

EMPRESS AND GODDESS:

JULIO-CLAUDIAN WOMEN IN THE IMPERIAL CULT

EMPRESS AND GODDESS:  
JULIO-CLAUDIAN WOMEN IN THE IMPERIAL CULT

By  
KRISTA MACIVER, B.A.

A Thesis  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Master of Arts

McMaster University

© Copyright by Krista MacIver, August 2001



MASTER OF ARTS (2001)  
(Classics)

McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Empress and Goddess: Julio-Claudian Women in the Imperial Cult

AUTHOR: Krista MacIver, B.A. (Mount Allison University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Evan Haley

NUMBER OF PAGES: viii, 141

## **ABSTRACT**

The worship of a mortal has long been an intriguing topic among scholars. The Roman imperial cult, which centered on the veneration of the emperor, exemplifies this phenomenon and its study has resulted in thousands of articles that attempt to explain the institution. Despite the vast amount of scholarly research regarding the imperial cult, few examine an important aspect of the cult: women. The emperor was not the only individual to receive the honours which are associated with the cult. Although the role of women in the imperial cult is frequently overlooked, it is an essential aspect of the cult.

This thesis will examine the role of women in the cult of the emperor, specifically that of the Julio-Claudian women. The study of these women is particularly valuable as they were the first women to be included in the imperial cult. An examination of ancient and modern sources, comprising physical and literary evidence, reveals that there are three identifiable roles for women in the cult. They were included as members of the imperial family, priestesses, and goddesses. Through a detailed analysis of these roles, the underlying impetus for the inclusion of Julio-Claudian women in the imperial cult may be elucidated.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Evan Haley, for his knowledge, guidance, and support throughout the writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Claude Eilers and Dr. Gretchen Umholtz, for their assistance and insight, particularly regarding chapter two. Thank you to my friends and family, for all of your support and confidence throughout the year. A special thank you to BJ, for your patience, advice, support, and love. Thanks to my wonderful support group of friends and family I survived the year. Thank you all!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AND DIVINE HONOURS	15
CHAPTER 3: IMPERIAL WOMEN AS PRIESTESSES	65
CHAPTER 4: IMPERIAL WOMEN AS DIVAE	92
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	115
APPENDIX	119
ILLUSTRATIONS	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY	139

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1a. Fulvia as Victory. Leaded bronze – Eumenia *RPC* 1.3139.
- Fig. 1b. Fulvia as Victory. *Aureus* – Rome. Wood (1999), fig. 1.
- Fig. 2. Vienna Sardonyx. Wood (1999), fig. 41.
- Fig. 3. Agrippina Minor, Drusilla, Livilla. *Sestertius* – Rome. Wood (1999), fig. 82.
- Fig. 4. Mithridates IV and Laodice of Syria. Coin. Davis and Kraay (1973), fig. 204, 205.
- Fig. 5. Livia as Hera and Julia as Aphrodite – Leaded bronze. Pergamon *RPC* 1.2359.
- Fig. 6a. Ara Pacis – Livia. Bartman (1999), fig. 75.
- Fig. 6b. Ara Pacis – Eastern Façade. Bartman (1999), fig. 76.
- Fig. 7. Livia as Ceres – Iponuba. Bartman (1999), fig. 84.
- Fig. 8. Livia as Ceres – Paestum. Bartman (1999), fig. 137.
- Fig. 9. Livia as Ceres. Ceres Borghese. Rome. Bartman (1999), fig. 42.
- Fig. 10. Claudius and Agrippina Minor. Sebasteion relief, Aphrodisias. Rose (1995), pl. 204.
- Fig. 11. Agrippina Minor crowning Nero. Sebasteion relief, Aphrodisias. Rose (1997), pl. 207.
- Fig. 12. Marlborough Turquoise. Bartman (1999), fig. 68.
- Fig. 13. Antonia Minor as Venus Genetrix – Baiae. Rose (1995), pl. 60.
- Fig. 14. Claudia Octavia as Venus Genetrix – Baiae. Rose (1995), pl. 62.
- Fig. 15. Vicus Sandaliarius. Rose (1997), pl. 111.
- Fig. 16. Livia and *carpentum*. *Sestertius*, Rome. Robertson (1962), pl. 11, fig. 19.



- Fig. 17. Livia – Florence cameo. Bartman (1999), fig. 184.
- Fig. 18. Livia – St. Petersburg head. Bartman (1999), fig. 82.
- Fig. 19. Livia – Ocrinum. Rose (1997), pl. 89.
- Fig. 20. Antonia Minor. *Denarius*, Rome. Wood (1999), fig. 55.
- Fig. 21. Agrippina Maior – Pompeii (Shrine in the Macellum). Small (1996), fig. 7.
- Fig. 22. Livia – St. Petersburg cameo. Bartman (1999), fig. 81.
- Fig. 23. Agrippina Maior – Tindari head. Wood (1999), fig. 93.
- Fig. 24a. Salus Augusta. *Dupondius*, Rome. Kleiner and Matheson (1996), Cat. 8.
- Fig. 24b. Pietas. *Dupondius*, Rome. Kleiner and Matheson (1996), Cat. 10.
- Fig. 24c. Iustitia. *Dupondius*, Rome. Kleiner and Matheson (1996), Cat. 9.
- Fig. 25. Drusilla – Caere. Wood (1999), fig. 111.
- Fig. 26. Bronze Coin – Apamea. Obv. Agrippina Maior as Pietas. Rev. Agrippina Minor, Diva Drusilla, Livilla. *RPC* 1. 2012.
- Fig. 27. Drusilla – Munich. Wood (1999), fig. 116.
- Fig. 28. Agrippina Maior. *Sestertius*, Rome. Kleiner and Matheson (1996), Cat. 19.
- Fig. 29. Diva Augusta. *Dupondius*, Rome. Bartman (1999), fig. 104.
- Fig. 30. Ravenna Relief. Rose (1997), Pl. 98.
- Fig. 31. Ravenna Relief- reconstruction. Rose (1997), Pl. 99.
- Fig. 32. Diva Augusta – Rusellae. Bartman (1999), fig. 103.
- Fig. 33. Diva Augusta – Lepcis Magna. Bartman (1999), fig. 102.
- Fig. 34. Livia – Velleia. Rose (1997), Pl. 143.
- Fig. 35. Juno Ludovisi. Wood (1999), fig. 50.
- Fig. 36. Livia as Ceres (Diva type) – Rome. Bartman (1999), fig. 121.

Fig. 37. Livia as Ceres (Diva type) – Rome. Bartman (1999), fig. 123.

Fig. 38. Livia as Ceres (Diva type) – Puteoli. Bartman (1999), fig. 105.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Roman imperial cult, which was primarily devoted to the worship of the emperor, has long been a subject of scholarly interest and debate on account of its divergence from contemporary beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Despite numerous volumes published on the subject, one aspect remains virtually unexplored: the presence and role of women in the imperial cult. The cult of the emperor is frequently thought of as a cult centred upon the worship of the emperor alone. This, however, was not the case, as many members of the imperial family were frequently honoured with him. Although women appear relatively infrequently in comparison to their male counterparts, they constituted an important aspect of the cult. By the second century AD, a number of women were included in the honours of the imperial cult; the particular focus here, however, will be on the inclusion of Julio-Claudian women in the cult of the emperor. Julio-Claudian women were introduced into the cult when it was still in its infancy and, thus, the positions which they held and the honours which they received provided an example for later imperial women. Before examining the questions which surround their inclusion into the cult, it is essential to understand the background to the imperial cult as a whole.

---

<sup>1</sup>There have been hundreds of studies on the imperial cult. Some of the most comprehensive of these include Taeger, (1957) *Charisma*, Price (1984a), Taylor (1975), Fishwick (1987-1992).

The imperial cult was not a homogeneous institution throughout the Roman Empire. Although the imperial cult was a phenomenon which did not truly exist in the Western Empire until the reign of Augustus, the concept of offering a living man honours which paralleled those of the gods was not unusual in the Eastern Empire. Long before the reign of the first Roman emperor, it was considered normal practise to venerate worthy men with quasi-divine honours in the Greek East. These Hellenistic traditions are fundamental to the development of the imperial cult in the Eastern Empire.

While divine honours are attested before Alexander the Great, that ruler marks a new level in the extent of the veneration.<sup>2</sup> A central aspect of the ruler cult was the granting of divine or divine-like honours. Although there is much dispute concerning whether Alexander believed in his own divinity, it is certain that he received honours which paralleled those of the gods.<sup>3</sup> Yet one may wonder why Alexander and his successors were honoured in this way. One answer lies in the introduction of monarchy and the foreign nature of the new ruler. Tyrants were frequently citizens of the city which they ruled; this changed, however, with the rise of Alexander and his successors. Once strongly autonomous Greek cities were then forced under the rule of a foreign king whose power base lay outside their city. The ruler cult acted as a means of justifying this new domination by paralleling the external control of an absent king to the external power

---

<sup>2</sup>See Taylor (1975), 1-6, for Persian precedents of ruler worship. See also Habicht, C. (1970) *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte*. Munich, and Price (1984a). According to Plutarch, *Lys.* 18.4, Lysander was the first Greek to receive divine-like honours.

<sup>3</sup>For the question of Alexander and his divinity, see Habicht (1970).

which the gods wielded over men.<sup>4</sup> This concept is neatly illustrated in a pair of second century AD apophthegms which state

What is a god? Wielding of power.  
What is a king? Like a god.<sup>5</sup>

The external nature of the new ruler was key to the development of the ruler cult.<sup>6</sup> The king was thus integrated into the framework of the traditional gods and divine honours were conferred upon him.<sup>7</sup>

The formation of the ruler cult is only partially explained by the external power of foreign kings. Another answer lies in the material benefits of such worship. Grants of semi-divine honours, *isotheoi timai*, as a reward for great achievements and benefactions had been a long-established tradition in the Greek world.<sup>8</sup> Kings were often a city's greatest benefactor, ushering in peace and prosperity. Ruler cults were often spontaneous reactions to the benefactions which foreign kings offered. While the divine honours associated with the cult could be granted as a response to the king's proven munificence,

---

<sup>4</sup>Price (1984a), 25-6; 29-30.

<sup>5</sup> Heidelberg papyrus Inv. 1716 Verso, from a 'school book'. See Bilabel (1925), 339. Cf. Price (1984a), 234.

<sup>6</sup> Price (1984a), 26.

<sup>7</sup>It should also be noted that, although the Greeks attempted to justify foreign rule by comparing it to the external power of the gods, there were originally outcries against the bestowal of divine honours. See Price (1984a), 222.

<sup>8</sup>Charlesworth (1934), 8-16. *Isotheoi timai* literally translates to god-like honours. These honours frequently reflected those offered to the gods and included, among others, the assignment of priests, dedication of altars, bestowal of divine titles, and inclusion in traditional festivals. It must be stressed that although these honours echoed those of the immortal gods, their bestowal did not confer divinity upon a mortal. Citizens could be honoured on account of their benefactions with burial in the agora, as well as honours frequently associated with deities, such as sacrifices, altars or precincts dedicated to the individual. This tradition continued alongside the ruler cult (Charlesworth (1934), 9; Bowersock (1965), 112-113). For

*isotheoi timai* could also be offered in the hope of procuring benefactions. By offering divine honours, subjects were able to display both loyalty and goodwill towards the king and thereby hope to secure benefits from their actions.<sup>9</sup> This impetus has led some scholars to view the ruler cult as a primarily political phenomenon, used only to serve the interests of the city.<sup>10</sup> Jones takes an extreme view when he states that

It may be said that there is in a sense no ruler-cult but only the cult of benefactors... Hellenistic kings were worshipped because they were donors, saviours from danger, founders and not primarily because they were kings.<sup>11</sup>

The dynastic or royal cult emerged as a variant of the ruler cult. While the honours were essentially the same, the motivation behind its institution differed. Instead of developing as a result of the spontaneous goodwill of the people and driven largely by the desire to secure benefactions, dynastic cults were established by the king himself and imposed upon his subjects.<sup>12</sup> The first instance of a ruler enforcing divine honours for himself and his family is found during the reign of Antiochus III (223-187 BC).<sup>13</sup> This type of cult presented numerous political benefits for the king. It primarily acted as a method of legitimising the king's power by emphasising his relationship with the founder of the dynasty. The cult also acted as a means to ensure loyalty to the king and provided

---

an example of honours to benefactor citizens, see *SEG* 1.366; Cf. Austin (1998), no. 113; Syll.<sup>3</sup>, 354; Cf. Austin (1998), no. 112.

<sup>9</sup> Bowersock (1965), 112-113.

<sup>10</sup> Fishwick, 1.1.11. Cf. Price (1984a), 29.

<sup>11</sup> Jones (1977), 80.

<sup>12</sup> Fishwick, 1.1. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Austin (1998), 262.

additional prestige to his rule by linking himself and his family closely with the divine. Furthermore, by establishing a cult to himself, the king was able to create a more uniform method of worship, which the establishment of local cults had prevented.<sup>14</sup>

The practice of honouring men on account of their benefactions continued throughout the Hellenistic period. It is unsurprising that the tradition continued with Roman intervention in the East. During the period of the Roman Republic, several Roman generals and government officials were offered *isotheoi timai* in the Hellenistic tradition.<sup>15</sup> The first Roman to receive this type of honour was Titus Quinctius Flamininus in 191 BC when he defeated Philip V, thereby establishing peace and declaring freedom for the Greek cities.<sup>16</sup> While semi-divine honours were accorded to Romans on behalf of their benefactions, such honours also served as a means of displaying loyalty. By the late Republic, the bestowal of *isotheoi timai* appears to have been largely a diplomatic tool which maintained goodwill between Rome and the Greek East.<sup>17</sup>

The Roman imperial cult is often viewed as a continuation of the Hellenistic ruler cult.<sup>18</sup> Although this is not entirely true, certain aspects did endure in the imperial cult of

---

<sup>14</sup> Fishwick, I.1.13. Cf. Austin (1998), 262, who argues that the main objective was not to legitimise the king's authority to rule but rather to honour his own merits and achievements, while also stressing loyalty to the king.

<sup>15</sup> See Fishwick, I.1.46, for the types of honours which Roman generals and magistrates received.

<sup>16</sup> Plut. *Flam.* 17.1. The honours which Flamininus received included a priest, sacrifices, libations, hymns, and the association of his name with Herakles and Apollo. His worship continued into the late second century AD in Chalcidice (Taylor [1975], 35-36).

<sup>17</sup> Bowman (1965), 115.

<sup>18</sup> Price (1984a), 24.

the Greek East. As the Greek East attempted to justify foreign rule by paralleling it to that of the gods, it would have been natural to extend such honours to the most powerful man in the ancient world, namely the Roman emperor. Augustus and his successors were the ultimate benefactors, and thus, in Hellenistic tradition, the focus was placed upon the worship of the living emperor. It is important to note that it is this element which distinguishes the imperial cult of the Greek East from its Latin counterpart. Unlike the imperial cult of the Western Empire, emphasis was placed upon the worship of the living emperor in the Greek East. Although termed *theos* during his life, it is generally accepted that the majority of Greeks did not actually believe that Augustus was a god; rather that he was worthy of similar honour on account of his great deeds and munificence.<sup>19</sup> The Hellenistic custom of honouring powerful individuals in the hopes of securing benefactions further explains the honours offered to the living emperor. As this was one of the primary motives behind the establishment of cult, the worship of a deceased emperor, as practiced in Rome, was impractical.<sup>20</sup>

The imperial cult also established diplomatic ties between Rome and the Eastern Empire.<sup>21</sup> In allowing these honours to continue in the Greek East, the Romans were able to maintain good relationships with their eastern subjects. The imperial cult also acted as

---

<sup>19</sup> Price (1980), 29.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the worship of Augustus first began with honours offered to the emperor and Roma, the personification of Rome. Cults to Roma had been long established in Greece by the reign of Augustus. Generals and administrators were frequently honoured with Roma, thus the cult of Roma offered a bridge between the Hellenistic ruler cult and Roman imperial cult. The inclusion of Roma in the worship of a living man was reminiscent of the Hellenistic kings, who were worshipped with the *Tyche* of the cities which they ruled. See Charlesworth (1934), 26; Taylor (1975), 37; Fishwick, 1.1.50. For Roma, see Jones, C.P. (1977) 'ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΑ'. *Phoenix* 31: 77-81.

<sup>21</sup> Fishwick, 1.1. 46. Cf. Bowman (1965), 115; Price (1984a), 65-78.



a means of preventing subversive activities against Roman power. The cult offered many opportunities for both cities and men to prove their excellence. The festivals and competitions associated with the imperial cult appeased the people.<sup>22</sup> The elite vied for positions as imperial priests while cities strove for the prestige of establishing the cult of the emperor. The imperial cult exploited the competitive nature of the Greek East, effectively diverting into cult activities rather than against Roman authority.<sup>23</sup> Although the divine worship of the living ruler was inappropriate for Rome, its existence in the Eastern Empire was in the best interest of Rome.

While the cult of the emperor is frequently referred to as the imperial cult, it should be noted that this term is a scholarly invention; there is no such term in the ancient sources.<sup>24</sup> Although Dio Cassius suggested that the worship of the emperor acted as a unifying factor throughout the Roman Empire, there is no concept of 'the' imperial cult.<sup>25</sup> The organisation and impetus for the cult of the emperor differed dramatically throughout the empire. As noted above, the imperial cult of the Greek East was centred upon the living emperor. The cult of the emperor in the Western Empire is a more complicated issue. Although semi-divine honours could be offered to a living emperor, Rome's aversion to kings meant that divine worship was officially reserved for only those emperors who were deemed worthy on account of their actions, both moral and material,

---

<sup>22</sup>It is important to note that cult activities were not forced upon the Greeks but were initiated by the Greeks themselves, stemming from eastern traditions towards foreign rule.

<sup>23</sup> Price (1984a), 132. Beard et al. (1998), 352.

<sup>24</sup> Goodman (1997), 299.

<sup>25</sup> Dio. 51.20.7-8; Beard et al. (1998), 318.

and sanctioned only after the emperor's death by senatorial decree. Consequently, the number of emperors who were officially termed god in the Western Empire was much smaller than that of the Greek East.

Although divine honours were officially reserved for posthumous consecration, Augustus received *isotheoi timai* without upsetting Roman tradition.<sup>26</sup> This was achieved through a number of indirect means. The first step taken was Augustus's incorporation of Vesta, the goddess of the state hearth, into his home.<sup>27</sup> By consecrating part of his house to her, he essentially made his home a centre of public worship. In 7 BC, Augustus restored the neglected cult of the *Lares Compitales*, an ancient cult to deceased ancestors which was located at cross roads. In a major innovation, Augustus added his own ancestors to the revived *Lares Compitales*, essentially changing the nature of the cult to the *Lares Augusti*.<sup>28</sup> He took this one step further when he also added his own *genius* to the group. The *genius* is a divine double of a man, his guiding force, and was worshipped as a deity, receiving prayer, sacrifice and oaths in its name.<sup>29</sup> Through these actions,

---

<sup>26</sup> Roman traditions did not completely oppose the eventual worship of a man. The existence of a cult of the dead, in which the deceased was honoured as a god upon death, provided precedents for the worship of an apotheosised emperor. See Wardman (1982), 82. Cf. Taylor (1975), 49-57.

<sup>27</sup> Dio 54.27.3.

<sup>28</sup> In Rome, the officials of the *Lares Augusti* consisted of four freedmen (*magistri*) and four slaves (*ministri*) for each *vicus* (Taylor, [1975], 186). The presence of slaves in this priestly office may have occurred at a later date, once freedmen pursued the more prestigious position of an *Augustalis*. Controversy surrounds the term *Augustales* and whether it referred to priests or denoted a status division created by Augustus. Although Fishwick, 2.1.608-616, argues that they were priests of the emperor, Beard suggested that there is no reason to particularly link them to the imperial cult, although she believes that they had religious duties (Beard et al. [1998], 358).

<sup>29</sup> The *genius* could be worshipped in one's home or among the *lares* (OCD, 630). The concept of the *genius* is complicated by the fact that it could be associated with numerous things, including places, buildings, groups of people, and even gods (Fishwick [1969], 360). It should be noted that Augustus was not the first individual to receive special honours for his *genius*. The *genius* of Gaius Marius may have been

Taylor believes that Augustus was able to create a veiled form of worship for himself without upsetting Roman custom.<sup>30</sup>

The cult of the *genius* of Augustus became a popular cult, although it appears to have adopted numerous forms.<sup>31</sup> In Rome, the *genius* of the emperor was worshipped in the temples and shrines of other deities, while it received its own cult in Italian municipalities.<sup>32</sup> Augustus's *genius* had been receiving libations at all public and private banquets since 30 BC.<sup>33</sup> In 13 BC, the Senate decreed that oaths were to be made by the

---

offered popular worship, receiving libations in the hopes of protection during the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones and was honoured with food and drink in private homes. See Goodman (1997), 129; Taylor (1975), 48, 56.

<sup>30</sup>Taylor (1975), 190, 204. Cf. Weinstock (1971), 214-217, who argues that free citizens did not participate in the cult of the emperor's *genius* and that Augustus did not want a public cult. A public, state cult did not exist until the reign of Nero.

<sup>31</sup> An offshoot of the worship of the emperor's *genius* is the cult of the emperor's *numen*. While the *genius* was a divinity in its own right, the *numen* appears to have been the divine power which one might possess. The worship of the *numen* often originated from gratitude and was the highest honour that one could offer (Fishwick [1969], 361, 364; Cf. Nock [1932], 516). While the cult of the *genius* frequently acted as a veil for the worship of Augustus, this cult focussed more closely on the living emperor himself (Beard et al. [1998], 355). The distinction between the *genius* and *numen* may have been complicated by the fact that *numen* could also be applied to fountains, trees, places, people, among other things, in a similar manner as the *genius*. It is possible to surmise that subjects were easily confused by the two concepts (Fishwick [1969], 365). Cf. Beard et al. (1998), 207.

<sup>32</sup> It is believed that the *genius* of the emperor was later incorporated with Mars in the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum. See Taylor (1920), 125-126. It seems that priests of the *genius* of the emperor received the title *flamen* when worship was centred on a temple, while the term *sacerdos* was reserved for worship centred on an altar. See Beard et al. (1998), 357. Cf. Fishwick, 1.1.165, where he argues that the term *flamen* refers to priests of official state deities. Representations of the emperor and his family could also be found in private *lararia*. Charlesworth (1934), 13; 31. Cf. Ovid, *Pont.* 2.8.

<sup>33</sup> Horace *Ep.* 2.1.15. Although Horace uses the term *numen*, it is generally interpreted to mean oaths were offered to the emperor's *genius*. Fishwick, 1.1.52, notes that Augustus did not institute a state cult to his *genius*. Cf. Weinstock (1971), 214-217, who argues that Augustus did not want a public cult and Taylor (1920), 124, who believes that a senatorial decree of 13 BC, noted above, essentially changed the cult of Augustus's *genius* into a state cult.

emperor's *genius*.<sup>34</sup> The complex nature of the *genius* provided the transitional step required for the development of the imperial cult and the veneration of the emperor himself. It was not a difficult move to transfer the worship offered to a spirit double to that of a living man. It is possible that some people were confused by the concept of the *genius* and thus believed that they were actually honouring the living emperor rather than his spirit double. Although the cult of the emperor's *genius* continued alongside the imperial cult, it may be regarded as a preparatory step to the imperial cult.<sup>35</sup>

Augustus was extremely careful about the introduction of his own worship in Rome. He refused direct worship in Rome, even prohibiting temples to himself and Roma, which he had permitted in the east. Instead, he promoted the cult of his adopted father, Julius Caesar, who was officially deified posthumously in 42 BC.<sup>36</sup> In doing this, Augustus appeared as an ideal Roman citizen, a pious and moral man, honouring his father and refusing extravagant honours for himself. At the same time, Augustus was able to promote his relationship to a divine individual, terming himself a *divi filius*, which indirectly fostered the notion that Augustus, through a combination of his bloodlines and deeds, would also achieve the position of *divus*. Thus, Augustus indirectly laid the foundation for his own deification through the worship of his *genius* and the deification of his ancestor.

---

<sup>34</sup> It has been suggested that many of the honours that Augustus received were based on those first requested by or offered to Julius Caesar. For honours associated with Julius Caesar, see Weinstock (1970); Cf. Taylor (1975), 58-77; Fishwick, 1.1.56-72.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor (1975), 182-183.

<sup>36</sup> Goodman (1997), 129.

The imperial cult of the Western Empire did not always follow the Roman paradigm of reserving explicit divine honours for the deceased emperor. In Italy itself, there was a more overt form of worship for Augustus while he was living.<sup>37</sup> Previously pacified provinces, such as Spain and North Africa, frequently adopted the imperial cult on their own accord and offered divine honours to both living and deceased emperors.<sup>38</sup> The establishment of the imperial cult in the western provinces offered a number of benefits to the emperor. The prestige of the priesthood associated with the cult allowed the emperor to bind the provincial elite to himself. Furthermore, it appears that the cult was promptly imposed in areas of particular instability or uncertain loyalties in an effort to control them.<sup>39</sup> As no precedents existed in many of these areas, the emperor was able to introduce the style of cult himself. In this case, the imperial cult frequently adopted a more Hellenistic approach, in which the emperor was offered divine honours while living.<sup>40</sup> By appropriating an eastern attitude for the imperial cult, the emperor was able to enforce his rule more strongly, using his supposed divine nature to reinforce his position. It has also been argued that the imperial cult acted as a means for the

---

<sup>37</sup> This was often the result of a pre-existing Greek heritage and explains the adoption of a cult which followed precedents of the Hellenistic ruler cult. This is best seen in Neapolis, a region with strong Greek influence, which offered games to Augustus while he was alive. See Dio 55.10.9; Taylor (1920), 117-8.

<sup>38</sup> Cult honours were frequently offered by communities without the intervention of the emperor. This is demonstrated at Tarraco, which requested permission from Tiberius to establish a temple to Divus Augustus. See Tac. *Ann.* 1.78. See Wardman (1982), 87, for the predisposition towards ruler worship in Spain and North Africa.

<sup>39</sup> Taylor (1975), 210. Cf. Garnsey and Saller (1987), 164-170. Unstable areas had the cult imposed on them by Roman governors and authorities. While pacified areas usually established local cults, unstable areas received provincial versions. The cults at Lyon and Cologne typify the form of cult imposed upon unstable provinces (Garnsey and Saller [1987], 165-6).

<sup>40</sup> Beard et al. (1998), 352.

Romanization of the provinces, introducing both Roman offices and practices to the natives.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to note that although divine honours were offered to the living emperor throughout the Roman Empire, it is generally understood that this did not imply that the emperor was a living god.<sup>42</sup> Although uneducated subjects awed by the might and majesty of the emperor may have believed the emperor's divinity more readily, divine honours did not suggest divinity. There is no evidence in the Julio-Claudian period for prayers offered to the emperor in times of illness or need as there are for Olympian gods, thereby implying that the emperor was not considered a true god.<sup>43</sup> Fishwick describes this view best, stating that 'emperors were not so much divinities themselves as symbols of divinity, clearly recognised for what they were'.<sup>44</sup> Despite the varying motivations and manifestations of the imperial cult, the cult may be seen as a method of defining the relationship of power between subject and ruler.<sup>45</sup>

In order to understand fully the importance and function of the imperial cult, one must consider the inclusion of women. Although a number of imperial women were honoured in the imperial cult, this thesis will examine the first women to receive such

---

<sup>41</sup> Wardman (1982), 88. The imperial cult did not completely replace native religious beliefs but co-existed with them. See Beard et al. (1998), 351-2, which notes that native gods could act as protectors of the emperor. It should also be noted that colonies that consisted primarily of Roman citizens retained a more Roman form of the imperial cult.

<sup>42</sup> Price (1984a), 29, 84.

<sup>43</sup> Fishwick (1969), 365; Price (1984a), 91. Cf. Apul. *Met.* 3.29.

<sup>44</sup> Fishwick (1969), 365-366.

<sup>45</sup> Price (1984a), 248. Cf. Beard et al. (1998), 361.

honours, namely the Julio-Claudian women, including among others Drusilla, Agrippina Minor, and most importantly, Livia.

Julio-Claudian women were affiliated with the imperial cult in three fundamental ways. They were predominately included in the divine honours associated with the imperial cult as a relation of the emperor: mother, sister, wife or daughter. Imperial women were also involved with the cult as priestesses of deified emperors. Finally, a few exceptional Julio-Claudian women attained the pinnacle position of the imperial cult, officially receiving cult as a *diva* in Rome. The divine honours offered to imperial women were essentially similar to those offered to the emperor. One of the most prominent and important methods of honouring imperial women was through association with a variety of goddesses. The implication of these associations and the types of honours that they received are fundamental to the comprehension of the role women played in the cult.

Examination of the inclusion of the women in the cult will be based on a variety of sources.<sup>46</sup> Ancient literary sources provide valuable accounts of the types of honours which were offered to these women. These references are predominately found in the history of Dio Cassius, and the lives of Suetonius, as well as the severely biased writings of Tacitus. Fortunately, there is a great deal of surviving evidence in the form of inscriptions, coins and statues. These provide excellent evidence of the divine titles and attributes conferred on imperial women. Through the examination of the vast amount of

---

<sup>46</sup> Little work has been done on the women of the imperial cult. For an insight into historic and iconographic evidence for their roles, see: Grether (1946); Gross, W.H. (1962) *Iulia Augusta*. Gottingen; Herz, P. (1981) 'Diva Drusilla', *Historia* 30: 324-336; Bartman (1999); Wood (1999).

surviving evidence for the honours which they received according to their positions in the imperial cult, the true impetus and importance of the inclusion of the imperial women in the imperial cult may be elucidated.

Although imperial women could be granted divine honours on account of their own merits, this thesis will attempt to show that the inclusion of women in the imperial cult was primarily due to their membership in the imperial family and, consequently, their dynastic importance. The bloodlines of the imperial women were essential for the validation of an emperor's reign and the inclusion of Julio-Claudian women in the cult and its honours indirectly strengthened the emperor's claim to the throne. The importance placed upon the role of the Julio-Claudian women and their descent suggests that their incorporation into the imperial cult may thus be viewed as an indirect means of justifying Roman rule throughout the empire.



## CHAPTER 2 THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AND DIVINE HONOURS

Julio-Claudian women were affiliated with the imperial cult in respect to three roles: as relatives of the emperor, as priestesses of the imperial cult, and as goddesses themselves. The latter two positions were granted to very few imperial women and only one, Livia, was incorporated into the cult in all three of these aspects. However, almost every woman was granted divine honours of some description due to her membership in the imperial family. Divine honours were a central aspect of the imperial cult and the number and intensity of the honours offered to the Julio-Claudian women varied throughout the Roman Empire. Such honours were accorded to imperial women for one principal reason: membership in the imperial household. Augustus's desire to create a dynasty and the development of the notion of an imperial household, a *domus augusta*, entitled the Julio-Claudian women to an enhanced public status and a variety of privileges hitherto unattested, including divine honours. While the emperor's dynastic emphasis undoubtedly influenced the East's decision to include the women of the imperial household in divine honours, a predisposition towards the worship of a living king and his family in the Greek East further compelled their veneration. By examining the divine honours which the Julio-Claudian women received, it is possible to understand the importance of their relationship with the emperor as an impetus for this form of homage.

In Rome, the concept of the *domus augusta*, an imperial household, dictated the inclusion of women in the imperial cult. Before examining the dynamics of the *domus augusta*, the term itself requires comment. The *domus* was originally broad in context, referring to both the family and slaves of a household, although it eventually developed a more narrow definition, referring to the family group, encompassing both *agnates* and *cognates*. The use of the *gentilicium* as a modifier for the term *domus* was a common practice in Roman society (*domus Claudia*), indicating the founder of a household. However, the imperial household adopted the *cognomen* of the emperor, namely Augustus. The use of the *cognomen* to describe the imperial household instead of the *gentilicium* alluded to Augustus's dynastic intentions, for it suggested that Augustus had established a household which would carry on his own name, rather than the family name *Iulii*. Monarchical undercurrents were also implied through the title *domus augusta*, as it suggested that Augustus's successors would replace the emperor not only as the head of a household in his name, but would also retain his extensive power. This was furthered by the fact that the cognomen of the *princeps* was in fact an honorific title decreed by the senate and was therefore not legally hereditary.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the phrase *domus augusta* did not appear until the end of Augustus's life and is first referred to by Ovid.<sup>2</sup> The late institution of this phrase may be explained

---

<sup>1</sup> Flory (1996), 292.

<sup>2</sup>Evidence of the imperial household as the *domus augusta* is first attested to c. AD 15-20, although references may have been made as early as AD 8. Examples of the early literary references to a house specifically associated with Augustus include, among others, Ovid *Pont.* 2.2.74; *Fasti* 1.532. Tacitus also uses the term *domus Caesarum*, the house of the Caesars, to refer to the imperial household. This expression appears to have been the original one (Corbier [1995], 178; Cf. Flory [1996], 293).

by the political atmosphere at the time. In AD 4 Augustus adopted Tiberius, the son of Livia from her first marriage, thus acknowledging him as his successor. Previously, the emperor's chosen heirs had direct links to Augustus and Julian blood through his daughter, Julia, or sister, Octavia. Tiberius, however, was of Claudian blood. By promoting the notion of a *domus augusta*, a unified family under Augustus, the more distant relationship between Tiberius and Augustus could be overlooked. The phrase thus created a new Augustan household, one which encompassed both Julian and Claudian blood.

Although the term technically included those related to Augustus by blood or marriage, the politically promoted *domus augusta* did not include everyone. Instead, only those who were of dynastic importance regarding the future of the imperial house and the justification of Julio-Claudian rule were extensively promoted.<sup>3</sup> The true extent of the early political *domus augusta* is uncertain, although the core group appears to have consisted of Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus II. It was this small group which was of primary political importance, identifying the reigning emperor, his possible successors and the woman who linked them all together and legitimised their positions.<sup>4</sup> This notion is echoed by an inscription from Gytheum which describes rituals associated with the imperial cult and which dedicated a day of honours to each of these five

---

<sup>3</sup> Although the dynamics of the *domus augusta* would change, Ovid identifies the earliest version as Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus II but also alludes to the wives and children of the latter two men. Further references by Ovid are extensive and include *Pont.* 2.2.69-74; *Tr.* 2.161-169. The *senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* included Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Drusus II, Agrippina I, Antonia Minor, and the sons, sister and brother of Germanicus as part of the imperial household (ll. 123-5; Cf. Bartman [1999], 114).

<sup>4</sup> Flory (1996), 293.

individuals.<sup>5</sup> Flory likewise identifies Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus as those depicted in a dynastic statuary group in the Circus Flaminius portraying the *domus augusta* in AD 15.<sup>6</sup> However, the dynamics of the imperial household were constantly altered during the Julio-Claudian period and were reflected in the political concept of the *domus*. Despite the changing dynamics, the fundamental concept of the political *domus* remained constant, promoting the emperor, his potential successor, and the women who legitimised their positions.

The concept of the *domus augusta* developed from necessity. Augustus's marriage to Livia had formed a connection between two of the highest houses of Rome, the Iulii and the Claudii. Unfortunately, Augustus was unable to solidify the union through the birth of a male child with Livia. Instead, he was forced to rely upon his female relations, through a series of interfamily marriages and adoptions, to produce his desired heirs. The ability to connect oneself closely to Augustus, often through one's female relations, would become essential for the remaining Julio-Claudian emperors.

While all of the members of the Augustan house enjoyed great prestige on account of their inclusion in the exclusive household, women received an alarmingly substantial amount of power and prestige as a result of their connection. The lack of sons sprung from the *princeps* required the dynasty to be based to a great extent on those produced by his female relatives. Both 'closed' and 'open' marriages were formed in the

---

<sup>5</sup>SEG 11.922-3.

<sup>6</sup>The only reference to this statuary group is found on the *Tabula Siarensis*, a copy of the funerary honours decreed by the Senate in honour of Germanicus in AD 19. See Flory (1996) for those depicted in this statuary group.

hopes of producing eligible heirs.<sup>7</sup> Without a son, Augustus first looked to the children borne by his sister, Octavia, for possible heirs. Unfortunately, her son Marcellus died prematurely. The emperor then looked to the sons of his daughter Julia as heirs. A similar fate befell these two chosen successors. It was only after his direct relatives failed to produce a successor that he looked to the children of Livia's first marriage.<sup>8</sup> Livia, although empress, gained her most prominent position only near the end of her husband's life, as mother of the future emperor.

From the reign of Tiberius onwards, Julio-Claudian women were essential in political propaganda, not only for their ability to produce heirs but also on account of their own connections to the first *princeps*, Augustus. These relationships were indispensable for the justification of the reigning emperor's prerogative to rule, and, as a result, the women were often influential in the politics of the *domus augusta* even after their death.<sup>9</sup>

The dynamics of the imperial household were constantly shifting as emperors publicly promoted the women who could best legitimise their hereditary right to reign as emperor. Caligula stressed his Julian blood through his deceased mother, Agrippina the Elder, and downplayed the Claudian blood of his father. Suetonius notes that Caligula was even willing to deny his grandfather Agrippa in order to claim descent from an

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Closed' marriage refers to marriage between close kin, while 'open' marriage alludes to marriages outside such close relations: see Corbier (1995), 184.

<sup>8</sup> As daughter of Octavia and Mark Antony, Antonia Minor could have provided suitable heirs for Augustus. However, she refused to remarry after her husband's death and was thus useless to the *princeps'* dynastic plans and therefore did not acquire the prominent public persona apparent with Octavia, Julia, and Livia at this time.

<sup>9</sup> Fishwick, 1.1.13.

allegedly incestuous relationship between Augustus and his daughter Julia, thus creating an even closer connection to the Julian line.<sup>10</sup> The precarious rise of Claudius to the position of emperor and the fact that he was not a direct descendant of Augustus nor of Julian blood required a special emphasis on Claudius's female relatives. However, his closest connections were deceased and thus promoted posthumously. He emphasised both Antonia Minor, through whom he could refer to Augustus as *avunculus magnus*, and Livia, his grandmother. Livia was a particularly strong link to Augustus. Upon his death, Livia had been adopted by her husband, creating a unique relationship in which Livia was now both wife and daughter of the first emperor.<sup>11</sup> This strange relationship between Augustus and Livia was rarely referred to. Inscriptions from Aphrodisias and Velleia, which do refer to Livia as Augustus's daughter, date to Caligula's reign.<sup>12</sup> Such a reference may be explained by Caligula's desire to down play his Claudian blood. By referring to Livia in this manner, he emphasised her Julian adoption, and she was therefore a stronger dynastic link.<sup>13</sup> The extravagant posthumous honours which were granted to Livia by Claudius will be examined in chapter four. Claudius continued to strengthen his connections to Augustus through his marriages. Messalina was the granddaughter of Antonia Minor, while his fourth wife, Agrippina Minor, offered closer

---

<sup>10</sup> Suet. *Gaius*, 23.1. There is probably little truth to this anecdote. Nonetheless, it illustrates that the emphasis placed upon the Julian line during Caligula's reign was apparent to others.

<sup>11</sup> Livia's name was changed to Julia in recognition of her adoption into the *gens Iulia* (Dio Cass. 56.46, Tac. *Ann.* 1.8). Political motives may have underpinned this action. Through the adoption, Tiberius would have had a stronger claim to rule, as both he and his mother had been adopted by Augustus.

<sup>12</sup> Aphrodisias: *AE* (1980), 877; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat* 70; Velleia: *CIL* 11.1165; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 76.

<sup>13</sup> Bartman (1999), 123.

connections as a descendant of Julia. Nero's dynastic line was the strongest of the Julio-Claudian successors, for his grandmother Agrippina Maior was a daughter of Julia, and his mother was sister of the emperor Caligula and wife of the emperor Claudius.

The importance of the relationships created by the imperial women is perhaps best illustrated through dynastic portraiture groups, which offer a visual representation of the changing dynamics of the *domus augusta* and dynastic politics.<sup>14</sup> The relationships among the *domus augusta* were particularly important for the Julio-Claudian women and defined the types of honours which they received and the period in which they received them.

The dynastic significance of the imperial women resulted in a public role which was unprecedented for a Roman *matrona*. Livia received a plethora of extraordinary honours during her life due to her dynastic importance, including honorific statues, sacrosanctity,<sup>15</sup> freedom from *tutela*, and the inclusion of her name in the formula used by the consuls for proposals made to the senate.<sup>16</sup> After her husband's death, new titles were proposed for the empress including the title *mater patriae*, echoing Augustus's title of *pater patriae*.<sup>17</sup> Upon Livia's adoption, she acquired Augustus's honorific title, as well as

---

<sup>14</sup>Bartman (1999), 79. Rose provides the most detailed account of dynastic portraiture in his book *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period*.

<sup>15</sup>Dio Cass. 49.38.1. Sacrosanctity was bestowed upon Octavia and Livia. This may have been a political act by Octavian. By granting sacrosanctity to Octavia, Octavian was able to manoeuvre against Mark Antony. It is generally believed that Livia was included in this honour only as an attempt to maintain equal honours for the wives of the triumvirs. Barrett (1990), 62.

<sup>16</sup>Barrett (1989), 62.

<sup>17</sup>Tiberius vetoed this and other honours offered to Livia at Augustus's death. Tac. *Ann.* 1.14; Dio Cass. 57.12.4, 58.2.3.

the name Julia and was thereafter referred to as Julia Augusta.<sup>18</sup> The title, which was a quasi-religious term, recalled the emperor's power and divinity and may have been interpreted by some as bestowing similar powers upon her.<sup>19</sup>

This title was also granted to a select few Julio-Claudian women, including Antonia Minor, Agrippina the Younger, and Poppaea. It appears that it was reserved for mothers of the emperor, a precedent established by Livia. Thus, it is perhaps surprising that Antonia had been offered the title by Caligula, her grandson. Although it appears that she refrained from using it while living, Claudius re-bestowed the title upon his deceased mother as an act of filial reverence.<sup>20</sup> Agrippina Minor received the title while wife of the emperor and mother of the heir apparent,<sup>21</sup> while Poppaea was granted it upon the birth of her first child.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that Claudius did not allow the title to be bestowed upon Messalina in AD 41, despite the fact that she was empress and mother of a possible heir.<sup>23</sup> By refusing her the title, he maintained an elevated status for his more

---

<sup>18</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 1.8; Dio Cass. 56.46.

<sup>19</sup>Grether (1946), 233. Cf. Mullens (1941/2), 66. The term *augusta* would become problematic when it appeared in conjunction with the name of a deity or personification. The implications of the term in this context will be examined in the succeeding chapter.

<sup>20</sup>Suet. *Gaius* 15.2; Dio Cass. 59.3.3. Cf. Flory (1996), 298. The re-granting of the title was required as Claudius abolished all of Caligula's *acta*, including the senatorial decree which bestowed the title upon her. See Suet. *Cl.* 11.2, Cf. Flory (1996), 298.

<sup>21</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 12.26.1. Agrippina Minor was also the first woman to receive the title while her husband was still living.

<sup>22</sup>The daughter which she bore was also given the title Augusta at her birth, making the child the first to receive the title who did not bear the potential successor. See Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.

<sup>23</sup>Dio Cass. 60.12.5.



direct connections to Augustus, Livia and Antonia Minor.<sup>24</sup> However, despite the lack of official sanction, provincial coins infrequently refer to her as Augusta.<sup>25</sup> She was also honoured with the Greek equivalent of the title in the east, Σεβαστη, as were many Julio-Claudian women.

A variety of honours, which had hitherto been unattested in Roman society, were accorded to the women of the Julio-Claudian dynasty on account of their importance in the Augustan household. Birthday festivals and games were held for various Julio-Claudian women. Caligula held a series of games for his mother, which included a procession in which Agrippina Maior's image was carried in a *carpentum* and Claudius honoured Antonia Minor with games upon her birthday.<sup>26</sup> Women were also included in oaths for the first time. Caligula's sisters were included in the annual vows for the emperor's safety, as well as the annual vows of allegiance to the emperor.<sup>27</sup> Most striking of the Roman honours was the appearance of Julio-Claudian women on official Roman coinage. Livia was the first living woman named on a coin, an event which did not occur until AD 22.<sup>28</sup> Caligula broke new ground when he issued a coin devoted completely to his deceased mother, Agrippina I. This was the first coin to have both obverse and

---

<sup>24</sup>Wood (1999), 254.

<sup>25</sup>Mullens (1941/2), 62; *RPC* 1.2130, 1.3627.

<sup>26</sup>Dio Cass. 60.5.1.

<sup>27</sup>Suet. *Cal.* 15.3.

<sup>28</sup>*RIC* I<sup>2</sup>, 97 no. 51, pl.12.

reverse dedicated to a woman. Furthermore, he set a precedent by naming his sisters on a *sestertius* and depicting them in the guise of divine personifications.<sup>29</sup>

The preceding honours may be explained by the dynastic importance of the Julio-Claudian women. Emperors promoted the female relatives who could most closely associate them to Augustus. By honouring Agrippina I with a festival and procession, Caligula was able to promote his close connections through her to Augustus while at the same time distancing himself from Tiberius, who had previously persecuted her.<sup>30</sup> Antonia, on the other hand, was honoured with birthday games only in Claudius's reign. The promotion of Antonia Minor, the niece of Augustus, was one of the indirect means for Claudius to connect himself to the first divine *princeps*. The portraits of Julio-Claudian women on coins acted in a similar manner, promoting not only the women but also their bloodlines. Thus, the coin dedicated to Agrippina Maior recalled Caligula's connection to Augustus through his mother. Spanish coins reflected this idea, stressing matrilineal bloodlines and emphasising the relationships established by the mothers of Caligula and Nero.<sup>31</sup> By emphasising dynastic connections, the emperor, as well as his subjects, increased the prestige of the women and the imperial family, while recalling connections to Augustus. The power of bloodlines thus allowed Julio-Claudian women to enter the public sphere of Rome as no woman had before.

---

<sup>29</sup>Agrippina Maior: *RIC* I<sup>2</sup>, 112, no. 55, pl. 14; Caligula's sisters: *RIC* I<sup>2</sup>, 110, no. 33, pl. 13.

<sup>30</sup>Wood (1999), 410.

<sup>31</sup>Rose (1997), 34. For Caesaraugusta's emphasis on Agrippina I, see *RPC* 1.385.

The oaths sworn in the name of Caligula's sisters differed slightly in their dynastic motivations. The oaths were made while the emperor's sisters were living and rather than stressing any connection with Augustus and thereby justifying Caligula's imperial position, it seems they were included in the oaths as a means of indicating that Caligula was prepared to accept an heir from among any of his sisters.<sup>32</sup> The oaths were a means of publicly promoting Caligula's attempt to continue the imperial dynasty. Similarly, coins bearing their likeness elevated their status and singled them out as potential bearers of the future emperor.

This idea also explains the promotion of the wives of the emperor, who were presumably expected to bear heirs. This is particularly relevant when examining the honours accorded to the wives of Claudius and Nero. In turn, imperial mothers, who frequently procured the imperial seat for their sons, were also accorded honours because of their dynastic connections. Although the honours accorded to Livia predominantly date to Tiberius's reign rather than Augustus's, evidence of Livia's maternal role is referred to before her son's rise to the imperial throne.<sup>33</sup> Flory suggests that a statue offered to Livia in 9 BC exemplified this idea, stating that the statue was centred on Livia and motherhood, and functioned as a precursor for later propaganda, which centred on motherhood as a means of securing succession.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that

---

<sup>32</sup>Wood (1995), 461.

<sup>33</sup> Rose (1997), 23.

<sup>34</sup>Flory (1993), 306. The statue appears to have been in reaction to the death of her son, Drusus (Dio 55.2.5). The exact location of this statue is uncertain. For further discussion of this statue and its significance, see Flory (1993), 297-306.

Livia's motherhood was expressed primarily in provincial and privately commissioned works.<sup>35</sup>

Surprisingly, despite Roman reservations concerning the worship of a living individual, many honours which were bestowed upon the women of the imperial household echoed those offered to divinities. These god-like honours were similar to the *isothēoi timai* of the Greek East, a matter which will be discussed shortly, in the fact that the honours were similar, although not equivalent, to those offered to the gods. While they may have implied a sense of divinity, they did not suggest that the individual was a god.<sup>36</sup> As the Greek East provided a model for the imperial cult of the west, it is possible to use the *isothēoi timai* of the Greek East as a model for the divine honours of the Western Empire.

*Isothēoi timai* included a number of honours, such as festivals, oaths, the renaming of objects and places in honour of an individual, and goddess association. The latter issue requires careful consideration and will be examined in detail below. Games and festivals, such as those previously discussed, may be considered god-like honours for they often reflected those offered to deities. The procession of Agrippina's image during the games held in her honour would have undoubtedly reminded spectators of similar processions offered during cultic festivals. Likewise, oaths which included Caligula's sisters would have recalled those offered to the gods.<sup>37</sup> Upon Augustus's death, the senate

---

<sup>35</sup>Bartman (1999), 82.

<sup>36</sup>Price (1984), 88.

<sup>37</sup> Price (1984), 90.

proposed the renaming of months after Tiberius and Livia.<sup>38</sup> Finally, the *Fratres Arvales* connected a few of the Julio-Claudian women closely to the imperial cult through the celebration of their birthdays.<sup>39</sup> Originally associated with the agricultural deity, *Dea Dia*, the brotherhood had fallen into disuse until Augustus restored them. With the restoration of their ancient rites, he also invested them with rituals which were associated with the cult of the imperial house, including prayers for the health and safety of the imperial family and birthday celebrations.<sup>40</sup> The earliest reference to Livia by the Arvals is found in the *vota* of AD 22. Antonia Minor's birthday was also celebrated by the Arvals during Caligula's reign.<sup>41</sup> It must be stressed that, like their male counterparts, the Julio-Claudian women were rarely admitted into the full honours of the imperial cult in Rome while living. Although they did occasionally receive god-like honours during their lifetime, they did not receive sacrifices, temples, and priestesses beside their deified husbands.

Livia, however, appears to have been an exception to this rule. As the first empress and *femina princeps* of the imperial house, Livia was accorded many honours which established a precedent for later Julio-Claudian women, yet she was also awarded

---

<sup>38</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 26.2. Tiberius, notorious for his ultra conservatism regarding the bestowal of divine honours for both himself and his mother, declined this semi-divine honour.

<sup>39</sup> Arvals sacrificed on the birthday of Livia, Drusilla, and Agrippina Maior among others, although the sacrifices usually did not continue long past their death. For further information regarding the *Fratres Arvales*, see M. Beard (1985), "Writing and Ritual: A Study of Diversity and Expansion in the Arval Acta", *PBSR* 53 (1985): 114-162.

<sup>40</sup> For Augustus's role in the college, see Beard (1998), 194-195.

<sup>41</sup> For Livia's incorporation see *CIL* 6.32340, ln. 17. Barrett (1989), 62, discusses Antonia Minor's inclusion.

honours which no other Julio-Claudian woman surpassed. First among the latter honours was what appeared to be the worship of the living empress. It must be stressed that such worship refrained from an outright proclamation of Livia's divinity. Instead, inscriptions testify to the worship of Livia's *juno*.<sup>42</sup> The *juno* is the female equivalent of the male *genius*, a spirit double of an individual and as such, its worship coincided with the Roman tradition of refraining from the veneration of a living individual.<sup>43</sup> Although the cult of the *genius* and *juno* existed as a separate entity alongside the imperial cult, it enabled an easy transition to the worship of the imperial couple themselves. While such veneration was not directed towards the imperial couple, the distinction between the worship of the individual and their spirit double was easily confused or overlooked and thus it was a small step from worshipping the spiritual double of a mortal to venerating the mortal himself. However, it has been thought that it was under the guise of the worship of the *genius* that Augustus was first worshipped while alive.<sup>44</sup> If the cult of Augustus's *genius* acted as a veiled method of personal worship, as Taylor argues, a similar statement may be made concerning the worship of Livia's *juno*.<sup>45</sup>

The veneration of Livia's *juno* could be found throughout the Western Empire. A dedication from Falerii acknowledges that the empress's *juno* was worshipped at altars in

---

<sup>42</sup>*CIL* 11.3076; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 12; *CIL* 8.16456 = *ILS* 120; Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 27; *CIL* 3.2904; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 26

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Dio. Cass. 51.20.7-8, which states that no living emperor was outwardly worshipped in Rome or Italy.

<sup>44</sup>*Supra*, p. 8-10.

<sup>45</sup>Taylor addresses the issue of the worship of Augustus while alive in her article 'The Worship of Augustus in Italy during his Lifetime', *TAPhA* 60 (1929): 87-101. Cf. Grether (1946), 239.

Italy, while a similar inscription was found in Africa at El Lehs.<sup>46</sup> It was also honoured alongside household gods, the *lares*, in private shrines or *lararia*, as Ovid himself apparently practised while in exile.<sup>47</sup> This notion is further corroborated by the discovery of statues of Livia in *lararia* near Naples and Lyon.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to discover the full extent of such private worship offered to Livia.

The empress could be included, either officially or by implied association, in dedications to her husband's *genius* or receive dedications to her *juno* alone. It would not be difficult to associate her *juno* with the worship of Augustus's *genius*. As empress, it was a natural step to include her in the homage paid to her husband. By honouring the wife of the emperor, subjects were indirectly honouring the emperor and proclaiming the superiority not only of the emperor but his entire family. The true identity of the intended spirits could be made ambiguous by the use of the plural form of *genius*, which could then technically refer to the spirits of Augustus and Livia, Augustus and Tiberius, or all three.

Inscriptions, such as those found on altars and statue bases, provide further confusion. The problem arises with the interpretation of IUNONI AUGUSTAE. It could be interpreted as 'to Juno Augusta', using the dative form of both terms. However, it could also be read as 'to the Juno of Augusta', taking the genitive form of Augusta. While an inscription from Zara bearing this formula has been translated as 'To Augustan

---

<sup>46</sup>Falerii: *CIL* 11.3076; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 12. El Lehs: *CIL* 8.16456 = *ILS* 120; Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 27.

<sup>47</sup>*Ov. Ponto.* 2.8.

<sup>48</sup>Grether (1946), 225.

Juno', possibly denoting the collocation of the empress and goddess, a similar inscription from Falerii is dedicated 'to the Juno of Augusta'.<sup>49</sup>

Numismatic evidence presents a similar problem regarding the interpretation of legends. Abbreviations of legends on coins, such as IVN AVG, can be interpreted in the same manner as above, as 'to Juno Augusta' or 'to the Juno of Augusta'.<sup>50</sup> The ambiguous nature of these legends may have been intentional, allowing for both interpretations.<sup>51</sup>

Further evidence of the establishment of cults to Livia or her *juno* during her lifetime is attested through the presence of priestesses.<sup>52</sup> Taylor suggests that the temples and priests of the living emperor were in fact connected with cult of his *genius*.<sup>53</sup> Thus, a similar possibility exists concerning the altars and priestesses associated with Livia during her lifetime.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, priestesses found throughout the Western provinces, particularly Italy itself, would have been devoted to the veneration of the *juno* of the

---

<sup>49</sup>Zara: *CIL* 3.2904; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 26. Falerii: *CIL* 11.3076; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 12. The inscription from Zara is located on a statue base, which is thought to have depicted Livia as Juno. A similar inscription (IUNONI LIVIAE AUGUSTI) found at El Lehs is also thought to have been on a statue base but has been interpreted as a dedication to Livia's *juno*, thus showing the difficulties in translating these inscriptions.

<sup>50</sup>Grant (1950), 112, suggests that 'to Juno Augusta' was infrequently used and thus implies that 'to the Juno of Augusta' was the more likely interpretation.

<sup>51</sup> Grant (1950), 112.

<sup>52</sup>Grether (1946), 239, identifies the following priestesses as devoted to the cult of Livia's Juno. They include priestesses of Julia Augusta in Italy at Minturnae in Latium (*CIL* 10.6018), Pompeii (*CIL* 10.961), Aeclanum in Samnium (*CIL* 9.1154), Polla in Lucania (*ILS* 9390), Vibo in Bruttium (*CIL* 10.51). Throughout the Western Empire, they can be found in Salonae in Dalmatia (*CIL* 3. 14712), Olisipo in Lusitania (*CIL* 2.194), Vasio and Baetarrae in Gallia Narbonensis (*CIL* 12.1363, 4249), and Gaulos (*CIL* 10. 7501).

<sup>53</sup>Taylor (1920).

<sup>54</sup>Grether (1946), 239.



empress. Traditionally, priestesses were appointed to oversee the worship of female deities; however, both male and female priests, *flamines* and *flaminicae*, are attested for Livia.<sup>55</sup> Dessau notes that the title *flaminica Iuliae Augustae* dates before her official deification but after her death.<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that some form of cult was devoted to the empress before her apotheosis and the eagerness to offer her cult may be explained by the practise of the worship of her *juno* during her lifetime. The confusion which arises with the empress's posthumous deification will be examined in chapter four.

The imperial cult of the Western Empire was not a well-defined entity; there was no concept of 'the' imperial cult. Roman citizens were expected to be restrained in the extent of the honours which they granted to the living imperial family, reserving blatantly divine honours for the deceased.<sup>57</sup> Roman subjects were distinguished from citizens by the form of imperial cult they adopted, for subjects usually worshipped the living, as well as the deceased, emperor.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, Italian cults did not always adopt the restrained nature of their Roman counterparts. It has been suggested that this illustrates that the Romans, and thus the Italians themselves, did not believe that the citizens of these areas were equals with Roman citizens, but rather their subordinates.<sup>59</sup> However, many Italian areas which reveal evidence of the worship of the living are places which

---

<sup>55</sup>Priests: *CIL* 2.194; 3.14712. Cf. Taylor (1920), 121, who cites Geiger's definition of *flaminica* as a priestess of a living empress.

<sup>56</sup> *ILS* 6991, n.1.

<sup>57</sup>Roman citizens in the Eastern Empire were also expected to follow the type of cult established in Rome, which worshipped only officially consecrated, deceased emperors (Beard et al. [1996], 353).

<sup>58</sup>Beard et al. (1996), 353.

<sup>59</sup> Beard et al (1998), 349 n. 102.

retained a strong Greek heritage and this factor may explain the more Hellenistic approach to the cult of the emperor, one which readily accepted the worship of the living. Such a Greek heritage may explain the altar dedicated to Livia and Tiberius at Himera, in Sicily and Haluntium's inscription, *LIVIAE AUGUSTI DEAE MUNICIPIUM*, honours which are more openly divine in nature.<sup>60</sup>

Pacified provinces, such as the Spains, often initiated the imperial cult on their own accord, and honoured both living and deceased emperors. This was most likely an attempt to curry favour from the emperor and may explain Baetica's attempt to establish a temple to Tiberius, Livia, and the Roman Senate.<sup>61</sup> Local traditions may also account for the divine honours offered to the imperial family.<sup>62</sup> Spain was particularly generous in bestowing honours upon Livia, presumably due to her powerful position as wife and mother to Roman emperors. She received the title of *genetrix orbis* on a *dupondius* from Colonia Julia Romula in Spain, despite Tiberius's rejection of a similar title proposed by the senate, *mater patriae*, and was associated with goddesses during her lifetime and had priests appointed to oversee her cult.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> *CIL* 10.7340, 7464. Cf. Grether (1946), 228.

<sup>61</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 4.37. The refusal by Tiberius was perhaps unexpected. He had previously allowed a temple to be erected to Divus Augustus in Tarraco (*Tac. Ann.* 1.78) and had permitted a temple to the Roman senate, Livia and himself in Asia Minor (*Tac. Ann.* 4.15). Pre-existing Hellenistic traditions may account for Tiberius's approval in Asia Minor.

<sup>62</sup> See Wardman (1982), 87, for the predisposition towards ruler worship in Spain and North Africa.

<sup>63</sup> *RPC* 1. 73. See Dio. 57.12.4, 58.2..3; *Tac. Ann.* 1.14. for Tiberius's refusal of honours for Livia. Leptis also issued bronze coins with the legend *Augusta, mater patriae*. Anticaria bestowed a similar title, *genetrix orbis* (*CIL* 2.2038, Bartman [1999], *EpigCat.* 31; Cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 1.649 ff). Priests: *CIL* 2.194.

The imperial cult could also be imposed in areas which were particularly unstable as a means of pacification and as a method of establishing and maintaining loyalty. In an attempt to enforce such loyalty further, a Hellenistic model for the cult was often adopted, honouring the emperor and his family more frequently with cult while alive.<sup>64</sup>

The Hellenistic tradition of the ruler cult influenced both the imperial cult of the Greek East and the Western Empire. The ruler cult had developed in reaction to external, foreign rule. The Greeks, formerly ruled by their own citizens, attempted to justify their new, foreign ruler by comparing his external power to that of the gods, thus justifying their own subordinate positions and establishing the practice of offering the king god-like honours.<sup>65</sup> As foreign kings began to be worshipped and honoured by Greeks, it seemed only a natural step to include the wives and women of the royal family in similar worship.<sup>66</sup> Through this action, the subjects were able to show further devotion and loyalty to the king by increasing the overall prestige of the royal family, while indirectly venerating the king himself. With the arrival of the Romans in the east in the late second century BC, this concept and the honours which were associated with it were quickly transferred to the conquering Romans and finally transformed into the imperial cult under emperors.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Supra, 10-12; Garnsey and Saller (1987), 164-170.

<sup>65</sup>Supra, p. 2-5; Cf. Price (1984a), 25-6; 29-30.

<sup>66</sup>Flory (1993), 291.

<sup>67</sup>Supra, p. 5-7.

The divine honours which had been bestowed upon the Hellenistic queens and princesses provided a precedent for the types of honours which were granted to the Julio-Claudian women. *Isotheoi timai*, literally god-like honours, had been an essential aspect of the ruler cult, offered to both the male and female members of the royal family. The term itself emphasised the fact that this type of honour was a derivative of those utilised by the cults of the gods and not equivalent to those offered to divine beings; their bestowal did not confer divinity upon the individual.<sup>68</sup> It should be stressed that the Greek East retained its Hellenistic traditions, honouring the living members of the ruling family with *isothēoi timai*, frequently in the hopes of receiving benefits from the bestowal of extravagant honours. This idea would in turn influence the worship of the imperial family.

As previously discussed, *isothēoi timai* included a vast array of honours, which could include sacrifices and processions, the establishment of altars, temples and priests, oaths sworn in the individual's name, and the honorific renaming of months, cities and mundane objects. Although these semi-divine honours were predominately associated with Hellenistic kings, epigraphical evidence confirms that many of their queens were also venerated in this manner. Queen Stratonike I received sacrifices, was included in oaths and was honoured with a month in her name.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Arsinoe II was lauded with honorific renaming among numerous other honours.<sup>70</sup> Such honours were frequently

---

<sup>68</sup> Fishwick, 1.1.13; Cf. Price (1984), 88.

<sup>69</sup> *OGIS* 222, Cf. Austin (1998) no.143; Scott (1931), 203-5; *OGIS* 229. 71-73, Cf. Austin (1998), no. 182.

<sup>70</sup> Macurdy (1985), 125.

conferred upon these women on account of their position in the royal family, although they were occasionally merited due to benefactions which they had meted out.<sup>71</sup> The promise of continued munificence and the hope for future benefactions were also major impetus for the bestowal of *isotheoi timai* in the Greek East.<sup>72</sup>

Price suggests that while the power of the emperor was readily accepted in the Greek East, women of influential power, such as Livia, may have posed a problem to Greek cities.<sup>73</sup> This does not appear to be the case, for Hellenistic queens, who frequently wielded great power themselves, were acknowledged and included in the divine honours of the ruler cult alongside their husbands or male relatives. Hellenistic precedents allowed the Greeks to embrace the influential and powerful Julio-Claudian women in their own familiar terms, and thus they were readily included in the divine honours of the imperial cult. It must be stressed, however, that the divine honours which were offered to the Julio-Claudian women in the Greek East were rarely instigated or vigorously encouraged by the imperial family. The bestowal of divine honours on the imperial women was merely recognised as an established tradition of the ruler and dynastic cults.

Julio-Claudian women, particularly Livia, were honoured in the east following Hellenistic tradition. However, it should be noted that these women were not the first Roman women to receive semi-divine honours in the Greek East. Many of the honours

---

<sup>71</sup> Laodice III of Syria was awarded a cult in honour of the dowries which she had established for poor citizens (*Annuario* 45-6 (1978/9), 445, co.2; Cf. Robert (1971), 621; Price (1984a), 30). Ptolemy III and Berenice were immortalised in Egypt as the *Theoi Euergetai*, Benefactor Gods (*OGIS*, 56; Cf. Austin [1998], no. 222).

<sup>72</sup> *Supra*, p. 3-4.

<sup>73</sup> Price (1984a), 217.

offered to Hellenistic kings were granted first to Roman magistrates and generals as a means of promoting benefactions and good relations. Although the wives of Roman magistrates located in the Greek East were frequently honoured along side their husbands with statues in the Hellenistic custom, Fulvia, the first wife of Marc Antony, was the first Roman woman to receive *isotheoi timai*.<sup>74</sup> The Phrygian town of Eumenia apparently changed its name to Fulvia for a short period, an honour not unknown to Hellenistic royal women.<sup>75</sup> The town eventually struck a coin bearing the likeness of Fulvia as a winged victory (fig. 1).<sup>76</sup> Goddess association such as this was frequently offered to Hellenistic queens and became an integral aspect of the imperial cult.

Eastern subjects essentially regarded Julio-Claudian women as Hellenistic queens. Following the precedent of honouring women of the ruling family, the divine honours which were offered to the women of the imperial family in the East echoed those of the queens. Livia's honours, in particular, were reminiscent of those bestowed upon Hellenistic queens. Common objects such as paper, wine and figs were named after the empress.<sup>77</sup> The existence of Liviopolis and Livias (later Julias) attest to the naming of

---

<sup>74</sup> Flory (1993), 291.

<sup>75</sup> Grether (1946), 223.

<sup>76</sup> RPC 1.3139. Cf. Wood (1999), 41–44. Lugdunum and Rome also minted a coin with this depiction. Scholars debate whether the coin from Eumenia truly depicts Fulvia. The coin itself dates to 41/2 BC, a year before her husband was depicted on a coin, thus suggesting that this is a personification rather than a portrait. However, the figure wears a contemporary hairstyle, thus suggesting that the woman depicted is mortal rather than divine. Wood offers perhaps the best suggestion concerning the identity of the winged female, proposing that if it indeed acted as a portrait, it should be considered a 'divine personification who subtly resembles a living woman rather than as a deified portrait' (Wood [1999], 43).

<sup>77</sup> Pl. *N.H.* 13.23.74; 14.8.60; 15.19.70. Cf. Grether (1946), 222.

cities after the emperor's wife.<sup>78</sup> Games were held in honour of Livia at Chalcis and festivals were dedicated to her throughout the Greek world.<sup>79</sup> Livia's name was included in the marriage oath in Egypt, where marriage contracts were also occasionally signed before her statue. This latter action suggests that her statue acted in the capacity of a cult image, while her inclusion in the marriage oath may suggest an association with Juno, the goddess of marriage.<sup>80</sup> Livia's role in the marriage ceremony in Egypt also recalls that of Queen Laodice III of Syria, to whom sacrifices were made during the marriage ceremony.<sup>81</sup> Months were also renamed in honour of Livia, as well as other Julio-Claudian princesses.<sup>82</sup> Livia's connection with Hellenistic queens may have been reinforced by her name change. Upon her husband's death, Livia was adopted into the *gens Iulia* and thus acquired the name Julia. Furthermore, Augustus's will stipulated that she receive the title Augusta. Although this was a dynastic issue in Rome, it had resonance in the Hellenistic world, where queens adopted new names to mark significant events. As Livia's name change signified the end of her husband's reign and the

---

<sup>78</sup>Pl. *N.H.* 6.3.11; 13.9.44; Jos. *Bell. Iud.* 2.168. Cf. Grether (1946), 222. Liviopolis was located in Cappadocia, while Livias was located in Judea.

<sup>79</sup> Bartman (1999), 112.

<sup>80</sup> Wood (1997), 77; Grether (1946), 242.

<sup>81</sup>For Laodice's connection to marriage, see *Annuario* 45-6 (1978-9), 445, no.2; Cf. Price (1984a), 30. Livia may also have been associated strongly with marriage in Egypt on account of her actions in Rome, where she also set up dowries for poor citizens (Dio Cass. 58.2.3).

<sup>82</sup> See Scott (1931), 208-212, 245-266, 278. Calendars also include other Julio-Claudian women. Cyprus (21-12BC): Livia, Octavia, Julia; Egypt (Caligula's reign): Julia (Augusta), Drusilla, Agrippina Minor; Aphrodisias: Julia (Augusta); Asia Minor: Julia (Augusta).

beginning of her son's, a particularly important event, it may have strengthened the eastern perception of Livia as a Hellenistic queen.<sup>83</sup>

The euergetism of the Julio-Claudian women is also well attested and accordingly praised. Livia acted as benefactor to a number of influential individuals, including the queen of Pontus and Bosphorus.<sup>84</sup> Divine honours were frequently accorded on account of received benefactions and occasionally in the hopes of instigating such deeds. This appears to have been the impetus behind a large number of dedications to Julio-Claudian women. Livilla received numerous divine titles and dedications from Lesbos, the island of her birth.<sup>85</sup> The Lesbians may have believed they had a special connection to the imperial princess because of this and looked to her for special patronage. A similar desire for benefactions may have prompted the Athenians to offer Livia divine honours.<sup>86</sup> The association of Livia with Tyche, the Greek goddess of Fortune, by Gytheum was a particularly appropriate association for the empress as Gytheum had received imperial benefits at her instigation.<sup>87</sup> Divine titles were often offered to the imperial women on

---

<sup>83</sup> Bartman (1999), 102. Cf. Carney (1991), 159-160.

<sup>84</sup> *IGR* 1.902; Cf. Bartman (1999), EpigCat 17. Livia was also considered a benefactress to the Samians (Bartman, [1999], 73; Cf. Dio Cass. 54.7.2.), as well as a Gallic city from which she attempted to remove tribute (Suet. *Aug.* 40.3).

<sup>85</sup> Rose (1997), 35. Lesbos was particularly liberal in bestowing divine titles, altars and monuments to the imperial women.

<sup>86</sup> Bartman (1999), 73. It is uncertain whether Livia joined Octavian in his visit to Athens in 31/30 BC (Bartman [1999], 71, n.101).

<sup>87</sup> *SEG* 11.922-3; Cf. Rose (1997), Cat. 74. Gytheum is a particularly interesting case. The inscription from Gytheum relates one of the most detailed outlines of the ceremonies of the imperial cult, in which Divus Augustus, Tiberius and Livia, among other members of the imperial house, are honoured with incense before their portrait busts. Its importance is furthered by the fact that while Tiberius refused divine honours for himself, he left his mother to decide for herself. It appears that Livia was inclined to such



account of their benefactions. Thasos provides an exemplary inscription. Livia is entitled *thea* in this inscription in association with her benefactions.<sup>88</sup> The same inscription also makes reference to Julia as a benefactress. It is important to note that Julia did not receive this title on account of her own actions; rather she earned them because of her relationship to Augustus, her father, and is called benefactress by descent. This emphasises the notion that the women of the imperial family were frequently included in cult honours merely on account of their relationships in the imperial household.

\* \* \*

The aforementioned divine honours resembled those which were offered to the gods. However, one type of divine honour, which was practiced throughout the Roman Empire, connected the mortal more closely with the divine, namely goddess association. The most prestigious and powerful connections to the divine were formed through association or assimilation with the gods. Based on Hellenistic traditions, goddess association was considered the highest form of flattery possible for a mortal and was therefore one of the primary honours of the imperial cult throughout the Roman Empire.

Excluding official deification, goddess association was the greatest honour which could be bestowed upon a living individual. Identification with the gods was accomplished by two methods: through the addition of visual attributes commonly affiliated with a deity and through the use of divine epithets and titles on coins and

---

activities and her acceptance may explain her association with the goddess Tyche, whereas Tiberius received no such divine association.

<sup>88</sup> *IGR* 1.835; Rose (1997), Cat. 95; Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 23. The inscription was dedicated between 16-13 BC.

inscriptions. The latter form was considered a more reserved type of goddess association known as divine associations.<sup>89</sup> Images of a deity or her attributes on the reverse of coins which bore the portrait of an imperial princess on the obverse were also considered divine associations for the divine nature of the reverse provided an indirect means of linking the mortal to the divine.

Divine association acted as an indirect means of elevating mortals to the divine realm and was frequently accomplished through the use of titles. Various terms were utilised to indicate an association between mortals and gods. Greek tradition originally sanctioned the use of the term *theos/thea*, which literally translates to god, as a measurement of rank or status on account of extraordinary achievements, such as saving the state, and did not possess a predominately divine connotation.<sup>90</sup> Eventually, the term was transformed into an honorific adjective that could be associated with a god (*thea Aphrodite*) or a mortal (*Theoi Euregetes, thea Livia*), allowing for the misinterpretation by some to signify a divine nature in a mortal.<sup>91</sup> Ptolemaic kings openly adopted the use of divine titles such as this for their family and this practice was easily transferred to the emperor and empress. Romans rarely granted the Latin equivalent to this term, *diva*, reserving it for official apotheosis. The ambiguous nature of divine terms and the problems associated with them will be examined in tandem with the issue of deification.

---

<sup>89</sup>Mikocki (1995), 7.

<sup>90</sup> Price(1984), 80-81.

<sup>91</sup> Bartman (1999), 114; Price (1984), 81-2.

A similar result was achieved by the addition of the Greek term νέος (new) to separate the names of the divine and mortal (*Livia nea Hera*). This term could also be used solely with the name of a deity (*nea Aphrodite*). Coins frequently depicted the image of the empress with legends such as *Nea Hera*, relying on the portrait to identify the recipient of the divine association. As one of the simplest divine honours, the addition of this title suggested a shared cult, which was established by the addition of the individual's statue in the temple of the deity.<sup>92</sup>

Divine associations could also be accomplished through the use of collocation, a process which simply placed the name of the individual along side a god's name, thereby implying a relationship between the two (*Ceres Julia Augusta*).<sup>93</sup> Likewise, a deity's cult title or epithet could be appropriated by a Hellenistic queen or imperial woman as a means of insinuating a shared quality and furthermore allude to a close relationship between the mortal and divine. Collocation first arose in the Hellenistic period. Stratonike I was collocated with Aphrodite and Arsinoe shared the epithets *Basileia* and *Teleia* with Hera, thereby implying a relationship between the queen and the goddess.<sup>94</sup> Livia acquired Hera's title *Pronoia*, while Demeter's epithet *karpophoros* (fruit bearing) and *kalliteknos* (bearer of beautiful children) were often bestowed upon imperial women who had given birth.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup>Mikocki (1995), 7.

<sup>93</sup>*CIL* 10.7501; Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 50.

<sup>94</sup>Stratonike: *OGIS* 229. 71-73; Cf. Austin (1998), no. 182, ln. 70 (1998). Arsinoe: Fishwick, 1.1.29.

<sup>95</sup>Price (1984), 86.

Associations between mortal and god in this manner were considered a *legitimus honor*.<sup>96</sup> A long-standing tradition of the Hellenistic ruler cult, it was offered as a means of displaying respect, esteem, gratitude, and loyalty.<sup>97</sup> The offering of titles that reflected the power and majesty of the gods implied that the mortal should receive similar reverence. Thus, it is not surprising that such associations were one of the principal means of honouring the Julio-Claudian women in the eastern imperial cult.

The addition of attributes typically ascribed to a goddess was the most conspicuous method of conferring a sense of divinity upon an imperial princess. Their presence immediately linked or assimilated the two in the observer's mind. Unlike divine associations, assimilation provided a strong connection between the mortal and divine, implying that the mortal had become the goddess and the incarnation of her powers and virtues.<sup>98</sup> Although it was not considered deification, assimilation with a goddess may be held as a partial deification. Mikocki terms this as a type of deification, *in formam deorum*.<sup>99</sup>

The use of divine attributes traces its antecedents to the ruler cult of Alexander the Great and his successors and was utilised by both male and female members of the various Hellenistic royal families.<sup>100</sup> The use of divine attributes offered a potent visual method of suggesting elevated status and alluded to the divinity and the power that the

---

<sup>96</sup> Livy, 32.25.2-4.

<sup>97</sup> Edson (1933), 324.

<sup>98</sup> Matheson (1996), 182.

<sup>99</sup> Mikocki (1995), 7.

<sup>100</sup> Fishwick, 1.1.29.

royal female wielded. Despite its Eastern origins, this practice was prevalent throughout the Roman Empire.

This connection between divine and mortal was achieved most notably on statues. While the Western Empire provides abundant examples of this form of divine assimilation, unfortunately, few statues remain of the Julio-Claudians from the Greek East. Presumably made of bronze, they were later melted down for reuse.<sup>101</sup> Numismatic evidence thus provides the majority of examples of visual assimilation in the Eastern Empire, unlike their western counterparts, who depicted women far less frequently as goddesses on their coinage. It must be remembered, however, that with such evidence, the identity of the individual is often more difficult to ascertain on account of the small size of the medium, although hairstyles and known portrait types aid in identification.

As attributes were often associated with several goddesses, their presence did not always clarify which goddess was meant to be evoked. The ambiguity concerning the goddess to whom reference was being made to may have been deliberate, thus allowing for identification with more than one goddess. The evocation of one or more divinities or interpretations in imperial portraits is known as polysemy and can be found throughout the Roman Empire. Although polysemous images were found in the public sphere, they appear to have been much more prominent in private artistic works. It was through these works that a subject could display his loyalty to the imperial family by depicting members of the imperial family in the guise of deities. Cameos often provide examples of

---

<sup>101</sup> Bartman (1999), 11.

uninhibited and polysemous goddess assimilation.<sup>102</sup> The best example of a polysemous work is found in the Vienna Sardonyx (fig. 2).<sup>103</sup> The cameo of Julia Augusta depicts her in her role as priestess of the deified Augustus. A general air of divinity is suggested by the hairstyle, which is a generic style for goddesses. Numerous goddesses are evoked by the attributes with which Livia is depicted. Cybele is denoted by the mural crown that Livia wears, the throne that she is seated on, and the poppies and shield depicting a lion that she holds. The bouquet of wheat and poppies which Livia grasps recalls Ceres while the slipping *chiton* alludes to Venus.<sup>104</sup>

The choice of goddess for association or assimilation with imperial women was carefully considered and chosen for a variety of reasons. A goddess could be chosen because they acted as a patron deity to the woman or her relative. This notion may explain the visual association of Julia with Diana on a Roman *denarius*.<sup>105</sup> As a virgin goddess, she would be an unsuitable choice for a young fertile woman who was expected to bear future heirs. However, Diana had been invoked as a patron deity for Octavian and Agrippa during the battle at Naulochus in 36 BC: as a daughter to one and wife to the other, Julia would be a suitable choice for an association with their patron deity.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup>For further discussion on the private nature of cameos, see von Heintze, Helga. (1990) 'Römische Glyptik und Münzprägung' in *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte Das Römische Weltreich*. T. Kraus, ed., p. 281-286.

<sup>103</sup>Bartman (1999), Cat. 110.

<sup>104</sup> Bartman (1999), 105; Cf. Wood (1999), 120.

<sup>105</sup>*RIC I*<sup>2</sup> 72, no. 403. pl.7.

<sup>106</sup> The identification of Julia as Diana on this Roman *denarius* is debated. It has been suggested that it is in fact Octavian himself in the guise of the goddess (Pollini [1990], 353-355). I find this unconvincing, as I have found no other incidents in which a male, particularly Augustus, is depicted in the

Events, such as the birth of a child, could also dictate the collocation of a Julio-Claudian woman and a goddess, particularly Demeter. Agrippina I was honoured with the epithet *karpophoros* when she gave birth to Livilla while in Lesbos.<sup>107</sup> Goddesses could also be chosen with respect to the qualities reflected in the Julio-Claudian women, such as their beauty or youth.

It is through goddess association that one can especially observe the importance of the role which the imperial women held in the *domus augustus*. The most important factor taken into consideration was her role in the imperial family, for the goddess chosen for association or assimilation frequently corresponded to the role of the imperial woman. Identification with Hera/Juno is a prime example. This goddess was particularly appropriate for an empress. The emperor was the most powerful man in the mortal sphere and, as such, he was primarily associated with the lord of the gods, Zeus/Jupiter. As a result, the empress would be readily identified with the consort of Zeus/Jupiter. Hera/Juno's relationship to a powerful male and the extent of her own great power were reflected in the emperor's wife and therefore a suitable choice for assimilation.

Although goddess assimilation was common in the Greek East, the first public instance of divine assimilation in Rome did not occur until the reign of Caligula. Augustus and Tiberius had been reluctant to publicly honour imperial women with overtly divine honours. Caligula, however, held no such reservations. The honours which were bestowed upon the Julio-Claudian women during Caligula's reign were considered

---

guise of a female deity. See Wood (1999), 67-68 and Fullerton (1985), 476, for further arguments regarding the identity of Diana.

<sup>107</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 2.54.1; *IGR* 4.22, 74; Cf. Rose (1997), 25.

revolutionary. Not only was the first coin entirely devoted to a woman, specifically Agrippina Maior, minted between AD 37-41, but the first coin flagrantly depicting imperial princesses in the guise of divine personifications also occurred in AD 37. A bronze *sestertius* depicts the sisters of Caligula, who are individually named, as divine Virtues of *Securitas*, *Felicitas*, and *Concordia* (fig. 3). Agrippina Minor appears on the left as *Securitas*, leaning on a pillar, Drusilla appears in the centre of the trio as *Concordia*, holding a *patera*, while the rudder which Livilla holds identifies her as *Fortuna*. They appear in the Greek *chiton*, rather than the Roman *stola*, and wear hairstyles reminiscent of Classical Greek goddesses, thus emphasising their divine nature. The coin promoted aspects of Caligula's reign, namely security, felicity and concord, and transformed his sisters into living personifications of these virtues and, by extension, connected them to the future of the empire, its happiness and prosperity.<sup>108</sup> This concept is furthered by the cornucopia held by each woman. The cornucopia was an attribute which alluded to the prosperity of the empire and was an important aspect of divine associations.

Although largely a tool of propaganda for the virtues of Caligula's reign, dynastic motives underlie the coin. As Caligula had no son, he looked to his sisters for a prospective heir. As Julian women, they would bear children who would be able to connect themselves to both Caligula and Augustus. By displaying all three sisters together on the coin as a close trio of equals, he suggested that his sister's children were all eligible candidates. The fact that he portrayed them with a divine nature increased the

---

<sup>108</sup>Wood (1995), 461.



prestige of the possible successors, as well as that of the emperor himself, for if the emperor's sisters had a divine nature, surely the same could be said of the emperor.

While numerous examples are recorded, evidence regarding Livia's identifications with goddesses surpasses that recovered for any other empress, excelling her closest rival by almost three times.<sup>109</sup> Livia's exceptional position in the *domus augusta*, which included her status as the first empress and mother of the emperor, allowed for numerous opportunities for assimilation with a variety of goddesses. Continuing Hellenistic tradition, empresses were predominately associated and assimilated with Hera, Aphrodite, and Demeter and their Roman counterparts.

The most obvious choice for assimilation and association with the empress is Hera/Juno. Ancient sources, including epigraphic, numismatic, statuary, and literary, abound with evidence of this association.<sup>110</sup> As matriarch of the *domus augusta* and almost the female equivalent of Augustus, subjects readily identified her with the consort of the lord of the Olympian gods, Hera. This connection almost always reflected the assimilation of the emperor as Zeus/Jupiter, although rare instances associated an empress without a reference to her male counterpart.<sup>111</sup> The empress's assimilation with

---

<sup>109</sup> Mikocki (1995), 126. Goddess assimilation occurred 132 times for Livia while her closest rivals, Sabina and Julia Domna, numbered only 45 and 43 respectively.

<sup>110</sup> Ovid frequently alludes to Livia's association with Juno and examples include: *Ponto*, 1.117-118; 3.117-118, 145; *Fasti*, 1.648-650. The attributes of Hera/Juno present a problem, for they are not unique to the goddess. Attributes which may denote assimilation or an association with the goddess include the veil and infula, diadem, a sceptre and *patera* (Mikocki [1995], 101). Livia's connection to Hera/Juno are primarily epigraphic, numismatic, and literary. For examples, see Mikocki (1995), 160-163. Few statues attest to this assimilation, although Mikocki identifies Livia as Juno in a statue from Rusellae (Mikocki [1995], Cat. 92).

<sup>111</sup> Mikocki (1995), 102. Assus provides an inscription in which the emperor is included but not assimilated to Zeus.

Hera/Juno thus functioned to recall her husband's power. Assimilation with Juno, a goddess of fertility, marriage and morality, also connected her closely with the female sphere and strengthened Livia's image as *femina princeps*.<sup>112</sup> Although Livia's connection with this principal female deity was most frequent during her husband's lifetime, it was not limited to this period. The goddess's association with fertility, and thereby motherhood, made this connection appropriate for Livia even after Augustus's death. The association of the empress with the mother of the gods reflected Livia's symbolic role as mother of the *domus augusta* before Augustus's death and her role as mother of the emperor following it. Her continued power and importance in the imperial family after Augustus's death as imperial mother also permitted the continuation of this association.

The empress's assimilation with Hera was particularly appropriate in the Greek East due to its Hellenistic roots. Hellenistic queens were often associated with the chief goddess, as a coin of Mithridates IV and Laodice of Syria shows (fig. 4). Zeus and Hera appear on the reverse, suggesting a connection between the royal pair depicted on the obverse and the Olympian pair. This idea was emphasised by the addition of the names of the royal pair beside the corresponding deities.<sup>113</sup> As Livia was perceived in the Greek East as a Hellenistic queen, the association with Hera was considered natural, as evidence from Assos and Mytilene attests.<sup>114</sup> While inscriptions, such as an Athenian inscription

---

<sup>112</sup>Mullens (1941-2), 61.

<sup>113</sup>Davis and Kraay (1973), coin 204, 205, 206.

<sup>114</sup>*IGR*, 4.249; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 5; *IG* 12 Suppl. 50; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 62.

which grants Livia Hera's epithet *Pronoia*, reveal this association, the majority of associations between the Livia and Hera were found on coins.<sup>115</sup> Numismatic evidence frequently attests that the title Νέα Ἥρα was bestowed upon the empress. Pergamene coins associated the empress and Hera as early as 10-2 BC (fig. 5).<sup>116</sup>

One might expect that all empresses, as consort of the emperor, would be readily associated with Hera/Juno. This, however, does not appear to have been the case. Perhaps surprisingly, Agrippina Minor was not regularly honoured in connection with Hera/Juno. Agrippina's powerful position in the Augustan house, as sister, wife and mother of various emperors, was the closest parallel to Livia. As consort of the emperor and mother of the intended successor, she would have provided a ready parallel to the primary goddess. Yet, it appears that the assimilation to Hera/Juno was primarily reserved for Livia, perhaps as a result of the respect held for the first empress or simply as a means of avoiding confusion between the empresses. Subtle numismatic allusions were practised as a means to associate Agrippina Minor to this goddess rather than the overt associations offered to Livia. A coin from Chalcis suggests the association of Agrippina Minor and the goddess by depicting the portrait of the empress on the obverse while Hera mirrored her on the reverse.<sup>117</sup> A second coin from Miletus conveys this association with even

---

<sup>115</sup> For the Athenian epithet, see, *IG* 2/3, 3238; Cf. Bartman (1999), *EpigCat.* 36. Coins assimilating Livia and Hera/Juno can be found in Pergamon, Thapsus, Rome, Leptis Magna, Carthage, Cnossos, Corinth, Cyprus and numerous other areas. See Mikocki (1995) for a catalogue which includes these coins.

<sup>116</sup> *RPC* 1.2359.

<sup>117</sup> *RPC* 1.1350.

more subtlety by depicting a peacock, an attribute of Hera, on the reverse.<sup>118</sup> Despite this seemingly oblique reference to Hera, the connection between the divine and mortal would be readily identified.

Antonia Minor, although never empress, was infrequently honoured by assimilation with Hera/Juno during Claudius's reign. This may reflect an attempt on Claudius's part to associate his mother with Livia, thereby emphasising his connections to Augustus. Messalina and Poppaea were irregularly honoured with this assimilation. The infrequency of their associations suggests that it occurred as a result of the Hellenistic custom of associating the queen with this goddess.

Despite her assimilation with Hera/Juno, Livia was primarily associated with goddesses of fertility, Demeter/Ceres. As a mother goddess and goddess of fertility, she was an appropriate choice for assimilation with Livia. Despite Livia's childless marriage to Augustus, an association with Demeter, a deity well known as a devoted mother, was not inappropriate, for she had previously proven her fertility through the birth of Tiberius and Drusus. Numerous Eastern cities associated and assimilated the empress with Demeter.<sup>119</sup> The popularity of the Eleusinian Mysteries may have originally prompted the association. Upon Octavian's initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries, both he and his wife received statues in the precinct, creating a special connection between the future empress and chthonic goddess. The erection of this statue may have marked the

---

<sup>118</sup> *RPC* 1.2686.

<sup>119</sup> The assimilation of Livia and Demeter is found in Cyzicus (*SEG* 33. 1055; Bartman [1999], *EpigCat.* 7), Lampsacus (*IGR* 4.180; Bartman [1999], *EpigCat.* 55); Ephesus (*SEG* 4.515; Bartman [1999], *EpigCat.* 45; Rose [1997], *Cat.* 116).

commencement of Livia's association with this mother goddess, while the popularity of the goddess may have motivated the association.<sup>120</sup> Hellenistic precedents for the association of queens with the Demeter further justified the assimilation of empress and goddess in the Greek East.<sup>121</sup>

Identifications with this goddess's Latin equivalent were also relevant in Augustus's life, as Ceres was associated with marriage, as well as fertility. Political motives may underlie the assimilation of the empress and Ceres. Augustus had placed particular emphasis on cults of agricultural prosperity, erecting altars to *Ceres Matris* and *Ops Augustae* and reinstating the brotherhood originally associated with the chthonic goddess, Dea Dia. Augustus's promotion of goddesses of fecundity undoubtedly influenced others decision to associate Livia with Ceres. Furthermore, goddesses of fertility, particularly Ceres/Demeter, were connected with the prosperity of the land. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* emphasised the peace and prosperity of the Roman Empire established under Augustus. Livia's portrait on the altar, a much more idealised version than had previously existed for the empress's public portraits, depicted her in a style which echoed the goddess on the eastern façade (fig. 6a).<sup>122</sup> This particular goddess (fig. 6b) has been identified as a variety of goddesses, including Ceres and Pax. The similarity

---

<sup>120</sup> Wood (1999), 92, notes that Augustus may have also recognised the political importance of this association and may have influenced the use of this association.

<sup>121</sup> Mikocki (1995), 121.

<sup>122</sup> All of the Julio-Claudian women were portrayed in a more idealised manner than had previously been seen. The depiction of Antonia Minor provides a good parallel to Livia, for she appears idealised and wears a similar coiffure of waves radiating from a middle part (Wood [1999], 142).

between the goddess and empress, particularly in their coiffures, suggests an association between the two, an idea which is corroborated by the fact that the altar was dedicated on her birthday.<sup>123</sup> By associating the empress and these deities, the altar indirectly linked the peace and prosperity of the empire to the empress, and, thereby, the emperor. A similar notion was formed in the Hellenistic period, particularly in Egypt. By depicting the queen with a cornucopia, an attribute of the Greek goddess Tyche, notions of the fertility of the royal family and the land were recalled.<sup>124</sup>

The vast majority of associations between Livia and Ceres occurred during Tiberius's reign. It was at this point that she became explicitly identified as Ceres Augusta.<sup>125</sup> This may be explained by the goddess's connection to motherhood. As Tiberius was emperor, emphasis was placed upon Livia's role as mother of the emperor. It has been suggested that this association was not extensively propagated by the state, rather arising as a voluntary means of honouring the imperial mother throughout the empire.<sup>126</sup> Numerous honours had been offered to Livia in AD 14 but had been refused by Tiberius, including the title of *mater patriae* for his mother. The title implied notions of motherhood, prosperity and munificence and association with Ceres, a goddess of fertility and prosperity, functioned as an alternative which offered similar connotations.

---

<sup>123</sup> Wood (1999), 99; Cf. Bartman (1999), 86-92. For further discussion of Ceres on the Ara Pacis, see Barbara Stanley Spaeth (1996), 125-151.

<sup>124</sup> Fantham (1994), 145. Ptolemaic queens were frequently associated with Demeter (Mikocki [1995], 121).

<sup>125</sup> Wood (1999), 112. Livia was renamed Julia Augusta in AD 14.

<sup>126</sup> Wood (1999), 113.

By assimilating the two women, individuals were able to illustrate their loyalty without offending Tiberius by disobeying his decree.<sup>127</sup>

Although the empress's identification was never actively promoted in Rome, Ceres was a particularly important goddess for Tiberius. As a chthonic goddess, Ceres was closely associated with grain and the harvest. Grain had always been a primary concern in Rome. During Tiberius's reign, shortages arose in the grain supply and he attempted to alleviate the problem.<sup>128</sup> Through Tiberius's own promotion of Ceres, demonstrated by his restoration of the temple of Ceres, Liber, and Libera, he was able to indirectly recall the deeds he had accomplished while simultaneously alluding to the prosperity of the empire during his reign.<sup>129</sup> Although Tiberius did not actively promote the identification of his mother with the goddess of grain, such an association acted in his benefit by again indirectly recalling his actions. Thus, Tiberius's own promotion of the goddess Ceres may have influenced subjects's decision to assimilate Livia with the deity and may explain the predominance of the association during his reign.

The attributes of Ceres/Demeter are readily identifiable. As a chthonic goddess, she is frequently portrayed with wheat stalks, poppies, flowers, or a cornucopia. Numerous coins and statues depict Livia with these attributes, many of which date during her lifetime. A Sicilian coin, dating to Augustus's life, reveals a veiled head which is

---

<sup>127</sup>Wood (1999), 113, citing Winkes (1988) 'Bildnistypen der Livia', *Ritratto ufficiale e ritratto privato: Atti della II Conferenza Internazionale sul Ritratto Romano*. 560-561.

<sup>128</sup>Suet. *Tib.* 8.1; Tac. *Ann.* 2.87.

<sup>129</sup>Bartman (1999), 107.

crowned with wheat and has been identified as a representation of Livia.<sup>130</sup> Similar coins, rendering Livia in the guise of Ceres/Demeter, holding a wheat sheaf, or wearing a wreath of grain or flowers, can be found throughout the Roman Empire.<sup>131</sup> Despite the lack of statuary evidence for this assimilation in the Greek East, there are numerous Western examples. The cornucopia of Fortuna/Tyche/Abundance is the conspicuous feature of a Spanish statue of the empress (fig. 7).<sup>132</sup> Livia also appears in the guise of Ceres/Tyche in Leptis Magna. Paestum provides an early example of this assimilation, dating to the late Augustan/early Tiberian period, representing Livia with both a veil and floral crown (fig. 8), while an Italian head dating to Tiberius similarly depicts Livia with a floral crown and fillet. Livia's assimilation with Ceres also occurred in Rome and its environs.<sup>133</sup> A fine example is seen in the 'Ceres Borghese', which dates to Tiberius's reign (fig. 9).<sup>134</sup> This Roman statue depicts Livia with numerous attributes of Ceres. She wears a floral crown, veil, and fillet, carries a cornucopia overflowing with produce in her left hand and grasps wheat stalks in her right hand. Another Roman head of the same period portrays a crown of poppies, laurel and wheat, along with a veil and *infula*. The numerous statuary remains depicting the assimilation reinforce the importance of this association in the Western Empire.

---

<sup>130</sup> Grether (1946), 227 n. 24; *B.M.C. Sicily*, p. 125, no. 43; *RPC* 1.643; Mikocki (1995), Cat. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Examples include Thapsus: *RPC* 1.795; Mikocki (1995), Cat. 18; Pergamon: *RPC* 1.2368; Mikocki (1995), Cat. 22.

<sup>132</sup> Bartman (1999), Cat.50.

<sup>133</sup> Bartman (1999), Cat.23; Cat.35.

<sup>134</sup> Bartman (1999), Cat.3.



While the most abundant examples of assimilation with Ceres/Demeter are accorded to Livia, she was not the only Julio-Claudian woman to receive this divine honour. In fact, identification with this goddess was one of the most popular associations offered to the imperial princesses for a number of reasons.<sup>135</sup> As previously noted, identification with Ceres acted as an alternative to the title *mater patriae*, mother of the country. Barbara Stanley Spaeth believes that since assimilation with Ceres alluded to an empress's role as mother of the country, the emperor's duties as *pater patriae* were recalled in her divine assimilation, as well as the *auctoritas* of the imperial family. Thus, assimilation with Ceres functioned as an indirect method of justifying imperial rule.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, fertility, whether agricultural or reproductive, was a quality that was particularly emphasised during the Julio-Claudian period. Augustus's desire to create a dynasty depended on the fertility of his female relatives, while his successors relied on these women to continue the dynasty. Eastern tradition granted the epithets of Demeter, καλλίτεκνος (bearer of beautiful children) and καρποφόρος (fruit bearing), to the imperial women once they had proven their fertility.<sup>137</sup> Livia received such honorific epithets, despite her barren marriage with Augustus. Antonia Minor and Agrippina Maior were more frequently associated with Demeter; however this assimilation was usually posthumous. Antonia Minor was the first Roman woman to be depicted on a Roman coin

---

<sup>135</sup> See Barbara Stanley Spaeth (1996), 119-123, for further discussion on the importance of this association for imperial women.

<sup>136</sup> Barbara Stanley Spaeth (1996), 122.

<sup>137</sup> Julia as *kalliteknos*; see Rose (1997), 13.; Agrippina Major as *karpophoros* upon the birth of Julia Livilla on Lesbos, see CIG 2183, Rose (1997), 25; Agrippina Minor as *karpophoros* in Mytilene, see

with the attributes of Ceres.<sup>138</sup> The maturity of women such as Livia, Agrippina Maior, and Antonia Minor was reflected in their assimilation with Demeter and lent to the frequency of the association.

There are few instances of Agrippina Minor's assimilation with Ceres. Despite the relative infrequency of depictions of the empress as Ceres, she was first living woman to be portrayed with the grain wreath of the goddess, appearing with this attribute on the coins of Claudius and Nero.<sup>139</sup> Claudius may have intended to strengthen his Julian connections further by paralleling her to his mother Livia, who was frequently associated with Ceres, while Agrippina Minor's role as Nero's mother explains her continued association with the chthonic mother goddess.<sup>140</sup>

Unlike the citizens and subjects of the Latin West, Eastern subjects often honoured Agrippina Minor through assimilation with the Greek equivalent of Ceres, Demeter. This goddess was the epitome of mother goddesses and Agrippina Minor's role as Nero's domineering mother may account for the emphasis placed on the assimilation of the empress with the goddess. A relief from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias illustrates

---

Rose (1997), 42. Livia also received the title Demeter Karpophoros and new Demeter (see *SEG* 4.515; Cf. Bartman [1999], *EpigCat* 45; *CIG* 2815).

<sup>138</sup>Wood (1999), 149. Claudius conferred this honour upon his mother as a means of validating his reign by emphasising his Julian bloodlines. Antonia Minor appears with the grain wreath of Ceres on the obverse of a *denarius*, the reverse depicting the legend SACERDOS DIVI AUGUSTI. An *aureus* likewise depicts her on the obverse with the attributes of Ceres. For the coins, see *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 124, nos. 67-68, pl. 15; *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 124, nos. 65-66, pl. 15.

<sup>139</sup>Wood (1988), 421.

<sup>140</sup>Claudius may have had similar intentions regarding Antonia Minor's association with Ceres.

this well (fig. 10).<sup>141</sup> In a relief depicting the harmony between herself and her husband Claudius through the *dextrarum iunctio*, she is shown in the manner of a Kore statue and holding a wheat sheaf.<sup>142</sup> Agrippina's association is emphasised by a second relief from this Sebasteion (fig. 11).<sup>143</sup> Agrippina Minor stands beside her son Nero, clasping a cornucopia in her left hand while she crowns her son with her right. This relief depicts the empress '*sub specie Demetrae*', the cornucopia connecting her with the chthonic goddess.<sup>144</sup> The fact that she, not a personification, crowns her son as emperor suggests that she may have also been identified with the personification of the Roman people, Roma or Virtus.<sup>145</sup> Julio-Claudian women could also be depicted as Demeter as a means of complementing their husbands' association with Triptolemos.<sup>146</sup>

Assimilation with Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, also alluded to similar ideas of fertility. The use of the younger goddess was more appropriate for younger imperial princesses.<sup>147</sup> It also aided in the differentiation of mother and daughter or sisters. Agrippina Minor was identified with Persephone while her mother, Agrippina Maior, was portrayed as the more mature mother goddess Demeter. This assimilation is

---

<sup>141</sup>Rose (1997), Cat.105.

<sup>142</sup>Rose (1997), 167.

<sup>143</sup>Rose (1997), Cat.105.

<sup>144</sup>Mikocki (1995), 39.

<sup>145</sup> Association with these goddesses may have been considered by the observer on account of other portrayals of the crowning of the emperor on the Sebasteion. Augustus and Claudius were crowned by the personification of the Roman people while Livia was crowned by Roma or Virtus. See Rose (1997), 166-167.

<sup>146</sup>Mikocki (1995), 91.

<sup>147</sup> Drusilla's connection to Kore will be examined in chapter four.

therefore exemplary of the manner in which divine associations could be used to reflect the relationships of the Julio-Claudian women in the imperial household.

The maturity and proven fertility of Livia were reflected most readily in associations with Juno/Hera and Ceres/Demeter. Assimilation with Venus/Aphrodite, a young goddess with the promise of fertility, may therefore seem inappropriate for the mature empress who held a venerated position in the Augustan house. Yet it is Livia's place in the *domus augusta* which explains the empress' association with this goddess. Augustus was able to trace the founding of his family, the *gens Iulia*, to Aeneas. This, in turn, allowed Augustus to claim Venus, Aeneas's divine mother, as an ancestor. Her role as *ancestress of the princeps* was referred to by the epithet *genetrix*. As empress, Livia acted as a symbolic *genetrix* of her husband's dynasty and thus an association between Livia and Venus recalled her role as the female head of the *domus augusta*. Despite the importance of this connection, Livia's public connection with Venus was only rarely referred to in the Western Empire under Augustus and infrequent under Tiberius, occurring primarily in the provinces or in private works.<sup>148</sup> However, the earliest known divine assimilation for Livia, occurring late in Augustus's reign or early in Tiberius's, is with Venus.<sup>149</sup> The cameo (fig.12) known as the Marlborough turquoise, depicts Livia with the slipping robe reminiscent of Venus and holding a bust variously identified as Augustus, Drusus, or Tiberius.<sup>150</sup> Colonia Julia Romula in Spain granted Julia Augusta

---

<sup>148</sup>Bartman (1999), 95. Inscriptions rarely associate Livia and Venus (*SEG* 15.532; Bartman [1999], *Epig.Cat.* 16). Ovid uses the epithet *genetrix* for Livia (*Fasti* 1.649-50).

<sup>149</sup>Matheson (1996), 184.

<sup>150</sup>Bartman (1999), *Cat.* 95; Wood (1999), 119. Cf. Bartman (1999), 83.

the unofficial title of *Genetrix Orbis*, Mother of the World, on a coin shortly after Augustus's death.<sup>151</sup> Her association with this goddess was more prevalent in the Greek East, where Hellenistic queens were primarily associated with Aphrodite as a means of flattering their beauty.<sup>152</sup>

Association with Venus/Aphrodite was usually reserved for younger imperial princesses who had already proven their fertility.<sup>153</sup> Augustus's daughter Julia was particularly appropriate for such an association. When Augustus's own marriage did not produce an heir, he placed his hope in his daughter's offspring. She thus became the hope of his future dynasty and was therefore associated with his divine ancestress, Venus Genetrix. Despite the dynastic importance of the association, it was rarely alluded to in Rome, instead predominately occurring in the Greek East. Epigraphic evidence from Lesbos attests to the collocation of Julia with Venus Genetrix, the epithet of the goddess, *genetrix*, being appended to her name.<sup>154</sup> Pergamene coins likewise depict Julia in the guise of Aphrodite (fig. 5), while Mytilene referred to her as *Nea Aphrodite*.<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup>RPC 1.73. The title is reminiscent of the title proposed by the Senate and denied by Tiberius, *mater patriae* and may have been inspired by the proposal. The title is also found in an inscription (CIL 2.2038).

<sup>152</sup>Mikocki (1995), 122. Eastern inscriptions allude to this divine connection: AE (1950), 174-175, no.8; SEG, 15.532; Bartman (1999), EpigCat 16.

<sup>153</sup>Drusilla is an exception to this rule. Her association with Venus will be examined in detail in a following chapter.

<sup>154</sup>IGR 4.9; Cf. Rose (1997), 218 n.49.

<sup>155</sup>RPC 1.2359 (Pergamene coin); IGR 4.114 (Mytilenian inscription).

Perhaps surprisingly, the mature Antonia Minor was posthumously associated with the young goddess Venus, as a statuary group from Baiae suggests (fig 13).<sup>156</sup> Venus is alluded to through her posture, which echoes the Kore Albani, as well as the presence of Cupid at her left shoulder.<sup>157</sup> The association of these two is particularly interesting. As previously stated, Venus Genetrix was considered the ancestress of the Julian family. However, Claudius was only a Julian by marriage, having never been adopted into the Julian clan. Claudius was thus forced to emphasise his female relatives, particularly his grandmother Livia and mother, Antonia Minor, in order to connect himself to Augustus and legitimise his rule. Antonia's assimilation with Venus Genetrix recalled the foundations of the imperial family, thereby connecting Claudius with Augustus. A similar motive may underlie the connection between young Claudia Octavia, Claudius's daughter, and the goddess (fig. 14).<sup>158</sup> The statue, also located in Baiae, closely links the girl with Venus. The slipping chiton recalls the goddess herself, while her hair jewellery connects her to Eros, the child of Venus. By portraying her in this way, Claudia's role as a potential bearer of future heirs was alluded to, as well as her connections with the *gens Iulia*.<sup>159</sup>

The preceding deities were the predominant choices for association or assimilation among the Julio-Claudian women, although they were far from the only ones

---

<sup>156</sup>Rose (1997), Cat. 4.

<sup>157</sup>Wood (1999), 132, 300.

<sup>158</sup>Rose (1997), Cat. 4.

<sup>159</sup>Wood (1999), 132.

used. A number of lesser deities, including local gods and personifications, could be connected with the imperial women.<sup>160</sup> Unsurprisingly, the greatest number of divine associations belongs to Livia, who was assimilated with seventeen goddesses, a number which would only be surpassed by Julia Domna, almost 200 years after the first empress.<sup>161</sup>

A sense of the divine did not rely solely on divine association or assimilation. A general air of divinity could be implied through the use of clothing and hairstyles which recalled those portrayed on Classical Greek goddesses.<sup>162</sup> Divine allusions accomplished through these means were more appropriate for Romans, who reserved blatant visual associations to the divine for the deceased. The use of Greek dress, such as the *chiton* and *himation*, reminded the viewer of the garb which classical goddesses wore. Such dress however, was primarily reserved for private works such as cameos or posthumous portraits.<sup>163</sup>

Coiffures also evoked a divine nature. A simple part in the middle of the forehead, with waves softly undulating outwards, and the use of shoulder locks were reminiscent of the hairstyles of classical goddesses.<sup>164</sup> Although shoulder locks would later lose some of

---

<sup>160</sup>Imperial women were associated with more divinities in the Greek East than their Hellenistic predecessors. One explanation lies in the complex nature of the *domus augusta*. As the imperial household relied on numerous relationships, more deities were used to help identify their role in the imperial family.

<sup>161</sup>Mikocki (1995), 125.

<sup>162</sup>Mikocki does not believe that the use of clothing and hairstyle always suggested an assimilation between mortal and divine (Mikocki [1995], 17). Although the intention may not have been to accomplish this, the observer could have easily inferred this.

<sup>163</sup>Bartman (1999), 41.

<sup>164</sup>Wood (1999), 98.

their subtle divine nature, the first portraits of Livia which included the locks undoubtedly allude to the semi-divine character of the empress.<sup>165</sup> Likewise, the coiffure which Livia wears on the Ara Pacis (fig. 6a) was deliberately designed to suggest a sense of divinity. While the middle part and radiating waves recalled classical precedents, the hairstyle was a direct parallel of that portrayed on the polysemous goddess on the eastern façade, thereby consolidating the association between Livia and the divine.<sup>166</sup> The middle part became a standard hairstyle for Livia under Tiberius, and although the regularity of its use may have decreased its sense of the divine, its use for her portraits after her official deification would have strengthened its divine nature once more.

The importance of Julio-Claudian women was two fold: they represented the future of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and provided vital links to the past. Furthermore, the paucity of males in the *domus augusta* resulted in a dependency on female relatives to act as a legitimising factor to an emperor's rule. Tiberius and Nero owed their position on the imperial throne to their mothers. Their adoption, by Augustus and Claudius respectively, and their designation as successors had occurred through their mothers's intercession. Similarly, Claudius relied upon his female relatives to validate his claim to the imperial throne, for he had never been adopted by the emperor. As a result of their dynastic importance, Julio-Claudian women received unprecedented honours, including *iostheoi timai*.

The public honours which the imperial women received, both extravagant and semi-divine, reflected the changing dynamics of the imperial household as emperors

---

<sup>165</sup>For examples of Livia with shoulder locks, see Wood (1999), 105-107.



promoted the women who legitimised their succession to the imperial throne. The timing of the semi-divine honours offered to Julio-Claudian women also reflects their dynastic significance. This is exemplified by Livia and Antonia Minor, who were promoted only at the time when their connections to Augustus were most needed. Thus, Caligula's Julian blood resulted in the downplay of the honours bestowed upon Livia. Likewise, Antonia Minor was prevalent only in Claudius's reign, as she provided a vital connection to Augustus. A similar notion was applied to the mothers of potential successors, as demonstrated by Julia's promotion on coins in 13-12 B.C, when her sons were the heirs apparent.

Unfortunately, the originator of divine honours is often uncertain as the emperor, Roman officials, citizens and subjects could have instigated such honours. Regardless of the initiator, the divine honours offered to Julio-Claudian women functioned as an indirect means of justifying Roman rule. This notion is best illustrated through goddess association. The three major goddesses associated with Julio-Claudian women, Juno/Hera, Ceres/Demeter, and Venus/Aphrodite, acted as an indirect means of recalling the emperor's authority. Juno/Hera, the consort of the lord of the gods, recalled the emperor's power and might. Ceres/Demeter alluded the *auctoritas* of the imperial family, while Venus/Aphrodite recalled the divine ancestry of the *gens Iulia*. Perhaps more significantly, association with these goddesses provided one of the most comprehensive methods of conveying the importance of the familial connections provided by the imperial women by echoing their roles in the imperial household. Although it may not

---

have been the prime intention of the divine honours, dynastic connections and bloodlines of the Julio-Claudian women were indirectly recalled by the emphasis placed upon their roles in the imperial household. The bloodlines of the imperial women were especially important for the emperor, as they became increasingly dependant on their female relatives to legitimise their position by recalling their affinity to the *gens Iulia*.

The incorporation of Julio-Claudian women into the divine honours associated with the imperial cult may therefore be viewed as a dynastic and political device ensuring the validation of the imperial rule. The divine honours which the Julio-Claudian women received increased the status of the entire imperial house and thereby strengthened the Julio-Claudian claim for power. More importantly, divine honours functioned to indirectly recall the bloodlines of the imperial family. Although the traditions of the ruler cult of the Greek East originally functioned as a means of justifying foreign domination and procuring benefactions, concepts which continued in a diluted form in the imperial cult of the east, imperial bloodlines were essential for the validation of imperial rule throughout the Roman Empire.

---

<sup>166</sup>Wood (1999), 99.

### CHAPTER 3

#### IMPERIAL WOMEN AS PRIESTESSES

Julio-Claudian women were primarily associated with the cult of the deified emperor on account of their position in the imperial house. Mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters received many of the semi-divine honours which were associated with the imperial cult as a result of the relationships that they forged between the past, present, and future emperors. Although Julio-Claudian women were honoured in this manner, few received the status of priestess of the imperial cult. It was not unusual for women to hold the office of priestess in the ancient world. These priestesses were usually associated with cults of female deities, such as Vesta. However, the appointment of imperial women as priestesses of the deified emperors signified a departure from Roman tradition. Julia Augusta's designation by the senate as priestess to her newly consecrated husband was unusual, for it was rare that a female administered the rites of a major male deity.<sup>1</sup> Despite the unconventionality of her appointment and the rarity of its bestowal, the emperor benefited both politically and dynastically by having a relative as priestess of the imperial cult. Thus, the priestess of the imperial cult became an important aspect of political propaganda.

Imperial women were frequently affiliated with the religious realm and were therefore more readily accepted in their role as imperial priestess. This was particularly

---

<sup>1</sup>Grant (1950), 118.

relevant for the first empress and priestess, Livia, who, although not holding an official religious office until AD 14, had a strong presence in the religious sphere. A number of her actions, such as the offerings she performed for Tiberius's safety in Germany, inextricably associated her with priestesses, despite the lack of official sanction.<sup>2</sup> This notion was reinforced by the visual representation of the empress in a religious context on a number of altars. The Vicus Sandaliarius altar (fig. 15), which dates to AD 2 and depicts Augustus performing the *tripudium* (auspices) before Gaius's journey to the East, provides one example.<sup>3</sup> The woman, identified as a priestess by her veil and the *patera* and incense jar that she holds, has been variously recognised as Livia and a priestess of Cybele, among others.<sup>4</sup> While the diadem, torque and spiral bracelet associate the woman more closely with the priesthood of Cybele, an observer, upon recognising Augustus and his intended successor, would have easily identified the woman accompanying them as the empress.<sup>5</sup> A similar effect may be found in the Belvedere Altar. Although the female head has been partially destroyed, the altar may represent Divus Julius, the imperial couple and the proposed successors, Gaius and Lucius on one façade.<sup>6</sup> This altar depicts the inauguration of the Lares Augustales on another face, and although Livia is not depicted on the relief which specifically referred to this event, her mere presence on the

---

<sup>2</sup>Ovid *Tr.* 4.2.11. Cf. Bartman (1999), 93.

<sup>3</sup>Bartman (1999), 84-85. Cf. Ryberg (1955), 60, who identifies the young man as Lucius.

<sup>4</sup>Bartman (1999), 85. Cf. Rose (1997), 105, who identifies the woman as a priestess of Cybele and Ryberg (1950), 60, who identifies her as Livia.

<sup>5</sup>Bartman (1999), 85. Cf. Rose (1997), 105.

<sup>6</sup>Ryberg (1955), 56-57.

altar may have indirectly related her to the event. As both altars were associated with the Lares, whose worship helped prepare the way for the imperial cult, it is possible to surmise that Livia was closely associated with both the cult of the emperor and the religious realm of Rome at an early date. It should also be noted that both of these altars, which place Livia in an important religious context, commemorate moments of dynastic and political importance.<sup>7</sup> As shall be seen, these ideas continue to be of significant importance for priestesses of the imperial cult.

Livia was directly associated with a number of divine cults, as demonstrated by her euergetism. Following Roman tradition, the cults which Livia was associated with were predominately female. Livia restored a shrine of *Pudicitia Plebeia*, a particularly feminine deity which emphasised the virtue of feminine modesty.<sup>8</sup> She appears to have had a special connection with Fortuna, as demonstrated through her reconstruction of the temple of *Fortuna Muliebris*.<sup>9</sup> This relationship is also alluded to through a dedication by Roman equestrians for her recovery from a serious illness in AD 22 at the temple of *Fortuna Equestris*. An inscription from Forum Clodi may suggest a relationship between Livia and Bona Dea.<sup>10</sup> Ovid confirms this idea, stating that Livia restored a temple of

---

<sup>7</sup>Ryberg (1955), 60-61.

<sup>8</sup>Bartman (1999), 93. Cf. Flory (1984), 318-319, for discussion of the shrine to Pudicitia Plebeia.

<sup>9</sup>See Flory (1984), 318, for the reconstruction of this temple.

<sup>10</sup>*CIL* 11. 3303, ll. 14-15; Cf. Rose (1997), Cat. 11. The inscription, referring to honours associated with the imperial cult, dictates the distribution of cakes in honour of Livia by the 'women of the community of Bona Dea'. A relationship between the goddess and empress is suggested by the restriction of the cultic activities associated with Livia to these women.

Bona Dea Subsaxana.<sup>11</sup> A shrine, dedicated to Concordia and located in the Porticus Liviae, continued to link the empress with the religious institutions of Rome.<sup>12</sup>

Livia's most potent connection to the priestesses of Rome lay with the Vestal Virgins, the most distinguished priestesses of Rome. Recognising the political value of the Vestals, Augustus himself propagated this relationship, thus establishing the precedent for an exclusive relationship between imperial women and Vestal Virgins.<sup>13</sup> Augustus initiated an intimate association between the Vestals and the imperial house in 12 BC, when he incorporated the shrine of Vesta into his own house. The importance of the Vestals in Augustan policy can be further noted by an increase in their privileges, by their appearance on the Ara Pacis, and their inclusion in the *Res Gestae*.<sup>14</sup> Augustan promotion of the cult of Vesta offered a number of political advantages. As the guardians of the state hearth, the cult was directly tied to the well being of the entire state. Augustus's incorporation of the shrine of Vesta linked the imperial and state hearths together; thus the safety of the imperial hearth indirectly reflected the safety of the state.

Livia was associated with the priestesses of Vesta without difficulty. She had previously received sacrosanctity and freedom from *tutela*, benefits associated with the

---

<sup>11</sup>Ovid, *Fast.* 5.157-58.

<sup>12</sup> Ovid *Fasti* 6.637-48. Cf. Flory (1984). Ovid also refers to an altar which was established by Livia and dedicated to the goddess (*Fast.* 1.673 f). Livia's association with Concordia was particularly suitable for the imperial couple, who wished to portray marital accord and promote a harmonious imperial house.

<sup>13</sup>Grant (1950), 112.

<sup>14</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 31; *Res Gestae* 11, 12. Cf. Bartman (1999), 94.

Vestals.<sup>15</sup> Her association with the cult of Bona Dea, which was under the tutelage of the Vestals, also indirectly connected her to these priestesses. She also appears to have directed the cult of the Palatine Vesta and was instrumental in extinguishing a fire in the temple of Vesta in AD 14.<sup>16</sup> Most importantly, her appointment as priestess to her deified husband directly paralleled the priestesses of Vesta, for she was granted the privilege of a lictor to accompany her in her religious rites, a privilege also accorded to the Vestals.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, a *sestertius* (fig. 16) dedicated to the empress in AD 22 depicted a *carpentum*, a mode of transportation affiliated with the Vestal Virgins.<sup>18</sup> Finally, in AD 22, Tiberius permitted his mother to sit with the Vestals in the theatre.<sup>19</sup> The connection between the empress and the priestesses was furthered through their position as protectors of the hearth, Livia in the domestic realm and the Vestals for the state. Although Tiberius did not officially recognise Livia with all of the privileges of an honorary Vestal, the numerous similarities between the women permitted the ready identification of Livia as a priestess, both before and after her designation as imperial priestess.<sup>20</sup>

The benefits of Augustus's promotion of the cult of Vesta were numerous. While it alluded to a connection between the imperial household and state, it also conjoined

---

<sup>15</sup> Dio Cass. 49.38.2.

<sup>16</sup> Dio Cass. 54. 24.2; Flory (1984), 317-18, 321.

<sup>17</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.14; Cf. Dio 56.46.1-2. Tiberius appears to have refused to permit her to be preceded by a lictor, except during her religious duties (Wood [1999], 81).

<sup>18</sup> *RIC I*<sup>2</sup>, 97, nos.50-51, pl. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.

<sup>20</sup> Wood (1999), 82.

Livia with the Vestal Virgins. The latter relationship increased the empress's status and, by extension, implied that Livia, like the Vestals, was a protectress of the state, since Livia protected the imperial hearth, which had become a reflection of the state hearth.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the relationship resulted in Livia's smooth transition into her position as priestess of the imperial cult. Her early association with one of the most important religious institutions of Rome aided in the validation of Livia's religious office. This was particularly important as her designation as a priestess of a male deity was unusual. Her position as priestess was based upon the tradition established by the Vestals, as demonstrated by the grant of a lictor and strengthened by her previously decreed sacrosanctity and freedom from *tutela*. By framing the new priesthood upon the Vestals, her unorthodox assignment to a male deity was made more acceptable to Roman traditions. Another important factor which arose from Livia's association with the Vestals was the link which was forged between two of the most important aspects of Roman religion. The cult of Vesta and the imperial cult were thus consolidated through one woman.<sup>22</sup>

It should be noted that Livia was not the only Julio-Claudian woman to receive privileges which paralleled those of the Vestals. Caligula granted Antonia Minor and his sisters honours which equated them as honorary Vestals. The *carpentum* was frequently associated with imperial women on coins. Livia, Agrippina Maior, and Messalina were either associated with a *carpentum* on imperial coinage or granted the right to ride in one,

---

<sup>21</sup>Wood (1999), 82.

<sup>22</sup>Grant (1950), 112.



thus implying a status equivalent to the Vestal Virgins.<sup>23</sup> The position of honorary Vestal increased the prestige of these women and was often bestowed upon Julio-Claudian women rather than the illustrious office of priestess of the imperial cult.

After Augustus's death in AD 14, the emperor was officially consecrated by the Senate, thus marking the true beginning of the imperial cult in Rome.<sup>24</sup> Upon her husband's death, the Senate attempted to bestow numerous honours on Livia, many of which were denied by her son.<sup>25</sup> Tiberius was extremely selective regarding the honours which he permitted for his mother, as he was reluctant to raise his mother above the accepted realm for Roman women. He did not, however, prevent her designation as priestess by the senate, which increased her status and offered her a public role that was exceptional for a Roman woman.<sup>26</sup> Much to Tiberius's chagrin, Livia took full advantage of her new position, instituting the Ludi Palatini in Augustus's honour and beginning construction of a temple to Augustus with her son.<sup>27</sup> Livia also erected a statue to Divus Augustus near the Theatre of Marcellus and attempted to erect a statue of the Divine

---

<sup>23</sup> Agrippina Maior was granted the honour of a *carpentum* posthumously, as illustrated on a Caligulan *sestertius*. For the coin, see *RIC I*<sup>2</sup>, 112, no. 55, pl. 14. Messalina received this privilege in AD 43-44 (Dio. 60.22.2).

<sup>24</sup> Although sanctioned by the Senate, Augustus's cult was largely orchestrated by Livia and Tiberius (Dio. 56.47.1-2).

<sup>25</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Dio. 57.46.1.

<sup>27</sup> The Ludi Palatini commenced on the imperial couple's anniversary, 17 Jan. For the construction of the temple see Dio Cass. 56.46.3; Pliny *N.H.*, 12.42.94.

Augustus in her Palatine home; Tiberius, however, prevented this latter action.<sup>28</sup> In an unprecedented move, Livia ensured that her name preceded the emperor's on the inscribed base of a statue of Augustus dedicated by the imperial mother and Tiberius at the Theatre of Marcellus.<sup>29</sup> Although this was a bold manoeuvre, it was fundamentally a religious act affiliated with the imperial cult, and thus her position as priestess justified the order of the inscription.<sup>30</sup>

Although Tiberius denied his mother numerous proposed honours, he promoted her appointment as *flaminica*.<sup>31</sup> Shortly after Augustus's consecration, Tiberius issued a bronze *dupondius* in commemoration of the event.<sup>32</sup> On the reverse, a veiled and enthroned woman, holding a *patera* and sceptre, could be identified by observers as the priestess of the new imperial cult.<sup>33</sup> This interpretation would imply that Tiberius represented his mother on a coin for the first time. Although this was an extraordinary honour, Tiberius's conservatism prevailed, for it must be stressed that this woman did not bear the likeness of the imperial mother nor identify her by name. Despite this lack of clarity regarding the identification of the woman, which is convoluted even further by the

---

<sup>28</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 3.64; Dio Cass. 57.12.5. Tiberius may have feared Livia's house becoming a shrine for the divine emperor, or that the erection of the statue in her private home could lead to the development of a cult to Augustus and Livia (Bartman [1999], 103).

<sup>29</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 3.64.

<sup>30</sup>Grether (1946), 235.

<sup>31</sup>The imperial cult was an important tool and Livia's close association with it worked to Tiberius's advantage (Wood [1999], 113-114).

<sup>32</sup>*BMCRE* 1.124-7. Here, the figure is identified as Pax.

<sup>33</sup>Bartman (1999), 103. This interpretation is based on provincial coins which depict a similar figure but include the legend IULIA AUGUSTA.

presence of a sceptre, an attribute of royalty or divinity, observers could have easily identified the woman as Livia.<sup>34</sup> The obverse's depiction of the recently deified Augustus would have allowed for an identification of Livia as priestess. This notion is confirmed by provincial coins which depict a similar seated figure but which also add the empress's name.<sup>35</sup> An *as* dating to AD 15-16 may have also alluded to Livia's priestly duties. The veiled and enthroned woman has been identified as Pietas, yet would have been an appropriate association for Livia on account of her position as priestess.<sup>36</sup>

The Senate attempted to bestow numerous honours on the wife of the most prestigious and recently consecrated man in Rome, yet the position of *flaminica* was one of the few which Tiberius allowed. As previously noted, Livia's appointment was an extraordinary achievement, for Roman custom dictated the designation of a man as priest of a male deity. One must ponder why he permitted this honour for his mother. Tiberius appears to have allowed honours which provided political and dynastic benefits and Livia's appointment as priestess of the deified *princeps* was particularly valuable in this capacity. While the imperial cult itself was an indispensable aspect of political propaganda, Livia's position as priestess of the deified emperor compounded the importance of the cult for Tiberius.<sup>37</sup> By promoting Livia's role as priestess, Tiberius

---

<sup>34</sup>Bartman (1999), 105.

<sup>35</sup>Bartman (1999), 103. Cf. Grant (1950), 115. For provincial adaptations, see *RPC* 1.341 (Caesaraugusta), *RPC* 1.711 (Hippo Regius), *RPC* 1.3919 (Cyprus).

<sup>36</sup>*RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 96, no. 33-36, pl. 11; Wood (1999), 89.

<sup>37</sup>The imperial cult acted as an important part of political propaganda as it functioned as a means to promote dynastic connections to the *princeps*, thereby validating the emperor's succession. Furthermore, it provided an outlet for the emperor to demonstrate his filial piety. The cult also offered the opportunity to

recalled his filial devotion, as well as his bloodlines. Furthermore, her own association with the cult and the divine emperor acted to forge a connection between the two reigns. Finally, the promulgation of Julia Augusta as priestess recalled the benefits of Augustus's reign and suggested that his blessings would now be administered through the actions of his priestess and wife, Julia Augusta.<sup>38</sup> Thus, her position as priestess became a major aspect of Tiberius's propaganda, surpassing the importance of her association with Ceres/Demeter in Rome.<sup>39</sup>

Evidence of Julia Augusta as priestess is found in both public and private works, suggesting that citizens and subjects throughout the empire were aware of the importance of this office in Rome and responded to Tiberius's approval of his mother as *flaminica*. Ancient authors occasionally refer to her religious obligations.<sup>40</sup> Coins also alluded to her religious duties. Although the imperial mother was not depicted in any official Roman coin issues as a goddess, her position as priestess was indirectly recalled by the *sestertius* bearing a *carpentum* of AD 22 (fig. 16) and possibly coins dating to AD 15-16, as discussed above. Variations of the latter coins, which were often identified as Livia as a *flaminica*, can be found in at least seven provincial issues.<sup>41</sup> Cameos frequently depict the

---

define oneself as a *divi filius*, a term which had an enormous beneficial impact in bolstering the emperor's claim to the throne. See Wood (1999), 114.

<sup>38</sup> Grether (1946), 245.

<sup>39</sup> Wood (1999), 113.

<sup>40</sup> Ovid *Pont.* 4.6.107; Cf. Vellius Paterculus 2.75.3.

<sup>41</sup> Grant (1950), 115.

empress in her capacity as priestess.<sup>42</sup> A sardonyx gem in Florence (fig. 17) provides an excellent example of the empress in her capacity as priestess.<sup>43</sup> The private nature of cameos allowed for overt references to her position as priestess, while at the same time depicting goddess assimilation. The Vienna sardonyx (fig. 2) is a fine depiction of the empress in her capacity as priestess, as well as her assimilation with a number of goddesses, including Venus.

Public depictions provide further evidence of Livia's role as *flaminica*. Heads located in Copenhagen and St. Petersburg (fig. 18) appear to allude to this role.<sup>44</sup> A headless female on a relief on the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias may depict the empress sacrificing.<sup>45</sup> A statue from Otricoli (fig. 19) exemplifies the empress in her role as priestess.<sup>46</sup> Found in a basilica near a nude statue of Divus Augustus, Livia's pose has been reconstructed as one of prayer, the so-called *orans* pose, with arms outstretched. Although the coiffure is reminiscent of the Augustan period, the pose and gesture were later adaptations. The gesture which the empress makes is debated. Although some scholars attempt to trace the pose to the late Classical period, it has been suggested that the female *orans* pose itself was a development of the first century AD, evolving from

---

<sup>42</sup>Although a conclusive identification has not been reached, a cameo from St. Petersburg and another in Rome may represent Livia in her priestly role. For discussion of the cameos, see Bartman (1999), 105, Cat. 104, 105.

<sup>43</sup>Bartman (1999), Cat. 97. The veil is a complex accoutrement, denoting ideas of modesty (as exemplified in the *pudicitia* pose), reverence and piety (Bartman [1999], 44-45). However, the veil in combination with a laurel wreath frequently refers to priestly duties and will be discussed below.

<sup>44</sup>Bartman (1999), Cat. 36, 43.

<sup>45</sup>Smith (1985), 125-127.

<sup>46</sup>Bartman (1999), Cat.22.

demands to depict the new office of *flaminica* of the imperial cult.<sup>47</sup> As the gesture of this statue was restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bartman suggests that the present pose should be ignored and replaced with Livia's hands holding an attribute or the edge of her mantle.<sup>48</sup>

Although Julia Augusta died in AD 29, no Julio-Claudian woman replaced her as priestess of the imperial cult until Caligula appointed Antonia Minor in AD 37.<sup>49</sup> Caligula offered numerous honours to his grandmother in his attempt to stress his Julian blood and thereby reinforce his claim to the imperial throne. These honours, including her appointment as *flaminica*, raised Antonia to a position which was nearly equivalent to that of Livia. This parallel with Livia, in turn, recalled connections with Augustus. Similarly, as priestess, Antonia herself was connected more closely with Divus Augustus and reflected this connection on Caligula. The fact that no Julio-Claudian woman was entrusted with this position until the succession of a new emperor also alludes to the dynastic significance of the office, suggesting that Antonia's promotion as priestess acted as an indirect means of strengthening Caligula's claim to the throne. Thus, Antonia's appointment as *flaminica* may have acted as a further legitimising factor for Caligula's rule.<sup>50</sup> She held the position only briefly before her death and thus the large majority of

---

<sup>47</sup>Wood (1999), 115.

<sup>48</sup>Bartman (1999), 47. It should be noted that the much of physical evidence regarding Livia as priestess is from the Western Empire. This may be partially explained by the importance of the cult of the deified emperor in the west. The Eastern Empire, while establishing cults to deified emperors, placed emphasis on the veneration of living emperors. While the Greek East did acknowledge Livia as priestess, the relative infrequency of such references when compared to Livia's divine honours exhibits the fundamental differences between the imperial cult of the Eastern and Western Empires.

<sup>49</sup>Dio Cass. 59.3.3; Suet. *Gaius* 15.2; Cf. Kozakiewicz (1996), 139.

<sup>50</sup>Wood (1999), 142.

references to her priestly office occurred posthumously, during Claudius's reign.

Antonia's position as priestess of the imperial cult was particularly important to Claudius as a dynastic tool.<sup>51</sup> By promoting his mother in this role, he was also able to recall his connections to Augustus through her and justify his claim to the throne. The only visual representations of Antonia Minor as priestess occur in Claudius's reign. He issued a *denarius* (fig. 20) which explicitly referred to her religious office, as the legend SACERDOS DIVI AUGUSTI attests.

Agrippina Minor was the final Julio-Claudian woman to be appointed priestess of the cult of the emperor, a position which was reflected in the public realm.<sup>52</sup> Agrippina Minor may be represented as priestess in a shrine in the Macellum at Pompeii (fig. 21). The incense box in the hand of a veiled woman, along with her headgear, identify the woman as a priestess of the imperial cult. A similar statue is located in Copenhagen, portraying Agrippina veiled and ready for sacrifice<sup>53</sup> while a statue at Olympia also recalls her priestly duties. The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias may also allude to Agrippina's affiliation with the imperial cult, as she is seen crowning her son Nero (fig. 11).<sup>54</sup> However, a more divine nature is alluded to in this relief, as similar scenes on the Sebasteion portray divine beings crowning the emperor.<sup>55</sup> Another relief from the Sebasteion may also allude to Agrippina's priestly position, as a priest and priestess are

---

<sup>51</sup>Wood (1999), 154.

<sup>52</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 12.69; Cf. Bauman (1994), 191.

<sup>53</sup>Small (1996), 126-128.

<sup>54</sup>Wood (1999), 302.

<sup>55</sup>Supra, p. 56.

depicted pouring a libation. Although the priestess does not appear to be the portrait of a specific woman, Ryberg identifies her as Agrippina Minor based on the coiffure and similarities with the Ara Pietatis.<sup>56</sup>

Nero had the strongest bloodline of the Julio-Claudian emperors. Agrippina Minor, his mother, had not only been empress, she also had direct connections to Augustus as his great granddaughter. Nonetheless, Agrippina's promotion as priestess acted as an indirect means of bolstering Nero's position. Claudius's deification allowed his successor to define himself as a *divi filius* and the imperial cult acted as an outlet for his filial piety. However, Nero was not the only one entitled to be called *divi filius*, as Claudius had a son, Britannicus.<sup>57</sup> As Nero's mother, Agrippina functioned to link Nero more closely to the divine Claudius through her appointment as priestess. Her appointment as *flaminica* to the deified Claudius also served as a bridge between the two emperors, linking the two reigns and suggesting that her religious office acted as a means of continuing Claudius's benefactions. Agrippina Minor's appointment as priestess thus strengthened Nero's reign by connecting him more strongly to Claudius while simultaneously recalling Nero's Julian blood.<sup>58</sup>

As priestess to her deified husband, Agrippina Minor closely resembled the first great empress, Livia. The connection with Livia for Julio-Claudian women was significant, for it recalled her prestige, power, and popularity, as well as the foundation of

---

<sup>56</sup>Ryberg (1955), 96.

<sup>57</sup>Wood (1999), 267.

<sup>58</sup>As *flaminica* of the *Divus Claudius* and the imperial cult, Agrippina Minor may have also been priestess to the deified Augustus and Julia Augusta. This may have strengthened Nero's rule further.



imperial rule. Parallels between imperial women and Livia were often made in an attempt to justify the claim of Julio-Claudian successors. Agrippina Minor closely resembled Livia in a variety of ways. They were the only Julio-Claudian women to be wife of an emperor and mother to another. They also shared numerous honours, most importantly as honorary Vestal Virgins. Agrippina had received the rights of an honorary Vestal Virgin during Caligula's reign. Her designation as priestess thus equated her closely with Livia and thereby indirectly recalled the vital connection to Augustus.<sup>59</sup>

The three aforementioned women were officially recognised as priestesses of the imperial cult. One attribute lends to the identification of these imperial women as priestesses: the *infula*. The exact nature of the *infula* is a matter of contention. The *infula* itself is a knotted woollen headpiece or beaded fillet. The headpiece first appeared in Greek art in the late fifth century BC and was especially prevalent in Magna Graecia.<sup>60</sup> The first Roman depiction occurred in the early first century BC on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus.<sup>61</sup> The *infula* could appear in association with gods, sacrificial animals, and priests and yet it was not an attribute which was obligatory to any one of these groups.

---

<sup>59</sup> Agrippina followed many of the actions of her predecessor, initiating the construction of a temple to her deified husband. See Barrett (1996), 148. Bartman (1999), 137-138, notes that connections with Livia were not as vital for Agrippina Minor on account of the latter's Julian blood and suggests that Livia never served as a legitimising element for Agrippina Minor. However, the parallels between the empresses, particularly in the titles and positions they held, would not have hindered Agrippina Minor in any way.

<sup>60</sup> Kozakiewicz (1996), 139. At this early date, it appears that the *infula* was primarily associated with the cult of Apollo.

<sup>61</sup> Kozakiewicz (1996), 139.

Although the exact nature of the accoutrement is uncertain, its primary significance appears to have been one of religious sanctity.<sup>62</sup>

Women who appear with this attribute were frequently depicted in the act of sacrifice, a religious act which could allude to a priestly office.<sup>63</sup> Kozakiewicz suggests that the beaded fillet was primarily reserved for Julio-Claudian *flaminicae* of the imperial cult, although it was later adopted by the lower orders of the imperial cult. This is illustrated by a Pompeian woman who has been identified as a priestess of the imperial cult on account of the *infula* and floral wreath which she wears.<sup>64</sup> The presence of the floral wreath accompanying the headpiece may have further alluded to a religious affiliation with the imperial cult.<sup>65</sup> The floral wreath associated with imperial women, however, may have also been an allusion to assimilation with a goddess.

The *infula* could also be accompanied by a laurel wreath as a means of denoting their priestly office. The laurel wreath itself had many connotations, indicating victory, priestly sanctity, and fertility.<sup>66</sup> The headpiece was frequently tied together with a ribbon. Imperial women, however, were often depicted on cameos with a beaded ribbon hanging from the wreath. The beaded nature of the ribbon suggests that it may be an *infula*,

---

<sup>62</sup>Bartman (1999), 45. Cf. Wood (1999), 116. It should be noted that while the *infula* was associated with religious sanctity, Livia was not portrayed with this attribute when she received sacrosanctity in 35 BC.

<sup>63</sup>Wood (1999), 116; Cf. Kozakiewicz (1996), 141.

<sup>64</sup>Kozakiewicz (1996), 141; Wood (1999), 116.

<sup>65</sup>Small (1996), 126, suggests that this combination denoted a priestess of the imperial cult. The *infula* itself has been variously described as a *vitta*, *tutulus* and fillet. For ancient definitions of the *infula*, see Seneca *Ep.* 14.11; Serv. *In Aeneadem*, 10.538.

<sup>66</sup>Flory (1995), 42, 63.

thereby relating her position as priestess.<sup>67</sup> The St. Petersburg cameo (fig. 22), which may represent Livia as priestess, bears the laurel crown and *infula*, as does a cameo from Florence (fig. 17).<sup>68</sup> Although Livia is represented publicly with a laurel wreath before her appointment as priestess, this accoutrement is not seen on cameos until AD 14. The emergence of laurel on cameos at this date, an attribute which was perhaps introduced to this medium by Livia herself, further suggests its association with the imperial cult.<sup>69</sup>

Livia, Antonia Minor, and Agrippina Minor were frequently depicted with the *infula*, thus identifying them in their position as *flaminica*. Livia was the first Julio-Claudian woman to be depicted with the *infula*. The fact that she was not portrayed with the headpiece until after AD 14, when she became priestess, and that it appeared predominantly during Tiberius's reign, while her role as priestess was heavily promoted, reaffirms the notion that the *infula* was representative of the priesthood of the imperial cult.<sup>70</sup> The Claudian *denarius* which commemorates Antonia Minor as priestess epitomises the religious nature of the *infula*. A beaded fillet is depicted, along with two torches, on the reverse of the coin which explicitly links Antonia to the priesthood of the imperial cult.<sup>71</sup> Many of the depictions of imperial women as priestess which have

---

<sup>67</sup>Flory (1995), 49, 51.

<sup>68</sup>The *infula* is not depicted with its characteristic hanging ends. Instead, the beads appear gathered together at the nape of the neck.

<sup>69</sup>Flory (1995), 60. The first cameo to represent Livia with a laurel wreath appears to be the Marlborough Cameo. Livia was depicted with a laurel wreath in earlier public works, including the Ara Pacis.

<sup>70</sup>Kozakiewicz (1996), 138.

<sup>71</sup> A second coin alludes to Antonia Minor's priestly position. The obverse of a Claudian *denarius*, which associates Antonia Minor with Constantia on the reverse, depicts Antonia Minor with the *infula*, as

previously been discussed bear the *infula*, identifiable by its characteristic beaded headband and ends which hang along the sides of the neck.<sup>72</sup> However, although the *infula* frequently bespoke an imperial woman's priestly duties, one of the primary examples of Livia as priestess, the Vienna Sardonyx (fig. 2) omits this attribute and therefore suggests that its presence was not necessarily required in order to allude to her position as priestess.<sup>73</sup> The early date of the gem, shortly after AD 14, may explain its omission.

While those Julio-Claudian women who were officially consecrated as *flaminica* of the imperial cult were few in number, iconography suggests that other Julio-Claudian women were also associated with this office. Imperial women including Agrippina Maior, Drusilla and Messalina, were also portrayed with the *infula*. Although they did not officially hold the prestigious office of *flaminica* to the imperial cult, a general sense of religious sanctity may be found among all those depicted with the *infula*.<sup>74</sup> Messalina occasionally appears with an *infula*, suggesting that she may have been a *flaminica* of the

---

well as the grain crown of Ceres. For these coins, see *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 124, nos. 67-68, pl. 15; *RIC* I<sup>2</sup> 124, nos. 65-66, pl. 15.

<sup>72</sup>The headgear which Antonia Minor wore also deserves examination, for it is possible to confuse it with the *infula*. She is often depicted with a twisted band, similar in appearance to the *infula*. As it appears before her position as priestess, it is most likely a *vitta*, an attribute of married women. A beaded version may be a *tutulus*. Although this accoutrement could be worn by priests and priestesses, it was a special accoutrement of *matres familias*. Festus describes this headpiece as woven into the hair, thereby implying that the *tutulus* did not circle the head as an *infula* does. The fact that the hanging ends of the *infula* are not found on Antonia's portraits suggests that it was a *tutulus*. See Wood (1999), 159; Wood (1995), 478; Grant (1950), 158.

<sup>73</sup>The nature of the *infula* would undergo a metamorphosis during Caligula's reign, as the deified Drusilla appears with the attribute as a means of denoting her recent consecration. This change will be examined in the succeeding chapter.

<sup>74</sup>Drusilla's use of the *infula* will be examined in the succeeding chapter.

imperial cult.<sup>75</sup> Although she did not become an imperial priestess, Agrippina Maior also appears with the *infula*, as illustrated by heads from Tindari (fig. 23) and Luna. Its presence may be explained by Agrippina Maior's religious affiliations, for although Agrippina Maior did not become priestess of the imperial cult, she did posthumously receive the honours of an honorary Vestal Virgin. The posthumous honours thereby conferred a priestly nature on Agrippina and may have justified the use of the *infula* in her portraits. However, a statue from Velleia, which presents a more overtly religious connotation, as suggested by the presence of a small incense box, omits the *infula*.<sup>76</sup> Although this statue represents her in a religious act, it refrained from including the *infula* which would have strongly associated her with a priestly office. The lack of the *infula* therefore reinforces the fact that she was not a priestess of the imperial cult, despite the religious connotation of the statue, and instead conveys a general sense of religious sanctity and piety.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to their new assignment as priestesses, Julio-Claudian women continued to receive the divine honour of goddess association in both the public and private realms. A simple adjustment was necessary to include reference to their religious position – thus the *infula* continued to be utilised on statues which assimilated a goddess and empress. It must be remembered that the *infula* was an attribute which could also be associated with a deity, therefore its presence did not interfere with the divine

---

<sup>75</sup>See Kozakiewicz (1996), 139.

<sup>76</sup>Wood (1999), 225.

<sup>77</sup>Wood (1999), 225.

connotations which were conveyed in such works. Images of Livia as both priestess and goddess are too numerous to examine in great detail and can be found on both coins and statues. As previously discussed, provincial coins adapted the seated figure of Tiberius's bronze *asses*, substituting Ceres's grain sheaf instead of a *patera*, thus portraying her as both priestess and divine.<sup>78</sup> Some of the finest examples of divine assimilation include the *infula* and thereby make reference to the imperial woman's priestly duties. For instance, the Ceres Borghese (fig. 9) includes this accoutrement. The empress's connection with Ceres was particularly important during Tiberius's reign, yet he emphasised her role as priestess. The attributes associated with Ceres easily accommodated the addition of the *infula*. Thus, assimilation with Ceres allowed allusions to be readily made to the empress's fertility and superior, semi-divine status, as well as her religious obligations. Furthermore, Ceres was connected to Vesta, with whom Livia had a relationship on account of her similarity to the priestesses of Vesta.<sup>79</sup> The floral wreath, an attribute frequently ascribed to the chthonic goddess, could also accompany the priestess's headband and has been identified as an attribute designating a *flaminica* of the imperial cult.<sup>80</sup>

Reference to a religious office can be found in association with a number of deities. As noted above, assimilation with Ceres often included the *infula*. The Marlborough turquoise (fig. 12), which presents Livia in the guise of Venus Genetrix,

---

<sup>78</sup>Grant (1950), 111.

<sup>79</sup>Bartman (1999), 94.

<sup>80</sup>Small (1996), 126.

may also show her as *flaminica*. However, this interpretation is dependent on the identification of the bust which the empress holds as Augustus, a theory which is currently debated.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, assimilation with Juno/Hera could also allude to piety or priestly office through the use of both veil and diadem, rather than the *infula*.<sup>82</sup> Agrippina Minor was depicted in this manner in provincial coins which may thus indirectly refer to her role as priestess of the deified Claudius.<sup>83</sup>

Assimilation with Vesta also indirectly referred to Livia's connection to the religious sphere of Rome.<sup>84</sup> Evidence of this association is wide ranging. Ovid describes Livia as Vesta and Caligula minted a bronze coin with the legend VESTA, which depicted a seated figure similar to the seated figure found on Tiberius's coins that has been identified as Livia in her role as priestess.<sup>85</sup> Identification with this goddess was easily accomplished on account of Livia's close relationship with the goddess's priestesses, the Vestal Virgins, which thus tied her to the religious welfare of Rome. Statuary evidence suggests that the empress adopted a costume which paralleled that of the goddess. The *himation* and *chiton* which Livia occasionally wore would have echoed

---

<sup>81</sup>Wood (1999), 119, identifies the bust as the deified Augustus. Cf. Bartman (1999), 83, who, although noting the bust could be Tiberius, argues for its identification as Drusus.

<sup>82</sup>Wood (1999), 294-295.

<sup>83</sup>Wood (1999), 294.

<sup>84</sup>Livia was also associated with Vesta's Greek counterpart, Hestia, at an early date. Athens associated Livia and Julia with the cult of Hestia (CIA 3.316).

<sup>85</sup>*BMCRE* I.154, no. 45; pl. 146. Cf. Grant (1950), 121.

the tunic and cloak of Vesta, particularly when in the presence of the more elaborately costumed Vestals.<sup>86</sup>

While association with major deities continued simultaneously with their appointment as priestess, there appears to have been an increase in identifications with divine personifications of virtues or blessings. Julio-Claudian women were associated with Virtues throughout the Roman Empire. This concept was borrowed from Hellenistic traditions and was a popular means of honouring Julio-Claudian women. Livia was associated with a number of deified concepts, such as Pronoia and Tyche.<sup>87</sup> By the end of the Republic, Roman men were frequently associated with divine personifications or concepts.<sup>88</sup> These Virtues became an integral aspect of the imperial cult in Rome, reflecting characteristics or virtues which the emperor believed distinguished his reign or wished to claim as his own. The women of the imperial family became instrumental in claiming and promoting these aspects as inherent to the imperial household and the reign of the emperor. Thus, the *sesterius* depicting the sisters of Caligula as Securitas, Felicitas, and Concordia may be seen as the emperor's promotion of concepts which he wished to advance as aspects of his reign.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Claudius's promotion of Antonia Minor with Constantia suggested that he had inherited this quality from her.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup>Bartman (1999), 94-95.

<sup>87</sup>Grant (1950), 113. Livia's identification with Tyche in Gytheum is one of the best examples of this association (*SEG* 11.923).

<sup>88</sup>Fishwick, 2.1.456-7.

<sup>89</sup> Concordia was a particularly important virtue for the imperial family and often denoted marital harmony. While Livia's association with Concordia, primarily conveyed through the presence of a shrine to the divinity in the Porticus Liviae, undoubtedly referred to her marital concord, it may also have referred to



Unsurprisingly, one of the most celebrated associations with Virtues is accorded to Livia. During Tiberius's reign, it appears that Livia was very closely associated with the Virtues of Salus, Pietas, and Iustitia. The value of this propaganda is obvious, as it allowed Tiberius to claim these characteristics as aspects of his reign. A series of *dupondii* issued during Tiberius's reign depict a female bust with the respective virtue identified. These were the first coins to identify an imperial woman with a divine personification, and thus established a precedent which succeeding emperors would follow.

Livia, who was referred to as Julia Augusta on account of her adoption upon Augustus's death, appears to have been closely associated with Salus. This was achieved on a *dupondius* through the title Salus Augusta. As Livia had been granted the honorific cognomen *Augusta* in AD 14, a strong connection was thus made between the empress and virtue Salus. Of the three *dupondii*, the Salus Augusta coin of AD 22 (fig. 24a) is the only one which depicts individualised features on the woman.<sup>91</sup> The use of 'augusta' with Salus may have appeared as collocation between the empress and the virtue, thereby implying a shared quality or divinity. Salus was connected with health, and the fact that the coin was issued after Livia's recovery from a serious illness may explain Livia's collocation with the divine personification. However, while Livia's physical well-being

---

the harmony established between the two families, the *gens Iulia* and the *gens Claudia*. See Flory (1984) for Livia's association with Concordia.

<sup>90</sup> Antonia's association with Constantia appears on a *sestertius*. Antonia appears on the obverse as priestess, with *infula* and grain crown of Ceres. The legend CONSTANTIAE AUGUSTI appears on the reverse, thus linking the two together. See *RIC I*<sup>2</sup>. 124, no. 65-66; pl. 15. Cf. Wood (1999), 155-6.

<sup>91</sup> Wood (1999), 109.

explains her association with Salus, it may not have been the only reason. It has been suggested that the term *salus* referred to the health of the state rather than to personal health, which would be denoted by the term *valetudo*.<sup>92</sup> Her health was representative of the entire imperial family and thus, by extension, the Roman Empire.<sup>93</sup> Livia was closely linked with the welfare of the state through the Vestals- thus an association with the health of the Roman state would not be inappropriate.

The term *augusta/augustus* in connection with virtues and gods must be considered. Its exact nature is a matter of controversy and its abbreviation results in further ambiguity.<sup>94</sup> The term was connected with virtues in two forms: the nominative (*augusta/augustus*), which functioned as an epithet or adjective, and the genitive (*augustae/augusti*). Fishwick notes a theory regarding the interpretation of this term. Although the *Salus Augusta* coin may have been interpreted as collocation between the empress and virtue, a more probable reading may be to use the adjectival sense of the word, thus interpreting it as ‘Augustan well-being’. In this instance, emphasis would be placed on Livia’s health as a prerequisite for the health of the state.<sup>95</sup> While the adjective applied itself to the emperor’s reign, the genitive form of *augustus/a* may have directly linked the Virtue to the emperor. Thus, *Pax Augusti* would refer to the peace of the

---

<sup>92</sup>Wood (1999), 82, citing Winkler (1995), *Salus: vom Staatskult zur politischen Idee, eine archäologische Untersuchung*, Vol. 4 of *Archäologie und Geschichte*.ed. Tonto Holscher. 40-44, 48-49.

<sup>93</sup>Wood (1999), 110.

<sup>94</sup> See *supra* p.12; Cf. Fishwick, 2.1.455- 474.

<sup>95</sup>Bartman (1999), 112; Fishwick, 2.1.462-463.

reigning emperor while Pax Augusta would refer to imperial peace.<sup>96</sup> Following this argument, Salus Augusta did not refer to the empress personally. However, it is uncertain whether all observers comprehended the dual nature of the term. Undoubtedly, it was easily interpreted as the association of the empress with the Virtue. In the case of Salus Augusta, it is generally accepted that collocation between the empress and divine personification was the result, if not the intention.<sup>97</sup>

The identification of Livia as Pietas (fig. 24b) and Iustitia (fig. 24c) is a matter of controversy as the term *augusta* is completely lacking.<sup>98</sup> Pietas was a particularly important virtue for emperors and a fundamental concept of the imperial cult. While an association with Pietas was particularly appropriate for a *flaminica* of the imperial cult, the enthroned and veiled woman depicted does not appear to be a portrait of the imperial mother. Furthermore, the *stephane* which the woman wears was not an attribute associated with Livia at this time. Similarly, the woman on the Iustitia coin wears a diadem, an attribute which was associated with divinity and reserved for Livia's official deification, and is therefore probably not Livia.<sup>99</sup> However, observers undoubtedly associated the empress with these personifications despite the fact that this may not have been the original intention.

---

<sup>96</sup>Fishwick, 2.1.463.

<sup>97</sup>For further discussion of the concept of Salus Augusta, see Weinstock (1971), 171-174.

<sup>98</sup>Kleiner and Matheson (1996), 60, identify Livia with the busts of the Pietas and Iustitia coins. Wood (1999), 109, does not believe that such an identification is possible.

<sup>99</sup>Cf. Kleiner and Matheson (1996), 60, who cite Michael Grant as suggesting that the connection to Livia may have been intended as the year marked the tenth anniversary of the consecration of the altar of Justice in Rome.

Virtues were closely associated with the reign of the emperor and the imperial cult. Altars dedicated to virtues such as *Salus* or *Pietas* and their appearance on coins recalled the blessings of the emperors and the fundamental concepts of the imperial cult.<sup>100</sup> The association of imperial women with these concepts implied that they were hereditary characteristics and thus an inherent aspect of Julio-Claudian rule. The connection between virtues, such as *pietas*, and the imperial cult allowed for a ready association with imperial women who were priestesses of the imperial cult.

The position of priestess appears to have relied heavily upon the position of the woman in the imperial household. Those who were officially recognised as priestesses were usually mothers of the reigning emperor. Agrippina Maior was the only imperial mother who had not received this honour. She was, however, honoured posthumously as an honorary Vestal. Her death prior to her son's accession explains the failure of her appointment as priestess, as well as Antonia Minor's appointment. With Agrippina Maior's death, Antonia was the closest living female connection Caligula had to Augustus. With the exception of Antonia Minor, the priestesses were also the wives of the deified emperor. Once again, dynastic politics influenced the decision of the appointment of the *flaminica* of the imperial cult. As both wife and mother, Livia and Agrippina Minor acted as a bridge between the two emperors and strengthened their sons' claims to the imperial throne. The women who were officially associated with the cult of the emperor as *flaminica* were primarily honoured on account of dynastic politics. As their appointment recalled the necessary connections to maintain the imperial seat and

---

<sup>100</sup>Ryberg (1955), 65.

acted to ensure the transition of imperial power by joining the two reigns through her presence, their affiliation with the imperial cult as priestess thus acted as an indirect means of securing the imperial seat.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPERIAL WOMEN AS *DIVAE*

The death of Julius Caesar marked a pivotal change in the nature of Roman State religion. For the first time, a mortal was consecrated by the Senate and joined the pantheon of gods, becoming an official deity of the Roman state as *Divus Iulius*. Caesar's deification marked the foundation of the imperial cult and established a precedent which would become vital to imperial rule. Deserving emperors were henceforth honoured with deification. The consecration of an emperor offered both political and dynastic benefits to his successors and aided in the justification of imperial rule. Similar motives underlie the deification of Julio-Claudian women. Few women attained this prestigious position, which officially integrated them into the imperial cult and its divine honours and permitted the establishment of cults to the deified female. In their role as *Divae*, Julio-Claudian women were able to posthumously recall dynastic connections and reinforce claims to the imperial throne.

Although the deification of Julio-Claudian women may appear exceptional, there is evidence that others may have considered similar actions. In his extreme grief, Cicero, a staunch Republican and Stoic, appears to have contemplated deeds which would have essentially deified his daughter Tullia. He became obsessed with the notion of erecting a *fanum* for his beloved daughter.<sup>1</sup> The use of the term *fanum* is particularly important, for

---

<sup>1</sup>*Ad Att.* 12. 35-6; 41.

*fanum* denotes a shrine, an area which had been consecrated to the gods.<sup>2</sup> Cicero was adamant in using this term above any other to describe his plans for the deceased Tullia, thereby suggesting that the construction of the shrine was an attempt to raise Tullia to the plain of the gods. Despite his fixation on the construction of the shrine and Cicero's requests that Atticus find a suitably conspicuous area for the shrine, it never materialised.<sup>3</sup> This has led some scholars to question Cicero's motivations.<sup>4</sup> Whether grief, guilt, or the need to advertise the extent of his loss prompted him to consider building a shrine, the fact remains that its construction would have brought his daughter as close to deification as possible.<sup>5</sup> This, in turn, would have kept her memory alive, the ultimate goal of a bereaved father. Cicero's extreme reaction illustrates that the idea of consecrating a loved one was at least contemplated before the establishment of the imperial cult. Unfortunately, the reaction that this pseudo-deification would have effected is uncertain considering his failure to complete his memorial.

The excessive mourning evident with Cicero may also have acted as an impetus for the deification of the first Julio-Claudian woman. Surprisingly, the foremost empress and imperial mother, Livia, was not the first to attain the coveted title of Diva.<sup>6</sup> Instead, this honour was accorded to a sister of Caligula, Drusilla. She and Caligula had been

---

<sup>2</sup>Sullivan (1944), 158.

<sup>3</sup> Shrine: *Ad Att.* 12.35, 36; location: 12.27; 12.29.

<sup>4</sup> Shackleton Bailey (1971), 209, 215.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.15.19-20; Shackleton Bailey (1971), 209.

<sup>6</sup>Although *divus/a* and *deus* appear to have been interchangeable during the Republic, the title Diva came to designate a deity who had been formed through consecration, whereas the title *deus* indicated an immortal god (Price [1984], 83).

particularly close; rumours of incest are attested by ancient sources.<sup>7</sup> Her unexpected death on June 10, AD 38 was a difficult blow for the emperor. Caligula, overcome by grief, proclaimed public mourning (*iustitium*), prohibiting business and public and private celebrations.<sup>8</sup> Upon the completion of the *iustitium*, Drusilla was consecrated and received numerous honours to augment her newly acquired status. A shrine was erected to the divine Drusilla and twenty priests, male and female, attended to her rites.<sup>9</sup> She received extravagant honours, including many that had been accorded to Livia. Drusilla was the only imperial woman of whom a gilded portrait was erected in the Roman Curia. Her birthday became a two-day celebration of games, during which her image was drawn in procession by elephants. Furthermore, women were to swear by Drusilla's *numen*.<sup>10</sup>

The senate conferred on Drusilla the epithet Panthea, the all-embracing or universal deity.<sup>11</sup> The adoption of this epithet, one which was accorded to a number of other gods, was unusual for a Julio-Claudian woman yet allowed for her identification with a variety of deities. Drusilla's birthday celebrations were based upon the Ludi Megalenses, a festival of Cybele, thereby associating her with the goddess through the

---

<sup>7</sup> Suet. *Gaius*. 24.1.

<sup>8</sup> Dio 59.11.5 ; Cf. Suet. *Gaius* 24.2. Apparently the *iustitium* was observed as far away as Alexandria. Despite the extent of the *iustitium* as described by Dio, the Arvals continued to celebrate (Barrett [1989], 86). It is interesting that Drusilla was both mourned and deified, for the former suggested the end of life rather than the rise to immortality. Caligula himself appears to have been unsure whether grief or joy should be decreed (Dio. 59.11.5).

<sup>9</sup> Dio. 59.11.3.

<sup>10</sup> Dio. 59.11.3. Cf. Suet. *Gaius*. 24.2., who notes that Caligula also swore by his sister's *numen*, even before the armies.

<sup>11</sup> Dio. 59.11.3.



similarity of their festivals.<sup>12</sup> Statues often assimilated Drusilla with Kore, as did provincial coins.<sup>13</sup> Kore was appropriate for assimilation with Drusilla since her mother, Agrippina Maior, was frequently assimilated with Demeter.

Drusilla was primarily assimilated with Venus/Aphrodite. Despite her elevation to a goddess, Drusilla was honoured with a shrine rather than a temple.<sup>14</sup> To compensate for the lack of her own temple in Rome, her statue was placed in the Temple of Venus Genetrix. The idea of temple sharing, while frequently practised in the Greek East, was unusual in Rome and Drusilla was the only Roman woman to receive this honour.<sup>15</sup> Although the two goddesses shared the temple, neither was subordinated to the other. The statue of Drusilla was the same size as her Olympian counterpart and received the same rites.<sup>16</sup> Temple sharing thus acted to strengthen the bond between the goddesses.

Drusilla's identification with Venus marked a departure from tradition. Prior to Drusilla, identification with the goddess was predominately an eastern tradition and reserved for young women who had borne children. Despite the lack of children, Drusilla was readily assimilated with the goddess and henceforth, imperial women of all ages

---

<sup>12</sup>Dio 59.11.3.

<sup>13</sup>Although few statues remain of Drusilla, two adopt features frequently used for Kore. A statue of Drusilla from Caere seems to be based upon the Kore Albani. A similar statue type was located in Velleia, although this was based upon the Kore of Praxiteles. See Wood (1999), 242-243, 245-246, for discussion of the statues. Coins from Smyrna also assimilate the two women (*RPC* 1.2472; Cf. Mikocki [1995], Cat. 223).

<sup>14</sup>Dio 59.11.3 uses the term *σηκός*, a shrine or sacred enclosure.

<sup>15</sup>Rose (1997), 36. There are few instances of temple sharing for Julio-Claudian women in the Greek East. These include Livia's inclusion in the Temple of Athena Polias at Cyzicus and Livilla's with Athena Nikephoros in Pergamon (Nock [1972], 236). For discussion of temple sharing, see Nock (1972).

<sup>16</sup>Dio. 59. 11.2-3.

were identified with Venus/Aphrodite.<sup>17</sup> Drusilla's assimilation with Venus/Aphrodite was found throughout the Roman Empire. Inscriptions from Cyzicus and Mytilene attest to their identification and the Greek East frequently identified Drusilla as New Aphrodite (νέα Ἀφροδίτη).<sup>18</sup> A statue from Caere (fig. 25) represents Drusilla in the *chiton* and triangular *himation* frequently used for depictions of Venus Genetrix.<sup>19</sup>

Numismatic evidence testifies that the cult of Drusilla was well received in the Greek East. Although Roman coins never depicted her deification, her new status was frequently alluded to on provincial coins.<sup>20</sup> A coin from Apamea in Bithynia (fig. 26) depicting Caligula's three sisters indicates Drusilla's divine status by placing a star of apotheosis over her head.<sup>21</sup> A similar motif is found on a coin of unknown origin; both coins clearly identify Drusilla through the legend DIVA DRUSILLA.<sup>22</sup> Coins from Miletus and Smyrna also allude to her divine nature, although they may date before her official consecration. While the coin from Smyrna portrays her enthroned, grasping a sceptre and the stalks of wheat and poppies of Kore or Demeter, it fails to bestow the title

---

<sup>17</sup>Rose (1997), 36.

<sup>18</sup>*IG* 12.2.172; Cf. Wood (1995), 460; Barrett (1989), 87. See Mikocki (1995), Cat. 228-233 for further examples.

<sup>19</sup>Rose (1997), 84. Cf. Wood (1999), 242-243, who argues that the statue was based upon the Kore Albani.

<sup>20</sup>Wood (1999), 245, suggests that Drusilla's enhanced status was omitted on Roman coins as coins depicting Agrippina Maior, mother of Drusilla and the emperor, were still in circulation. If Caligula had depicted Drusilla's deification, he would have undermined the honours offered to his mother by showing the drastic difference in their status.

<sup>21</sup>*RPC* 1. 2012. Cf. Wood (1995), 462-3.

<sup>22</sup>Wood (1995), 463, describes the reverse of the coin as the three sisters standing, with Drusilla in the centre and depicted with a star over her head. *RPC* 1.2014 identifies a coin of a similar reverse as Apamean as well.

*thea* upon her.<sup>23</sup> Had this coin been issued after her consecration, she would have undoubtedly received this title. The Milesian coin depicts Drusilla with a crescent diadem and the legend ΘΕΑ ΔΡΟΥΚΙΑΑΑ.<sup>24</sup> The date of this coin is more difficult to determine on account of the term *thea*. Divine honours were frequently bestowed upon the living in the Greek East. Although Romans differentiated between immortal and consecrated gods (*deus/a* and *divus/a* respectively), the Greek East had no such division. *Thea* was used to refer to Olympian gods, yet it was also used as a divine honour for mortals.<sup>25</sup> Consecrated individuals were not singled out by a change in titulature, thereby creating confusion when attempting to date inscriptions and numismatic legends for a deified Julio-Claudians. Thus, the Milesian coin could refer to Drusilla before or after her official deification in Rome.

Drusilla's deification required the use of new attributes and terms to distinguish her in her enhanced position. Inscriptions appear to have used the term *θεά* with the name of a goddess as a sign of her consecration.<sup>26</sup> Two attributes were adopted for images of Drusilla. The crescent diadem was often used for portraits of Drusilla (fig. 27). It appears that its presence primarily functioned to distinguish Drusilla, in whom Caligula placed his hopes for Julio-Claudian children, from her sisters.<sup>27</sup> The diadem was an

---

<sup>23</sup>RPC 1. 2472. Cf. Wood (1995), 462.

<sup>24</sup>RPC 1.2704. Cf. Wood (1995), 462.

<sup>25</sup> For further discussion of the term *theos/a*, see Price (1984).

<sup>26</sup>Rose (1997), 36.

<sup>27</sup>Wood (1999), 242.

accoutrement often associated with deities and its presence conferred a divine nature upon the individual. Although Drusilla was often depicted with the diadem, it does not appear to have been the attribute which distinguished her in a divine role; rather, a beaded headband or *infula* appears to have been the headpiece which identified Drusilla as a goddess.<sup>28</sup> As honorary Vestals, all three sisters would have been entitled to wear this headpiece.<sup>29</sup> Drusilla, however, appropriated the *infula* upon her deification. As the *infula* conveyed notions of religious sanctity, it was an appropriate accoutrement to signify her change in status. Of five identified heads of Drusilla, four were re-cut to add the *infula* and designate her as a goddess.<sup>30</sup>

Drusilla's apotheosis is frequently viewed as further proof of Caligula's mental instability. Although Caligula's mental health remains an issue of dispute, his sister's deification may have been grounded in dynastic politics. During a serious illness in AD 37, Caligula designated her as his heir.<sup>31</sup> In actuality, he probably intended her husband, Marcus Lepidus, to rule in his stead.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, Caligula's actions functioned to single out Drusilla from her sisters for the continuance of the imperial house. Her premature death thwarted Caligula's dynastic plans and the emperor did his best to

---

<sup>28</sup> Wood (1995), 463.

<sup>29</sup> Wood (1999), 241.

<sup>30</sup> Wood (1999), 135. The *infula* of the Caere statue (fig. 25), a Spanish statue, the Hispanic Society head, and a head in the collection of Prince Heinrich von Hessen all appear to have been later additions (Wood [1999], 242). Only a head from Munich appears to have originally had both diadem and *infula* (Wood [1995], 476).

<sup>31</sup> Suet. *Gaius*. 24.1.

<sup>32</sup> Barrett (1989), 82; Cf. Wood (1995), 459; Dio. 59.22.6-7.

salvage the situation. Although Caligula could not have Drusilla as the female head of his house, her deification allowed her to remain as a symbolic head and protectress of the imperial household.<sup>33</sup> Caligula's decision to identify her cult with that of Venus Genetrix reinforces this notion as it closely associated her with the divine ancestress of the *domus augusta*.

Consecration allowed for further connections between Drusilla, the divine *princeps* and the *domus augusta*. A restoration of an Arval fragment suggests that Drusilla's shrine was consecrated on September 23, Augustus's birthday.<sup>34</sup> Her two-day birthday festival also connected her with Augustus, as it echoed the two-day festival celebrated in honour of Augustus's birthday.<sup>35</sup> The Julian connection to Troy and Venus Genetrix were recalled by the celebration of the *Lusus Troiae* at her tomb during the funeral.<sup>36</sup> By closely linking Drusilla's deification with Augustus and the *gens Iulia*, Caligula was able to indirectly emphasise his own connections to the divine *princeps*. Drusilla's consecration thus functioned as an important dynastic tool for Caligula. The dynastic importance of Drusilla's cult is epitomised by the fact that it quickly disappeared after Caligula's death, as it was of no dynastic importance for Caligula's successor.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>Wood (1995), 457, 460.

<sup>34</sup>Barrett (1989), 87. Cf. Rose (1997), 38. For Arval fragment, see *AFA* 46 e. 5-12.

<sup>35</sup>Rose (1997), 38; Cf. Dio. 59.24.7.

<sup>36</sup> Rose (1997), 35-36; Dio. 59.11.2. Cf. Dio. 59.7.1-5, which notes that noble boys performed equestrian games of Troy at the consecration of the shrine of Augustus. Thus, the games offered a further parallel between Augustus and Drusilla.

<sup>37</sup> No mention of her cult can be found in the *Fasti Ostienses* and Seneca could freely ridicule Drusilla's deification (Wood [1995], 465; Sen. *Apocol.* 1).

It has been suggested that Drusilla's untimely death forced Caligula to deify her before other Julio-Claudian women who were more deserving of the honour. Wood suggests that Caligula's mother may have been intended for deification.<sup>38</sup> Caligula had offered Agrippina Maior numerous posthumous honours, including those of an honorary Vestal Virgin. One honour in particular appears to hint at notions of deification: a *sestertius* which depicted a *carpentum* (fig. 28). Wood argues that the details of the *carpentum* allude to the divine, especially the stars of apotheosis on its side panels, and that the *carpentum* as a whole may have acted as a small temple on wheels.<sup>39</sup> As Agrippina Maior was never officially deified, Caligula was compelled to walk a careful line with Drusilla's cult, neither bestowing honours which were far superior to those offered to his mother, nor granting her honours which equated her cult to the prestige of the cult of *Divus Augustus*.<sup>40</sup>

Although Caligula may have considered deification for his mother, in all likelihood, Caligula probably intended to consecrate both Livia and Agrippina Maior, in that order.<sup>41</sup> While Livia's position among the gods was usurped by Drusilla, this did not prevent the continuation of the divine or extravagant honours that she had received under Tiberius's rule. As Livia had died years before, such honours would not have been as controversial. Caligula, however, did not grant any new, official divine honours for

---

<sup>38</sup>Wood (1999), 125.

<sup>39</sup>Wood (1999), 209.

<sup>40</sup>Wood (1995), 462.

<sup>41</sup>Wood (1999), 125.

Livia.<sup>42</sup> This may be partially explained by the fact that he was of Julian blood and therefore stressed his Julian relations rather than his Claudian.

Tiberius's conservatism regarding divine honours and his growing animosity towards his mother during the last years of her life may explain his failure to deify Livia upon her death in AD 29. A declaration of mourning was decreed for the empress's passing, without the suspension of business.<sup>43</sup> This effectively prevented her deification at the time, for one would not mourn the death of one who was to become a deity as it would have cast a shadow of doubt upon her deification.<sup>44</sup> Although Tiberius claimed that it was Livia's wish to remain mortal, Grether believes that Tacitus and Suetonius imply that deification was indeed desired by the empress.<sup>45</sup> The empress's previous acceptance of divine-like honours, such as those offered to her in Gytheum, suggested that the ancient historians were probably correct in their deductions.<sup>46</sup> The senate's willingness to deify Drusilla has led some scholars to believe that they were also inclined to consecrate Livia but prohibited by Tiberius.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>Wood (1999), 124.

<sup>43</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 5.2; Dio. 58.2.2-3.

<sup>44</sup>Augustus's death was not mourned for this reason. However, Caligula's decree for public mourning throughout the empire with the suspension of business in AD 39 provides a sharp contrast to this practice.

<sup>45</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 5.2; Suet. *Tib.* 51.2; Cf. Grether (1946), 245.

<sup>46</sup>SEG 11.922-3; Cf. Grether (1946), 245-246.

<sup>47</sup>Barrett (1989), 87.

Twelve years after her death, Livia was consecrated at Claudius's instigation and she finally received her place among the gods.<sup>48</sup> Her cult statue was placed alongside Augustus's in the Temple of Divus Augustus and cults were established to Diva Augusta. Following the precedents set by Drusilla's deification, her statue was paraded in an elephant-drawn carriage, equestrian games were held in her honour, and women swore oaths in Livia's name.<sup>49</sup> To commemorate her deification, Claudius also issued a *dupondius* with an enthroned woman grasping a torch and a wheat sheaf and bearing the legend DIVA AUGUSTA (fig. 29). The figure is often interpreted as a replica of the statue which the emperor erected in the Temple of Divus Augustus.<sup>50</sup>

Livia's deification during Claudius's reign essentially legitimised the divine honours and worship which she had already been receiving through the worship of her *juno*, transferring them instead to her actual person.<sup>51</sup> The divine honours which she had previously received resulted in a smooth and quick transition to the worship of the divine empress; a priestess of Diva Augusta could be found in Cirta as early as AD 42.<sup>52</sup> The cult of Diva Augusta is easily identifiable in the Western Empire on account of the titles which Livia had received over the course of time. Prior to AD 14, she is identified as

---

<sup>48</sup>Dio. 60.5.1-2; Suet. *Cl.* 11.2. Evidence for the commemoration of the anniversary of her consecration by the Arvals exists between AD 43 and AD 48 (*CIL* 6.2032).

<sup>49</sup>Suet. *Cl.* 11.2; Dio. 60.5.1-2.

<sup>50</sup>Rose (1997), 113. Cf. Bartman (1999), 130-131.

<sup>51</sup>Bartman (1999), 128. The extent of the divine honours offered after Livia's death but before her consecration varied (see chapter 2). One of the most blatant offers occurred ten years before her deification when M. Cotta Messalinus was nearly punished for referring to Livia's birthday festival, which had been celebrated by priests since her death, as a funeral festival. Tiberius was lenient in this case as prosecuting him would have conferred the sense of divinity on his mother which he avoided (Bauman [1994], 132).



Livia, from AD 14 - 41 she was known as Julia Augusta, and she acquired the title of Diva Augusta upon her deification in AD 41. Cults to Diva Augusta are found throughout the Western Empire, including Aquinum, Ostia, Messana, Ipsca and Vasio.<sup>53</sup> Further references to Diva Augusta are attested on various architrave blocks, including marble slabs from Corinth, Vienna, and Collegno.<sup>54</sup> While the Corinthian inscription is dedicated to the Diva alone, an inscription from Vienne refers to both Diva Augusta and Divus Augustus, and the inscription from Collegno links Diva Augusta with Diva Drusilla.<sup>55</sup>

Livia's cult was primarily attended by female priestesses; male priests are rarely attested.<sup>56</sup> In Rome, her cult was administered by the Vestal Virgins, which attests to the close relationship that Livia had previously held with the priestesses.<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere, her priestesses are known by the titles *sacerdos*, *flaminica*, or ἱερεῖα.<sup>58</sup> Although their specific duties are uncertain, they were undoubtedly instrumental in the games, processions, banquets and sacrifices associated with her cult.<sup>59</sup> A position as priestess in the cult of

<sup>52</sup>CIL 8. 19492. Cf. Grether (1946), 249.

<sup>53</sup>CIL 10.5413; 14. 399; 10. 6978; 2.1571; 12.1361. See Grether (1946), 249 for a further list of areas with a cult to Diva Augusta.

<sup>54</sup>See Bartman (1999), 128, for a list of the marble slabs from various structures.

<sup>55</sup>Vienne: CIL 12. 1845; Corinth: Bartman (1999), EpigCat. 72; Collegno: AE (1988), 607.

<sup>56</sup>Bartman (1999), 128, notes one male priest to Diva Augusta at Aphrodisias. Male priests were also attested in Spain before her consecration and thus suggest the worship of her *juno* (CIL 2.194).

<sup>57</sup>Dio. 60. 5.2.

<sup>58</sup>Grether (1946), 149, notes that the title *flaminica* denoted a priestess of a living woman while *sacerdos* indicated a consecrated empress.

<sup>59</sup>Bartman (1999), 128.

Diva Augusta was a prestigious office and was often occupied by influential individuals who had the means to afford the expenses associated with the spectacles.<sup>60</sup>

The cult of Diva Augusta is much more difficult to trace in the Eastern Empire. Although epigraphic and numismatic evidence attests to Livia's identification as a goddess through the title *thea*, it is often impossible to date the evidence by this title alone.<sup>61</sup> Livia's consecration does not seem to have resulted in a change in titles; she is called *thea* both before and after her death. The closest Eastern parallel of Livia's title of Diva Augusta appears to be Θεά Σεβαστή.<sup>62</sup> The problem may be explained by the Hellenistic tradition which permitted the bestowal of the title *thea* upon the living members of royal and imperial families. Unlike Roman custom, which worshipped only deceased emperors, Hellenistic tradition included the worship of the living emperor. As divine honours were frequently bestowed in an attempt to gain or maintain benefactions, emphasis was placed upon the living emperor and the title god was used for both living and consecrated emperors and empresses.<sup>63</sup>

It is evident that Claudius's deification of Livia was well received throughout the Roman Empire and often acted as a means of legitimising the worship she was already

---

<sup>60</sup>Grether (1946), 250.

<sup>61</sup>The volume of inscriptions which refer to Livia as *thea*, suggest that many of these were a reaction to her official consecration in Rome (Bartman [1999], 128).

<sup>62</sup>Inscriptions from Andriaca (*IGR* 3.720; Cf. Rose [1997], Cat. 102) and an altar from Tegea (*IG* 5.2.301; Cf. Bartman [1999], 128), provide exceptions. In both instances, Livia is referred to as *thea sebaste*, before her consecration.

<sup>63</sup>This does not suggest that the Greek East did not comprehend the consecration of the emperor which occurred in Rome, as they do not appropriately emperors who were designated in Rome as a *divi filius*. See Price (1984), 84.

receiving. Claudius's need to consecrate his grandmother must therefore be considered. Firstly, the empress's deification acted as a means to distance Claudius from his detested predecessors. By consecrating Livia, Claudius demonstrated his filial piety, thereby recalling Tiberius's and Caligula's lack of it.<sup>64</sup> Dynastic considerations were the primary motivation behind Claudius's actions. By deifying Livia, Claudius was able to secure his claim as emperor in two ways. As discussed in the preceding chapters, Claudius's claim to the imperial throne was weak, for he was not a direct descendant of Augustus and was, therefore, forced to rely upon his female relations to provide a connection to the first *princeps*. Livia, as his grandmother, offered one of the strongest connections with Augustus and her deification functioned to fortify it. If he could not term himself a *divi filius*, he could at least be a *divae nepos*, a relationship which would link him intimately with the divine and buttress his claim to the imperial throne.<sup>65</sup>

The dynastic importance of Livia's new role as a goddess is evident in archaeological remains. A Claudian relief from Ravenna (fig. 30) exemplifies this.<sup>66</sup> Although there is some discussion concerning the identity of the woman with a small cupid on her shoulder, the individual is generally believed to represent the divine Livia.<sup>67</sup> Livia, facing right, is depicted in the guise of Venus Genetrix, wearing a diadem and accompanied by a small Cupid. Augustus, who also faces right, stands to Livia's left.

---

<sup>64</sup>Tiberius demonstrated his lack of filial piety, not only in his refusal to deify his mother, but also in his failure to construct an arch decreed by the senate (Dio 58.2.6) and to execute her will (Dio. 59.2.4).

<sup>65</sup>Bauman (1994), 167. Cf. Bartman (1999), 128, 137; Grether (1946), 246.

<sup>66</sup>The relief appears to have belonged to a monumental altar, although there are concerns over the validity of this conclusion. See Rose (1997), 101; Cf. Bartman (1999), 128.

<sup>67</sup>Wood (1999), 133, 136. Cf. Rose (1997), Cat. 30; Bartman (1999), 133.

Although the face of the woman sitting on the rock on the far left has been destroyed, she has been distinguished as Antonia Minor. The cuirassed general, who is in physical contact with Antonia, has been identified as her husband, Drusus I, and the semi-nude man whom he turns to has been recognised as the couple's son, Germanicus. The relief thus presents a group of significant dynastic importance to the imperial household and can be subdivided in a number of ways in order to stress those of particular importance. Firstly, the divine pair, Livia and Augustus, are separated by the fact that they both face to the right, while the three remaining members form a close family grouping. Drusus I, Germanicus, and Augustus all appear to have held staffs and the reconstruction of these implements allows for further subdivision. According to Rose's reconstruction (fig. 31), the two tallest staffs were held by Augustus and Drusus. The lines of the staff, if extended upwards, isolate Antonia Minor and Augustus on the far sides and focus is placed upon Livia, Germanicus, and Drusus I. This grouping highlights Livia's maternal role as it represents mother, son and grandson. However, the lines of Germanicus's and Augustus's staffs function together to isolate Livia.<sup>68</sup> As she is portrayed in the guise of Venus Genetrix, this emphasises her role as the female head of the imperial family and conveys the importance which she offered as a dynastic link.<sup>69</sup> The relief effectively acted as dynastic propaganda for the imperial house. The presence of Antonia Minor, Drusus I, and Germanicus on the relief is explained by their prominence in the *domus augusta*

---

<sup>68</sup>It should also be noted that the staffs of Germanicus and Drusus act to separate them as a dynastic pair.

<sup>69</sup>Rose (1997), Cat. 30.

during Claudius's reign.<sup>70</sup> Livia's presence acts as the connection between the *domus augusta* of Claudius and Augustus and thereby functions to legitimise Claudius's succession as emperor.

A longstanding tradition of assimilation with divinities may explain the lack of a new portrait type to commemorate the empress's consecration. Although her portrait changed little, her coiffure adopted a more divine style. A central part with waves radiating outwards was reminiscent of Classical depictions of goddesses and was frequently used in Livia's portraits after AD 14.<sup>71</sup> A more fervent type of this coiffure was adopted for the portraits of *Diva Iulia*.<sup>72</sup>

Livia's hairstyle conveyed the divine nature of the empress, yet it was not enough to express the extent of her new status. Drusilla's prior deification resulted in the need for extra accoutrements in order to define Livia as a goddess. Drusilla appears to have been designated in her divine role through the use of the *infula*. Livia, however, had previously been portrayed with this attribute on account of her position as priestess of the imperial cult. In order to designate Livia as *Diva*, the diadem was often used. The nature of this attribute is complicated. Persian kings originally wore the diadem. The first Greek to adopt its use was the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius I. Despite this early appearance, it was not until the rise of Alexander that the diadem became popular and was used to

---

<sup>70</sup>Bartman (1999), 135.

<sup>71</sup>Bartman (1999), 145, identifies this type of coiffure as the Kiel/Salus type. Cf. Wood (1999), 116-117, who classifies it as Livia's adoption type. Examples of this hairstyle before AD 14 include the *Ara Pacis*, the *Tyche of Lepcis Magna* and the *Vienna gem* among others (Bartman [1999], 134).

<sup>72</sup>Bartman (1999), 145; Wood (1999), 127.

distinguish Hellenistic royalty.<sup>73</sup> The diadem, a band of white cloth that could be worn flat or rolled, was worn by Alexander the Great, although it appears that he did not choose to wear it for any specific reason. His successors adopted the diadem from Alexander and it was soon transformed into one of the most important attributes of the royal family.<sup>74</sup> Although the diadem was associated with royalty, it was also found on images of the Olympian gods, thus imbuing the diadem with notions of divinity.<sup>75</sup>

Although the diadem was appropriated by the Romans as early as the second century BC, its use under the principate of Augustus was highly limited and reserved to denote members of the imperial family.<sup>76</sup> Few living women were granted the privilege of bearing this accoutrement.<sup>77</sup> Drusilla's death marked the use of the diadem for deceased members of the imperial family.<sup>78</sup> Nero instituted the final change in the use of the diadem, allowing Agrippina Minor to be the first to receive the honour of portraits which bore the diadem while she was still living.<sup>79</sup> Although it was initially a Hellenistic

---

<sup>73</sup>Weinstock (1971), 333.

<sup>74</sup>Smith (1988), 34.

<sup>75</sup>Wood (1988), 420.

<sup>76</sup>Weinstock (1971), 334. Cf. Erhart (1978), 201. Other Julio-Claudian women who wore a diadem include Antonia Minor, who is depicted with a diadem on coins from Thessalonica and Crete, and Agrippina Maior, who is found with this attribute on at least five portrait heads. For Antonia Minor, see Erhart (1978), 198; Agrippina Maior, see Wood (1999), 223-4, 230.

<sup>77</sup> Depending on the interpretation of the Tiberian coins of Pietas and Iustitia, Livia may have been granted the privilege of being depicted with the diadem. See Rose (1997), 76.

<sup>78</sup>Rose (1997), 76.

<sup>79</sup>Examples of Agrippina Minor with the diadem which date before her death include a fragment of a head in the Terme Museum, the Ny Carlsberg gem, and a statue at Petworth. See Wood (1988), 420 for discussion of these examples.

attribute, the majority of examples of imperial portraits which retain a diadem have been found in the Western Empire.<sup>80</sup> This may be explained by the lack of dynastic portraiture groups found in the Greek East, which were presumably made of bronze and thus melted down for reuse.

The vast majority of Livia's portraits that bear the diadem date to Claudius's reign, thereby reinforcing the notion that this accoutrement was used to indicate Livia's new status as Diva. A statue from Rusellae (fig. 32) provides an excellent example.<sup>81</sup> As Livia appears enthroned and wearing the diadem, the statue is often interpreted as a copy of her cult statue in Rome on account of its similarity to the enthroned figure on the *dupondius* of Claudius (fig. 29).<sup>82</sup> A similar statue was also found in Lepcis Magna (fig. 33), complete with an inscription identifying it as Diva Augusta, thus offering a secure example of Livia's depiction as goddess.<sup>83</sup>

Although the diadem usually alluded to Livia as a consecrated Diva, examples may be found prior to her official deification. The private nature of cameos also allowed the diadem to be freely depicted on her portraits at an early date.<sup>84</sup> Rose notes that Drusilla's presence in dynastic portraiture groups that included Livia and Agrippina

---

<sup>80</sup>Rose (1997), 76.

<sup>81</sup>Rose (1997), Cat. 45 and Bartman (1999), 130-131, both place this statue in the Claudian phase of the dynastic group. Wood (1999), 128, however, expresses uncertainty concerning the date.

<sup>82</sup>Rose (1997), Cat. 45. Cf. Bartman (1999), 130-131, who argues that enthroned statues were not uncommon before her deification.

<sup>83</sup>Bartman (1999), 129.

<sup>84</sup>The Vienna sardonyx depicts Livia with a diadem as early as AD 14. See Bartman (1999), Cat. 110.

Maior often resulted in all three women being represented with the diadem.<sup>85</sup> A statue from Velleia (fig. 34) provides an early example of Livia with a diadem. Dating to Caligula's reign, the diadem on Livia's statue appears to have been an original attribute. The fact that Drusilla also appeared in this dynastic group may explain the presence of the diadem. As Drusilla was depicted as Diva, it is possible that the artists were confused concerning the honours which were to be accorded to each.<sup>86</sup>

While the diadem frequently indicated Livia in her role as goddess, the diadem was not a required attribute to express Livia's official divine status. However, when the diadem was absent from a portrait, it was often replaced with a floral wreath.<sup>87</sup> One rare example in the Vatican depicts Livia without any headgear, relying on the hairstyle to suggest Livia's divine nature.<sup>88</sup>

Despite Livia's own deification, she continued to be assimilated with Olympian deities. Both the diadem and the floral wreath permitted Livia to be readily assimilated with goddesses. The diadem alone could allude to assimilation with Juno. The Juno Ludovisi (fig. 35), a head which dates to the reign of Claudius, exemplifies this assimilation. Although the identification of the woman is debated, the features and

---

<sup>85</sup>Rose (1997), 76. Cf. Wood (1988), 420, who states that statues and busts of Livia with a diadem date to Claudius. Examples of Agrippina Maior with the diadem include the Luna and Tindari heads, as well as a head for the Vatican, the Via Varese and a statue from Olympia. The latter three heads date to the reign of Claudius and are meant to parallel the features of Agrippina Minor in an attempt to recall Julian bloodlines. See Wood (1999), 223-4, 230, for discussion of these examples.

<sup>86</sup>Bartman (1999), 124-5. Cf. Rose (1997), Cat. 50.

<sup>87</sup>Bartman (1999), 134.

<sup>88</sup>Bartman (1999), 134; Cat. 9.



presence of the *infula* suggests that it is probably Livia.<sup>89</sup> The floral crown often alluded to assimilation with chthonic goddesses, especially Ceres. Livia's identification with this goddess had been an established tradition and continued with Livia's official consecration. The prominence of this assimilation recalls Tiberius's reign. Claudius, like Tiberius, placed great emphasis on the grain supplies of Rome. By continuing this assimilation, Claudius's actions were indirectly alluded to.<sup>90</sup> Further evidence of this assimilation is abundant and includes excellent examples in Rome (fig. 36, 37) and Puteoli (fig. 38). Livia's assimilation with Venus also continued despite her own deification, as previously illustrated on the Ravenna relief.

The next Julio-Claudian female to be deified was a child, Claudia, the daughter of Nero. The senate decreed her consecration in AD 63, granting her both a temple and priests.<sup>91</sup> The motivations behind her consecration may have been similar to Caligula's deification of Drusilla. Claudia would have been the hope for the future of Julio-Claudian rule; however, her deification allowed her to remain a symbolic and divine part of the imperial family.

Poppaea, a wife of Nero, was the last Julio-Claudian woman to achieve apotheosis. In AD 68, she received a shrine at Rome and was assimilated with Venus, as attested by its inscription.<sup>92</sup> The association with this goddess was reminiscent of

---

<sup>89</sup>Wood (1999), 133-135; 170-171; Cf. Erhart (1978), 199-201, who identifies the woman as Antonia Minor.

<sup>90</sup>Levick (1990), 109-110. Claudius's emphasis on grain is most obvious on a *dupondius* which portrays the goddess on the reverse with the legend CERES AUGUSTA (*RIC* 1<sup>2</sup>. 127, no. 94).

<sup>91</sup>Tac. *Ann.* 15.23; Cf. Rose (1997), 49; *CIL* 11.6955.

<sup>92</sup>Dio, 63.26.3-4; Cf. Rose (1997), 49; *CIL* 11.1331.

Drusilla's association with Venus and again recalled the divine ancestry of the imperial household. Poppaea's consecration may be explained by her daughter's deification. Since Poppaea was mother of a divine child, it would appear blasphemous not to declare her a goddess as well.

Although Agrippina Minor was renounced by her son, one might consider whether she could have attained the position of Diva had circumstances differed.<sup>93</sup> She had held an incredibly powerful position during her son's reign. The honours and titles which she had received had essentially equated her with Livia. Presumably, Agrippina Minor had been expecting to follow Livia's example and acquire the status of Diva as well. Despite her titles, power, and influence, Agrippina lacked the dynastic significance to the emperor which had hitherto been quintessential for deification. Livia's deification had been in an attempt to secure the emperor's claim to the throne while Drusilla's was an attempt to repair the damage which her death had caused for the future of Caligula's dynasty. Agrippina offered no such purpose for Nero; her deification was not necessary to buttress Nero's claim for the imperial throne. Nero had a strong Julian bloodline and had been adopted by the emperor, acquiring the title of *divus filius* upon Claudius's consecration. With a direct connection to the divine through Claudius, there was no need to deify his mother. Nero was thus concerned with the future of the imperial dynasty. The birth of Claudia had resurrected hope for the continuation of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and her deification was an attempt to rectify the damage caused by her death. Poppaea's deification was an indirect result of her daughter's death. Had animosity not impeded

Nero and he had opted to deify his mother, it probably would have been solely an honorific action, for she was not crucial to Nero's claim to the imperial throne nor vital for the continuation of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

The limited duration of the cults of deified Julio-Claudian women attests to the dynastic significance of the role of Diva, for the cults rarely outlasted their dynastic usefulness. The cults of Drusilla, Claudia Octavia, and Poppaea were all short-lived, barely surviving the deaths of the emperors who had them consecrated. Their deification only functioned to strengthen the present emperor's reign, and thus, the succeeding emperor abandoned their cults. Without imperial support, these cults usually fell aside.

Of those Julio-Claudian women who attained the coveted position of Diva, Livia's cult outlasted them all.<sup>94</sup> Her association with the cult of Augustus may account for her cult's popularity, although the veneration which she received in the years after her death and before her consecration suggest that Livia was popular even without her husband.<sup>95</sup> Although Livia's cult flourished for years, her role as Diva also reveals its dynastic underpinnings. Claudius heavily promoted her as diva in the unstable first years of his reign. However, once his position was secure, Livia was overshadowed by Messalina and Agrippina Minor and was no longer prevalent on coins or cameos.<sup>96</sup> Although Livia offered his strongest bloodline to Augustus, she was deceased. As wives

---

<sup>93</sup> Upon her death, rather than consecrating her, Nero had her birthday declared a day of ill omen (Tac. *Ann.* 14.12).

<sup>94</sup> Grether (1946), 251. The *divi* which the Arvals sacrificed to in AD 183, 218, and 224 may have included Livia. Price (1984a), 61, notes that the birthdays of Livia and Augustus were still celebrated by Pergamum in the early second century AD. Grether (1946), 252, suggests that the empress was no longer officially included in the imperial cult following Marcus Aurelius's or Commodus's reign.

<sup>95</sup> Grether (1946), 251.

of the emperor, Messalina and Agrippina Minor, who also had connections to Augustus, became the focus of Claudius's political propaganda. Whether the consecration of Julio-Claudian women resulted from an attempt to salvage a dynastic setback or as justification for the emperor's claim to the throne, the underlying impetus, as demonstrated by the limited duration of their cults, was dynastic.

---

<sup>96</sup>Bartman (1999), 128. Cf. Bauman (1994), 167.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Bloodlines were essential for the justification of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and imperial rule throughout the Roman Empire. Connections with Augustus, the first *princeps*, were vital to an emperor's claim to the imperial throne. A lack of males forced Augustus's successors to rely on Julio-Claudian women for the requisite connection to the first emperor. As a result, these women received an unprecedented public position and were incorporated into the cult of the emperor. Unlike their male counterparts, imperial women were affiliated with the cult through three distinct roles. The decision to honour Julio-Claudian women in each of these roles appears to have been due to their membership in the imperial household and their bloodlines, the emphasis of which acted as an indirect means of justifying Julio-Claudian rule.

While grants of divine honours in the Greek East may be partially explained by a predisposition towards the veneration of the members of the ruling family, the importance of women in the *domus augusta* prompted the bestowal of semi-divine honours in the Western Empire, particularly Rome. As lineage was especially important in Rome, imperial women were usually promoted at times when their descent was the most beneficial in supporting the position of an emperor. The emphasis on bloodlines thus strengthened the emperor's claim to rule by recalling their connections with the founder of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

Divine honours frequently reflected the position and roles of the Julio-Claudian women in the imperial house. This is particularly evident when examining the highest divine honour offered to Julio-Claudian women, namely goddess association. While the assimilated goddess could indirectly act to justify the emperor's power, the chosen goddess also corresponded with the role of the imperial woman in the *domus augusta*. Emphasis was thus placed upon the roles of the women in the imperial household, thereby indirectly recalling dynastic connections which were essential to Julio-Claudian rule.

The official positions of the imperial cult, priestess and goddess, offered Julio-Claudian women greater power in the Roman religious realm. As a result, the roles of *flaminica* and *diva* required sanction by the Senate and would presumably be bestowed with the permission of the emperor. This does not suggest that citizens and subjects were unaware of the importance of these positions, for evidence dictates that they instigated some of the honours associated with these positions. The emperor's decision to allow his female relatives a powerful public role was based primarily in dynastic politics and the need to connect himself to Augustus. The promotion of Julio-Claudian as priestesses and goddesses functioned effectively to highlight such connections to the *gens Iulia*.

As priestess, a Julio-Claudian woman provided a sense of continuity between two reigns. Women who were officially chosen for this office were a close relative of both the reigning emperor and his predecessor. As such, the *flaminica* of the deified emperor physically connected the two reigns and emphasised the dynastic connection between the emperor and his deified successor, thereby strengthening the emperor's position.

Furthermore, through her religious duties, the beneficence of the previous emperor might continue in his successor's reign. The promotion of an imperial woman as *flaminica* of the imperial cult in Rome primarily functioned to strengthen the emperor's position in the first awkward years of his reign while simultaneously emphasising the emperor's dynastic connections.

Unlike their male counterparts, Julio-Claudian women were deified for dynastic reasons. The veneration of these deified women may have been genuine. Livia, who had received worship even before her official consecration, exemplifies this notion. However, the impetus to deify such women usually came from the emperors themselves in an attempt to secure their position or future Julio-Claudian rule. Caligula and Nero deified women who had represented the hope for the future of the dynasty, while Claudius deified Livia in an attempt to secure his own claim to the imperial throne. Divine relatives enhanced one's right to the imperial seat, whether a divine emperor or empress. The deification of women acted as a means to rectify dynastic disasters, whether it was the lack of direct connections to the founder of the dynasty or a set back for the future of the dynasty.

Although the focus of the cult was primarily centred upon the worship of the emperor, Julio-Claudian women were an integral aspect of the imperial cult. Their varied involvement with the imperial cult recalled their dynastic importance both directly and indirectly. As members of the imperial family, they were included in the divine honours associated with the cult, and their bloodlines accorded them the more prestigious and official positions of the cult in Rome. Dynastic politics were essential for the validation

of imperial rule and, although not its primary function, the imperial cult offered a means to emphasise the bloodlines of the Julio-Claudian women. Thus, as the inclusion of Julio-Claudian women in the imperial cult was frequently influenced by dynastic considerations, their incorporation into the cult may be viewed as an indirect means for the justification and continuation of imperial rule.



Julio-Claudian Family Tree

Appendix

The Julio-Claudians,

Barrett (1996), viii-ix.

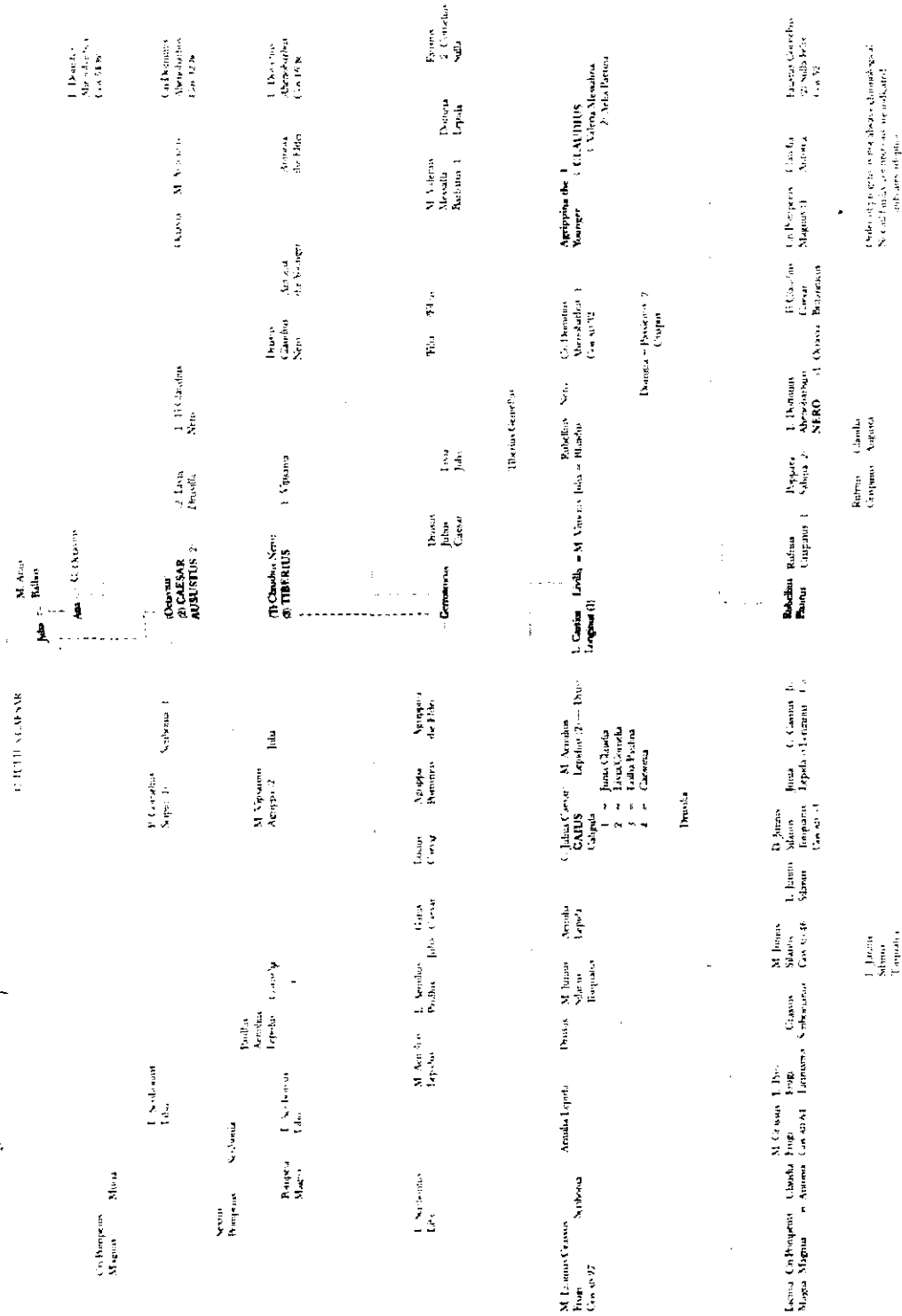


Fig 1a  
Fulvia as Victory. Leaded bronze – Eumenia



3139



Fig. 1b.  
Fulvia as Victory. *Aureus* – Rome



Fig. 2. Vienna Sardonyx

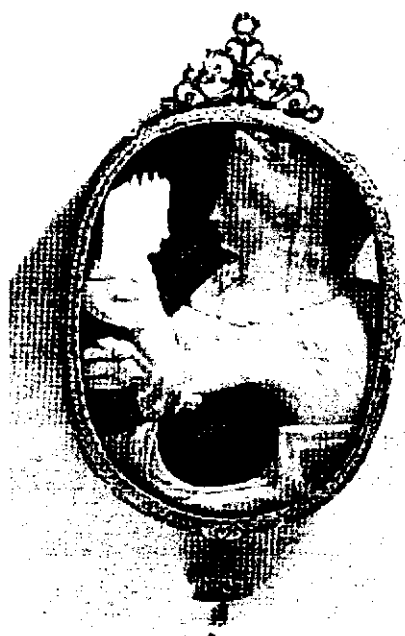


Fig. 3.  
Agrippina Minor, Drusilla, Livilla  
*Sestertius*, Rome



Fig. 4  
Obverse: Mithridates IV and Laodice of Syria  
Reverse: Zeus and Hera



Fig. 5.  
Livia as Hera, Julia as Aphrodite  
Leaded bronze, Pergamon



2359



Fig. 6a  
Ara Pacis – Livia



Fig. 6b  
Ara Pacis – Eastern Façade



Fig. 7  
Livia as Ceres – Iponuba



Fig. 8  
Livia as Ceres – Paestum



Fig. 9  
Livia as Ceres  
Ceres Borghese – Rome



Fig. 10  
 Claudius and Agrippina Minor  
 Sebasteion relief, Aphrodisias



Fig. 11  
 Agrippina Minor crowning Nero  
 Sebasteion relief, Aphrodisias



Fig. 12  
 Livia: Marlborough turquoise



Fig. 13  
Antonia Minor as Venus Genetrix – Baiae



Fig. 14  
Claudia Octavia as Venus Genetrix – Baiae





Fig. 15  
Vicus Sandaliarius

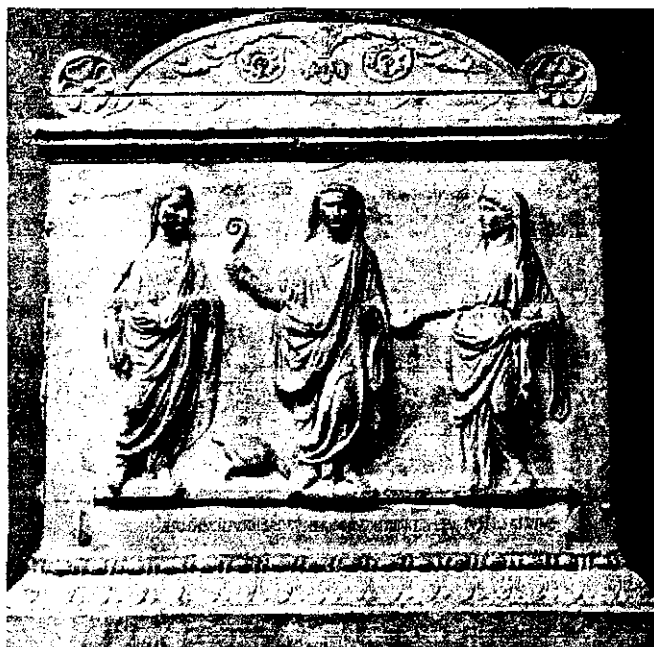


Fig. 16  
*Sestertius*: Iulia Augusta



19

Fig. 17  
Livia – Florence cameo



Fig. 18  
Livia – St. Petersburg



Fig. 19  
Livia – Ocrinum



Fig. 20  
*Denarius of Antonia Minor*



Fig. 21  
*Agrippina Minor – Pompeii*



Fig. 22  
St. Petersburg cameo



Fig. 23  
Agrippina Maior – Tindari head



Fig. 24a  
*Dupondius: Salus Augusta*



Fig. 24b  
*Dupondius: Pietas*



Fig. 24c  
*Dupondius: Iustitia*



Fig. 25  
Drusilla – Caere



Fig. 26  
Bronze coin – Apamea  
Obv – Agrippina Maior as Pietas  
Rev – Agrippina Minor, Diva Drusilla,  
Livilla



2012



Fig. 27  
Drusilla – Munich



Fig.28  
Agrippina Maior  
*Sestertius* – Rome



Fig. 29  
Diva Augusta  
*Dupondius* – Rome



Fig. 30  
Ravenna Relief



Fig. 31  
Ravenna Relief – reconstruction





Fig. 32  
Diva Augusta – Rusellae



Fig. 33  
Diva Augusta – Lepcis Magna



Fig. 34  
Livia – Velleia



Fig. 35  
Juno Ludovisi

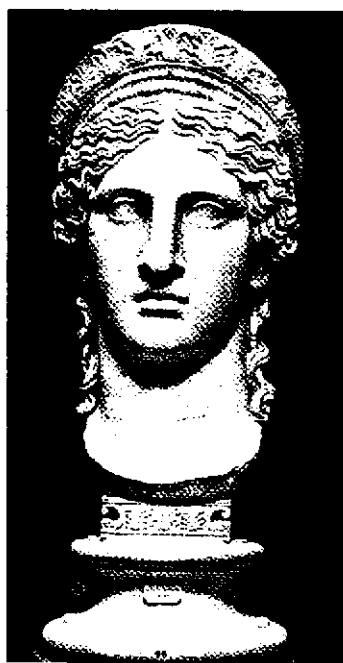


Fig. 36  
Livia as Ceres (Diva type) – Rome



Fig. 37  
Livia as Ceres (Diva type) – Rome



Fig. 38  
Livia as Ceres (Diva type) -- Puteoli



## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Austin, M.M. (1998) *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. Cambridge.
- Barrett, A.A. (1989) *Caligula: The Corruption of Power*. New Haven.
- Barrett, A.A. (1996) *Agrippina*. New Haven.
- Bartman, E. (1999) *Portraits of Livia*. New York.
- Bauman, R. (1994) *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*. London.
- Beard, Mary et al. (1998) *Religions of Rome*. Cambridge.
- Burnett, A. et al (1992) *Roman Provincial Coinage. I From the Death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius. Pt.1 Introduction and Catalogue*. London.
- Carney, E. (1991) 'What's in a Name? The Emergence of a Title for Royal Women in the Hellenistic Period' in Pomeroy, S.B. *Women's History and Ancient History*. United States, 154-172.
- Charlesworth, M.P. (1934) 'Some Observations on Ruler-Cult, Especially in Rome', *HThV* 27: 5-44.
- Corbier, M. (1995) "Male power and legitimacy through women" in Levick, B & Hawley, R. eds. (1995) *Women in antiquity: new assessments*. London, 178-193.
- Davis, N. and Kraay, C.M. (1973) *Hellenistic Kingdoms: Portraits on Coins*. London.
- Edson, C.F. (1933) 'Legitimus Honor. A Note on Hellenistic Ruler-Worship'. *HThR* 26: 324-325.
- Erhart, K.P. (1978) 'A Portrait of Antonia Minor in the Fogg Art Museum and Its Iconographical Tradition', *AJA* 82, 193-212.
- Fishwick, D. (1969) 'Genius and Numen'. *HThR* 62: 356-367.
- Fishwick, D. (1987-1992) *The Imperial Cult in the Latin World*, 3 vols. Leiden.

- Flory, M. (1996) 'Dynastic Ideology, the *Domus Augusta*, and the Imperial Women: A Lost Statuary Group in the Circus Flaminius', *TAPA* 126: 287-306.
- Flory, M. (1993) 'Livia and the History of Public Honorific Statues for Women in Rome', *TAPA* 123: 287-308.
- Flory, M. (1984) 'Sic Exempla Parantur: Livia's Shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae', *Historia* 23.3, 309-330.
- Flory, M. (1995) 'The Symbolism of Laurel in Cameo Portraits of Livia', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 40, 43-62.
- Fullerton, M. (1985) 'The Domus Augusti in Imperial Iconography of 13-12 BC', *AJA* 89: 473-483.
- Goodman, M. (1997) *The Roman World 44BC- AD 180*. London.
- Grant, M. (1950) *Aspects of the Principate of Tiberius*. Portland.
- Jones, C.P. (1977) 'ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΑ'. *Phoenix* 31: 77-81.
- Kleiner, D and Matheson, S. (1996) *I Claudia, Women in Ancient Rome*. Austin.
- Kozakiewicz, M. (1996) 'Appendix: The Headgear of the female statue', in Small, A. (1996), 137-141.
- Levick, B. (1990) *Claudius*. London.
- Macurdy, G.G. (1985) *Hellenistic Queens*. Chicago.
- Matheson, S. (1996) 'The Divine Claudia: Women as Goddesses in Roman Art', in Kleiner, D. and Matheson, S. (1996), 182-193.
- Mattingly, H. (1965) *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum Vol.1*. London.
- Mikocki, T. (1995) *Sub Specie Deae: Les Imperatrices et Princesses Romaines Assimilees a des Deesses, Etude Iconologique*. Italy.
- Mullens, H.G. (1941-42) 'The Women of the Caesars' *G&R* 11: 59-67.
- Price, S.R.F. (1984) 'Gods and Emperors: Greek Language of the Imperial Cult', *JHS* 106: 79-95.
- Price, S.R.F. (1984a) *Rituals and Power: The Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. London.

- Rose, C. (1997) *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period*. New York.
- Scott, K. (1931) 'Honorific Months', *Yale Classical Studies* v.2: 197-278.
- Shackleton Bailey, D.R. (1971) *Cicero*. London.
- Small, A. ed. (1996) *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity*. (JRS Supplementary Series 17). Ann Arbor.
- Smith, R.R. (1988) *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*. Oxford.
- Smith, R.R. (1987) 'The Imperial Reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias' *JRS* 77, 223-317.
- Stanley Spaeth, B (1996) *The Roman Goddess Ceres*. Austin.
- Sullivan, J.J. (1944) 'Consecratio in Cicero', *Classical Weekly* 37.14: 157-159.
- Sutherland, C. (1984) *Roman Imperial Coinage* I<sup>2</sup>. London.
- Taylor, L. R. (1975) *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*. Philadelphia.
- Taylor, L.R. (1920) 'The Worship of Augustus in Italy during his Lifetime', *TAPHA* 51: 116-133.
- Weinstock, S. (1971) *Divus Julius*. Oxford.
- Wood, S. (1995) 'Diva Drusilla Panthea and the Sisters of Caligula' *AJA* 99: 458-82.
- Wood, S. (1999), *Imperial Women: A study in public images, 40 B.C- A.D. 68*. Leiden.
- Wood, S. (1988) 'Memoriae Agrippinae: Agrippina the Elder in Julio-Claudian Art and Propaganda', *AJA* 92: 409-426.
- Wardman, Alan. (1982) *Religion and Statecraft among the Romans*. Baltimore.