understanding of women's roles in the civil wars following Caesar's death in March 44 BCE.⁶ The period following Caesar's death saw the rise of the Triumvirate and the triumvirs, and with them the rules of the great political game of the dynasts changed. This had a far-reaching impact on the Roman world and, as we shall see, on the women married to the men of the ruling elite (the *matronae*). While Rome descended into civil strife, civil war, proscriptions, and an ever-changing political climate, the *matronae* of Rome had to adapt and often step out from behind the curtain and the traditional way of influence, and show agency in public. But how was female influence defined in Rome, if at all, and how can we define it today? Roman women were barred from political office, military service and quite often from geographical centres of civic administration such as the Forum Romanum.⁷ Traditionally speaking, women would influence their own husbands behind closed doors in order to achieve a favour on their behalf, like Cato the Censor famously feared women would do in 195.⁸ During the last century of the Republic it would seem that this traditional approach to enact influence met competition from a more independent approach. Women, due to the possibilities granted to them via the evolution of law and tradition, as will be discussed, started to

¹ See, Dixon 1988, 199; Lintott 1999; Lange 2009, 2016; Osgood 2006, 2018; Steel 2013; Culham 2014; Hemelrijk

² Treggiari 2019.

³ Barrett 2004; Brännstedt 2016.

⁴ Treggiari 2007.

⁵ A *matrona* (pl. *Matronae*) was a married honourable woman. The term is used to describe in particular the wives of the leading men of Rome. To mention a few, see Shaw 1987; Dixon 1988, 1992; Gardner 1995; Treggiari 1991, 2007; Webb Forthcoming.

⁶ All dates are BCE unless otherwise stated.

⁷ See, Boatwright 2011.

⁸ Livy 34.29.9; 4.18.

act independently in certain extreme cases. Not necessarily because they wanted to, but rather because it was forced upon them to do so.

The ability to act independently and in public stemmed from a number of customs and incidents that allowed for women to intercede. One was the Roman mythology and legend itself. Though not new nor defining of the Late Republic, Roman legend allowed women to intercede on behalf of the state, and thus interfere in the otherwise male sphere of operations – with an example being the Sabine women in the days of Romulus or Veturia, the mother of the general Coriolanus from the 5th century BCE.⁹ Another was the Punic Wars of the 3rd and 2nd century BCE, which expanded the empire and changed politics in Rome. Following the changes in economy, politics, diplomacy and military due to the wars, the women of the elite gained more wealth and autonomy.¹⁰ In the ensuing years, internal strife, an ever-changing political climate and the fight for sole supremacy amongst the leading generals consumed the republic, forcing the women to use their new freedom when faced with the absence of men. The ever-looming presence of internal conflict allowed for the women to act on an unprecedented scale. However, during the civil wars following Caesar's death there was not a uniform way of exercising female influence, and Fulvia and Octavia used their influence and independency in different ways. Thus this thesis poses the main question: How did female *auctoritas*, influence, and 'power' manifest itself during the civil wars under the so-called second Triumvirate?

Female Auctoritas

Being barred from office, women sought to influence and direct politics in other ways. This thesis uses the distinctly Roman word and concept *auctoritas* to describe this influence and 'power'. To my knowledge the word does not occur in any description of a woman in our evidence prior to the principate, but the word, and indeed the concept, serves best in describing what was attributed to a select few women in the Late Republic. The notion of power, especially when concerning women, is an elusive and abstract concept that beckons the question: what was power in late republican Rome? The concept of *potestas* (power derived from a magistracy) and *auctoritas* was closely

⁹ Culham 2006, 14.

¹⁰ Ibid. 145; See also the debate on the *lex Oppia* repeal, in Livy 34.1-7. Women were gradually given more rights through tradition and law, such as the right to own property, the right of divorce, the change from *in manu* marriages to *sine manu* marriages, a larger degree of education etc. Women also played a role in the religious life of Rome as Vestals, priestesses, *Regina Sacrorum* and in religious festivals such as the Bona Dea rites. See, Treggiari 1991; Dixon 1992; Gardner 1995; Hemelrijk 1999.

interlinked and female *auctoritas* could at times surpass that of male *potestas*, or so I will argue.¹¹ Actual *potestas* derived from a political office from being a *pater familias* (father of the family).¹² Women could not have actual power, but as we shall see, they could influence and were at times respected by others in such a manner that the word *auctoritas* is the most fitting. *Auctoritas* was in itself a way of power, one famously chosen by the first Emperor, Augustus, as his base of power, alongside his magisterial *potestas*.¹³ However, *auctoritas* is a term unique to the Roman world and connotes a wide range of meanings, and thus cannot be translated to a single word.¹⁴ As a core concept for this thesis, an exploration of the term is worthwhile: the concept in relation to the male sphere of operations and understandings as well as how it can be connected to women.

The word stems from the Latin *auctor* meaning a guarantor, or a person who affirms and lends credibility. As such *auctoritas* becomes “a quality that is inherent in and emanates from an individual”.¹⁵ However, *auctoritas* could, and did, form and derive from a political body such as the Senate. The Senate, while some members did possess *potestas* on an annual basis, did not rule through *potestas* or any other constitutional power. Rather it ruled through *auctoritas*,¹⁶ which, in this case is translated as through its ‘authority’ and as a ‘guarantor’. In theory it was the assemblies (the people) who voted and passed laws, but a senatorial decree was often heeded in the assemblies because of the senate’s *auctoritas*. Recognition was a key element. While *potestas* was bestowed upon an individual serving as a magistrate, *auctoritas* needed to be recognised by those on whom it was exerted.¹⁷ It follows that this would make it increasingly hard for a woman to attain *auctoritas*, or rather, that it would be recognised in our evidence, since a woman was not able to boost her reputation nor acquire the experience and wisdom through continuous office holding and service in the senate as men did. *Auctoritas* is, however, the most apt and fitting concept to describe the influence and power of the two women in this thesis.

Although the life of a Roman *matron* was a public one compared to their Greek counterparts, the ideal *matron* was expected to uphold the ideal of *pudicitia* (modesty) and could therefore not engage in public debate. As Rich stated, *auctoritas* was enjoyed in particular by the *principes*

¹¹ It could be argued that, in the last decades of the Republic, *auctoritas* surpassed *potestas* in several cases, as *auctoritas* was (as long as maintained) held for the duration of a lifetime, while *potestas* was held for a specific amount of time and related to a magistracy (not counting the *potestas* of a *pater familias*).

¹² This is known as *patria potestas* (power of a father). The father of a family had absolute power over his household and children.

¹³ RG 34.3: “After this time I excelled all in *Auctoritas*, although I possessed no more official *potestas* than other who were my colleagues in the several magistracies.” See also, Rich 2012 for the duality of Augustus’ power.

¹⁴ Cass. Dio 55.33.5.

¹⁵ Galinsky 1996, 12.

¹⁶ Cic. *Sest.* 98.

¹⁷ Galinsky 1996, 14.

civitatis (the leading citizen) due to his long service to the state, and thus he would take lead in the counsels in the Senate.¹⁸ The service to the state was the greatest one could aspire to do and the reward was *auctoritas*. This aspect of the concept is purely political. *Auctoritas* might be perceived differently depending on who interpret it. Augustus' claim to *auctoritas* might be understood differently by a soldier than by a senator – meaning that the soldier might perceive it as coming from Augustus' military achievements rather than his political, the same as the common citizen in the Empire might experience it as the *auctoritas* of a patron.¹⁹ As confusing as it might be, the term and concept had a “broad and ever expanding range of applications”.²⁰ It was not confined to the political sphere nor was it universally understood as the same. Unfortunately it is hard to decipher how it was perceived in the Republican era as much of what is known derives from the Augustan era and his claim to *auctoritas*. In those terms it embodied leadership, a fact that will be shown also applied to women of the Late Republic, as well as the term can be used to describe the influence and sway a mother held on her children (*materna auctoritas*).²¹ T. Peters and R. Waterman describe the role of a leader, one that is very applicable to the women in this thesis, by simply changing the pronouns:

The transforming leader is concerned with minutiae, as well. But [s]he is concerned with a different kind of minutiae; [s]he is concerned with the tricks of the pedagogue, the mentor, the linguist – the more successfully to become the value shaper, the exemplar, the maker of meanings.(...) [s]he is both calling forth and exemplifying the urge for transcendence that unites us all.²²

This thesis seeks to explore how *auctoritas* and ‘power’ was conferred on Fulvia, and Octavia and how they used it. Each woman was inherently different from the other and each exemplified the times they lived in. The thesis will make little use of modern theory on gender, as Rome was a pre-modern society and we have little to no information from the women themselves. All the evidence that survives is written by men and thus presents us with bias and the male view of these women. However, what may support some underlying structures is what might be deemed ancient theory. Thucydides and his description of Corcyra are used as a normative source – a source widely read

¹⁸ Rich 2012, 40.

¹⁹ The Emperor was in a sense the *pater familias* and patron of the entire Empire.

²⁰ Galinsky 1996, 16.

²¹ See, Hillard 1983.

²² Peters and Waterman 1982, 82-83.

and referred to by the likes of Cicero.²³ Some investigations have been made, that views Thucydides as a prospect theorist.²⁴ The study of gender predominantly works within the so-called age of Augustus and will not feature in this thesis, nor is gender the aim of this thesis' analysis.²⁵

Civil War and Female Agency

It becomes clear that women appear far more in the evidence when it shifts its attention to the civil wars of Caesar and the Triumvirate. The same becomes clear in the scholarship over the last decade, in which women play a larger role in the analysis of the civil wars and the understanding of politics and events.²⁶ This thesis joins with that conclusion but offer another factor, which is crucial in the understanding of the period and the women who navigated the troubled waters of civil war Rome. Not only do we learn more about women in the civil wars, civil war was the factor that made their influence, power and *auctoritas* possible on such an unprecedented scale. While it is more than likely that female agency and influence existed well before the civil wars, the changing condition caused by civil war forced women into action in a multitude of ways, not all discussed herein.²⁷ Fulvia and Octavia are in many ways alike, and yet still opposites in the way they deployed their skills. However, none of them would have had the possibility to influence and impact the Roman world and society the way they did had it not been for the conditions of civil war. This thesis views the women as individuals separate from their husbands, as rational beings exercising independent agency, specifically how Fulvia and Octavia, in relations to civil war, deployed their influence and skills during these times, not under orders, but because they could so on their own.

The first chapter of the thesis concerns itself with the use of methodology and how to approach the ancient evidence. It deals with the concept of ancient historiography and how this approach might reveal new possibilities and interpretations of Rome in the age of civil war. The second chapter deals with existing trends within the research field. It seeks to explain the current views, some of which this thesis builds on.

²³ Thuc. 3.70-85.

²⁴ Ober and Perry 2014.

²⁵ Milnor 2005.

²⁶ See amongst others, Syme 1939; Sumi 1997; Osgood 2006; Brennan 2015; Kunst 2016; Lange 2020; Cornwell 2020.

²⁷ See, Webb forthcoming on female influence in the middle Republic; Osgood 2014 on the *Laudatio* and Turia's influence; Treggiari 2007, 2019 on Terentia and Servilia.

The third chapter introduces a new interpretation of Fulvia, wife of Antony. With the political landscape and by extension the social hierarchy changed, Fulvia occupied a prominent and new role in the social sphere of Rome, one that resembles several characteristics of an Empress. The chapter seeks to see Fulvia in a new light, not necessarily as the cold and manipulative *matron* our biased evidence makes her out to be. The fourth chapter provides a brief overview of the time between Fulvia's death and Antony's subsequent marriage to Octavia.

The fifth chapter presents Octavia, the sister of Young Caesar – the future Emperor Augustus. In her, the principate and the Augustan ideals of a Roman matron is foreshadowed and displayed. The chapter presents her as the one in whom the new meets the old, but also as a woman of her time – proficient in civil war politics and the art of mediation and not just the ideal subordinate *matron* moulded in the Augustan narrative.

Methodology: Approaches, Evidence and the Problems

This thesis uses a historiographical method as its approach to the written evidence. Traditionally historiography deals with the history of writing history since the creation of history as a scientific field in the 19th century. Therefore each branch of history has its own historiography, or, in other words, history of how the field/branch occurred and how historians have approached it previously, how it was established and since evolved. In the context of ancient history historiography takes a different shape. Here it can be understood as the history-writing of the Romans and how they perceived their own history, or the later Greek response during the Emperors where some developed their own models of writing like Polybius, and others building on the Roman historians before them (Appian, Cassius Dio).²⁸ As a modern method and approach to the sources it once again changes form. When we approach the evidence with historiography it means:

“... The examination of ancient histories as literary artefacts, as the products of individual artistry with their own structure, themes and concerns ... general studies of individual historians tend to emphasize the ‘construction’ that the historian engages in while narrating his version of the past...”²⁹

In this thesis, a multitude of evidence will be used, ranging from contemporary (Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, archaeological evidence) and Late Republican evidence (Livy) to evidence produced in the early principate and later Empire (Augustus, Velleius Paterculus, Suetonius, Appian, Plutarch, Cassius Dio). Each presents us with different issues and inherent problems. Cicero was a stern opposition to Antony, Fulvia’s husband, and as such he is full of exaggeration, coloured by his political agenda and self-preservation.³⁰ Livy may have written during the early principate, and has several instances of what appear to be pro-Augustan sentiments and perhaps derived his narrative from some of Augustus’ memoirs and propaganda after the civil wars.³¹ All of the later evidence presents us with the same issues, while never having experienced the Republic. For the most part they do not inform us of their sources. As they were written more than a century after the civil wars they would have build their narratives on previously established ones – including evidence now lost

²⁸ Lange & Madsen 2016, VII.

²⁹ Marincola 2011, 77.

³⁰ On Cicero see, Lintott 2008, 33-42, 339-407; Steel (ed.) 2013b; Van der Blom 2019, 11-136.

³¹ See, Hoyos 2019, 210-238; Smith & Powell (eds.) 2009 on the memoirs of Augustus.

– while still having their own theme and agenda.³² Historiography enables us to read the evidence as a whole and understand the authors' view on the world and events he is portraying. In doing so we get a broader and more correct reading of the evidence when trying to understand single events. This thesis makes particular use of the narratives provided by Appian, Plutarch and Dio, as they are the most extensive works on the period and understanding them as a whole opens up for new opportunities. While in this instance historiography is used to remove inherent bias, it does also provide a positive understanding of the evidence in relation to its themes and goals. As such, new understandings of Dio's goals and themes may provide a new and improved reading of him as a whole.³³

By using historiography as a method in approaching the evidence on Fulvia and Octavia, this thesis seeks to provide a new and fresh understanding of the period and the women so instrumental to it, and in doing so challenge the previous understanding of women in the Late Republic. By identifying underlying bias, themes and analysing the language and rhetorical use in the evidence, we can extrapolate the women's actions and reconstruct the narrative in order to provide them with the role and agency they deserve in history.

Fulvia, Octavia, and the Evidence

Fulvia and Octavia are two of the women who appear the most in the big narratives on the civil wars. Yet, the approaches to each of them must be different due to the nature of the evidence, its origins and the time of its creation. On Fulvia there exists contemporary evidence, which begins during her entrance onto the stage of *ante bellum* Rome in the 50's and the civil wars. She first appears in Cicero's speech in favour of Milo given in 52.³⁴ This is coincidentally one of the only times that she is portrayed in a favourable light (Cornelius Nepos is the only other, to my knowledge), and the bias begins to take form, originating in Cicero's *Philippics* in the late 40's. By the time of the Perusine war, the contemporary archaeological evidence strongly suggests that some type of propaganda war was going on, with Fulvia involved.³⁵ The aftermath of the war firmly saw that Fulvia was blamed and damned for posterity. This bias becomes evident in the greater

³² Appian, Plutarch and Cassius Dio are the main narratives used in this thesis. For Appian see, Welch (ed.) 2015; For Plutarch see, Santangelo 2019, 320-350; For Dio see, Lange & Madsen (eds.) 2016, 2021.

³³ See Lange 2021 for an example on Dio and Perusia and Dio's themes.

³⁴ The speech that survives are a later reproduction by Cicero, published as a pamphlet see, Watts 1931, 3-5; Asc. *Mil.* 30C.

³⁵ *CIL* XI 6721.5/ 6721.14.

narratives of Appian, Plutarch and Cassius Dio, as will become clear. The obstacle to overcome here is to identify the bias, and separate it from what might actually have happened. Fulvia plays a big part in each narrative, and is mentioned in the surviving Livy as well.³⁶ However, she is not the focus or central aspect of the war in each. The question that remains to be answered is from which sources the narratives build, and if there was a pre-existing narrative in which Fulvia was a centrepiece? This thesis will not attempt to answer this question here, but it is evident that Fulvia was a target of bias and deformation in all the later, and some of the contemporary evidence as well.³⁷

With Octavia we are faced with the same problem, but in reverse. She survives in the evidence written well into the Imperial age, with Plutarch's *Antonius* being the most comprehensive evidence entailing Octavia. While women exercising power and influence are usually the objects of attacks in the evidence, Octavia is not. The representation of Octavia is one that envisages the ideal Roman *matron* one that Augustus likely created and cultivated from the 30's onward and this theme and language continues throughout the narratives. Hence we must reverse the bias and instead ask why Octavia is so different and if it is trustworthy that she was subordinate, chaste, non-meddling and the pawn of a brother or husband – despite of her capability and the time she lived in. Surprisingly, even Dio, who seldom has kind words for women stepping out of bounds, accepts Octavia's image as well as the Empress Livia's.³⁸ This thesis detaches Octavia from the Emperor Augustus and instead views her as the sister of Young Caesar, the triumvir. She is viewed as a woman with independent agency like the contemporary evidence suggests that several women exercised during the civil wars.³⁹ By investigating how her education, her upbringing and her first marriage looked like and what she might have experienced before the formation of the Triumvirate, it is possible to separate her from the existing narrative and instead create a more realistic picture of Octavia in the last years of the Republic.

³⁶ Livy *Per.* 125.

³⁷ The deformation of Fulvia will be discussed further, below.

³⁸ See, Langford 2021, 426-458; Moore 2017, 173-176: suggested that Livia build her image on the example set by Octavia.

³⁹ The so-called *Laudatio Turiae* suggest that independent agency in women was the norm, not the exception, in civil war times. See, Osgood 2014 on the *Laudatio*.

Trends in Moderns Scholarship

The study of Roman women has had several changing approaches and main focuses. Before the late 1970's and early 1980's few studies concentrated solely on women or a single *matron*.⁴⁰ Even then, the studies focused mainly on women in relation to the male protagonists of the narratives, and rarely as individuals with independent agency. This chapter offers a brief overview of the trends in the history writing on women and on the scholarship, which this thesis builds upon. It is not the goal of this chapter to map out the entirety of the scholarship on women, rather it seeks to aid the reader and establish the field of research that this thesis writes itself into.

The research field regarding Roman women in history can be divided into (roughly) four groups or trends.⁴¹ The first we engage with here is one that entails several of the principal works that establishes women's role in society and the Roman institutions. We might call this trend '*The Social Trend*'. In 1988 Suzanne Dixon published her work titled *The Roman Mother*.⁴² The work is quintessential to understand the role of motherhood expected from all 'upper-class' Roman women.⁴³ The relation between mother and child, often a son, is ever present in the evidence yet before Dixon, and indeed after, the relationship and social role is seldom included in the analysis of women. An often-neglected aspect of women and their children, which Dixon addresses,⁴⁴ are the relationship between mother and adolescent or adult son – a crucial aspect, which could aid the understanding of several historical moments.⁴⁵ In extension of the 1988 book, Dixon released her work on *the Roman Family* in 1992.⁴⁶ Though she already engaged with the concept of family in 1988,⁴⁷ the institution of family and its importance for the Roman society cannot, and ought not, to be underestimated – especially in relation to women. Strictly speaking, Dixon does not limit herself to women, however, much can be gained by understanding this relationship and the institution of the family. In a similar manner, Treggiari published her work, which is still very much a

⁴⁰ Syme 1939 paid some interest to the women, especially Servilia. Singer 1947 likewise took an interest Octavia, while Babcock 1965 is one of the first comprehensive works on a single woman.

⁴¹ The division into four groups are my own. As stated above, no common approach or recognized field exists on its own as of yet. However, I believe that the division proposed here is applicable in a larger sense.

⁴² Dixon 1988.

⁴³ Class is an all too confining concept in the Marxist context to use on Roman society. However, it is in this instance the best word to describe the women at the top of the social pyramid.

⁴⁴ Dixon 1988, 168-209.

⁴⁵ A few examples: Cornelia and the *Gracchii*, Sasia and her son and stepson, Antonia and Antony, Atia and Octavian, Livia and Tiberius.

⁴⁶ Dixon 1992.

⁴⁷ Dixon 1988, 13-40.

cornerstone in the field, on *Roman Marriage* in 1991.⁴⁸ In it, Treggiari explores not only the social contract of marriage and the institution itself, but also the evolution of law regarding marriage, the importance of the institution for the Romans, as well as the social implications marriage, divorce and dowry brought with them. This study allows us to fully appreciate the complexity of marriage, and how important it was. When writing about the women in Roman society, we often do so from the perspective of men and in relation to her husband. Treggiari's contribution allows us to understand and extrapolate on women's role and rights in such a marriage and extends the possibilities of interpretation of the evidence regarding women and independent agency. This thesis owes much to the contributions of Dixon and Treggiari, as they are instrumental in establishing independent rational agency and possible reasons for deploying it.

However, while the institutions of marriage, family, and motherhood are some of the pillars needed to understand women and fully appreciate their possibilities and circumstances in the Late Republic, Roman law as a whole and women in it, must not be forgotten. The contribution by Gardner is instrumental in mapping out women in relation to Roman law and society.⁴⁹ Much of what this thesis argues derives in some form or another from legal- and social rights obtained through time. An understanding of women's position in relation to the law provides a better reading and understanding of our evidence as a whole. The law and social rights was in large parts what made it possible for women like Servilia, Terentia, Fulvia, and Octavia to act as independently as they did. A failure to understand this might frame the women as atypical from other women on this basis alone. This thesis contest the idea that Fulvia and Octavia were atypical, and argues that they were typical, viewed in light of their rights, their roles as mothers, wives and as protectors of their respective families.

The second trend, or strain of scholarship, is one that has gained more popularity during the last 20 years. This trend could be called '*The Biography Trend*'. The name is revealing, however, the trend is not entirely as new as proposed above. In 1965 Babcock published an article on Fulvia and what he called her 'early career'.⁵⁰ While it was not a biography or intended as such, it is one of the most comprehensive works in English on Fulvia to this day.⁵¹ Babcock surveyed Fulvia's political career up until her death, though paying greatest attention to her marriage to Clodius.

⁴⁸ Treggiari 1991.

⁴⁹ Gardner 1995.

⁵⁰ Babcock 1965.

⁵¹ Others and more recent works on Fulvia has been made such as, Welch 1995; Weir 2007; Lange forthcoming; and this thesis (they will be discussed further below). However, only one of these resembles a biography.

It is, to my knowledge, some of the earliest work, which seeks to investigate a woman's influence on the political events in the *ante bellum* and civil war periods of Rome. Nevertheless, Babcock's study revealed, what will become, obvious challenges when trying to piece together a woman's doings in a time where the evidence is rather silent on- and biased towards women. The challenge and obstacle is to guess what a specific woman was doing when the evidence is silent on her. This obstacle is a clog on all biographies, as is evident in the more recent works of scholars like Barrett, Treggiari, Osgood, Weir and Moore.⁵² Though the biographies contribute a great deal on areas where the evidence is ample, conjecture is an ever-occurring necessity when writing on women in this sense. Even in Osgood's case (The so-called *Laudatio Turiae*), where a biography is provided by the evidence, we are forced to guess and fill out the blanks, as the evidence does not say all, and a man not the woman herself says it. Here Osgood is faced with another obstacle for modern scholars. More often than not, our evidence consists of fragments and is not complete. This is true for our written evidence as well as the material culture evidence such as inscriptions in this case.⁵³ With that being said, biographies serve a greater purpose and opened a little-investigated avenue for other studies such as this thesis. Looking back in time and viewing a woman's life in its entirety to reassess a later events, is beneficial as the woman is viewed not as an instrument or a pawn, but rather as an individual with her own reasons, motives, education, prior marriages, participation in events and so on. This is of course the aim of most biographies and as such this thesis owes much to this trend as well as partly belonging to it.

The third trend is younger than the rest and much is still to be explored. We will call this trend 'Gender'. While this thesis does not occupy itself with gender, either as a theory or as a separate research field, it is very much worth taking note of and could prove useful for other studies. In 2011 Boatwright examined the role of gender and women in civic and public places such as the Forum Romanum.⁵⁴ As Rome indeed was a highly patriarchal society, it is interesting to see how gender, be it via physical presence, images, statues or use of that space, influenced the public and private, especially in the contrast to the civil wars and the Triumvirate. Sadly it is impossible to know what the women themselves thought of the distinction between what was allowed for them and not. The relation between public and private has been debated, and in 2015 Trümper sought to investigate it

⁵² Barrett 2004; Treggiari 2007, 2019; Osgood 2014; Weir 2007; Moore 2017.

⁵³ See, Osgood 2014, 156-169.

⁵⁴ Boatwright 2011.

in relation to gender.⁵⁵ Here she investigated a variety of ‘spaces’ both public and private in the Greek and Roman world, in regards to how women could move between such places. While the issue of space as to how Fulvia or Octavia was within their right to use it, is interesting and could offer an alternative article, it is not the point here, and it might be said that the two women overlooked such rules. One could argue that the evidence on these two women in a gender context is widely shaped by the later ‘Augustan’ period. Exactly that point was the foundations for Milnor’s 2005 book on gender in the Age of Augustus.⁵⁶ Milnor sought to investigate how gender was written and understood in the time after Augustus became the Princeps, and in doing so, sheds light on how this might have a crucial impact on how the later Imperial sources is moulded by a tradition established here. The application of such studies will no doubt aid in further investigations on women, particular those who seek to focus on a single piece of evidence, or a single author.

The fourth and final trend is the one with which this thesis places itself most firmly. This trend focuses on political history and Roman women’s role as agents in times of crises in the Roman state. This trend is called ‘*Women and Crises*’. It focuses specifically on women as independent actors in the historical narratives, and the field has gained significant traction over the years. Hillard has through the years advocated for women as political beings in their own right, and holders of power and even *auctoritas*. In 1983 he put forward the idea of *materna auctoritas* (motherly influence),⁵⁷ a notion that this thesis extrapolates on and one that is highly influential in the interpretation of women like Cornelia, Servilia and Livia. Over the years Hillard provided further contributions on women in politics and how their influence manifested in the Late Republic.⁵⁸ This idea was followed in Bauman’s work from 1992, in which he tracked women in politics from the early Republic till the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.⁵⁹ Bauman provided the first overview on women on a large scale, as well as being one of the earliest contributions to single-out specific women and placing them in a political context as independent actors. However, the large scale of the investigation left more to be wanted from several individuals and neglected other aspects, such as family, marriage, tradition and law. At present Webb has done significant work on political active women and influence during the middle Republic, in part to show that the Late Republic was not the first time that women acted in relation to the state and political affairs, but rather the women

⁵⁵ Trümper 2015.

⁵⁶ Milnor 2005.

⁵⁷ Hillard 1983.

⁵⁸ Hillard 1989,1992.

⁵⁹ Bauman 1992.

of the Age of Civil War build on a tradition established before them.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Late Republic has attracted the most attention, and throughout the years, women who are prominent in the historical narratives have been the objects of renewed investigation. Brennan identified the Generation of 63 BCE as a particular interesting group in relation to female power, including Terentia and Fulvia.⁶¹ Since then Welch and Lange among others have reinterpreted Fulvia's role in politics, in the *ante bellum* period as well as later in life during her marriage to Antony.⁶² Others like Sumi have focused on events in which women partook or created a spectacle.⁶³ Unfortunately Octavia has not received the same attention, and often she occurs only as a side note to events in scholarship in spite of her presence and the ability credited to her in the narratives.⁶⁴ There are a few exceptions, Moore among them and older ones like Singer who investigated either her whole life or specific events.⁶⁵ This thesis seeks to remedy Octavia's absence from modern scholarship and reinvestigate her role in the light of the before mentioned scholarship, which may very well offer a different interpretation than previously put forward. Though Fulvia has received greater attention in recent years, a renewed interpretation of her actions in the aftermath of the Ides of March is needed, as the circumstances she faced and the position she enjoyed was different from that of the 50's. As such this thesis belongs to the trend '*Women in Crises*' more so than the others.

⁶⁰ Webb forthcoming. The Age of Civil War is borrowed as a concept from Lange's 2016 work on Triumphs. The Age of Civil War is here meant as from 49-30, however it could be used as far back as the early 90's BCE or the death of the Gracchi in 133 and 121 BCE.

⁶¹ Brennan 2015, 354-366.

⁶² Welch 1995; Lange forthcoming.

⁶³ Sumi 1997, 2004.

⁶⁴ An example is the otherwise great work of Osgood 2006, which investigates the time after Caesar up to Augustus. See also, Flory 1993, which discuss the grants of 35 to Livia and Octavia. However, Livia and the Statues are the goal of Flory's article.

⁶⁵ Singer 1947; Moore 2017.

The Old meets the New

Fulvia and A Civil War Spectacle

In recent years, Fulvia, the wife of Mark Antony, has undergone renewed investigations into her person and supposed involvement and influence on her husbands.⁶⁶ Her involvement in Roman politics stretches as far back as the late 60's and, it has been argued, the *ante bellum* decade of the 50's.⁶⁷ While Fulvia might very well have played a part in the Tribune P. Clodius' political planning, her first real entrance onto the stage of Roman spectacle and politics occur only on the death of Clodius in 52. As the *ante bellum* years slowly but surely drifted into civil war, as negotiations between Caesar and the senate collapsed, so too began a new era, and with it, new possibilities. It is tempting to see Fulvia's involvement in politics as a long and continuing 'career', however, there were disruptions and changes to what she could and could not do and thus what we can ascribe to her. With that in mind, there is a noteworthy resemblance between certain strategies before and after 49 in which Fulvia was most likely involved and perhaps the instigator, as we shall see. This chapter deals primarily with Fulvia in the Age of Civil War, beginning in 47 and ending with her death in 40.

Fulvia was on her third marriage by 46 and as her fellow 'meddling' *matronae* of the Late Republic she was accustomed to-and well versed in Roman politics during internal crises.⁶⁸ Civil war endured throughout her life and Fulvia first rose to unprecedented heights of influence and power as the wife of the Master of the Horse (*magister equitum*) and later consul.⁶⁹

The exact date of Fulvia's marriage to Antony is unknown. However, a shift in Antony's behaviour during and after his year as Master of the Horse suggest a reprimand, perhaps by Caesar via letter or perhaps by a soon to be wife. If we accept that Fulvia married Antony sometime during 47 – for it was as much Fulvia as Antony who chose to marry, given her likely status of *sui iuris* at this point – we might be able to speculate on Fulvia's apparent influence on Antony and his political strategies

⁶⁶ Bauman 1992, Welch 1995, Weir 2007, Brennan 2012, Wotring 2017, Lange forthcoming.

⁶⁷ Babcock 1965 in particular focused on what he dubbed her 'early career'.

⁶⁸ Previously married to P. Clodius (c. 62) and C. Scribonius Curio (c. 51/50); Many women seem to have several marriages under their belt, and a certain age, when they appear to interfere and meddle in affairs in this age. Examples are: Sasia, Terentia (at least in age), Servilia, Hortensia. The noteworthy exception is Octavia, who was still quite young – by modern standards - when she actively enters the narrative.

⁶⁹ Pina Polo 2020 (ed.) deals with the Triumviral period as period with its own dynamics and not just as a period of transition from the *res publica* to monarchy, albeit it was that too.

and policies in that year.⁷⁰ However, speculate is all we can do, as Antony did not show political prowess in 47 (see below).

While Caesar was occupied in Greece and Egypt following the battle of Pharsalus in 48, Antony was appointed Master of the Horse and put in charge of keeping the peace in Rome. Both Plutarch and Cassius Dio conveys that Antony did not succeed and, in fact, added to the almost Corcyran state Rome was in.⁷¹ Antony lacked the political ingenuity to pacify the situation in the new circumstances created by civil war. As Master of the Horse he was second only to Caesar, and in his absence he was the supreme head of Rome. It is impossible for modern readers of the narratives of the civil war years to ascertain what Antony had envisioned for himself. He met most opposition with a show of brute force, which would lend credibility to the notion that he intended to put himself in the dictators place, however, even Syme – who was in favour of reading Antony as a largely misunderstood figure – admits that Antony “may have lacked the taste, and perhaps faculty, for long designs...”⁷² This taste and faculty had not escaped Fulvia. Fulvia had come into the eye of the public in 52 when Clodius died, if not before i.e. during her decade long marriage to him. Her engineering of Clodius’ funeral and the subsequent trial clearly showed her eye for politics and manipulating the populace.⁷³ The events surrounding Clodius’ death is well known, so a brief summary will suffice here. In 52, a year started without proper elected magistrates, two political rivals continuously clashed in the streets. Clodius, the husband of Fulvia, and Milo (*pr.* 54), mustered gangs of armed thugs and gladiators. The culmination of the enmity between the two came when Clodius and Milo met each other with their respective gangs and entourages, at the Appian Way near Bovillae. The violent clash resulted in Clodius’ untimely death. Bloody, mauled, and with visible wounds he was carried to his and Fulvia’s house at the foot of the Palatine. Asconius provides the most vivid and detailed account of events, as well as framing the events in the setting of *ante bellum* and using civil war rhetoric and language to describe it.⁷⁴ Asconius portrays Fulvia as instigating anger in the populace by “displaying his [Clodius] wounds with

⁷⁰ Welch 1995, dates the marriage to 47 as well as emphasising the ground-breaking change in Rome and politics, 182-183.

⁷¹ Plut. *Ant.* 9.2-6; Cass. Dio 42.26-30, Thuc. 3.69-85: *Stasis* (Greek: internal strife, can include civil war, but not necessarily) in Corcyra during the Peloponnesian war.

⁷² Syme 1939, 108.

⁷³ Asc. *Mil.* 31C-33C, 40C ; Cic. *Mil.* 86. See also, Lange forthcoming.

⁷⁴ I proposed to view Asconius’ commentaries in the *ante bellum* perspective in an unpublished paper during my masters, which Lange has extrapolated convincingly in his forthcoming paper, as well as on the use of civil war language, Lange forthcoming, 16, n. 10.

effusive lamentations”.⁷⁵ It worked. The following day, very likely with Fulvia’s permission and perhaps even at her behest:

“...[the] mob took the corpse, stripped and bruised, just as it had been dumped on the bier, down into the Forum and placed it on the *rostra* in order to exhibit the wounds... The populus... took off the body of P. Clodius into the senate house and cremated it on a pyre ... the senate house itself caught fire and also the adjoining Basilica Porcia was engulfed in flame.”⁷⁶

Fulvia purposely neglected to perform her wifely duties, cleaning the body, preparing a traditional funeral, and instead chose to inflame the mob and create a spectacle more appropriate for civil war than a state of *concordia*.⁷⁷ The funeral was left without *imagines* (death masks) of ancestors, games and the ritual procession to the family burial ground. Instead it shook the very foundations of Rome and added to the factionalism and internal unrest. Appian and Dio might have seen this as the final straw in the systemic breakdown of Rome, as both their narratives goes from the funeral of Clodius directly to the breakdown of negotiations between Caesar and the Senate preceding the civil war.⁷⁸

The death of Clodius had long-term impacts on the Roman society as Lange has argued.⁷⁹ Among them the trial of Milo in which Fulvia and her mother gave testimony last,⁸⁰ affording their testimonies a good degree of weight and a last chance to influence the public and, as we shall see, the funeral was copied in 44. Fulvia had stepped onto the public stage and proven herself able. She was a worthy match of Antony, and was the sole surviving link to the Clodian *clientela*. If that was not enough, Fulvia was a veteran politicians wife and she had a crucial knowledge of Rome and the *populus*, especially in times of internal strife from her years in Rome during the mob and gang violence of the 50’s as well as during the flight of Pompey and the Senate as Caesar marched on Rome in 49. The marriage between Fulvia and Antony benefitted both parties, as Fulvia gained position and status, and Antony gained the sorely needed political advisor.⁸¹ The only obstacle in

⁷⁵ Asc. *Mil.* 32C.

⁷⁶ Asc. *Mil.* 33C.

⁷⁷ Polyb. 6.53-54 describes traditional aristocratic funerals, albeit in the middle republic; Suet. *Iul.* 84. give a comparison – tradition mixed with outrage and improvisation. The idea of spectacle will be discussed later.

⁷⁸ App. *B civ.* 2.24-2.34; Cass. Dio 40.48-40.56.

⁷⁹ See, Lange forthcoming.

⁸⁰ Asc. *Mil.* 40C.

⁸¹ Huzar 1986, 99-100; Welch 1995, 184. It should be noted that the marriage was very likely one of mutual affection, at least until 42/41 (Plut. *Ant.* 10.4-5.).

the way of such marriage was Antony's marriage to Antonia. Welch rightly states that the removal of Antonia and the subsequent marriage between Fulvia and Antony sees them in unison, and together they were a force to be reckoned with – a fact not lost on Cicero – as shall be discussed further below.⁸² Babcock sees the marriage of the two as pressure from Fulvia for Antony to divorce his wife and make a pre-existing relationship legal.⁸³ While we may not be able to say with certainty if such a pre-existing relationship existed, it seems out of character of Fulvia to force another woman out.⁸⁴ As I have suggested, it seems more plausible that Antony needed a political partner.

Sadly, the year 47 does not reveal much about Fulvia. Lepidus – another proven (unexciting) politician and general of Caesar's – was appointed Master of the Horse and Antony was without magistracy or position in Rome in 46 and 45. We must assume that in the years 46 and 45 she stayed in Rome, vigilant as ever, observing the political shifts and changes Caesar imposed. All while staying in contact, likely reporting the events to Antony.⁸⁵ As the most distinct heiress to the Clodian *clientela* she would also have held *salutiones* for both the Antonian and Clodian *clientela*, hearing petitions, maintaining alliances, and preserving Antony's role as a patron.⁸⁶ The years 46/45 were marked by instability and changing scenery though some stability was afforded through the position of Master of the Horse and the Dictator. However, as the year 44 progressed, the Republic once more descended into pandemonium.⁸⁷

As Caesar was declared dictator *in perpetuum*, schemes were being made to slay the tyrant.⁸⁸ While Caesar was consul with Antony as his colleague, Fulvia and Antony once again found themselves in the inner circle and at the height of (Republican) power. Welch is once again right on the money, when declaring that the condition of civil war allowed for Fulvia to gain power (unofficially) and that the absence of men created new possibilities for a wife of a prominent, beloved man, who was a

⁸² Welch 1995, 192.

⁸³ Babcock 1965, 13.

⁸⁴ The main source of this pre-existing relationship is found in Cicero's *Philippics*, which was a smear campaign against Antony and in part Fulvia. At this point in life, Fulvia had never been portrayed as anything else than a good wife (Welch 1995, 188), Babcock's conclusion rests on the presumption that she was inherently jealous and acted out of mere lust, following post-Perusia propaganda creations of Fulvia (discussed below).

⁸⁵ The same was done by Terentia during Cicero's exile, see, Treggiari 2007, 63-70.

⁸⁶ Hillard 1992, 39; *Salutiones*: receiving clients, holding court in the Villa.

⁸⁷ It is up for debate whether or not we ought calling it the 'Republic' after Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon. The Republic was, however, re-established, as the Triumvirate was an office in said Republic. Not until Augustus, did the Republic transform into a monarchy.

⁸⁸ App. *B Civ.* 2.113-117; Cass. Dio 44.12-18.

proven general and at the height of his career.⁸⁹ Upon entering 44 Fulvia once again had to prove her political eminence.⁹⁰ The political and social *milieu* that Fulvia found herself in was different from that of the late 50's, as were her position. However, her tactics was applicable to the violent change that was to come.

On the Ides of March 44 BCE, Caesar was assassinated in the theatre of Pompey.⁹¹ He lay slain, with blood running from 23 stab-wounds inflicted by the so-called Liberators. The dictator had failed to end the factionalism and political violence that characterized the Late Republic,⁹² and instead became a victim of that political violence.⁹³ The death of Caesar bears a striking resemblance to that of Clodius. By comparing the two incidents and the subsequent funerals it is possible to see a similar political tactic deployed, likely at the hand of Fulvia.

The main accounts of Caesars death and funeral have come down to us from Appian and Dio.⁹⁴ The gory details and the politics behind are more than familiar to most, so I will confine myself to draw the parallels. Both Clodius and Caesar met sudden and very violent deaths at the hands of political rival(s), and both deaths caused public uproar and had an immediate impact on Rome and its inhabitants. Most importantly in the context of Fulvia, their deaths gave way for political agency and a civil war spectacle. As we have seen above, the body of Clodius was brought home to Fulvia and the following day he was cremated in the senate house, the mob rioting through Rome. In the case of Caesar, Antony was held up outside the senate chambers on the Campus Martius, and when hearing the violent clash inside the chambers, chose to flee in fear of his own life.⁹⁵ Appian tells us that: "Antony fortified his house, having drawn the conclusion that the plot was directed at him as well as Caesar",⁹⁶ which Dio cooperates was indeed the case. The interesting in this piece of information is not that Antony saw himself as a likely target, rather that he returned home. We have no indication that Fulvia was not in Rome, nor is there reason to believe that she was not. The following events suggest that Antony sought advice from Fulvia, or had an unofficial *consilium*

⁸⁹ Welch 1995, 194-195.

⁹⁰ Indeed civil war afforded women like Fulvia with unprecedented possibilities and avenues to pursue, either on their own accord or because they were forced to do so given the circumstances. Thus we must distinguish between the *ante bellum* years and the civil war years.

⁹¹ On the Campus Martius.

⁹² Steel 2013a, 159-177, describes the Late Republic as one of factionalism and political violence.

⁹³ Lintott 1999, is the main piece on violence in Republican Rome.

⁹⁴ App. *B Civ.* 2.117-2.149; Cass. Dio 44.19-44.51.

⁹⁵ Plut. *Ant.* 14.1; Cass. Dio 44.19.1-2.

⁹⁶ App. *B civ.* 2.118.

attended by friends and allies and likely Fulvia, like that of Servilia's in 44 and 43.⁹⁷ The lack of evidence of such a meeting should not be surprising. The two meetings of Servilia are only attested in Cicero's letters and not in the narratives of Appian, Dio or even Plutarch. The letters do, however, suggest that such meetings were commonplace and not new or a result of the social crisis. By Cicero's tone in the letters it seems that this was a way to discuss many matters before acting, should it be legislation, political matters or something else entirely. I suggest that such a meeting took place, or at the very least Fulvia and Antony discussed the next step, now that Caesar was gone and civil war might seem imminent. Huzar hit the nail on the head when saying: "Antony had intelligence, courage, and readiness to act under fire. But political manipulation, guile, complex planning, and insatiable ambition were not his natural skills. Now he displayed them as never before and rarely later."⁹⁸ The events surrounding Caesar's funeral, and indeed the funeral itself, was meticulously planned and executed. This was a political manoeuvre that has the scent of Fulvia all over it. While Antony fled to the safety of his own home, the Liberators sought to ensure the public of their honest and devout intentions.⁹⁹ Appian and Dio's versions of what happened next differ from one another, however, they agree that the Liberators went up to the capitol and sought sanctuary there. From there they defended their actions and wished to mediate in fear of reprisals from Antony and Lepidus. Appian tells us that the immediate response and feelings of Antony and Lepidus were to seek vengeance,¹⁰⁰ while Dio has Cicero make a speech in favour of peace and resolution rather than vengeance and the following meeting between the two lieutenants of Caesar and the 'Liberators' resolved in relative peace.¹⁰¹ Appian's version of what happened is the most telling if we seek Fulvia's hand and to investigate the actions of Antony, where Dio's is all too brief. Antony chose, in his capacity as consul, to reconvene the Senate at the Temple of Tellus, near his house at the foot of the Esquiline Hill on March 17.¹⁰² This gave him – and Fulvia – almost two days to plan for the meeting and what should happen next. The debate in the Senate was fierce as to what to do with Caesar's legacy and the Liberators. Antony took a more consolatory stance, however, not before turning the issue from a public to a personal one. Caesar had appointed

⁹⁷ Cic. *Att.* 15.11: Meeting at Antium June 44; Cic. *Ad Brut.* 24/26.1-2: Meeting in Rome 27 July 43; Treggiari 2019, 188-196, 209-210. The first meeting concerned the aftermath of Caesar's death and what Brutus and Cassius should do, attended by Brutus and Cassius and several women, and presided over by Servilia (!). The second meeting concerned whether or not Brutus should return to Italy with his army, an act of civil war in itself. On the *consilium*, see Flower 2018.

⁹⁸ Huzar 1986, 100.

⁹⁹ App. *B Civ.* 2.118-119.

¹⁰⁰ App. *B Civ.* 2.124.

¹⁰¹ Cass. Dio 44.34.1-35.2.

¹⁰² App. *B Civ.* 2.126; Treggiari 2019, 185-186.

magistrates, allocated provinces and commands for the next 5 years. Should Caesar be declared a tyrant, and the killing of him as such lawful all of his appointments would be forfeit.¹⁰³ Many of the Liberators owed their station, current and future magistracies and provincial commands to Caesar, including the consul Dolabella, who was far too young to be consul had it not been for Caesar's appointment. Antony was calm and waited for the right moment to present the problem. This shrewd manner of manipulating the Senate, not by force or threats, but by appealing to the senators' own greed, vanity, and personal ambition suggest a second hand, likely Fulvia's. It is somewhat uncharacteristic of Antony, as his actions in 47 clearly shows, but it is likely that Fulvia had advocated for the consolatory way in favour of violence, for the time being. Fulvia had recognized in her years at Clodius' side, that power derived from the people and lay in manipulating them. The Senate was no exception and could be manipulated, and Antony needed to stay consul. Her and Antony merely bought themselves time as it was declared that Caesar's acts was to remain in place and at the same time that no punishment should befall Caesar's murderers.¹⁰⁴ What the 'power couple' Fulvia and Antony needed, was a public and grand spectacle. As a city and people, the Romans were obsessed with the idea of spectacle ranging from gladiatorial combat, theatre and public speeches, to triumphs, funerals and festivals. Flower point out that the city of Rome itself was build as a stage where spectacles were performed on a daily basis.¹⁰⁵ Caesar's funeral was no exception. Polybius is our main source on what one might expect an aristocratic funeral to entail.¹⁰⁶ A dead statesman i.e. a magistrate would have eulogies delivered by close family, usually the eldest son – symbolising continuity in the family line. There would be hired actors who would be dressed in the garbs of the ancestors of the dead, as well as *imagines*, including triumphal garbs, loot from campaigns, a procession and possibly funeral games, all taking place *in foro* in front of the populace of Rome. While Clodius was denied many of these things (i.e. the *imagines*, the ancestors/actors, the speech by the eldest son),¹⁰⁷ Caesar was not.

The funeral appear improvised at first glance, but I suggest that by a closer read and taking into consideration Fulvia, it was far from improvised, on the contrary it was meticulously planned. Plutarch sums up the events:

¹⁰³ App. *B Civ.* 2.128-129.

¹⁰⁴ Cic. *Phil.* 1.1 ; Vell. Pat. 2.58.4 ; Plut. *Brut.* 19 ; App. *B Civ.* 135; Cass. Dio 44.50.4.

¹⁰⁵ Flower 2004, 322-323.

¹⁰⁶ Polyb. 6.53-54.

¹⁰⁷ Cic. *Mil.* 86: " And assuredly it was the selfsame anger of the gods that inspired his minions with such a spirit of madness that, without portraits or music or games, without procession, mourners, panegyric or any funeral rites, besmeared with blood and clay, robbed of the solemnity that should attend that closing scene..."

“Now, it happened that when Caesar’s body was carried forth for burial, Antony pronounced the customary eulogy over it in the forum. And when he saw that the people were mightily swayed and charmed by his words, he mingled with his praises sorrow and indignation over the dreadful deed, and at the close of his speech shook on high the garments of the dead, all bloody and tattered by the swords as they were, called those who had wrought such work villains and murderers, and inspired his hears with such rage that they heaped together benches and tables and burned Caesar’s body in the forum...”¹⁰⁸

The resemblance to Clodius’ funeral is striking and not lost on Plutarch himself when writing of Brutus:

“All further orderly procedure was at an end, of course, some cried out to kill the murderers and others, as formerly in the case of Clodius the demagogue ... dragged benches and tables... erected a huge pyre; on this they placed Caesar’s body, and... burned it.”¹⁰⁹

The spectacle was grand and whipped the crowd into such frenzy that it turned into a mob fuelled by rage towards the Liberators. This was Fulvia and Antony’s plan. Brutus and the Liberators failed to recognize what power such a spectacle would bring with it and how it could be used to manipulate the crowd.¹¹⁰ According to Suetonius the public lamentations was so great that even the singers and actors “... tore off their robes, which they had taken from equipment of his [Caesar’s] triumphs and put on for the occasion ... and threw them into the flames...”¹¹¹ This suggest that by all accounts the funeral was well planned, as there were the customary singers and actors who would sing praises and appear in the garbs of the ancestors and portray Caesar’s greatest achievements. However, the spectacle that evolved was one created by the crowds,¹¹² as Sumi has argued with Clodius’ funeral. Fulvia and Antony just needed to ignite the flame and that was done with the will of Caesar followed by Antony’s ‘Friends, Romans, countrymen’ speech as Treggiari

¹⁰⁸ Plut. *Ant.* 14.3-4.

¹⁰⁹ Plut. *Brut.* 20.5-6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 20.1-2.; Appian has several senators approaching Piso, the guardian of Caesar’s will, trying to stop its public reading as well as a funeral but he would not yield (*B Civ.* 2.135).

¹¹¹ Suet. *Iul.* 84.4.

¹¹² See, Sumi 1997 on the crowd at Clodius’ funeral.

calls it.¹¹³ The public reading of the will was a stroke of genius, as it manifested the idea of Caesarian clemency and sparked the resentment towards the Liberators. Suetonius tells us that Piso first read out the will in Antony's own house, which in turn makes it likely that Fulvia too was present for the reading and that she understood the significance the will could bring.¹¹⁴ The will stated that Octavian (the future Emperor Augustus) was adopted as Caesar's heir and son.¹¹⁵ Furthermore it stated that several of the Liberators were to inherit from Caesar and several were named as secondary heirs.¹¹⁶ This, according to Appian, was the spark that lit the fire.

Fulvia and Antony had waited for the right moment. First they had planned and sought the consolatory road as a scheme to buy time. Antony had played the senators greed and vanity against themselves to secure Caesar's decisions was made valid, and then awaited the funeral, that great stage onto which his and Fulvia's true intentions were made clear. The funeral is reminiscent of Clodius' as both met violent deaths, both were shown with all their wounds symbolising the atrocity of political violence that infested Rome. It might be argued that Antony merely imitated the funeral of Clodius on his own accord. However, Antony was not present in Rome in 52 and would only have heard of the funeral,¹¹⁷ while Fulvia likely orchestrated parts of it and saw the effect it had on the populace. Fulvia's possible role in the funeral should not be underestimated nor should Antony's. Antony was the only one who could execute the plan, and he had the best possible position to do so, while still portraying clemency and concord. Fulvia knew the power of public spectacle in a time of *ante bellum* and civil war and she enlisted Antony in order to execute the plan. The planning and the political ingenuity are evident in Caesar's funeral, and it strikes as unlikely to derive from Antony's mind, and therefore rather Fulvia's. Antony had the charisma, political position, and strength to carry out the spectacle while Fulvia had the mind to plan it. Fulvia and Antony got what they wanted. The Liberators fled Rome and Antony was still consul.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Treggiari 2019, 186.

¹¹⁴ Suet. *Iul.* 83.1.

¹¹⁵ Cass. Dio 44. 35. 2.

¹¹⁶ App. *B civ.* 102.43.

¹¹⁷ Welch 1995, 189.

¹¹⁸ Plut. *Ant.* 15.1 ; Plut. *Brut.* 21.1 ; App. *B Civ.* 2.148; Cass. Dio 44.51.4.

The Makings of a Woman with Agency

While civil war rightly presented women like Fulvia with new avenues of influence and (unofficial) power, the key factors that made agency possible was already in place for large parts of the women of the propertied ‘class’.¹¹⁹ The evidence pays far more attention to women when narrating the civil war years. However, the civil wars did not provide the means by which women could act independently,¹²⁰ merely the opportunity to do so on an unprecedented scale. As the narratives shift from external war, politics and a single *polis*’ expansion into an Empire to the moral decay that led to the worst of wars, civil war, it seem proper to pay attention to the guardians of moral and virtue – the women – and point to them as part of the problem. Fulvia is one extreme example of this. She was able to do what she did, not through civil war or because she “wanted to rule a ruler” in all her villainess splendour, but because she was well educated, wealthy, and skilled in the political game. All neglected parts of women’s life and personal abilities when discussing their actions in this era. We must remember that women were political beings, not just pawns in the political game. To think that they did not understand the most central aspect of Roman life – politics – is fool hearted. They themselves lived and breathed it daily.

The basis of women’s agency laid in education, wealth and to some extension their legal rights as they developed through tradition and legislation. This brief section is dedicated to this aspect as it provides a fundamental understanding of how Fulvia and, by extension, other *matronae* of the civil wars were able to act how they did. Fulvia will be used here as an example, and later Octavia – on whom we may have more information.

Fulvia was afforded all the right conditions for a woman to thrive in the Late Republic. To be born a woman in the Late Republic, and especially in the last decades, did not come without certain legal-and traditional rights.¹²¹ Fulvia was born to the *Fulvii* – possibly the last in that line of the family-branch – an old and distinguished plebeian noble family.¹²² Cicero tells us in his third *Philippic* that Fulvia’s family was wealthy,¹²³ which was a prerequisite for a daughter’s education. It was not only a woman’s own wealth but also that of her family that gave way for agency. Women

¹¹⁹ Class is used here in lack of better. The Marxist term ‘class’ is not applicable to the Late Republic or the Roman world in general.

¹²⁰ Webb forthcoming, on female agency in the middle Republic.

¹²¹ See, Levick 2015 for a brief overview of women’s legal rights. Dixon 1988, 1992, on the Roman Mother and Family; Treggiari 1991, on Marriage; Gardner 1995, on Women and Roman Law; Hemelrijk 1999, on education.

¹²² Babcock 1965, 3. Noble family here denotes that the family had held consular office in the past. The Latin term *nobiles* refer to men of consular or senatorial ancestry.

¹²³ Cic. *Phil.* 3.16.

from poor families did not necessarily have the means to be educated, however, nor did wealthy ones. It is impossible to know how far behind women was, educational wise, from men.¹²⁴ However, as we must assume that Fulvia was the last in her line and looking at her future endeavours, she must have received formal education in her early years in writing, reading and grammar, perhaps alongside boys.¹²⁵ Given her somewhat ‘old’ age at her first marriage (Clodius in 62), she would have had the opportunity to continue her studies.¹²⁶ At her first marriage she was properly still in the *potestas* of her father, who would have arranged the marriage.¹²⁷ It would explain the somewhat odd marriage to a man disgraced, even one of the *gens Claudii*.¹²⁸ It is likely that she was not *sui iuris* before her second or possibly third marriage. Into each marriage she would have taken a considerable dowry, and in the case of her two first husbands’ deaths she would have inherited substantially.¹²⁹ When Clodius died she was likely named the protector of their children’s inheritance, as well as she likely owned some villas, apartments and land in her own right as Terentia did.¹³⁰ The marriage to Clodius also yielded an important lesson for Fulvia – *ante bellum* politics and how it worked in crises. This was, in a sense, a ‘learning on the job’ education. Cicero tells us that Fulvia seldom left Clodius’ side, which implies that she was present at his *contiones*, his campaigning and private *salutiones* – learning directly from the source.¹³¹ By the time of her marriage to Antony, Fulvia was wealthy, educated, and well versed in Roman politics and manipulation of the public in times of crises.¹³² She was also likely a *patrona* of Clodius’ *clientela*, as well as her own, and knew several of the senators of the Clodian party personally. All these attributes to her person were to come in handy and were sorely needed in the years 44-40.

¹²⁴ Hemelrijk 1999, 20.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21,26-28.

¹²⁶ Babcock 1965, n.14: puts Fulvia’s age at 22 at her first marriage. She might have been as young as 18. See, Shaw 1987 on the age of Roman Girls marrying.

¹²⁷ Gardner 1995, 5-11 on *patria potestas*. Treggiari 1991, 134: The paternal responsibility.

¹²⁸ Clodius, then still Claudius (before his *transitio ad plebem*), was accused of *incestum* after trespassing on the sacred Bona Dea rites in 62.

¹²⁹ Treggiari 1991, 323-365. She inherited Clodius’ villa at the foot of the Palatine (Cic. *de Dom.* 116-118; *de Har. resp.* 49; Babcock 1965, 23).

¹³⁰ Terentia owned considerable wealth, land and property alike (Cic. *Fam.* 14.1; Treggiari 2007, 31-32)

¹³¹ Cic. *Mil.* 29.

¹³² Cic. *Phil.* 3.16.

Off with His Head! From Power to Downfall 44-40 BCE.

The years following Caesar's death saw the rise of the Triumvirate and the downfall of Fulvia. However, it is during these years that we find Fulvia at the height of female influence, exerting near *potestas* and, so I will argue, actual *auctoritas*. It is also in these years that Fulvia came under scrutiny by Cicero in a series of speeches delivered in the Senate and in *contiones* in the Forum,¹³³ and she defended Antony in Rome by traditional means available to a *matrona* of the Republic.¹³⁴ While much of the evidence focusing on this period tends to describe Fulvia in largely negative terms (except Cornelius Nepos, see below) we might see Fulvia from a different perspective when re-examining the evidence, though it is not the point of this chapter to exonerate her from all wrongdoings.

By the end of 44 the political landscape had shifted. Young Caesar had returned in May 44.¹³⁵ He and several of the senators formed an opposition against Antony. Nearing the end of his consular term Antony tried to force Decimus Brutus (one of the Liberators) to abdicate the province of Cisalpine Gaul and turn it over to him for his own provincial command.¹³⁶ With so many factors shifting at a rapid pace, it is hard to ascertain what, if any, influence Fulvia had on affairs in Rome. She does, however, appear more frequently in the evidence from 44 onwards, and particular one episode is worth taking note of. As Antony besieged Decimus Brutus at Mutina, Cicero, ever the opponent to Antony and his wife, advocated heavily for declaring Antony a *hostis*,¹³⁷ enemy of the state. Fulvia was in Rome at the time and actively canvassing and trying to prevent the vote. Fulvia and Antony's mother deployed traditional measures of female influence, going from house to house of the leading senators, advocating for Antony and speaking in favour of an obstruction of the vote. They wore black mourning clothes in the streets, wailing, weeping and interceding on all who were on their way to the senate and, when they could go no further, they shouted their prayers from the gates of the Senate house.¹³⁸ This was not the first time such measures had been used in order to try to influence the senate. During Cicero's exile in 58 his wife, Terentia – the *fidissima atque optima*

¹³³ Cicero's *Philippics* attacked her as well as Antony.

¹³⁴ See, Webb forthcoming.

¹³⁵ App. *B Civ.* 3.10-13; Cass. Dio 45.3.2-5.3.

¹³⁶ App. *B Civ.* 3.27: He did not want to take the soldiers but would bring his own legions.

¹³⁷ Cicero consistently called Antony a *hostis* in his *Philippics* (e.g. 4.2). He demanded a *hostis* vote and that the conflict should be named a war (*bellum*) not an unrest or public emergency (*tumultus*) (8.1-2).

¹³⁸ App. *B Civ.* 3.51.

uxor,¹³⁹ and his daughter, Tullia – wore mourning clothes and went to the senators’ houses speaking for his return. A classic act of protest, as Treggiari calls it.¹⁴⁰ Fulvia recognised – like Terentia had – that the Senate held power and the only thing that was left to do was to appeal to the senate in the traditional and classic way available to women. The approach was likely to invoke empathy in the Roman populace, and the senate (as it had with Terentia and Tullia) and, if prolonged, it would be a public, yet subtle spectacle for all to see, while not trespassing into the male sphere of operation. Fulvia was not only trying to safeguard Antony, but, in fact, her entire family, which was vital for women i.e. the protection and survival of the *domus* and *gens*.¹⁴¹ Appian tells us that the effort succeeded:

“The senate began to waver when faced with the sound and sight of this, and with such a drastic and sudden change of fortune. Cicero was alarmed and addressed the senate...”¹⁴²

The traditional means of interceding still worked, but through the efforts of Cicero and his oratory – and perhaps with pressure from Young Caesar – Antony was declared an enemy of the state. Fulvia faced the same fears as Terentia had. With Antony declared a *hostis*, it meant that her marriage to him was annulled, his estates forfeit, all wealth would be seized and his children were left heirless.¹⁴³ Luckily for Fulvia, she was well off and owned her own home at the foot of the Palatine (see above). She was in a position to safeguard her family, but not all together. She struggled to pay off debts, no doubt due to lack of monetary wealth.¹⁴⁴ Nepos, a contemporary of Fulvia, tells of her struggles and fears – and is the only evidence to my knowledge that paint a more favourable picture of Fulvia:

“Not only his [Antony’s] open enemies... but also such as had lent themselves to the party opposed him... persecuted his friends, sought to deprive his wife Fulvia of all her property, and endeavoured even to get his children put to death... To Fulvia herself, too, when she was distracted with lawsuits, and troubled with great

¹³⁹ Cic. *fam.* 14.4. “most faithful and best of wives”.

¹⁴⁰ Treggiari 2007, 60.

¹⁴¹ *Domus*: literally meaning ‘house’, but in this connection ‘family’. *Gens*: Meaning ‘clan’ and ‘clan name’.

¹⁴² App. *B Civ.* 3.51.

¹⁴³ Cass. Dio 38.17.6-7: describes the terms of Cicero’s exile as the same as a *hostis* declaration. We must assume that the same was the case with Antony.

¹⁴⁴ Roman finance largely builds on investments. Wealth meant owning land, property, slaves etc. Not ready money.

alarms, he [Atticus] gave his services with such constancy... when she [Fulvia] had bought an estate, in her prosperous circumstances... and was unable after her reverse of fortune to... discharge the debt, he... lent her the money without interest...»¹⁴⁵

This piece of evidence is often overlooked, albeit it is the one piece of evidence that portrays Fulvia in distress and not the vile *matron* in this era. Fulvia was in real danger in Rome as not only Antony's estate was at risk but Fulvia's as well, which otherwise would be safe under normal circumstances.¹⁴⁶ Secondly, we hear of another house purchased by Fulvia, which implies that she was wealthy but lacked the ready money needed to pay off debts. Cornelius Nepos provides a narrative of Fulvia before she descended into the villainess of Appian and Dio's civil war narratives.

The canvassing of the senators was the last time that Fulvia relied only on the traditional means of influence outside the nuclear family. Not because she was not able to or that it was an insufficient way of exerting her influence and will, but rather because her position and the very core of Roman society and politics was about to change radically.

After the consuls Hirtius and Pansa, with Young Caesar, broke Antony's siege of Decimus Brutus at Mutina in 43, the political infrastructure changed dramatically. The three Caesarians, Antony, Lepidus, and Young Caesar ceased hostilities and created the Triumvirate.¹⁴⁷ It may be possible, and even likely, that Fulvia and Antony discussed the meeting beforehand in their correspondence. The Triumvirate *r.p.c.* was,¹⁴⁸ as was the norm, sealed not only in the political fashion but also in re-establishing *concordia* between Antony and Young Caesar.¹⁴⁹ This was done by marriage, so that the two Triumvirs were made family. Who suggested the marriage is not clear as the story diverges in the narratives. Velleius Paterculus, Plutarch, and Suetonius has the soldiers of Young Caesar and Antony demand the friendship should be sealed by marriage,¹⁵⁰ while Dio only names Antony's soldiers.¹⁵¹ What is interesting here is that the marriage was not between Antony's own daughter,

¹⁴⁵ Nep. *Att.* 9.1-5.

¹⁴⁶ Weir 2007, 66; On the property of the wife and husband in crises, see Dixon 1984, 81-83. On the property of husband and wife in marriage, see Treggiari 1991, 365-396.

¹⁴⁷ On the Triumviral assignment, see App. *B Civ.* 4.2; Lange 2009, 18-25.

¹⁴⁸ The formal title was *tresviri rei publicae constituendae* (The Triumvirate for organizing the Republic) *res publica* should be understood as 'the state' or 'commonwealth'.

¹⁴⁹ Cornwell 2020, 158-161.

¹⁵⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.65.2; Plut. *Ant.* 20.1; Suet. *Aug.* 62.1.

¹⁵¹ Cass. Dio 46.56.1.

Antonia, and Young Caesar, but between Fulvia's daughter by Clodius, Claudia, and Young Caesar. Maybe Antony's daughter was simply too young at the time, though it does not seem that Claudia was much older, if at all.¹⁵² An alternative interpretation is possible. All the narratives, with the sole exception of Appian, stress that it was Antony's stepdaughter who was to marry. This obviously depicts the troops as a political force in their own right;¹⁵³ however, they may have acted on instructions from Antony. More likely is it that the agreement was made in private between the two, as it was a perfectly traditional way of sealing agreements.¹⁵⁴ The choice to marry Claudia to Young Caesar beckons the question if Fulvia was involved. As mentioned above, it is likely that Antony and Fulvia discussed the meeting beforehand, very much like Cicero discussed matters with Terentia.¹⁵⁵ Fulvia manoeuvred herself into the position to be the wife of one triumvir, and marrying off her daughter to another, thus making her one of the most powerful women in Rome. Dio later states, that her position made her the *de facto* ruler of Rome in the absence of the Triumvirs.¹⁵⁶ This position at the top of the social pyramid presented Fulvia with unprecedented *auctoritas* and influence as the creation of the Triumvirate changed the very fabric of the Roman elite and political life (see below).

The Proscriptions: Fulvia's Cruelty Unveiled?

The years 44 and 43 had been a roller-coaster ride for Fulvia. With the formation of the Triumvirate, her position and security was now relatively safe. With the establishment of the Triumvirate the proscriptions followed – a list naming the undesirables, personal enemies, the traitors and remaining Liberators who would have their lands and wealth seized and their lives forfeited.¹⁵⁷ The proscriptions were a messy affair. Blood was spilling in the streets, the heads of the killed piled at the Rostra in the Forum, friend killed friend, father killed son and no one was safe from being proscribed.¹⁵⁸ One would expect this to have been the work solely of the Triumvirs,¹⁵⁹ however, Appian and Dio places Fulvia in a situation in which she was responsible for names being

¹⁵² Suet. *Aug.* 62.1: States that she was barely of marrying age, which would have made her about 12-14 in 43. See, Shaw 1987, 42.

¹⁵³ See, Gabba 1971 on Perugia and the political force of the legions.

¹⁵⁴ Dio even refers to the marriage between Caesar's daughter and Pompey, and allude to the later civil war between the two Triumvirs (Cass. Dio 46.56.3).

¹⁵⁵ Treggiari 2007, 63-70; See, Hillard 1992 on women as politically active.

¹⁵⁶ Cass. Dio 48.4.1.

¹⁵⁷ App. *B Civ.* 4.5; The proscription edict, see App. *B Civ.* 4.8-11.

¹⁵⁸ On the proscriptions during the reign of Sulla, see Thein 2017, 235-50; On the proscriptions during the Triumvirate, see Hinard 1985, 2006, 247-264; Hurlet 2020, 237-238.

¹⁵⁹ Although Young Caesar (Augustus) tried to downplay his part and instead blame his colleagues.

added to the list.¹⁶⁰ Appian has her putting the name of a Rufus on the list due to a petty dispute over the purchase of a house, which, although it did not save him, he later gifted to Fulvia. He was killed and Fulvia “...ordered that it [his head] be displayed on the apartment block rather than the Forum.”¹⁶¹ Dio likewise emphasize the greed and cruelty of Fulvia by saying that:

“...Fulvia caused the death of many, both to satisfy her enmity and to gain their wealth, in some cases men with whom her husband was not even acquainted...”¹⁶²

Should Fulvia have done this it would have been remarkable, as Weir notes.¹⁶³ What would be the pretext for Fulvia to have men killed? Could it be as simple as greed and pure malice or was it vengeance against those who sought to prosecute her during Antony’s *hostis* vote? It is more likely that this defamation of Fulvia and her character follows the Ciceronian narrative and creation of the most greedy and cruel woman, and quite possibly has no bearing in reality. Cicero had begun attacking Antony and, by association Fulvia, in 44 as he held a series of speeches delivered *in foro*, *contiones* and in the Senate.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Fulvia has here made her entrance (in the narratives of Appian and Dio) onto the path that would lead to the war at Perugia in 41/40, and Fulvia received no reprieve, nor any kind words along that path. Bauman is right in stating that Fulvia had obviously attained a reputation for being involved in the proscriptions, at least after the fact.¹⁶⁵

The proscriptions offer yet another cruel story starring Fulvia. Cicero was, unsurprisingly, proscribed – by Antony – and was subsequently killed.¹⁶⁶ This was a result of the *Philippics* and the long enmity between the two men and because Cicero was regarded as one of the conspirators to Caesar’s death, albeit he was not implicated in the act itself. Whatever the reason, Cicero, the single consular victim of the proscriptions,¹⁶⁷ perished and his head was brought before Antony as proof:

¹⁶⁰ App. *B Civ.* 4.29; Cass. Dio 47.8.2.

¹⁶¹ App. *B Civ.* 4.29.

¹⁶² Cass. Dio 47.8.2-3.

¹⁶³ Weir 2007, 101.

¹⁶⁴ The 14 *Philippics* of Cicero. Fulvia was often a victim of his attacks, though never as fiercely as Clodia in *pro Caelio* in 56. Fulvia was referred to as the greediest of women (*Phil.* 2.95; 3.10; 5.11) and the most cruel, here alluding to a incident at Brundisium (*Phil.* 13.18).

¹⁶⁵ Bauman 1992, 85.

¹⁶⁶ Plut. *Cic.* 46. 3; *Ant.* 19.1-3.

¹⁶⁷ Syme 1939, 192.

“Antony uttered many bitter reproaches against it and then ordered it to be exposed on the rostra more prominently than the rest... And Fulvia took the head into her hands before it was removed, and after abusing it spitefully and spitting on it, set it on her knees, opened the mouth, and pulled out the tongue, which she pierced with the pins that she used for her hair, at the same time uttering many brutal jests.”¹⁶⁸

Appian follows this horrid picture, which indicates a common source for this period, used by both authors. It has been suggested that incidents like these come from what Welch called ‘the other side of the civil war’.¹⁶⁹ Here, though, we only hear of Antony:

“The head and hand of Cicero were suspended for a long time from the rostra in the Forum... and more people came to see this than had come to listen to him. It is said that even while eating his meals Antony placed Cicero’s head in front of the table, until he had his fill of such a dreadful sight.”¹⁷⁰

The story conveys several aspects of cruelty and personal enmity in a time of civil war. Yet, it also distinctly connects Antony and Fulvia into an almost single entity, who both shared the cruelty and the morbid vindictive displays of a victor. Fulvia was no stranger to (civil) war spectacles, and was aware of what message the molestation of Cicero’s severed head would send. The entire idea of bringing the heads of the proscribed – Roman citizens – to the rostra for full display brings to mind the severed heads of conquered enemies of Rome. Toying with the head of a consular and distinguished man was for all purposes beneath any civilized *matron* of Rome. It seems oddly out of character from the Fulvia of the 50’s and early 40’s who was not governed by emotion and irrationality but rather astute and meticulous in her political actions. However, it does seem in character of Antony who contrary to Fulvia, seem to have acted very much in accordance with personal feelings and was rather rash and blunt, as his year as Master of the Horse showed in 47.

It is likely that Appian and Dio both used Augustus’ memoirs as a main source of this era, in fact they both site them as sources,¹⁷¹ which would explain the blame for the proscriptions and its horrors being put on Fulvia, Antony, and Lepidus. However, another possibility is as likely. Syme

¹⁶⁸ Cass. Dio 47.8.3.

¹⁶⁹ Welch 2009, 198: Welch argues that the narratives after the civil wars was created by both the victor and the defeated, as Augustus needed the legitimizing force of the defeated, now re-united under the new regime.

¹⁷⁰ App. *B Civ.* 4.20.

¹⁷¹ App. *B Civ.* 4.110; 5.45; 5.130; Cass. Dio 44.35.3; On Appian’s sources, see Westall 2015.

noted that the civil wars created an abundance of memoirs, and as Welch pointed out, many of these stories, deriving from family history, tales and actual history, was written by the losers of the wars who was now appropriated by the winners'.¹⁷² Therefore Appian and Dio likely build on Augustus' memoirs as well as that of others. The stories of Fulvia's involvement should be viewed with scepticism, and are most likely later fabrications to manufacture the character of Fulvia.¹⁷³ However, Fulvia would have benefitted personally from the proscriptions. The proscriptions seized property and wealth in order to restock the treasury, which had been emptied during the last decade of civil wars,¹⁷⁴ but some part of the seized wealth and property quite possibly fell into the hands of the Triumvirs and their close kin. Antony held true affection for Fulvia and he may very well have gifted her property and wealth derived from the proscribed.

The evidence here provided by Appian and Dio does show another vital aspect of Fulvia. Though the stories in themselves may not be true and the historical accuracy may be up for debate, Appian and Dio both demonstrate that Fulvia wielded a great degree of influence, even on the Triumvirs, and to that extend also *auctoritas* as she was heard and respected. The two narratives, truthfulness of the stories aside, clearly shows that at least Appian and Dio thought that Fulvia showed too much independent rational agency and wielded far too much power, or *auctoritas*. As it is likely that the historians and writers of history made use of an abundance of memoirs and accounts,¹⁷⁵ this might very well have been the assumption on Fulvia from the very start. So even in damning Fulvia, they illustrate that not only was she influential, but she acted on her own accord at times – as a rational independent being and not as a woman who blindly followed her husbands' bidding and wishes.

As shown, it is difficult to be certain to what extent Fulvia was involved directly in the proscriptions, although she was implicit. The character of Fulvia was being created and thus Appian and Dio, likely based on an already existing narrative, both frame her as the androgyny and vile *matron* to fit the narrative of the war at Perugia, which we shall now turn to.

¹⁷² Syme 1978, 108; Welch 2009, 196-198.

¹⁷³ Weir 2007, 105; For the cultural creation of Fulvia, see Wotring 2017.

¹⁷⁴ App. *B Civ.* 4.5.

¹⁷⁵ On Fulvia Appian and Dio is the most comprehensive. However, to name a few other historians and authors in both the Greek and Latin tradition: Polybius, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Plutarch, Tacitus, Florus, Valerius Maximus.

The Last Italian War Against Rome: Fulvia and the Perusine War.¹⁷⁶

In 41 BCE Lucius Antonius (Lucius henceforth), the younger brother of Antony, and Publius Servilius were consuls. However, Dio states that in reality the consulship was shared between Antony and Fulvia, as they were in actual power.¹⁷⁷ After the war at Philippi, Antony had taken the task of settle affairs in the East, while Young Caesar was to settle up to 50.000 veterans of their legions in Italy.¹⁷⁸ It is an often-overlooked fact that the civil wars of the Late Republic, those under the triumvirs especially, also concerned the ownership and the control over land and property. The task to settle the veterans on Italian soil was immensely difficult and was met with fierce opposition.¹⁷⁹

As the year began, Antony was in the East and Young Caesar was still in Macedonia making ready to embark on the journey to Rome.¹⁸⁰ The third triumvir, Lepidus, was disregarded and the narratives tells us of a Fulvia taking charge in Rome by superseding the Senate in the matter of granting Lucius a triumph – a matter of prestige traditionally handled by the Senate.¹⁸¹ Whether or not Dio tells the truth here is not of great importance in this instance, however, it should be noted that it is unlikely that Fulvia, even with her new recognized position as the wife of Antony and mother-in-law of Young Caesar, should be able to make those decisions.¹⁸² She was, however, able to influence the process if the earlier case of Servilia and the redistribution of the grain-commission in 44 were followed.¹⁸³ The narrative of the woman with nothing womanlike about her except her sex is prominent in the notion relayed by Dio.¹⁸⁴ Clearly the historical Fulvia had such a prominent role in the year 41/40 that the idea of a woman wielding near actual *potestas* did not seem far-fetched. Fulvia was implicated and, quite possibly, one of the main architects behind the conflict that led to the battle at Perugia. Dio establishes her as all too powerful and thus gives her the means to create, handle and manage the conflict that arose. As young Caesar returned home, Italy and

¹⁷⁶ Syme called it the last remnants of the social war, thus the last war of Italy against the central administration in Rome, see Syme 1939, 208; cf. Livy. *Per.* 125; App. *B Civ.* 5.12; Cass. Dio 48.13.2.

¹⁷⁷ Cass. Dio 48.4.1.

¹⁷⁸ Levick 2010, 34.

¹⁷⁹ Gabba 1971, 139.

¹⁸⁰ Bauman 1992, 86.

¹⁸¹ Cass. Dio 48.4.1-6.

¹⁸² However, there is contemporary evidence that suggest that some women may have been able to influence the Senate to alter their decisions, but to supersede them seems a stretch; cf. Cic. *Att.* 15.11; Treggiari 2019, 187-196.

¹⁸³ Cic. *Att.* 15.11.2; See, Treggiari 2019, 187-196.

¹⁸⁴ ... *uxor Antonii Fulvia, nihil muliebre prater corpus gerens...* (Vell. Pat. 2.74.2).

Rome itself would have been very uneasy.¹⁸⁵ What was to happen when one of the victors of Phillipi returned home was not clear. Though the return of Young Caesar did not come with renewed proscriptions the allocation of the landowners and the colonisation of veterans did not go over well.¹⁸⁶ The when and why Fulvia engaged with Young Caesar is unclear. What is clear is that sometime after Young Caesar's arrival in Rome, Fulvia and Lucius (for Fulvia was the main adversary, *not* Lucius, in Dio) formed an opposition to the cause and task of Young Caesar. Bauman sees Fulvia's actions as on behalf of Antony in an attempt to protect his interests,¹⁸⁷ but this is a too simplistic view of Fulvia and too exclusive of Lucius. We must not diminish the importance of this being the last year of the five-year term for the triumvirs, and that the agreement to settle the veterans was made with Antony's full consent.¹⁸⁸ Antony and Young Caesar would not risk any open conflict between the two of them as the triumviral assignment was far from complete and a renewal of their term was needed.

Fulvia and Lucius' opposition to Young Caesar was initially based on the fact that the allocation of the troops granted Young Caesar the *dignitas* alone, while not recognising Antony as his colleague.¹⁸⁹ The real reasons for the war and what actually caused the breakdown between the two parties are difficult, but not impossible, to assess;¹⁹⁰ however, the narratives almost exclusively place the blame on Fulvia, with an possible exemption being Augustus himself.¹⁹¹ As will be shown, Appian does not put the blame entirely on Fulvia. She played a prominent part in the *ante bellum*. She and Lucius tried to undermine Young Caesar's position with the veterans, and even going to such lengths as bribing the troops of Young Caesar in order to make them switch sides.¹⁹² Fulvia took hers and Antony's children and travelled to the veterans who had served under Antony, to remind-and plea with them not to forget their general, to whom they owed their loyalty.¹⁹³ Fulvia became the voice of Antony by extension, just as she had also spoken for Antony in 42 during the Hortensia incident.¹⁹⁴ By doing this she obstructed Young Caesar and took away an important supporter – the troops themselves. Gabba rightly stated that the veterans and troops was a political

¹⁸⁵ Cass. Dio 48.3.3.

¹⁸⁶ Gabba 1971, 140; App *B Civ.* 5.12; Cass. Dio 48.3.4-6.

¹⁸⁷ Bauman 1992, 89.

¹⁸⁸ App. *B Civ.* 5.12; Cass. Dio 48.2.2-4.

¹⁸⁹ App. *B Civ.* 5.14; Cass. Dio 48.5.2.

¹⁹⁰ Syme 1939, 210, 215.

¹⁹¹ Appian used the Augustus' memoirs in retelling the speeches given by Lucius and Young Caesar after the Perusine War, in which Lucius in given the bulk of the guilt. This shows Augustus' clemency and reconciliation (*B Civ.* 5.42-45, 5.54.)

¹⁹² Welch 1995, 102.

¹⁹³ App. *B Civ.* 5.14.

¹⁹⁴ App. *B Civ.* 4.32-34: See, Hopwood 2015 on the speech and the events.

force in their own right.¹⁹⁵ However, Appian states that it was not only Fulvia, but a consortium consisting of her, Lucius and one Manius – a sort of pseudo triumvirate – who decided to deploy Fulvia and the children.¹⁹⁶ Dio puts her in connection with Lucius, although he almost consistently names Fulvia first and Lucius last, and often only as ‘the consul’.¹⁹⁷ Again Dio paints a picture of Fulvia as being in command of affairs. This presentation of Fulvia makes her the sole woman in Rome who transcended the notion that a woman could not wield *potestas*. She used her influence to manipulate not just one of the *Antonii* but two. On that note it is interesting that Dio implicitly states that Fulvia had no problem with Young Caesar aside from the allocation of troops and that it was Young Caesar’s failure to incorporate Fulvia and Lucius that caused the rift:

“... And as so far Lucius and Fulvia, they kept quiet at first, because they counted upon their kinship with [Young] Caesar and upon their being partners in his supremacy. But as time went on, they quarrelled...”¹⁹⁸

Not only is a portion of the blame being put on Young Caesar indirectly, as one could argue, that he simply had to let Lucius and Fulvia play along, but Young Caesar also seem to have ignored the family ties and traditions in his new found *potestas*.¹⁹⁹ Fulvia saw how Young Caesar persuaded the veterans into thinking that he was their benefactor and she and Lucius rose to defend Antony’s *dignitas*.²⁰⁰ As the rift occurred, Young Caesar divorced his wife, Claudia, and returned her to Fulvia untouched (meant as an insult, but damning to his virility) and they “were brought to open warfare (πόλεμον)”.²⁰¹ Thus Dio states that the war had begun long before the siege at Perusia. As we know that both Appian and Dio made use of Augustus’ memoirs for this era,²⁰² this evidence may also imply that Young Caesar in fact played a role in the outset of hostilities, deriving from ‘the other side’.

¹⁹⁵ Gabba 1971, 143, 145.

¹⁹⁶ App. *B Civ.* 5.14.

¹⁹⁷ Cass. Dio 48.6.4; 48.10.2.

¹⁹⁸ Cass. Dio 48.5.1-2.

¹⁹⁹ This might be Dio using another source, the ‘unofficial story’ or simply relaying the human nature and power structures, which is a major theme in his work. See Lange 2021, on Dio and human nature during the Perusine War.

²⁰⁰ Huzar 1986, 102.

²⁰¹ Cass. Dio 48.5.1-2.

²⁰² FrHist. II [8] (2013); App. *B Civ.* 5.45; Cass. Dio 44.35.3. This also makes it certain that Augustus did not try to conceal the fact that he had fought a civil war against the Italians though Perusia is not mentioned in the *Res Gestae*. It might have served as an excellent example of his *clementia* when pardoning Lucius.

War broke out between the factions, and a series of campaigns followed. I would argue that Fulvia was against war following the initial statement made by Appian that “Fulvia blamed him [Lucius] for stirring up war at an inopportune time...”²⁰³ War was far from Fulvia’s mind if she ever contemplated it at all. The veterans was a political force in their own right, one that provided a political base of influence with which she could force Young Caesar to recognize Antony as his equal and cohort in the allocations. Thus she stood before them, trying to obstruct Young Caesar. Lucius and Fulvia’s motives would, however, simply diverge from one another as Lucius changed his objective at some time during 41. He adopted ‘republican’ (a highly problematic word) sentiments and changed to stand with the landowners who stood to lose their property to Young Caesar’s land distributions.²⁰⁴ By doing so, Lucius took an anti-triumvirate stance, and Fulvia, already attached to Lucius by their joint venture in opposing Young Caesar was forced to follow suit.²⁰⁵ It is unlikely that Fulvia would have taken an anti-triumvirate stance herself, and even less so, start a war to bring Antony back to Italy. Appian notes that Fulvia was opposed to war, until she was told that a war would bring Antony back from the clutches of Cleopatra.²⁰⁶ This brings forth a couple of inherent problems. Firstly, this would make Fulvia act out of pure jealousy, a trait she so far had lacked. She herself had been accused of adultery with Antony prior to their marriage and Antony’s affair with one Cytheris during their own marriage was well known.²⁰⁷ Weir rightly pointed out that no Roman *matron* would have been surprised should her husband step out on her rather it was the norm.²⁰⁸ Fulvia did not just adopt jealousy out of the blue. Secondly, we do not know how well the affair with Cleopatra was known at this point in time in Rome. Surprisingly the Martial epigram does not mention Cleopatra but one Glaphyra.²⁰⁹ This might indicate that Cleopatra was not yet associated with Antony. However, none of the sources that implicate Fulvia denies in any way that she had the means, resources and opportunity to start a war, quite the opposite. Livy and Velleius Paterculus blames Fulvia for the war and both Florus and Dio cite her as wearing armour and sword as if a general.²¹⁰ This is rhetoric to create the ‘manly’ picture of a usurping

²⁰³ App. *B Civ.* 5.19.

²⁰⁴ Gabba 1971, 146.

²⁰⁵ App. *B Civ.* 5.54; He took this stance as the Triumvirate assignment was fulfilled after Philippi, see Lange 2009, 26-30.

²⁰⁶ App. *B Civ.* 5.19.

²⁰⁷ Cic. *Phil.* 2.48; 2.61; 2.99.

²⁰⁸ Weir 2007, 111.

²⁰⁹ Mart. 11.20: “Because Antony fucks Glaphyra, Fulvia fixed this punishment for me...” Supposedly Young Caesar wrote the epigram at the time of the war, but we cannot be entirely sure.

²¹⁰ Livy. *Per.* 125; Vell. Pat. 74.2; Flor. 2.16; Cass. Dio 48.10.4.

woman. It also suggest that Fulvia wielded a great deal of influence and was a very public figure, and likely she was prominent in Augustus' narration of the events.

While much of the scholarly work, as well as the evidence on the Perusine war and Fulvia, tries to place Fulvia in the centre of the war, albeit not present at Perugia, I suggest an alternative.²¹¹ Fulvia was never present at the actual war, and as noted by Appian it was Lucius who stirred up the war,²¹² which would be named after its final battle, the siege of Perugia. Lucius and Fulvia made Praeneste their headquarters from whence Lucius went to the veterans and the troops of Young Caesar, rallying them to his cause and turning them against the triumvir.²¹³ Young Caesar and the duo, Lucius and Fulvia, rallied their troops and send them in order to seize strategic positions throughout Italy, no doubt including the 18 cities destined for the veterans:

“Meanwhile both sides in turn sent embassies and despatched soldiers and officers in every direction, and each managed to seize some places first, though repulsed from others... Caesar made an expedition against Nursia, among the Sabines, and routed the garrison encamped before it, but was repulsed from the city... Accordingly he went over into Umbria and laid siege to Sentinum, but failed to capture it. For Lucius... had suddenly marched against the city [Rome] itself, conquered the cavalry force that met him, hurled the infantry back within the walls, and after that had taken the city.”²¹⁴

Two points is worth taking note of in this piece. Firstly, the names given are that of the peoples of Italy, used to describe the Italian adversaries in the Social War in the beginning of the century. Is this a remnant of the Augustan narrative trying to portray the war as a rebellion? It surely was a rebellion, but by Italy or by Lucius and his republican sentiments, that remains unclear, as we do not know the cause of the Italian cities. It lends credibility to Syme's notion that this was the last war in the Social War, or at the very least, that it was a revolt against the central government in Rome. Secondly, the war was fought between two factions, and Fulvia was not a part of it. Fulvia's part in the war was founded in tradition; however, on such an unprecedented scale that it would be her downfall in her own time and posterity both. While the war was raging, Fulvia occupied a very public role as organizer, recruiter and lobbyist. Fulvia was in her right element as the war resembled

²¹¹ See, Bacock 1965; Gabba 1971; Huzar 1986; Bauman 1992; Welch 1995; Weir 2007; Lange forthcoming.

²¹² Perhaps with the acceptance of the senatorial class: Gabba 1971, 147.

²¹³ App. *B Civ.* 5.21; Cass. Dio 48.10.3.

²¹⁴ Cass. Dio 48.13.1-3.

the gang violence and political unrest of the 50's, with the veterans coming to Rome, armed clashes in the streets and cities in turmoil.²¹⁵ In this heated environment Fulvia could draw on her previous experience and knowledge, now aided by her reinforced position as one of the *de facto* most powerful persons in Italy. Fulvia raised three legions, most likely as the voice of Antony and through traditional lobbyism, she approached the men who would be in a position to take command, implored the veterans etc.²¹⁶ However, after delivering a speech to the people – in uniform, which was highly irregular and unprecedented – Lucius fled Rome with his legions and set out for Gaul. Blocked by the legions of Young Caesar, he turned to Perusia, where the forces of Young Caesar besieged him.²¹⁷ Fulvia, still at Praeneste, sought to aid the cut off legions by pleading to the Antonian general's in-and-near Italy.²¹⁸ She assembled reinforcements and sent them to Perusia to relief the besieged, while the generals marched with their legions of Perusia. However, they were blocked by Young Caesar's forces and they would not fully engage, no doubt due to the uncertainty of Antony's own wishes. It is also possible that Lucius' objective stood in direct opposition to their own. They were in command of several legions that were promised land at the end of their enlistment, and Lucius sought to obstruct this. Whatever the reason it seems that the generals actually heeded Fulvia's pleas and marched on Perusia, but chose to halt in sight of the city.²¹⁹ Fulvia's pleas and *auctoritas* as Antony's wife did not transcend Antony's own wishes, which were unknown. Fulvia could only await the news of the battle's outcome. Lucius was unable to break the siege and famine took hold of his troops and they were forced to surrender after many bloody engagements before the walls of Perusia.²²⁰

As shown, the war was not contained to the theatre of Perusia alone, but engulfed the entire peninsula. Fulvia was not present, and Lucius directed the war from the beginning more so than Fulvia. She played a central part in the organizing and preparation of the actual war as well as the preceding propaganda war, as the sling bullets recovered from Perusia clearly attest.²²¹ The post-Perusian defamation of Fulvia, in which she becomes the sole instigator of the war, most likely stems from an Augustan tradition where Livy is a prime example. In Livy *per.* 125 Fulvia is directly blamed for the war. Though it is only an résumé of Livy's actual book on the war, it does indicate

²¹⁵ App. *B Civ.* 5.17; 5.18; Cass. Dio 48.9.4.

²¹⁶ Huzar 1986, 102.

²¹⁷ Cass. Dio. 48.13.5-48.14.1.

²¹⁸ App. *B Civ.* 5.33.

²¹⁹ Huzar 1986, 102.

²²⁰ App. *B Civ.* 5.37-38; Cass. Dio 48.14.3.

²²¹ *CIL* XI.6721: *peto landicam Fulviae* (I am aiming for Fulvia's clitoris), See, Hallett 1977; Porter 2018; The sling bullets portray who the soldiers thought to be the main actors in the war, and is perhaps closer to the official story told at the time.

that Augustus wrote about the war, and in part blamed Fulvia for it. However, Fulvia did not start the war, nor did she instigate it, albeit she was very much part of the workings “behind the curtain”. Fulvia’s crime was that she transcended the private sphere wherein her *auctoritas* and influence would have been accepted and stepped into the sphere of the *res publica* and men, where her *auctoritas* and influence would become incriminating and the perfect example of an androgyny. Thus Young Caesar could point at Fulvia as a woman meddling in men’s affairs resulting in open war. Fulvia used her *auctoritas* to enlist armies and cause senators to deflect, though they already opposed the confiscation of land, as they owned much of it themselves. But Fulvia did not stand alone as she was in league with Manius and Lucius. It was her all too public role and exercise of *auctoritas* – derived from Antony – and intervention that became her downfall. She simply overplayed her hand. Appian again provide evidence of Fulvia’s absolution from guilt in the war from Lucius’ own mouth, perhaps even derived from Augustus’ memoirs:

“These are the causes of the war I waged and these alone: not my brother, nor Manius, nor Fulvia.”²²²

Lucius could be absolved of crimes, as he was a poster for Caesarian/Augustan *clementia* and rose to defend the republic from the Triumvirate and the build-in *potestas* in that office. Fulvia was not redeemed as she did not share such sentiments and would have continued the war if not the other cities had bowed in submission to Young Caesar.²²³ Fulvia fled Italy with her children, and later died, broken and deserted in Sicily.

Inter Uxores

After the fall of Perusia there followed a brief time of strained relationship between the two triumvirs, Antony and Young Caesar. This short chapter is named ‘between wives’ as Antony lost one wife but quickly gained another. However, the chapter must begin before the death of Fulvia and relay Antony’s role.

²²² App. *B Civ.* 5.43: The speech relays Lucius’ republican and anti triumvirate stance. Appian notes that he has this information from the memoirs of Augustus, who evidently wrote the speeches down (App. *B Civ.* 5.45.) See also App. *B Civ.* 5.54 where he once again takes the guilt and claims to be republican.

²²³ Cass. Dio 48.15.1-2.

It is uncertain how much Antony knew of what was going on in Italy in 41/40. Appian tells of two incidents, true or fictitious, in where Antony's sentiments might be found. The first was a letter, which Manius produced before the outset of war, in which Antony urged his generals to fight should his dignity be assailed.²²⁴ This is ambiguous at best and, if true, hard to interpret even for the generals. The second was one of Antony's quaestor's who had returned to Italy from the East and had told that Antony was "displeased with those who were making war on Octavian [Young Caesar]".²²⁵ This second sentiment seems truer in nature, considering that both triumvirs had agreed upon the arrangement. However, it is in Plutarch we find Fulvia once more, and a rather surprised Antony:

"... He [Antony] was surprised by reports from two quarters: one from Rome, that Lucius his brother and Fulvia his wife had first quarrelled with one another, and then had waged war with Octavius Caesar, but had lost their cause and were in flight from Italy..."²²⁶

This suggests that Antony knew little to nothing of the events in Italy itself and first after the battle of Perugia had he the information. Antony set sail for Italy and stopped in Greece where he was met by his mother and Fulvia.²²⁷ Here they likely filled Antony in on current events and told their side of the story – and possibly how his *dignitas* was assailed so to justify the war. Antony made ready for war against Young Caesar and set sail for Italy. As Lange rightly pointed out, a state of war did exist between the two triumvirs, as Dio used the word πόλεμος (*polemos*) to describe the power struggle between the two.²²⁸ Antony found the port of Brundisium blocked by Young Caesar's forces and was unable to make landfall. An outright clash between the two triumvirs and their armies seemed inevitable, but at some point the news reached Italy that Fulvia had died in Sicyon where Antony had left her.²²⁹ Though Antony was truly saddened by her death, it gave the Triumvirs an excuse to seize hostilities and blame the war and their differences on her. The death of Fulvia made way for peace-talks and the famous Pact of Brundisium where the Triumvirate was renewed.²³⁰ The pact of Brundisium also extended the triumvirs assignment, as Young Caesar was

²²⁴ App. *B Civ.* 5.29.

²²⁵ App. *B Civ.* 5.31.

²²⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 30.1.

²²⁷ Cass. Dio 48.27.5.

²²⁸ Cass. Dio 48.28.2-3; Lange 2020, 138.

²²⁹ Cass. Dio 48.28.2; App. *B Civ.* 5.29.

²³⁰ Huzar 1986, 104.

to make war upon Sextus Pompeius, who had taken Sicily and put up a blockade on grain shipments to the famished Rome and Italy, while Antony was to settle the east and make war on the Parthians.²³¹ As Lange has pointed out the Pact was celebrated with a joint ovation granted to the two triumvirs for the oddity of *not* making war on each other, or possibly for concluding the civil wars.²³² The Pact divided the empire into two halves, with Young Caesar retaining Spain but gaining Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul and Dalmatia while Antony took control of the East.²³³ Lepidus was given the small province of Africa, previously granted to him by Young Caesar. Huzar argues that Antony relinquished the West in order to get back to the East and wage war on the Parthians, but it could be argued that Antony had little or no interest in the West itself,²³⁴ as it was the poorer part of the empire with the East being a great opportunity to enrich himself, be a commander of legions and not a politician, which he did not excel at as previously shown. Fulvia would not have made the same choice and relinquished the West so easily. As Lange rightly points out, this was a power struggle between the two triumvirs, which was handled internally with a renewed peace treaty²³⁵. However, if Dio is to be trusted, war actually did occur between the two factions and battle was given! The triumvirs chose a course of reconciliation rather than to portray Brundisium as a civil war and thus they went to Rome to celebrate their joint ovation in full triumphal getup, but also to celebrate a wedding that would bring the two closer.

²³¹ Lange 2016, 114; Huzar 1986, 104.

²³² Lange 2016, 114, 157; Lange 2020, 139-143.

²³³ Cass. Dio 48.48.4.

²³⁴ Huzar 1986, 104.

²³⁵ Lange 2020, 138-139.

The New Meets the Old: Octavia

As the two triumvirs entered Rome in their joint ovation, there was a woman in Rome who would seal the pact and, in theory, make the bond between the two stronger. Her name was Octavia. The wedding between Octavia and Antony was publicly staged, resembling a spectacle, where all could behold the two triumvirs now each other's brother-in-law.²³⁶ From this point on Octavia played a prominent role in the narratives, even more so than Livia, the future Empress of Rome, up till Antony's demise and the establishing of the principate.²³⁷ This chapter must begin before the wedding of Young Caesar's older sister to Antony. Octavia is often viewed mainly as the sister of Augustus, and forgotten as the sister of Young Caesar and a republican-civil war *matron*. As such, one must be attentive of the Augustan bias and the light in which Octavia is portrayed, often as the ideal *matron*, as Moore emphasized in her dissertation.²³⁸ Huzar called Octavia's role 'the expected role of aristocratic women – serving as pawns in their families' political and economic chess games.'²³⁹ Women was much more than that, and it is possible to go further and credit the women with more agency, especially Octavia, in the Late Republic, or as perfectly framed by Moore: "...the assumption that she lacked all agency and was unable to learn from observations of her day-to-day life would be ... ill-advised."²⁴⁰ While we cannot credit Octavia with absolute agency in all her actions, a reappraisal on her in which she is viewed as what she was – a civil war *matron* of means and education – and in comparison to her contemporaries, is likely to provide a deeper understanding of the sister of Young Caesar.

An Expected Journey: Octavia's Youth, Education, and Early Influence

Octavia's date of birth is unknown, but she is estimated to have been around 15 years of age when Caesar offered her to Pompey the Great as a potential bride in 54.²⁴¹ This places her birth around 69 making her Young Caesar's senior by 6 years. Moore's suggestion that a later date of birth helps

²³⁶ Lange 2020, 141.

²³⁷ Dio famously noted in book 52 that Rome, under Augustus, reverted into monarchy, what we call the principate (52.1.1).

²³⁸ Moore 2017, ii. Moore's goal is somewhat different than this thesis'. Moore focuses on Octavia's role as a moral example and the transformation from Republic to Empire.

²³⁹ Huzar 1986, 104.

²⁴⁰ Moore 2017, 6.

²⁴¹ Suet. *Iul.* 27.1; Also mentions that she was already married to Marcellus, which she was married to at the earliest as 12, more likely 14, see Shaw 1987, 42. Moore 2017 has argued for her date of birth in 66 making her a new bride, properly not consummated in marriage at the time Caesar offered Octavia to Pompey; Moore 2017, 9-11.

explain the seemingly close relationship between brother and sister should, in my opinion, be disregarded. At the age of 10 and 4 Octavia and her brother lost their father, which most likely bonded the siblings closer. Octavian (not yet Young Caesar) was likely looking to his sister as an authority and parent figure, which in turn would explain the close relationship between the two later in life.

Gaius Octavius, the father of Octavia and Octavian, reached the praetorship in 60/59 and was, according to Suetonius, quite wealthy.²⁴² Though he came from the Italian town of Velitrae and was a *homo novus* (new man) in the Senate he had the means to educate his daughter.²⁴³ We know that Augustus saw to it that his own daughter and granddaughters were thoroughly educated. This might derive from his own experiences as a child and the general Late Republican practice in the well off families – though, of course, he sought to bring back the traditional values such as spinning and weaving too.²⁴⁴ It is also apparent from Suetonius that Augustus received the proper education as a child and adolescent and quite enjoyed it throughout his youth.²⁴⁵ There is no reason to suspect that Octavia was not schooled, at least as a girl and up until her marriage, where she would transfer from the state of a girl to that of a Roman *matron*.²⁴⁶ In her youth she would likely have been educated alongside boys, and, like Fulvia, been educated in her family's history and the politics of Rome.²⁴⁷ As the young Octavian would start his education, Octavia would presumably follow his lectures in at least the basics in reading and writing Latin. We also hear of Atia, Octavia's mother, who was regarded as a *matron* of virtue and tradition, so it is more than plausible that Octavia likewise was taught traditional weaving, spinning, dance, music and poetry.²⁴⁸ That both Augustus and Octavia came from a mother of traditional values and great reputation might have served Augustus and the Augustan writers in portraying Octavia as the continuation of her mother in character and as the revered *matron*. Unlike Fulvia, who was born in the wake of the Sullan era, Octavia was born into a Roman world aflame. As a young girl she would have witnessed or heard of the Catiline conspiracy and perhaps even seen the executions. She would have been in Rome much of her youth likely being exposed to the rapidly increasing gang violence and political fighting between Milo and Clodius, and she might even have witnessed the burial of Clodius. She experienced Caesar's

²⁴² Suet. *Aug.* 3.

²⁴³ *Homo novus* (new man) was a man who was the first in his family to enter the senate and pursue the *cursus honorum* (latter of offices). C. Octavius' family had held office in Velitrae but not in Rome it would seem.

²⁴⁴ Hemelrijk 1999, 22-33; Macr. *Sat.* 2.5.2; Suet. *Aug.* 86.

²⁴⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 8.2; 84.1; 89.1.

²⁴⁶ Hemelrijk 1999, 9.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-23. Hillard 1992, 40.

²⁴⁸ Tac. *Dial.* 28.

invasion of Italy, and through family ties she would have attended Caesar's parties and social engagements.

As the marriage to Clodius shaped the politics of Fulvia, so too can we assume that Octavia's marriage to Marcellus (*cos.*50) gave her an in-depth understanding of politics and Rome in crises. Her marriage to Marcellus is of an unknown date, but she was likely married quite young, and the abrupt transition from girl to *matrona* was worsened by the systemic breakdown of Roman politics. She was not much older than 20 when her great-uncle, Caesar, crossed the Rubicon in 49. It has been speculated that her marriage to Marcellus was a political move, either by Caesar or her stepfather Philippus, using her as a political pawn and playing both sides.²⁴⁹ We have seen how Caesar offered Octavia to Pompey and this might suggest that he was in charge of Octavia's marriage, perhaps as a *tutor*,²⁵⁰ although it might as well have been Philippus who saw to it that she was married to the distinguished Marcellus. Who contracted the marriage is not of great importance in this instance, however, it does seem that she was a political chip used to establish a family alliance, which was to happen again and was by no means unusual.²⁵¹ The marriage was not without lessons to be had for Octavia. Moore pointed out that she got to see and understand, through her own marriage as well as watching her stepfather and Caesar, how political relations was cultivated by men on opposing sides.²⁵² Moreover, Marcellus had a house in Rome near the Forum, as Cicero, rather humorously, let us know:

“... I am writing this letter on the 23rd at three o'clock in the morning... the candidate Marcellus is snoring so loud that I can hear him next door.”²⁵³

Octavia thus moved to the centre of Roman politics where all the higher-ranking senators lived. It is likely that she knew Fulvia herself through social interaction and lived quite close to her house.²⁵⁴ As mentioned above she likely witnessed the gang-violence of Milo and Clodius in the late

²⁴⁹ Moore 2017, 17-18.

²⁵⁰ *Tutor*: a legal guardian in charge of the woman's wealth and legal matters should her *pater familias* die. See Gardner 1995, 14-22; Dixon 1992, 48-49, on Women and Tutors.

²⁵¹ See, Dixon 1985.

²⁵² Moore 2017, 24.

²⁵³ Cic. *Att.* 4.3. This house might very well have been Cicero's house on the Palatine.

²⁵⁴ Asc. *Mil.* 32C.

50's, as well as the spectacle of Clodius' funeral from her house given the proximity to Fulvia's home.²⁵⁵

Through her marriage, and the social status of Marcellus, we can be quite certain of how her 'on-the-job' education would have looked like. The Roman family was highly social and women were not secluded from social gatherings, unlike their Greek counterparts.²⁵⁶ Politics was not confined to the Senate or the Forum. It was fluid and political conversations and debates took place both in private and in public (the *contiones*, public speeches from the Rostra).²⁵⁷ We have already established the possibility of private *consilia* where women could attend.²⁵⁸ Marcellus in all probability brought political and private business home, especially in the years 51-49, where Octavia would serve as the lady of the house, attending and hosting social gatherings, and perhaps way in with her own opinion in spite of her young age.²⁵⁹ We seldom hear of women influencing politics, though it most certainly did occur. To be influenced by a woman was not a good sign in a male dominated world,²⁶⁰ however, men did heed their counsel as shown with Fulvia and Antony and Cicero and Terentia. This might very well have been the case in Marcellus' and Octavia's marriage as well. Even if this should not have been true, Octavia would have observed the politics in the coming and goings of allies, clients, and co-senators in the house, which had a very fluid boundary between the 'private' and 'public' space.²⁶¹ It is also possible that Marcellus saw to a further education of his young wife, either on his own or by the help of a private teacher, though this is only speculation and there is no way to tell how wide spread this practice was in the Late Republic.²⁶²

Coming up on the civil wars, Octavia had been an elite-politicians' wife since at least 54. If she was 20 years old at her great-uncles crossing of the Rubicon she would have had 6-8 years to learn and become the *matron* worthy of a man of consular rank, not counting her years in training under the strict supervision of Atia. But the crossing into Italy presented Octavia and many families and women with an unwelcome problem. The general who now marched on Rome was her great-uncle and the men fleeing Rome, following Pompey, included her husband.²⁶³ Family was at the very core of Roman society, and the conditions of civil war split families apart, forcing the parties to choose

²⁵⁵ On the Funeral of Clodius, see especially Sumi 1997; Lange forthcoming.

²⁵⁶ Hillard 1992, 40-41.

²⁵⁷ See, Jehne 2013 on the importance of the *contiones*.

²⁵⁸ See also Dixon 1992, 63 cf. Cic. *Att.* 15.11; Treggiari 2019, 188-196.

²⁵⁹ Moore 2017, 28-29.

²⁶⁰ Hillard 1992, 42.

²⁶¹ See, Wallace-Hadrill 1988 on the social structure of the Roman house.

²⁶² Hemelrijk 1999, 30-41.

²⁶³ Moore 2017, 34.

to whom they owed loyalty. Dixon noted that the civil wars yielded examples of loyalty and betrayal in the family and in this instance Octavia could be loyal to both Caesar and her husband.²⁶⁴ Her family connection to Caesar opened the door to approach Caesar in a private setting, perhaps to intercede on her husbands' behalf. Moore has argued that this point in time is where Octavia learned the art of mediation between two parties.²⁶⁵ This is possible, and it is possible that she interceded on behalf of her husband and thus honed her mediation skills, as Moore suggests, however, some issues comes to mind. One is her role as mediator between Young Caesar and Antony during the 30's, which, in my opinion, should not be taken at face value. If she used her influence in this period, it is more probable that she used it on Marcellus, convincing him not to leave Italy and engage in civil war. Marcellus never left Italy, and it is possible that he became aware of the family connection to Caesar through his marriage, but rather he became aware of the great danger he might find himself in should he devote himself completely to the civil war on the side of Pompey. After all, he had spoken against Caesar in his own consulship, and "put the sword in Pompey's hand."²⁶⁶ We do not know when Marcellus returned home, but he advocated for his cousin's return in late 46, which meant that he had returned and engaged in conversation with Caesar properly after receiving Caesar's famed clemency.²⁶⁷ At the very least this meant that Caesar saw Marcellus and Octavia on a regular basis. Perhaps Octavia and Atia facilitated the connection between the two.²⁶⁸

Between 46 and the Ides in 44, Octavia is somewhat undetectable, no doubt to the evidence's focus on the dynasts. However, Octavia had already received a 'trial-by-fire' education in civil war politics in her marriage to Marcellus in the 50's and early 40's. She may have used her influence, but her *auctoritas* is not yet shown. This does not surface until her marriage to Antony and her brothers' changed status. The voice on Marcellus and thus our window into Octavia was silenced in 43, as Cicero, who supplied the bulk of the information, fell victim to the proscriptions and we hear little of Marcellus after that. In the years 44-40 Octavia gave birth to three children, two daughters and a son, Marcellus, who would become a favourite of Augustus.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ Dixon 1992, 27. Stories of loyalty and betrayal in civil war: the so-called *laudatio Turiae* see, Osgood 2014; Vell. Pat. 2.67.2; Val. Max. 6.7; App. *B Civ.* 4.11-23.

²⁶⁵ Moore 2017, 35.

²⁶⁶ App. *B Civ.* 2.31.

²⁶⁷ Cic. *Fam.* 4.9.

²⁶⁸ Moore 2017, 37.

²⁶⁹ See, Levick 2010, 80-84 on the advancement and favouritism of Marcellus.

We do have a single mention of Octavia during these years, and that is in 42 concerning the Hortensia incident. The Triumvirs had exacted a tax on 1400 on the wealthy women in Rome in order to fund the war effort and replenish the treasury. First, the women whom this tax concerned approached the female relatives of the Triumvirs, but were turned away by Fulvia. The women chose to appeal to the Triumvirs in public with Hortensia leading the charge, successfully forcing the Triumvirs to alter and reduce the tax.²⁷⁰ This was an organised political resistance by the so-called *ordo matronarum*, the order of honourable wives, against the Triumvirs and their politics.²⁷¹ This was the old way. Interestingly, the women chose to approach Octavia, and not Claudia, the wife of Young Caesar. The women regarded Octavia as the closest link to Young Caesar, and one that might be able to persuade him to alter the tax. This is significant. Octavia held sway and influence over her brother, and it was known. It paints a different picture of her than the subordinate sister we shall see later, and implies that she was an authority in Young Caesar's life and a respected advisor of his. The two was close, and she was older, had been submerged in Roman politics longer than he had and she understood Rome and the inherent problems he might face there. As implied above, in the late 40's and especially during 42-39, Young Caesars' position in Italy was far from secure and he could not hold power through his own *auctoritas*, and was therefore forced to use his legions to hammer the Italian cities and Rome into submission in the Perusine war. Octavia might very well have been a force in his life that was far more aggressive than submissive.

Marcellus died in 40 and left Octavia a widow at the age of 29, with three children. However, all was not lost for Octavia. Not alone had she been an honoured *matron* of a man of consular rank, she was also the sister of one of the triumvirs. She was still young, but had spent more than half of her life in *ante bellum* and civil war Rome, Roman politics and society.

²⁷⁰ App. B Civ. 4.32-34. See, Hopwood 2015 on the speech.

²⁷¹ See, Webb forthcoming on the *ordo* and female influence in the middle republic.

Octavia as *concordia* Between the East and the West

The Pact of Brundisium made one thing abundantly clear: the Roman empire was effectively split between two of the triumvirs, while the third, Lepidus, was given the province of Africa.²⁷² Antony and Young Caesar drew up lines that divided the empire into two, and each was the near-absolute ruler of their respective sphere. To ensure that they should remain friends and not go at each other's throats, Octavia was married to Antony. From this moment Octavia played a vital role in the continuation of the Triumvirate and peace in Italy. Interestingly, it was also here that the Augustan tradition of painting Octavia as the ideal *matron* began.

The evidence is quite clear that the Pact of Brundisium was sealed with the marriage between Octavia and Antony.²⁷³ Huzar sums up an interesting assumption that leaves Octavia out of the equation: "Ambition now led Octavian to offer his own sister as wife to the recent widower [Antony]."²⁷⁴ Who offered Octavia to Antony differs from source to source, however, Octavia herself is not mentioned to have had any choice in the matter, which may not be true. It is unlikely that Octavia was Young Caesar's to marry off. Since her parents were dead and Octavia now a widow, she was almost certainly *sui iuris* (legally independent), and was in her right to refuse the marriage. That said, Young Caesar had not discussed it with Octavia, nor was he able to do so, before his return to Rome alongside Antony. Moore's suggestion that Young Caesar had a marriage in mind for Antony before he left for Brundisium is unlikely, as Fulvia was still alive at that point.²⁷⁵ Then there was the issue of Octavia's mourning period. She had recently lost her husband, Marcellus, and was required to uphold a period of mourning, one that the Senate dispensed in order to have her marry Antony.²⁷⁶ However, Octavia agreed to marry Antony and in doing so, secured peace. There was a high-strung atmosphere in Rome and amongst the factions who desired peace, and the union of the two made that possible, as seen in Plutarch:

"...they needed stronger security, and this security Fortune offered. Octavia was a sister of Caesar, older than he, though not by the same mother...Caesar was exceedingly fond of his sister, who was, as the saying is, a wonder of a woman... Everybody tried to bring about this marriage. For they hoped that Octavia, who,

²⁷² App. *B Civ.* 5.65.

²⁷³ Vell. Pat. 2.78.1; Plut. *Ant.* 31; App. *B Civ.* 5.64; Liv. *Per.* 127.

²⁷⁴ Huzar 1986, 104.

²⁷⁵ Moore 2017, 88.

²⁷⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 31.3.

besides her great beauty, had intelligence and dignity, when united to Antony and beloved by him, would restore harmony and be their complete salvation.”²⁷⁷

Plutarch emphasise several crucial aspects, which leads us to understand just how critical the marriage was for the pact and the continuity of the Triumvirate. He is, however, mistaken about which Octavia married Antony. He refers to Octavia Maior, Young Caesars older half sister, while the Octavia who married Antony was Octavia Minor, the older sister by the same mother as Young Caesar. This minor mistake aside, Plutarch states that much rode on the union. Lange rightly emphasised that this was a matter of reconciliation as much as a continuation of the Triumvirate, and that the marriage was a cornerstone for the relationship between the two going forward.²⁷⁸ Plutarch also states that she was, in fact, intelligent and showed herself with dignity. Perhaps Octavia could tame the unruly Antony. All of these factors are worth taking note of, as they help redefine Octavia and the view we have of her during the mid-and-late 30’s. The public staging of the wedding was symbolic and represented more than just the wedding. It was a spectacle, a show of unity and reconciliation, just as the joint ovation was.²⁷⁹ It must have been an enormous responsibility being placed on Octavia. As Moore said: “This marriage of Octavia and Antony was an important step toward lasting *pax*... Octavia could not have failed to see the hope, which the Roman people were placing upon her shoulders. She was the living symbol of *concordia* and the bearer of *pax*.”²⁸⁰ The idea was, supposedly, that through Octavia the two Triumvirs would be bonded together and could use her as an arbitrator and mediator should problems arise.²⁸¹ We might read into this the assumption that the parties involved recognized that Octavia could influence both brother and husband, and that this quality in a woman was perhaps more widely accepted than previously thought in the Late Republic.²⁸² It is easy to see her being sent on a diplomatic mission by Young Caesar, given the previous strained relationship between him and Antony, and with our knowledge of the doomed marriage and events yet to happen.²⁸³ Nevertheless we must not jump to the conclusion that this was how Octavia viewed the marriage. No doubt she knew what was at stake, but she is more likely to have worked in favour of both parties and for the betterment of her

²⁷⁷ Plut. *Ant.* 31.1-2.

²⁷⁸ Lange 2009, 29.

²⁷⁹ Cass. Dio 48.31.1-3. One could argue for a spectacle containing two aspects, the ovation *and* the wedding as a joint spectacle of fellowship, reconciliation, stability and peace.

²⁸⁰ Moore 2017, 91.

²⁸¹ Bauman 1992, 92.

²⁸² This might very well be true of the Imperial era as well as the sources mainly belong to the post-Augustan age.

²⁸³ Moore 2017, 91. Octavia’s role in The Treaty of Tarentum and the events of 35-31 will be discussed below.

family as a whole – as well as the *res publica* – as she had done in the 40's. The family was everything to a Roman *matron* and she would protect it fiercely, as we saw Terentia do in 58/57, Servilia in the aftermath of the Ides, and now Octavia.²⁸⁴ Should she have been an agent of Young Caesar's, one might have expected a larger degree of anti-Antonian propaganda in the evidence than there is, pointing to the fact that she was an agent. However, this might be explained as being against Augustus' wishes and the image of the ideal *matron* that was being created for Octavia.

The marriage was initially a happy one by all accounts. Antony had coins minted featuring him and Octavia (though this was more for political reasons and the troops than a symbol of happiness) and Octavia spent the winter of 39-38 in Athens with Antony and all was bliss.²⁸⁵ But all was not bliss across the sea in Italy and Sicily. The son of Pompey the Great, Sextus, had long been a thorn in Young Caesar's side. Under the Treaty of Brundisium, Young Caesar was to make war on Sextus, unless an accord could be reached. Sextus had created a refuge for the proscribed, set up an alternative state with a quasi Senate in Sicily and blocked all grain shipments to Rome and mainland Italy.²⁸⁶ Famine and popular opinion in 39 had forced the triumvirs to negotiate a peace with Sextus and sign over provinces to his command and designating consuls for the coming years, including Sextus – He wanted to be a triumvir on equal terms with the three.²⁸⁷ The ceasefire proved short and war broke out between Young Caesar and Sextus in 38. The war did not go well for Young Caesar, and Antony set sail to meet the young triumvir in Brundisium.²⁸⁸ The meeting did not take place, as Young Caesar was not at Brundisium to meet Antony and the city would not allow Antony to enter, so he anchored at Tarentum.²⁸⁹

Antony is portrayed as being annoyed at his young colleague, and, to make matters worse, the office of triumvir elapsed in 38 and a renewal was needed.²⁹⁰ Octavia appear to have sailed with Antony to Italy, likely to see her brother but she was to take an all-together different role than the sister paying her brother a visit.²⁹¹

²⁸⁴ This can be observed in the *imagines* (death masks) of the ancestors displayed in the villa's atrium of a Roman house. On the Roman family, see Dixon 1992; Treggiari 2007, 56-70; Treggiari 2019, 183-216.

²⁸⁵ App. *B Civ.* 5.76; *RRC* 527; Plut. *Ant.* 33.3; Bauman 1992, 92.

²⁸⁶ App. *B Civ.* 5.67; Alternative state formation see, Crawford 2008.

²⁸⁷ Lange 2009, 30; Welch 2012, argued that Sextus was the last 'Republican'.

²⁸⁸ App. *B Civ.* 5.93; Plut. *Ant.* 35.1; Cass. Dio 48. 54.1.

²⁸⁹ Plut. *Ant.* 35.1.

²⁹⁰ Lange 2009, 31. See especially n. 48 on the second term. On Sextus in these years, see Welch 2012.

²⁹¹ App. *B Civ.* 5.93; Plut. *Ant.* 35.1.

Tarentum: Octavia's Agency and *Auctoritas*

At Tarentum Octavia took it upon herself to seek out her brother and, so Appian, Plutarch and Dio would have us believe, mediate between the two triumvirs. Moore follows the narratives and agrees that Octavia was the mediator and she met obstacles on the way, but through her skills she prevailed.²⁹² This view is too confining of Octavia, in my opinion, given her close relationship with her brother and her political skills. Octavia met with Young Caesar's friends Agrippa and Maecenas,²⁹³ not because she had to win them over before meeting her brother as Moore argues, but to establish a united front. This was a calculated move by Octavia. She knew her brother and it would seem from Appian, Plutarch and Dio that Young Caesar was impatient, angry almost like a scorned adolescent, and saw conspiracies in everything Antony did.²⁹⁴ Plutarch has Octavia appeal to her brother's empathy should war break out:

“But if, she said, the worse should prevail and there should be war between you, one of you, it is uncertain which, is destined to conquer, and one to be conquered, but my lot in either case will be one of misery.”²⁹⁵

It is enticing to accept the subordinate sister pleading her brother not to go to war and accept the very traditional view of women, here portrayed by Plutarch. I suggest an alternative reading. This is perhaps the Augustan tradition of the traditional “old” way a woman should behave.²⁹⁶ She interceded in a war that was about to break out, just like the women of Roman legend had done since the Sabine Women had stopped their husbands, fathers and brothers from killing each other and established peace.²⁹⁷ Octavia is repeatedly the cause for peace and time and again she tries to intercede (see below), however, by considering her contemporaries and upbringing in a civil war torn Rome, along with the relationship to her brother this may be discarded as Augustan propaganda. Moreover, since Appian, Plutarch and Dio firmly place her at Tarentum and credit her with the success of the mediation, it strongly suggests that they build their narratives on an earlier

²⁹² Moore 2017, 95-98; Moore uses the words attributed to the feminine: ‘reasoning and pleas’, 96.

²⁹³ Plut. *Ant.* 35.2.

²⁹⁴ App. *B Civ.* 5.93; Plut. *Ant.* 35.2; Cass. Dio 48.54.1-4.

²⁹⁵ Plut. *Ant.* 35.3.

²⁹⁶ It could be argued that such a tradition did not exist. However, Augustus did try to bring back an old way of life for women, via his new laws in the 20's and 00's BCE. The portrayal of the return of old ways and morality stems from these.

²⁹⁷ Livy 1.13; See, Stevenson 2011, 175-189 on women as *exempla* in Livy.

source. Augustus likely created the narrative himself or it stems from a pro-Augustan tradition, which in turn problematizes the description of Octavia in the narratives. I suggest that Octavia scolded Young Caesar and brought him to heel in a manner more like a mother, or a woman with a strong influence over her close relatives. Hillard argued for the concept of *materna auctoritas* (influence of a mother) based on Servilia's influence over Brutus.²⁹⁸ We have already established that Young Caesar and Octavia shared a close connection, confirmed by Plutarch,²⁹⁹ and that the loss of their father in an quite early age probably created a strong bond between them, resulting in Young Caesar viewing Octavia as an authority figure. Thus I suggest that what Octavia deployed here was a kind of *sorore auctoritas* (influence of a sister), to bring back Young Caesar from the brink of civil war. Singer argued against any involvement from Octavia's part, on the grounds that the men would not hear a woman, but Singer did not fully appreciate the position Octavia was in.³⁰⁰ Not only was their bond one that allowed for such a thing, but her entire first marriage had been a preparation for her marriage to Antony and her growing public role and responsibility.³⁰¹ Read in this light her words relayed by Plutarch above, are given the tone of a reprimand to stop, halt and reconsider the consequences should Young Caesar stay on this path. Appian supports this view, as Octavia here comes off as the voice of reason, and the one who could calm Young Caesar. Consider Appian's portrayal of events:

“Octavia therefore went to Octavian to act as mediator between them. He said that he had been abandoned while in the middle of the dangers that overtook him in the straits, but she replied that this matter had been resolved through the intervention of Maecenas. Octavian then said that Antony also sent a freedman to Lepidus... who was in the process of making an agreement with him against Octavian, but she replied that she knew that Callias had been sent to arrange a marriage... as had been agreed.”³⁰²

Young Caesars' charge against Antony had already been explained and defended by Maecenas but it did not settle the young man until Octavia reprimanded her brother. The way that Appian sets up Young Caesar's retorts implies the impatient and frustrated young man who was seeking an excuse

²⁹⁸ Hillard 1983, 10-13.

²⁹⁹ Plut. *Ant.* 31.1.

³⁰⁰ Singer 1947, 174.

³⁰¹ Moore 2017, 98; Plut. *Ant.* 35.2: ” For now, she said, the eyes of all men were drawn to her as the wife of one imperator and the sister of another”.

³⁰² App. *B Civ.* 5.93.

for war or quarrel and Octavia's calming voice of reason was what saved the day. This does not seem like the agent of Young Caesar, contrary to Moore's view.³⁰³ Young Caesar recognized and accepted his older sisters *auctoritas* and cooled himself.³⁰⁴

A comment on the *sorere auctoritas* is needed. While we have ample evidence to suggest *materna auctoritas*,³⁰⁵ the *sorere auctoritas* is harder to suggest in broader terms as an actuality throughout the Late Republican society. We seldom hear of sisters and if we do it are often as the pawns of men in crafting alliances, as Huzar probably would have put it. Nevertheless, the term does fit neatly here, as the relationship between Young Caesar and Octavia was special and close. Octavia is visible in the evidence as she occupied a very public role, as the closest woman in both men's lives and no doubt due to the later evidence's knowledge that the final battle was to be between these two men. We get an intimate view inside the relationship between a brother and a sister. Even though Roman society was highly patriarchal in nature, we must not confine women like Octavia to an entirely submissive role.³⁰⁶ Following that line of thought it is more than probable that Octavia could show independent agency while still fulfilling her duties as a sister, a wife and a mother in the traditional way taught to her by Atia. She deployed her agency as she came to mediate between the two triumvirs at Tarentum, or more rightly so, she seems more an arbitrator than a mediator, and secured peace once more – if only for a brief time.³⁰⁷

The two triumvirs agreed to meet in a river near Tarentum, according to Appian.³⁰⁸ The story resembles that of the meeting at Bononia, meeting at a river, and in a gesture of faith and trust, Young Caesar proceeded to Antony's side of the river under the pretext of wanting to visit his sister. Appian and Plutarch mention Octavia as being present during the negotiations between the two, as she:

“...also presented her brother with a gift which she had begged from Antony, of ten trireme-like skiffs, which were a composite of warship and merchantman, and

³⁰³ Moore 2017, 91.

³⁰⁴ Hillard 1992, 39-40: states that many women enjoyed the virtue of *auctoritas* though sisterly *auctoritas* is not mentioned.

³⁰⁵ Cornelia, Servilia, Atia, and Livia to name a few who had influence over their sons.

³⁰⁶ Baumann 1992, 92 interestingly places himself in the middle by affording Octavia agency, but not independent and not without help.

³⁰⁷ Rosillo-López 2020, 153-169 on arbitration in the *res publica*.

³⁰⁸ App. *B Civ.* 5.94.

Octavian gave her in return one thousand elite troops as a bodyguard, to be selected by Antony.”³⁰⁹

“Independently of this agreement, obtained twenty light sailing craft from her husband for her brother, and one thousand soldiers from her brother for her husband.”³¹⁰

It is evident that she played a major role in the negotiations and was not just the force that brought them together.³¹¹ She secured additional military aid for each party and their respective campaigns, and this might have been the arbitrator in her, as it is easy to imagine the two triumvirs being reluctant to hand over anything without getting anything in return, and thus Octavia possibly served as a go-between. Whatever the case here, Octavia performed her role with excellence, and displayed ingenuity, skill and *auctoritas*. All this on a very public stage and the people hailed the peace that was once again obtained.³¹²

As mentioned above, the five-year term for the Triumvirate had expired at the end of 38, and was not yet renewed. The agreement at Tarentum also extended the Triumvirate five more years, likely retrospective to the 1st of January 37.³¹³ In effect, Octavia did not just aid in avoiding war, which was good for the *res publica* but also secured another five-year term for the triumvirs so that they could complete their assignments from 40.³¹⁴ None of this would have happened if not for Octavia.³¹⁵

Young Caesar resumed his campaign against Sextus in Italy, while Antony returned to Syria and the east for his campaign against the Parthians. Octavia stayed in Italy with her children, and with Antony’s children by Fulvia.³¹⁶ This might very well be foreshadowing by the evidence, of the ensuing relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. However, Antony knew the perils of war and was not going to take his wife and children with him to the east. Besides, it was customary for the

³⁰⁹ App. *B Civ.* 5.95.

³¹⁰ Plut. *Ant.* 35.4.

³¹¹ Singer 1947, 174 argued that Octavia’s role was overstated in the evidence and a part of the anti-Antonian narrative deriving from Augustus.

³¹² Huzar 1986, 105; Moore 2017, 97.

³¹³ Lange 2009, 31-32.

³¹⁴ There may have been a plan to relinquish their triumviral powers in 38/37 and returning the *res publica* as the designating of Consuls as far as 31 might suggest; App. *B Civ.* 5.73; Lange 2009, 31.

³¹⁵ Cass. Dio 48.54.3.

³¹⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 35.5.

women to stay behind, and they certainly did not come on campaigns. Antony was not to return to Rome. Nonetheless, Octavia continued to remain loyal and ever the dutiful wife.

The Years 35-31: New Honours and Old Insults

Following the agreement reached at Tarentum, we hear nothing of Octavia, as the narratives focus their attentions on the Dynasts and the theatres of war in the East and at Naulochus. Thus Octavia's actions between 37 and 35 have been lost to history and we are resigned to conjecture. However, by looking at the precedent set by Fulvia in 41, we might put forward an educated guess as to how Octavia and Young Caesar's new wife Livia behaved and what social status they enjoyed in Rome. Young Caesar had married Livia Drusilla in 38, and she would go on to be an important and influential woman in Augustus' and Tiberius' lives.³¹⁷ She is not the main focus here, but as she and Octavia was the two closest relatives of Young Caesar they had a great deal in common, and was the physical representatives of Young Caesar in Rome. In 41 Fulvia had reigned, almost as an absolute ruler, even surpassing the consuls and the triumvir Lepidus.³¹⁸ It is enticing to think of Livia and Octavia occupying a similar role, albeit not as masculine and direct as Fulvia, when their husbands were absent from Rome.³¹⁹ While consuls were designated each year along with a number of *suffect* consuls, we know that women were often put in charge of households, *clientela* and maintaining the *dignitas* of their husbands.³²⁰ The autonomy of the consuls had been re-confirmed in 41 with the treaty of Teanum and the civic governance and Republican institutions of the empire endured under more or less normal circumstances.³²¹ However, the triumvirs' *potestas* was supreme and could overrule the consuls whom they, by the way, selected and appointed themselves.³²² Moore put forward the interesting idea that the women of the triumvirs, Livia and Octavia, acted as if in "complete control of their own affairs."³²³ Given their likely status of *sui iuris* this idea is hard

³¹⁷ Cass. Dio 48.43.6-44.1; See also Osgood 2006, 237. Tiberius: Augustus' successor and stepson. Livia, then the dowager Empress, was his mother and played a significant role in the early reign.

³¹⁸ Cass. Dio 48.4.1.

³¹⁹ It is worth noting that Antony spent almost the entirety of his time in the East and was only home wintering in Rome in 39/38; See, Osgood 2006, 336 and note 164.

³²⁰ On *Consules suffecti* in the triumviral age, see Pina Polo 2018, 99-114; Fulvia was one such woman, see above; See Treggiari 2007, 56-70 on Terentia in charge of the household and daily life; See Treggiari 2019 on Servilia as a woman in charge from early age and throughout life.

³²¹ App. *B Civ.* 5.20; See, Gabba 1971, 146 on Teanum; See Pina Polo 2020, 49-70 on the Functions of Government in the triumviral era.

³²² App. *B Civ.* 4.10. on the triumviral assignment; App. *B Civ.* 4.2; 5.1. on their powers; See, Lange 2009, 18-26.

³²³ Moore 2017, 102.

to contest,³²⁴ but we might also assume that they enjoyed a greater freedom and informal power over more than just their own affairs. The two women was a direct line to their husbands and in Octavia's case, likely her brother too. When Young Caesar was out of Rome it is plausible that the two women was regarded as the head of the households and affairs, and it is not unlikely that Young Caesar left instructions for his sister and wife. On a daily basis they would likely receive *clientela* in their houses, answer petitions and entertain senators and magistrates who would be eager to seek favour with the women and the triumvirs.³²⁵ The evidence pay far greater attention to Octavia than Livia in these years, due to her position as wife and sister of the triumvirs and a key figure in the power struggle between the two, but Livia and Octavia was likely equal in status when in Rome. This is, of course, conjecture but very plausible. We now turn our attention to the year 35, which offered unprecedented honours to Octavia and thereby tell us more about her role as the breakdown of relations between the triumvirs became inevitable.

In 36 Young Caesar had won two victories, one military over Sextus at Naulochus and one symbolic over Lepidus as he was retired from the Triumvirate, leaving Antony and Young Caesar the last two men standing.³²⁶ Antony, on the other hand, had suffered a defeat and lost two thirds of his army in his Parthian campaign and was licking his wounds in Alexandria. The victories of Young Caesar undoubtedly felt humiliating for Antony in the light of his recent setbacks.³²⁷ On returning to Rome from his Illyrian campaign in 35, Young Caesar postponed the triumph voted to him and instead had certain rights voted to Octavia and Livia:

“[Young Caesar] returned to Rome. The triumph which had been voted to him, he deferred, but granted Octavia and Livia statues, the right of administering their own affairs without a guardian, and the same security and inviolability as the tribunes enjoyed.”³²⁸

The statues and the freedom from *tutela* are not without precedent, and not the important factor here, although the statues do signify the beginning of a new public position for women of the

³²⁴ Dio notes that they were given the right to administer their own affairs without a guardian (49.38.1.), however, they were likely *sui iuris* and the position of a guardian seem largely ceremonial towards the end of the Late Republic.

³²⁵ Plutarch states that Octavia indeed did receive friends of Antony and helped them by lobbying her brother (*Ant.* 54.2.).

³²⁶ See, Syme 1939, 259-265; Osgood 2006, 243-250, 298-335, Lange 2009, 33-38; Lange 2016, 115, 158.

³²⁷ Moore 2017, 102.

³²⁸ Cass. Dio 49.38.1.

Imperial *domus*.³²⁹ It is the grant of sacrosanctity that has gotten the attention of modern scholars, and rightly so. The sacrosanctity was *like* that of the tribunes, and did not make the two women tribunes themselves, but made it a offence against the state to attack or violate the women in any way.³³⁰ Young Caesar could have opted for the sanctity of the Vestals but chose the tribunes sacrosanctity as he had obtained for himself the year before.³³¹ Why did Young Caesar go to such lengths to protect the women? Bauman and Moore argues that Young Caesar feared attacks made on the women, like the ones Livia had already been at the receiving end of, and the ones made against Fulvia in 41/40 by himself.³³² This is, however, unlikely anything other than a pretext as there are no indications that Octavia had been attacked and there is no record of Livia being attacked after 36.³³³ Flory convincingly argues that the honours and especially the sacrosanctity was granted to Octavia in particular, whereas Livia received them as she was the wife of Young Caesar, and therefore could not be seen as being passed over, and she was already regarded as his family.³³⁴ Dio mentions Octavia first, and it does seem that Octavia took precedent in these years, no matter who Young Caesar's wife was.³³⁵ The triumvir in all likelihood sought to protect his family and his sister, in spite of her marriage to Antony, all while asserting their new social status. It is striking that Antony did not receive the same sacrosanctity as Young Caesar.³³⁶ Octavia was being insulted by her absent husband, and had in 36 received the news that Antony had confirmed his paternity of three of his children with Cleopatra.³³⁷ Unfortunately we do not know how Octavia received this news, but she stayed loyal to her husband. Young Caesar assumedly wanted to protect Octavia against attacks, but did not initially intend to protect her against Antony. As matters unfolded, Antony provided an unforeseen use for the sacrosanctity for Young Caesar, one which he would later use against his colleague.

³²⁹ Bauman 1992, 94; Flory 1993, 296; Statues and public honouring women was not new. Antony had coins minted of Fulvia and Octavia in the east (see above).

³³⁰ Moore 2017, 102.

³³¹ Bauman 1992, 93-94.

³³² Suet. *Aug.* 69; Bauman, 94-95; Moore 2017, 103.

³³³ Bauman 1992, 96.

³³⁴ Flory 1993, 293.

³³⁵ Flory 1993, 293 stated, in defence of the Emperors' wife, that Livia 'of course assumed a far greater historical importance' than Octavia. I disagree as Octavia, though underappreciated, clearly played a vital role during the Triumvirate and throughout her life in Augustus' *domus* and life.

³³⁶ There may have been a connection to honours granted both Young Caesar and Antony in 36. Here Young Caesar was granted several personal rights, along with the right to hold banquets in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Cass. Dio 49.15.1-2). Antony was granted the right to hold banquets in the temple of Concord (Cass. Dio 49.18.6-7). However, there are significant differences, the rights to Young Caesar was bestowed upon him by the Senate and the people, while Antony's honours were given by Young Caesar himself.

³³⁷ Bauman 1992, 93.

As Octavia heard of the failure of the Parthian campaign, she pressed her brother to allow her to sail to Antony and bring with her fresh supplies, praetorians and money to aid the pressed Antony:

“But at Rome Octavia was desirous of sailing to Antony, and Caesar gave her permission to do so, as the majority say, not as a favour to her, but in order that, in case she were neglected and treated with scorn, he might have plausible ground for war... For she was bringing a great quantity of clothing for his [Antony’s] soldiers, many beasts of burden, and money and gifts for the officers and friends... and... two thousand picked soldiers...”³³⁸

This information comes from Plutarch, who portrays Octavia as the scorned woman and rather subordinate to her brother. Dio also notes that Octavia was on her way to Athens, in a tone that clearly implies the subordination of womanhood to her brother, though attesting that she herself had sent gifts – no doubt what Plutarch also mentions i.e. supplies, clothes etc.³³⁹ The story are, however, twofold and somewhat dubious. Osgood is cautious but not denying of the fact that Octavia took the initiative and sailed on her own accord,³⁴⁰ but that she sailed on her own volition should not be contested here. Given her independent agency earlier it is very likely that she did set out to Antony, as the good wife she was. Osgood rightly noted that the narrative is dubious and derived in all likelihood from Augustus.³⁴¹ Young Caesar would gain from - and use the neglect of Octavia in his own favour, no doubt, but when is unclear and it is unlikely that Young Caesar would cause emotional distress to his beloved sister on purpose. Octavia would have gone to Young Caesar and told him – not asked, for Young Caesar had no legal authority over her – that she was going to sail east to aid her husband. She reminded her brother of the allegiance he still owed to his colleague, though in reality they were becoming rivals, and that he ought to send the troops promised in 37 along with other provisions. If anything, Young Caesar and Octavia herself might very well have suspected a rejection of Octavia upon arrival but this did not stop her from performing her duty.³⁴² She went for the East and at Athens she was met with letters from Antony telling her to stay there. The pretext was his on-going military campaign.³⁴³ Dio says that Antony abandoned his campaign on hearing Octavia was on the way, though this is unlikely as he had

³³⁸ Plut. *Ant.* 53.1-2.

³³⁹ Cass. Dio 49.33.3-4.

³⁴⁰ Osgood 2006, 336.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*; See especially, n. 163.

³⁴² Cf. Bauman 1992, 96-97.

³⁴³ Plut. *Ant.* 53.1-2.

already ordered her to return home.³⁴⁴ Why then, did Octavia not continue? She knew her husband, and she did not want to press him even further by disregarding his orders. Moore rightly points to the case of Fulvia and how Octavia likely learned from her that to lead troops to Egypt would not be well received especially when Antony had made his wishes clear.³⁴⁵ Instead Octavia chose the Roman way and abided to the long-standing tradition of adhering her husbands' orders.

Apparently Cleopatra became so jealous and fearsome of Octavia's eminent arrival that she persuaded Antony to reject Octavia and have him stay in Alexandria.³⁴⁶ Cleopatra, who was a sovereign in her own right, did not have to use such ways, although love may have been a motive in itself, we cannot tell for sure given the bias on-and the propaganda against Cleopatra. All she had to do was to threaten to withdraw her support for Antony and he would have been forced to do her bidding. This might very well have been what happened, and the story of the jealous Cleopatra is likely Augustan propaganda – framing Antony as a man controlled by a foreign woman and concubine³⁴⁷ – though Cleopatra might very well have feared Octavia's abilities, beauty and sway over Antony.³⁴⁸ Octavia returned home to Rome where she was ordered by Young Caesar to leave Antony's house, which meant that she was to divorce him.³⁴⁹ Octavia bluntly refused and stayed in his house, taking care of her own children and that of Antony's with Fulvia. She scolded Young Caesar for wanting to make civil war with Antony over a woman “an infamous thing even to have it said that the two greatest imperators in the world plunged the Romans into civil war...” for such a reason.³⁵⁰

Later propaganda from Young Caesar, tells us that it was at this time that Antony made the so-called ‘Donations of Alexandria’ where he redistributed extensive amounts of Roman land and provinces to Cleopatra and their children.³⁵¹ Osgood argues that this is a later fabrication from Young Caesar.³⁵² Had it been true, Young Caesar would have had his pretext for war along with Octavia's sacrosanctity violated, and rallied Rome and Italy against Antony instantly instead of waiting until 32. But, as we shall see, Octavia's sacrosanctity became a part of the propaganda

³⁴⁴ Cass. Dio 49.33.3-4.

³⁴⁵ Moore 2017, 105.

³⁴⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 53.3-6.

³⁴⁷ This seem to be an overall theme in the evidence, from Plutarch to Dio, that Antony was indeed controlled by women and was under their spell – with the exception of Octavia.

³⁴⁸ Moore 2017, 106. The matter is quite unclear as both narratives are plausible. If Cleopatra wanted to keep Antony and to ignite a war, she would have feared Octavia as she had avoided war before through her wits and abilities.

³⁴⁹ Plut. *Ant.* 54.1.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*

³⁵¹ Plut. *Ant.* 54.3-6; Huzar 1986, 108.

³⁵² Osgood 2006, 338-339.

offensive against Antony in 32, and it is therefore likely that Young Caesar merely waited for the opportune moment to use all Antony's transgression.

Here it is worth making a brief detour and comment on the grants given Octavia in 35 in relation to the events that transpired. The chronology of events is not entirely clear from our evidence. The assumption that Young Caesar actively deployed Octavia as a weapon against Antony prevails and the grants could have been given both before Octavia's travel to the East and upon her return, retrospectively.³⁵³ Though Plutarch states that Young Caesar hoped that Octavia would be insulted, this should be disregarded as later propaganda or only half of the truth, as it would be highly unlikely.³⁵⁴ While there is some uncertainty as to when these honours were given, I suggest that they were conferred on Octavia and Livia on Young Caesar's return from Illyria in 35, *not* to use either of the two as a weapon, but to elevate them as a part of his family and his position. I suggest that the honours given had nothing to do with Octavia's journey or, indeed, relationship with Antony, though they came in handy down the line for Young Caesar. Flory's suggestion that Livia too received the honours as to keep the wives of the triumvirs equal is based on the assumption that Octavia received the honours only to be used against Antony.³⁵⁵ As Young Caesar had received the inviolability of the tribunes the year prior and then chose to confer the sacrosanctity of the tribunes on Octavia and Livia too,³⁵⁶ should, in my opinion, be viewed as separate from Antony. If this had been about equality between the triumvirs then Antony would have received the same protection, alas, he did not. Octavia was, after all, Young Caesar's beloved sister and his immediate family, and as Bauman stated, she was a part of the creation of the soon-to-be Imperial *domus*.³⁵⁷

In Rome, Young Caesar had taken offense more so than his sister,³⁵⁸ but Octavia had refused her brothers' orders to divorce Antony and leave his house. The sacrosanctity was not invoked at this time, and it might not have been enough. Octavia might have held out hope that Antony would see the errors of his ways as the Roman people surely did,³⁵⁹ and come to his senses. Octavia was no

³⁵³ Cf. Bauman 1992, 96; Flory 1993, 294.

³⁵⁴ Plut. *Ant.* 53.1.

³⁵⁵ Flory 1993, 294.

³⁵⁶ Augustus did not receive the *potestas* of the tribunes until the settlement in 23. In 36 he is given the sacrosanctity along with the right to sit on the tribune's benches, see Cass. Dio 49.15.5-6; Lange 2009, 34.

³⁵⁷ Bauman 1992, 97: says that she was the primary reason for the creation, but in my opinion this was a calculated move by Young Caesar to mark out his close family as a part of the State and not to be violated in any way.

³⁵⁸ Young Caesar may very well have made a conscious show out of the offense to his sister and himself, in order to frame Antony as a villain under the thrall of a foreign sovereign.

³⁵⁹ Plut. *Ant.* 54.3.

fool though, she was as political aware and capable as her brother and would have seen the deterioration of the two triumvirs relationship, and known that it was hard if not impossible to salvage as time progressed. She remained married to Antony in spite of his insults and the very publicly known relationship to Cleopatra. Why she chose to do so is lost to history, but she might very well have been the good *matrona* and wife, and divorce initiated by the wife was relatively rare.³⁶⁰ Moore suggests that Octavia remained married in order to retain her power and influence granted to her as the wife of a triumvir and the mediator between the two triumvirs.³⁶¹ However, Octavia's influence and *auctoritas* did not just derive from her marriage to Antony, more so it derived from her experience, character and her familial relation to Young Caesar, as argued above. The one over whom she could exercise the most influence was her brother *not* Antony – and she would continue to hold a revered place in her brothers court and personal life until her death. She was of course regarded as Antony's wife as much as Young Caesar's sister, however, Antony would not return to Rome and had not been in Italy since 37, whereas her brother was often present in Rome and in charge of affairs, therefore the link to her brother was far more visible even as she stayed at Antony's house. Her importance notwithstanding, Octavia's public role and visibility in the evidence fade in the coming years.

The evidence is silent on Octavia until 32. In the time between 35 and 32 the relationship between the two triumvirs cooled even more. Most of 33 were spent publicly insulting the other triumvir, while each fought out military campaigns.³⁶² By 32 two factors played a crucial role in the breakdown of relations and the coming of civil war. The triumvirates' second five-year term almost certainly expired on the last day of 33 without efforts to renew it from either side, and the two designated consuls for 32 was distinctively Antonian and loyal to Antony.³⁶³ One of these consuls, Sosius, openly attacked Young Caesar in the Senate to which Young Caesar responded with a show of force. Young Caesar convened the Senate and, accompanied by an armed guard, sat in his triumviral ivory chair (though not a triumvir anymore), and defended himself and brought allegations against Sosius and Antony.³⁶⁴ The consuls and a number of senators chose to flee Italy to Antony in the East. Antony convened a Senate of his own, resembling the alternative-state Sextus created in Sicily, and sent men to Rome to remove Octavia from his house, thusly divorcing her and

³⁶⁰ See, Treggiari 1991, 435-483; Gardner 1995, 81-95.

³⁶¹ Moore 2017, 109.

³⁶² Osgood 2006, 352; Moore 2017, 111.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Cass. Dio 50.2.5; Osgood 2006, 353.

renouncing the relationship with Young Caesar – war was eminent.³⁶⁵ Octavia left Antony’s home, in tears and distress “that she herself also would be regarded as one of causes for war”,³⁶⁶ and took the children with her and likely moved into the Palatine *domus* of Young Caesar and Livia.³⁶⁷ The story once again asserts Octavia as the ideal *matron* and is perhaps a dramatic reconstruction by Plutarch.³⁶⁸ There was nothing Octavia could do, the war was coming and the two imperators would soon meet again. But one question looms in the air; could the situation have been salvaged? In 33 the situation was not that different from 37, and perhaps Octavia could have arbitrated between the two if they had not been intend on pursuing the present cause of actions that left them at each other’s throats. Had a meeting between the two been arranged and Octavia sent as an envoy, the ensuing war might have been averted. However, events did not allow for Octavia to exercise her *auctoritas* or influence during these final years.

Young Caesar obtained Antony’s will from the Vestals³⁶⁹ and with all the outrage he could muster, read it out loud for the Senate and the Roman people – those parts he deemed the main articles.³⁷⁰ Antony was subsequently stripped of his consulship he was designated for in 31 and war was declared.³⁷¹ No doubt the insults on Octavia and the assault on her sacrosanctity were amongst the reasons for the downfall of Antony, though Octavia did all in her power to prevent the fall from grace and renewed civil war. In 31 Young Caesar won a decisive naval battle at Actium against the forces of Antony and Cleopatra,³⁷² and in 30 he took Alexandria – adding Egypt to the provinces. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Young Caesar was the last man standing and the Triumviral Age was at an end. Soon followed the principate headed by Augustus.

Octavia’s story does not end with her divorce in 32. She would continue to be a crucial and important member of the *domus* of Augustus – beloved and revered.³⁷³ However, as the times changed and peace and *concordia* became the new norm, Octavia fades into the background of the narratives. She took to the role of mother of children orphaned by the wars, including Antony’s by

³⁶⁵ Liv. *Per.* 132; Plut. *Ant.* 57.2; Cass. Dio 50.3.2.

³⁶⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 57.2.

³⁶⁷ Foubert, 2010, 70.

³⁶⁸ Moore 2017, 113.

³⁶⁹ To retrieve and read a living Roman’s will was a gross offence, but Young Caesar did so anyway, justified in his actions by the contents, or so he would argue.

³⁷⁰ See Osgood 2006, 353 and especially n.13.

³⁷¹ Lange 2009, 64-67.

³⁷² See, Osgood 2006, 373-384; Lange 2009, 73-79; Levick 2010, 45-50 on Actium and Alexandria; See, Lange 2016, 121-141 on the war and triumph. It should be noted that the war was not declared against Antony, but against Egypt and Cleopatra, although it was, in effect, a civil war.

³⁷³ See, Moore 2017, 117- 172 for an overview and discussion of Octavia’s role in the Imperial Rome.

Fulvia and Cleopatra, and became the ideal on which Livia would build her image.³⁷⁴ Octavia had proved herself a hardy politician and *matron* in the civil war years. Her mind equalled her brothers' and in her we see the last great influence and *auctoritas* of a Republican *matron* alongside the ideals of an Imperial Roman *matron*.

Conclusions

Influence, *Auctoritas* and Power all played a vital role in Fulvia and Octavia's lives during the Triumvirate. They were shown and exemplified in vastly different ways and each used the possibilities civil war afforded elite women for different purposes. Fulvia was first onto the stage, and was the first woman of the triumvirs to make herself noticed.

The similarities between the funeral of Fulvia's first husband, Clodius, and Caesar are striking. Contrary to the existing perception of the events leading up to the funeral of Caesar and the funeral itself, this thesis has argued that Fulvia was in a position to meticulously plan for the events through a family *consilium* and implement the plans through Antony. She had influence and wits, and, indeed, *auctoritas* gained through many years of political life. The handling of the Liberators and the grant of clemency while preserving the acts of Caesar was a political stroke of genius to buy time and maintain momentum and position, which Fulvia was an instrumental part of. She was not always in a position to exact such influence, as the year 44 clearly showed. In a marvellous resemblance of the earlier example set by Terentia and the later example of Turia, Fulvia was forced to protect her family and try to save her husband from a *hostis* declaration. All while preserving herself and her station in Rome, mustering traditional ways of female interceding. As allegiances and alliances was, and indeed are, a fickle thing in a time of (civil) war, so too was Antony's position, and by extension – Fulvia's, and it changed almost over night. The Triumvirate changed the Roman world and Fulvia's position in it. Civil war presented her with the possibility to assume *potestas*-like power. She was attacked for that very reason. This perceived power in the evidence strongly suggest that Fulvia indeed was instrumental in Roman politics in this time, and that it was unprecedented. Naturally it survives as deformation of Fulvia and the painting of war being conducted due to the transgression of a woman holding power. Though previous scholarship has accepted Fulvia's leading role in the Perusine War, this thesis argues that she was part of an organized opposition against Young Caesar on equal footing with Lucius and perhaps Manius. She

³⁷⁴ See, Harders 2009, 217-240, on Octavia and Augustus as surrogates for Antony's children.

was instrumental in lobbying for support amongst senators and supplying Lucius but their original cause was likely not the same. Fulvia wanted Young Caesar to recognize Antony as his colleague and cohort in the allocation of veterans, and did not have a personal grudge against Young Caesar, while Lucius shifted his focus to the landowners' anti-triumviral sentiments. The war began, not because of Fulvia, but because of Lucius' capture of Italian towns, and Rome itself. Fulvia tried to use her *auctoritas* as the wife of Antony and plea the Antonian generals for help but to no avail. Perugia was the last battle of the war, and Fulvia was in the end forced to flee. Her influence and *auctoritas* was used to aid her husband, her brother-in-law and to maintain position. Above all it was used to defend and protect Antony and her family and their position. Fulvia was caught on new ground as for what women *could* do and, what women *ought* to do. She was the intersection in which the Old met the New.

Octavia occupied an altogether different role than her predecessor Fulvia. In 40 she accepted her brother's betrothal of her and Antony, and became the visible image of *concordia* between the two triumvirs and in the *res publica*. The initial years of her marriage to Antony were happy and devout. But as Young Caesar struggled with his campaign against Sextus in 37, relations between the two triumvirs began to worsen and Octavia was called upon to re-establish *concordia* between the two. Young Caesar's closest friends and advisors had failed in curbing the young man's impatience and anger. Fighting might have begun had it not been for Octavia's intervention. Contrary to the common perception, this thesis has argued that Octavia did not engage in a submissive, pleading role in order to persuade Young Caesar, rather she scolded her younger and more impatient brother. She deployed the *auctoritas* of a sister, *sorore auctoritas*, available to her through their close bond and due to the respect and reverence Young Caesar had for his sister. She then proceeded to arbitrate, not just mediate, between Antony and her brother, using her influence as a wife and a sister in order to re-establish trust and faith between the two triumvirs and in doing so re-confirmed the Triumvirate and saw the extension of the office to another five years.

By 35 the scenario had changed. Octavia and Livia were elevated in status through the grant of unprecedented honours. By receiving the sacrosanctity of the tribunes it became a crime against the state itself to insult or violate the two women in any way. As has been shown, there is some debate as to why and when Octavia in particular received these honours. This thesis has argued that the honours had nothing to do with Antony and was intended to elevate Young Caesar's family, singling them out as a part of the state and above approach. As Octavia took it upon herself, by her

own accord, to aid Antony and obtaining from her brother the troops once promised to Antony, she was insulted and turned away by her husband. This has been widely regarded as a calculated move by Young Caesar and the honours were part of a trap set for Antony. Though the insult of Octavia was later used by Young Caesar, the grants was not for that explicit purpose. Rather Young Caesar, ever the realpolitiker, seized the opportunity to use this insult later in 32 as a part of his deformation of Antony.

Though it might have been possible for Octavia to reconcile the two triumvirs in 32 and possibly have averted the coming civil war, she was not permitted to do so. Antony divorced Octavia and had her thrown from his house. Young Caesar used the insults against Octavia along with a variety of accusations, and war was declared on Egypt, but in effect Antony. Octavia does not occur in the evidence again before Young Caesar's return to Italy in 29 and from then on she played an altogether different role in the public light. Her time as a civil war *matron* with a public role and influence ended with the civil wars. She became a part of the soon-to-be Imperial *domus* where she would rear Antony's children along with her own and continue to offer advice to her brother.

Her influence and *auctoritas* had come from her years of experience, her status, her talent, but a large part is owed to her familial relations – her marriage to Antony and her close bond with her brother.

Common for both Fulvia and Octavia was the conditions of *ante bellum* and civil war. That we see women exacting great amounts of influence in a time of civil war is no coincidence. The absence of men, the breakdown of the 'normal', along with the absence of the political elite, created a vacuum in which women were forced to step up to the plate and involve themselves directly in politics and even war. Fulvia and Octavia was not alone in doing so, but due to their closeness to the male protagonists, they feature on a larger scale due to the evidence's focus on the dynasts and power structures. This influence is best described as *auctoritas* as it seems that it was recognized and unchallenged by others of the community and had far reaches. However, Fulvia and Octavia chose to deploy it in very different ways. Fulvia reached the summit of possible power and influence achievable for a woman, not seen again before the time of the Empresses, while Octavia chose to contain her influence to within the family, albeit having a noteworthy impact on affairs of state and war. These two infamous *matronae* was not alone in breaking down barriers and stepping out from behind the curtain. Women like the so-called Turia, Antony's mother Antonia, Hortensia, Servilia and Terentia were just a few of those we know of who transcended the traditional idea of what

women could and were allowed to do. However, with the end of the civil war, this phenomenon was reserved for the women of the Imperial family and not the propertied class of Rome to the same extent. Fulvia was the one in which the old ways met the new, and Octavia was in effect the last civil war *matron*. In her the new met with the old.

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