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**Women in Public:
Gender-Segregation in Late Antique Rome and Constantinople**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between women and public spaces in the late antique cities of Rome and Constantinople (312-600 CE). It discusses representations of this relationship within late antique discourse, how women engaged with public spaces, and the extent to which they were segregated upon doing so. In all of this, Rome and Constantinople are compared, degrees of change and continuity are examined, and the impact of Christianity upon discourse and real practice is considered.

While women in Late Antiquity have received scholarly attention in recent years, their relationship with public spaces, and in particular the degree to which they experienced segregation outside the home, have not been extensively studied. Nor has particular focus been applied to whether these experiences differed between the classical and late antique periods, or between those of pagan and Christian faiths, or between east and west. As such, this thesis builds upon scholarship around women's history and urban space, bringing these fields of inquiry together, to examine how women experienced public environments in two major cities of the Late Roman world.

In so doing, a wide range of sources are scrutinised, including both textual and material evidence. Case studies are employed, to allow for detailed analysis and comparisons. Theories of urban space and segregation developed by social geographers and historians are applied, to establish how people were physically separated across both 'secular' and religious places. Moreover, this thesis will consider who segregation was aimed at, looking at spatial arrangements along both sexual and social lines.

This thesis argues that women engaged with a variety of public places, at many of which segregation was carried out (though it was often as concerned with separating elite and nonelite women from each other as it was with keeping the sexes apart). I will show how Christianity opened up new routes through which women could engage with public spaces in a manner deemed acceptable even by elite male commentators. I will also highlight how, while segregation might have functioned in places where people were static, it was where movement occurred that segregation broke down.

List of contents

Acknowledgements	page 2
Abstract	page 3
Table of Contents	page 4
List of Figures	page 5
Abbreviations	page 6
Introduction	page 7
Chapter One	page 29
Chapter Two	page 81
Chapter Three	page 141
Chapter Four	page 175
Chapter Five	page 216
Conclusion	page 255
Appendices	page 264
Primary Sources	page 272
Secondary Sources	page 279

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Late antique statues of women in Rome and their findspots.

Figure 2 – Late antique statues of women in Constantinople and their findspots.

Figure 3 – The Projecta Casket.

Figure 4 – Places in Rome associated with Fabia Aconia Paulina.

Figure 5 - Places in Rome associated with Caecinia Lolliana.

Figure 6 - Places in Constantinople associated with Olympias and possible routes taken.

Figure 7 - Festivals in Rome where it is suggested women might have been in public.

Figure 8 - Plan of Old St. Peter's.

Figure 9 – Nave mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Figure 10 - Roman chancel arrangement as envisioned by T. Matthews.

Figure 11 - The Trier Ivory.

Figure 12 – Gregory's *laetania septiformis* in 590 CE.

Figure 13 – Gregory's *laetania septiformis* in 603 CE.

Abbreviations

AE	L'Année Épigraphique.
ANF	Anti-Nicene Fathers.
<i>CJ</i>	Codex Justinianus.
<i>CT</i>	Codex Theodosianus.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.
<i>CIL</i>	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.
HA	Historia Augusta.
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library.
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.
PG	Patrologia Graeca.
PL	Patrologia Latina.
PLRE	Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire.
SC	Sources Chrétiennes.

Introduction

Among her many virtues, the ideal Roman woman was domestic. Concerned with modesty and reputation, she remained securely at home and ventured abroad infrequently. Familial care, household management, and spinning wool were her typical occupations. She avoided the company of extrafamilial men and had little physical relationship with the major public parts of the city in which she lived. Sites of civic power, such as the *fora* or Senate House, were masculine by virtue of their association with public life and political office, from which she was far removed. Locales of entertainment and leisure, such as the theatres and circuses, were much too bawdy for one so demure. As for the streets that linked these places together, danger lurked in every shuffling crowd and crooked alleyway. Thus, when she did step beyond the doors of the *domus*, it was with good reason and in the company of chaperones.

This was, with only minor variations, how Roman ladies were idealised from the dawn of the Republic through to Late Antiquity. This was the optimal woman found in Livy's ancient description of the exemplary maiden Lucretia, who remained at home spinning wool while her husband was away.¹ It was the 21-year-old Fannia Sebotis, whose name is recorded in a late first or early second century funerary inscription outside Rome, who 'never wished to go to a public place or to a bath or to any place at all' without her husband.² It was the freedwoman Aurelia, who was 'ignorant of the foul ways of the crowd', just as it was the elite fourth-century Christian ascetic, Asella, who 'rarely went abroad or spoke to a man'.³ It is a woman whom we encounter repeatedly in the written and epigraphic sources. By Late Antiquity, she had lived in the minds of Roman authors, themselves almost uniformly male, for the better part of a millennium.

And yet this idealised figure could hardly be representative of all, or even most, Roman women. She was propertied and wealthy, free of economic demands that might otherwise compel her to action outside the home. Even among elite women, her laudable domesticity

¹ Livy, *The History of Rome*, 1.57.9; Lucretia's relationship with physical space as represented by Livy is discussed in S. R. Joshel, 'the Body Female and the Body Politic', in J. D. Chaplin and C. Shuttleworth Kraus (eds), *Livy*, (Oxford, 2009), pp. 380-409.

² AE 1987.179: *Quae numquam sine me in publicum aut in balineum aut ubicumque ire voluit*, trans. L. Caldwell, *Roman Girlhood and the Fashioning of Femininity*, (Cambridge, 2015).

³ Jerome, *Letters*, 24.4: *ut nunquam pedem proferret in publicum, nunquam viri nosset alloquium*.

and distance from public life were often contrasted with the less commendable behaviour of her peers, whose insistence on improperly appearing in public endlessly annoyed Roman authors. Indeed, by championing the exemplary behaviour of the supremely modest, our sources reveal that such behaviour was far from universal. Reports of ideal comportment often served as rhetorical tools designed to teach, or shame, others into modifying and improving their own conduct. Moreover, even the laudably modest women who appear in Roman texts were permitted some, albeit limited, engagement with public spaces. For example, the funerary inscription of Fannia Sebotis, mentioned above, suggests she could legitimately visit public places in the company of her husband.

These 'permissible' engagements, I will demonstrate in this thesis, increased over time as Christianity provided new opportunities for elite women to enter and make use of urban public spaces. This first result, however, opens further lines of inquiry. The next question, then, is how elite women engaged with such spaces, and made themselves visible to others, while both protecting and advertising their modesty. I will show how this was achieved, in part, through methods of segregation; that is, the spatial separation of high-status women from those who were perceived to pose a risk to their reputations.⁴ Elite women in public, whether static or on the move, were often distanced from extrafamilial men (those from without the household) and 'unchaste' women (typically, though not exclusively, nonelite women). Such segregation, serving both practical and promotional needs, could be willingly taken up by elite women themselves or imposed by those who exercised authority over them.

Yet, as I will also show, methods of segregation were deeply imperfect and, as we shall see, our varied sources recount in righteous outrage those occasions in which women came into contact with men and immodest women. Furthermore, even the most deeply conservative Christian commentators, who championed female seclusion, accepted that acts of piety could constitute acceptable reasons for elite ladies to enter and make use of public spaces, in close proximity to extrafamilial others, representing a break from earlier tradition. As for nonelite women (understood as unpropertied persons, poor, and enslaved) they were

⁴ Other methods included dressing in a modest fashion, such as by covering the head. On this see L. L. Lovén, 'Visual Representations', in M. Harlow (ed.) *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in Antiquity*, (London, 2017), pp. 135-155; K. Wilkinson, *Women and Modesty in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge, 2015), pp.28-58.

generally overlooked by both pagan and Christian authors, who tacitly accepted such women were widely present in public spaces, reliant as they were on occupations that brought them into frequent contact with the general urban populace. On account of this, such women were considered in both literature and law to be without modesty, meaning efforts at segregation were often concerned with them only insofar as they needed to be kept away.⁵

In order to demonstrate these points, I will examine the relationship between women and public space in the late antique cities of Rome and Constantinople (312–600 AD), seeking to draw out similarities and differences across the two cities and over time. These two cities are apt case studies for comparison due to their size, importance, and similar infrastructures (outlined in more detail further below). This will involve looking both at the representation and at the practical realities of women's engagement with public space, with a particular focus on segregation. This chronological range of almost three centuries has been chosen as it broadly reflects the period of Late Antiquity, specifically from the time of Constantine's victory over Maxentius to the end of the sixth century. This period thus begins with the official toleration and imperial patronage of Christianity, its growth at the expense of Greco-Roman paganism, and the founding of Constantinople as a major city. The period ends at a time when Rome's senatorial elite had lost much of their former wealth and traditions, amidst a collapsing Western Empire and the subsequent Byzantine Reconquest of Italy. By the seventh century, after years of ruin wrought by the Gothic Wars (535 – 554 CE), Rome was no longer comparable in size to Constantinople.

In seeking to better understand sexual divisions of public space, I will first examine how women and public space were discussed in late antique discourse, looking at their representations in text and material culture. Of course, there was never one single 'discourse', but as Cameron explains 'rather a series of overlapping discourses always in a state of adaptation and adjustment'.⁶ However, I will use the singular term 'discourse' for the sake of convenience, taking it to mean, as Cameron does, 'all the rhetorical strategies

⁵ CT 9.7.1, a law of Constantine from 326 CE made a distinction between those women who had sexual honour (and could therefore be protected from male sexual violence under the laws on adultery) and those who had not (and therefore warranted no such protection); on this and Constantine's reforms to family law see J. Evans Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation*, (Oxford, 1999).

⁶ A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire : the Development of Christian Discourse*, (Berkeley, 1991), p. 5.

and manners of expression' we see in our sources.⁷ Here, I will explore under what circumstances Roman men were prepared to tolerate, or even celebrate, women in public. I will also examine how pagan and Christian texts represented women and urban space. I will show that, while all late antique authors idealised domesticity in elite women (and generally overlooked nonelite women entirely), Christian authors were more likely to discuss female engagement with public space in a positive light. In the second and third parts of my thesis, I will then address the key issue of segregation. This issue is 'key', as I will demonstrate below, because not only has the question of segregation been much less studied than women's relationships with urban space, but it enables us to better understand how different women experienced public environments and displayed modesty in such. I will thus discuss who segregation was aimed at, how effective it might have been, and in what contexts and places it was employed.

I would also contend that the spread of Christianity at the expense of traditional pagan cult worship was perhaps the single greatest transformation of Late Antiquity. As such, this thesis will focus upon this particular development's impact on women's relationship with a changing urban religious landscape. I will look at how pagan and Christian religious activity afforded women acceptable routes into public places and visible roles. This is, in part, because religion was one of the major ways in which elite women fulfilled public duties and, in part, due to the religiously oriented nature of much of the source material. Indeed, it is this source material that makes the two cities suitable candidates for comparison, with a wealth of evidence for Rome's pagan tradition, both textual and archaeological, available for analysis alongside Late Antiquity's range of Christian texts and, particularly in the case of Rome, material remains.

i. Previous Scholarship

While scholarship has addressed the relationship between women and urban space in the Roman world, its efforts have often been concentrated on specific urban places and are thus limited in focus.⁸ Not only this, but while efforts have been made to address the specifics of

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸ Studies have looked at women in the Roman Forum, such as M. T. Boatwright, 'Women and Gender in the Forum Romanum', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol.141, No.1, (2011), pp. 105-141; or on the presence of women in baths alongside men, such as G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, (Ann Arbor, 2002).

what women might have done outside the home, thus demonstrating that women *did* venture into public places, less work has been undertaken to understand how women maintained modesty while doing so. Where questions on the precise spatial organisation of men and women have been raised, these are again chronologically or topographically limited in focus.⁹ Furthermore, there has been little comparison undertaken, which I believe is important for understanding if women in Late Antiquity experienced urban space differently to those who came before (chronological comparison), whether pagans and Christians thought similarly about women in public places (religious comparison), or if those in the east behaved other to their western counterparts (regional comparison). On this last point, though comparisons have been made between Rome and Constantinople, they have tended to focus on very specific questions (food supply, infrastructure, treatment by individual authors) and rarely discuss women.¹⁰

It is upon this body of work, which has gone some way towards showing that women of all status did indeed utilise public space and that Christianity presented new opportunities for doing so, that I will build my investigation into segregation. As I outline in this section, these scholarly contributions are manifold, but in particular I will be guided by the work of Kate Wilkinson, who has greatly developed the argument for why elite women needed to advertise their modesty beyond the home and in public settings.¹¹ As I maintain in this thesis, segregation was as much about this display as it was about protecting elite women. By focussing on spatial arrangements, I will look in detail at how segregation functioned in a variety of secular and religious settings, who it involved and excluded, and how late antique practices compared to classical. My goal is to take a more holistic view, as looking at these different settings better equips us to understand how women might have experienced segregation as a feature of their urban environments. In keeping comparative analysis at the centre of my work, whether between cities, times, or religions, I aim to identify what attitudes, behaviours, and experiences were (and were not) customary or exceptional.

Looking at previous work, then, we see that Roman women and urban space are two very active fields of inquiry but are considered together infrequently. On the former, much effort

⁹ For instance, focussing on liturgical arrangements in space, such as R. Taft, 'Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When-And Why?', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol.52, (1998), pp. 27-87.

¹⁰ Examples of these works will be set out below.

¹¹ Wilkinson (2015), pp. 58-86.

has been invested in trying to tease out the lived realities of Roman women, as distinct from their representation in male-authored sources. In 1994, Gillian Clark set about trying to answer the question: 'to what extent could women choose what to do?'.¹² In so doing, Clark correctly identified that much previous scholarship on women had, until this time, been focussed on earlier, classical periods. The cut-off point for such inquiries was often at, or before, the third century. However, in recent decades more attention has been paid to women in Late Antiquity, with important contributions from authors such as Kate Cooper and Kate Wilkinson on womanhood in an age of Christianisation.¹³

This requirement of elite women to consistently advertise their modesty has been explained in the literature. As Catherine Edwards outlined, in a society where marriage and inheritance were the two major vehicles for transmission of wealth and property, faithful wives were essential in the production of legitimate heirs.¹⁴ The severity with which Roman law and discourse condemned adultery, as identified in Antti Arjava's study of women and late antique law, surely stemmed from the recognised inability of adulterous lovers to reliably prevent pregnancy, and the absence of any methods to securely identify a child's paternity.¹⁵ Thus, questions around the chastity of a wife casted doubt on the legitimacy of heirs, threatening the very basis upon which elite families stayed propertied. It was therefore paramount that a wife did all in her power to ensure no eyebrows were raised, which she accomplished by conducting herself in a chaste and modest fashion. The same was true of unmarried daughters, as Lauren Caldwell's study of Roman girlhood explained, as daughters' value on the so-called 'marriage market' was determined, in part, by their own reputations.¹⁶

Previous scholarship has also emphasised the link between a woman's reputation and that of her wider household, including her husband. As Kate Cooper discussed, a Roman man 'earned his standing in a community by governing his own house ... in a manner consonant

¹² G. Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity; Pagan and Christian Lifestyles*, (Oxford, 1993), p.1.

¹³ K. Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride; Idealised Womanhood in Late Antiquity*, (London, 1996); Wilkinson (2015).

¹⁴ C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 34-63.

¹⁵ A. Arjava, *Women and Law in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 1996), pp. 193-205.

¹⁶ L. Caldwell, *Roman Girlhood and the Fashioning of Femininity*, (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 45-79.

with shared ideas of virtue'.¹⁷ In short, a man who could not keep his home in order was surely unfit to manage affairs of state, and thus disobedient wives or daughters were viewed as a 'profound social failure'.¹⁸ Cooper explained how, among elite men, there existed always rivals who would seize upon opportunities to denigrate the standing of their opponents. Misbehaviour among female members of a household provided them with the necessary ammunition. It is for these reasons that Roman men viewed the ideal woman as one who remained securely at home. As Torjesen neatly explains:

'According to the gender stereotypes of the Mediterranean, public speaking and public places were the sole prerogatives of males; private spaces, like the household, were the proper sphere for women's activities. Furthermore, society insisted that a respectable woman be concerned about her reputation for chastity and her seclusion in the household; modesty and reticence were accepted as testimony to her sexual restraint. Public activities and public roles seemed incompatible with modesty'.¹⁹

Gilmore echoes this sentiment, as he argues that the tendency to 'depict women as being vulnerable to a predatory male sexuality' resulted in efforts to 'protect women through the sexualised division of community space'.²⁰ Given the semi-private nature of elite Roman households, this is not so simplistic as saying that private spaces were deemed feminine and public masculine, as the *domus* was ultimately the domain of the male *dominus*, but it was certainly the case that overtly public spaces were generally represented as being unsuited to women.²¹ However, as Wilkinson has convincingly demonstrated, there was a very public element to female domesticity, as modesty was an 'active and performative enterprise'.²² A virtuous wife who remained faithfully at home could hardly attract praise from other members of the elite if those elite persons were not made aware of her exemplary behaviour. Indeed, a woman's 'modest location in space and modest movement through space' must therefore be accompanied by 'the public advertisement of such modest location and movement'.²³ The question, then, is not whether an elite woman will appear in

¹⁷ K. Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman Domus', *Past and Present*, Vol.197, No.1, (2007), p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁹ K. Jo Torjesen, *When Women were Priests; Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*, (San Francisco, 1993), pp. 11-12.

²⁰ D. Gilmore, 'The Shame of Dishonour', in D. Gilmore (ed.), *Honour and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, (Washington DC, 1987), p. 5.

²¹ On the aristocratic *domus* being only semi-private, see K. Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman Domus', *Past and Present*, Vol.197, No.1, (2007), pp. 3-33.

²² Wilkinson (2015), p. 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

public spaces, but 'how she will manage and frame her public self so as to maintain a reputation'.²⁴

This brings us to the question of segregation, through which elite women appear in public places in a modest fashion. There have been some important contributions to the topic of Roman women and urban space in recent years. Monica Trümper noted that ideas of 'gendered space' had previously been assessed in an almost entirely Greek context, and thus appraised the situation in classical Rome.²⁵ Trümper concluded that ancient authors portrayed public spaces in idealised ways, thus necessitating scholarly consultation of a range of source material, including archaeological evidence, to better understand and contextualise the written record. She also noted that relationships between gender and public space have rarely been examined, and that future works might benefit from comparing detailed case studies of individual cities, in order to better ascertain whether notions of urban public space as male were, in truth, 'rather more (literary) fiction than fact'.²⁶

Building on this, Amy Russell demonstrated that notions of private and public space, and their associations with the feminine and masculine, are problematic in their application to Late Republican Rome.²⁷ Russell determined that while Roman authors associated elite women with domestic spaces, they did not necessarily link them to the private sphere. Indeed, as Cooper has shown, the bustling elite Roman *domus* was not a private space in ways we might understand today, with its many visitors, staff, and doors thrown open 'as a matter of course'.²⁸ Moreover, Russell highlights that the association of women with domestic spaces in the source material is heavily concentrated upon those from wealthier households, while the majority of poorer women were 'likely to have business which took them out in public'.²⁹

On this issue of private and public space, it is worth clarifying what I consider to be 'public' in the context of the late antique city. Throughout this thesis, I take the term 'public' to

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁵ M. Trümper, 'Gender and Space, "Public" and "Private"', in S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, (London, 2012), pp. 288-304.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²⁷ A. Russell, *The Politics of Public Space in Republican Rome*, (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 77-96.

²⁸ Cooper (2007), p. 15.

²⁹ Russell (2016), p. 3.

refer to all those parts of the urban topography that lay without the privately-owned residence and that were for the use of, or contributed to the social life of, the people of the city in which they were situated. As alluded to, the aristocratic *domus* was not private in the sense we might imagine a modern home to be private (witnessing the regular movements of clients, visitors, and staff in addition to the family). Ancient sources understood that, where an elite's home was open to many people and thus served the community in some way, it could be considered semi-private.³⁰ Overall, however, ancient and late antique concepts of public and private were not so different from our own.³¹ As Duby states, in the Greek and Roman world 'the household defined the limits of private space'.³²

On the question of zoning (i.e. whether women were excluded from certain public places), Mary Boatwright explored the extent to which *fora* were male spaces in the early and middle empire.³³ She concluded that attitudes between the Late Republic and third century CE evolved, with the presence of women in the Roman Forum becoming more acceptable over time, as reflected in their (limited) representation in both textual and material sources.³⁴ More recently, Cristina Murer returned to this question of women in Rome's *fora*, also challenging (like Cooper and Russell) the idea that public and private were the domains of men and women respectively.³⁵ She also surmises that the idealised nature of the written discourse renders it difficult to draw firm conclusions about women in public places from literary evidence. To this end, she recommends scrutinising honorific statuary to expand our understanding of how women engaged with certain public places.³⁶

Notably, little of this scholarship addresses the question of women and their relationship with urban space in a late antique context. As seen in the works of Trümper, Russell, Boatwright, and Murer, such inquiries often do not stretch beyond the third century. As such, they do not address how relationships between women and public spaces might have been impacted by the Christianisation of the Roman world in the wake of Constantine's

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

³¹ A. McKee, *The Public Sphere: An Introduction*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 34.

³² G. Duby, *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, (Harvard, 1992), p. 567.

³³ Boatwright (2011), pp. 105-141.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³⁵ C. Murer, 'Women in the Forum: The Cases of Italy and Roman North Africa', in M. Flohr (ed.), *Urban Space and Urban History in the Roman World*, (London, 2020), pp. 154-178.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

victory over Maxentius in 312 CE, or the long-term absence of emperors (and consequently imperial power) from Rome. It should also be noted that much of this previous scholarship on ancient women and urban space has often focussed on cities like Athens and Rome, while this thesis will see such discussions brought to bear upon Constantinople.³⁷ Indeed, this thesis will attempt the comparison of two detailed case studies as recommended by Trümper.

Comparisons between the Old and New Rome in previous scholarship are also rarer than one might expect, given their symbolic and political relationship. The most extensive work on this subject is *Two Romes*, edited by Grigg and Kelly, which is itself a collection of independent chapters, each often focussed on one city without much in the way of direct comparison between the two.³⁸ For instance, there are chapters on the water supply of Constantinople but not Rome, while much of the comparison that does take place is focussed upon representations of the cities within panegyrics and Christian literature. Another key contribution was Krautheimer's *Three Christian Capitals*, which among other things appraised the topographies of Rome and Constantinople. However, even this was not systematic in its comparison, dealing with the cities separately.³⁹ Van Dam's work, meanwhile, focussed largely on economic factors, such as food supplies, and the symbolic importance of the cities, rather social history.⁴⁰ Others have explored the relationship between the two cities, both in terms of discourse and east-west power dynamics.⁴¹ While some have suggested that various aspects of Constantinople were 'founded to mirror those of the old Rome', others have argued that, at the time of its founding, the city on the

³⁷ For discussions of women and urban space in Classical Athens, see for example D. Cohen, 'Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens', *Greece and Rome*, Vol.36, No.1, (1989), pp. 1-15; J. Roger, *Women in Athenian Law and Life*, (London, 1989); L. C. Nevett, 'Towards a Female Topography of the Ancient Greek City: Case Studies from Late Archaic and Early Classical Athens (c.520–400 BCE)', in L. Foxhall and G. Neher (eds), *Gender and the City before Modernity*, (Chichester, 2012), pp. 86-106.

³⁸ L. Grigg and G. Kelly (eds), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2012)

³⁹ R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics*, (Berkley, 1983).

⁴⁰ R. Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, (Baylor, 2010); however the treatment of women between east and west, more generally, has been explored in L. Dossey, 'Wife Beating and Manliness in Late Antiquity', *Past & Present*, Vol.199, (2008), pp. 3-40. Though here Dossey acknowledges research is needed to determine whether or not Greeks and Romans had different views on the isolation and domestic seclusion of women in Late Antiquity.

⁴¹ J. R. Melville-Jones, 'Constantinople as 'New Rome'', *Byzantin Symmeita*, Vol.24, (2014), pp. 247-262; G. Kelly, 'The New Rome and the Old: Ammianus Marcellinus' Silences on Constantinople', *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.2, (2003), pp. 588-607.

Bosporus was not, in fact, intended to be a 'New Rome'.⁴² However, comparison between the two cities in relation to women's history is not often seen.

This thesis, then, seeks to build on existing discussions around women's history and urban space, bringing these topics together to examine the relationship between them. It will bridge the gap between classical and Late Antique inquiry, to allow for an appreciation of how discourse and practice might have changed, or remained consistent, over time. It will also offer a comparison of female engagement with public space across both Rome and Constantinople, providing a more precise insight into how developments in individual cities might have impacted upon women's experiences and patterns of movement, alongside how the relationship between these two cities might have influenced these yet further. It will broaden out the work of scholars like Trümper, Boatwright, and Murer, to consider a variety of urban settings across both cities. Furthermore, it will take the analytical tools of Trümper, who proposes four models of spatial segregation (outlined later in the thesis), and will look at how these functioned in the context of Wilkinson's argument that women were engaging with public spaces, at least in part, to publicly advertise their virtues (in other words, it was important to be seen whilst segregated).

ii. Argument

On a general level, as other scholars have done before for the classical period, I will demonstrate that the idealised matron, as described, was deeply unrepresentative of most late Roman women. Despite a discourse that favoured female modesty and domesticity, women frequented a wide range of public places, fulfilled visible roles, and came into close contact with extrafamilial men while doing so. I will make the argument that for elite women, those appearances in public deemed respectable by our sources - the range of 'permissible' routes into public space - increased as Christianity provided new opportunities for laudable engagement with such space. Meanwhile nonelite women, who obviously constituted the vast majority, were often in public places by virtue of their need to support themselves and their families. They, however, are typically overlooked by the authors of Late Antiquity, both Christian and pagan.

⁴² Kelly (2006), p. 588; Melville-Jones (2014), p. 249.

Having demonstrated that women were venturing into public places, I will then show how practices of segregation were employed while doing so. Regarding segregation, I am discussing attempts to introduce physical distance or barriers between people, either to prevent contact or impede communication. In public places, the desire to protect the reputations of elite women clearly led to such efforts in both Rome and Constantinople. However, as I will argue, few urban places were entirely gendered (limiting access to only one sex) and, more often, men and women were instead separated while in the same space. This was, in my view, because women were a noted part of their urban and religious communities, and thus were expected to attend the public events of such. Imperial celebrations and ecclesiastical processions were designed to publicly showcase the strength of an emperor's popular support or the unity of a religious group, thus requiring the presence of the entire group, including even the most modest women. Moreover, there was a performative intent to segregation, showcasing elite persons in their proper places, which was best viewed by other elites.

However, the efficacy of such measures varied greatly, as did experiences of segregation. For instance, practices were generally concerned with separating elite women from everyone else, including other elite men and nonelite women (with possible exceptions for female slaves and attendants). Segregation did not generally seek to protect nonelite women (who were deemed as lacking any modesty worth protecting), but rather to distance them alongside men. In this respect, female experiences of segregation seem to have changed little between the classical and late antique periods. I would argue, however, that there was a change in the discourse surrounding male use of space, as Christian authors and moralists were keener than their pagan predecessors to see expectations of male behaviour brought into line with those of women. In a Christian context, at least, segregation and seclusion were also about protecting both man and woman from sin.

I shall also demonstrate that movement was a crucial factor in how effective segregation could be. At places where people were reasonably static, such as in church or at the amphitheatre, the spatial arrangement of individuals was quite possible, if not perfect. However, it was en route to and around such places where people of all stripes would have been brought together in proximity. The confined and crowded nature of many streets in both Rome and Constantinople, and the obvious numerical superiority of the nonelite,

would have made movement for elite women difficult to conduct at a distance from others. To this end, measures such as vehicles and chaperones were employed to try and introduce a degree of 'segregation on the move', although the extent to which they effectively segregated the elite from everyone else is questionable. Moreover, the desire of some Christians to see both male and female elites behave modestly may have undermined such measures, as discourse began to praise those who travelled on foot and with minimal retinues.⁴³

Finally, it will become clear that it is not possible, with the sources at our disposal, to determine whether one city was more segregated than the other. However, important differences will be highlighted between Rome and Constantinople, such as how segregation at church in the latter seems to have been more severe. There are various reasons for their multiple differences, including their unique histories, religious makeup, and geographies. In particular, the presence of the imperial court at Constantinople, and its absence from Rome across much of Late Antiquity, can explain some of these differences, as the emperor and his family monopolised control over civic and ecclesiastical space in the eastern capital, transforming both into stage-managed arenas for imperial promotion.

iii. Primary Sources and Methodology

Sources, case studies, and comparison

When seeking to determine the reality of women's experience in the ancient or late antique world, it should first be acknowledged that our sources are overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, male. Most of Late Antiquity is glimpsed through the eyes of elite men who, writing for the benefit of other such men, exhibited a general uninterest in the lives of those beyond their social group. Thus, we do not hear what women themselves thought about their domesticity, relationship with public places, or experiences of segregation. Women, the poor, and the enslaved were often overlooked and the details of their lives ignored. Similarly, Christian authors, who dominate our record from both cities throughout Late Antiquity, spoke of pagans (and pagan women in particular) in highly rhetorical terms, using them as shaming devices to encourage better behaviour in Christians (to be seen later in

⁴³ On the topic of pedestrian movement see T. M. O'Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture*, (Cambridge, 2011).

chapter one). Moreover, in Constantinople, as we shall see, we detect an effort on the part of our sources to portray the city as a Christian foundation, and so activities of pagans within that city and the sites they might have associated with (before they were forcibly closed) is rarely ever discussed.

The challenge this poses has long been recognised in the scholarship.⁴⁴ The consensus concludes that, while it is impossible to fully separate the reality of late antique experience from the male-authored discourse, there are methods that allow us to fruitfully interrogate the available evidence. Principle among these is the need to scrutinise as many types of source as possible, as different genres can yield distinct answers to the same question. For instance, when asking what happened to a woman caught in adultery, one will find ‘different answers in law, history, moral exempla, gossip, and satire’.⁴⁵ Indeed, it is both important and possible to distinguish between invective and other, less emotive, sources. For example, while Roman literature often portrayed female involvement in legal proceedings as improper and subversive, as Susan Dixon points out, the evidence of imperial rescripts shows that such involvement was actually rather common.⁴⁶

It is for this reason that I draw upon a wide array of sources throughout the thesis. Written histories, letters, sermons, legal codes, calendars, church orders, administrative catalogues, and panegyrics are all interrogated. Material culture will also be examined, including statues, inscriptions, mosaics, and frescoes. Even though our sources are typically oriented to an elite male perspective, what these men thought about women does matter. After all, the discourse of elite men was the dominant discourse. This discourse shaped the female ideal and, while we do not hear what women themselves thought about such things, we can be sure elite women recognised what the ideal version of femininity looked like in male eyes, where they stood in relation to it, and what behaviours and actions moved them closer or further away from embodying it.⁴⁷ Elite male attitudes were also reflected in law

⁴⁴ S. Dixon, *Reading Roman Women*, (London, 2001); A. Richlin, *Arguments with Silence; Writing the History of Roman Women*, (Michigan, 2014).

⁴⁵ Richlin (2014), p. 6.

⁴⁶ Dixon (2001), p. 91.

⁴⁷ On the issue of discourse shaping women’s experience in Late Antiquity, see E. Clark, ‘The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian After the “Linguistic Turn”’, *Church History; Studies in Christianity and Culture*, Vol.67, No.1, (1998), pp. 1-31; J. Huskinson, ‘Gender and Identity in Scenes of Intellectual Life on Late Roman Sarcophagi’, in M. Richard (ed), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, (London, 1999), pp. 190-214.

and informed real world practice, particularly where such men were perceived to wield moral or spiritual authority. For instance, when a bishop's sermon instructed either men or women to avoid certain places, we might suppose at least some were listening.

Similarly, we might reason that some people were *not* listening. Often, it is the complaints of elite men about behaviours they deemed problematic, whether on the part of women or nonelites, that reveal such actions to us. From traditionally-minded pagans, bitter complaints of elite ladies travelling frivolously through the streets remind us that not all Roman matrons followed the example of the legendary Lucretia.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as scholarship has shown, Christian authors were fond of rhetorically shaming their audiences into improving their conduct, often by comparing exemplary actions against less ideal comportment.⁴⁹ As such, elite male dialogue confirmed both good behaviour and counter-behaviour, and in so doing highlights the wide array of people's responses to the prevailing discourse. It also indicates which behaviours were considered unacceptable, by whom, and the degree to which societal norms changed or persisted over time.

In addition to working with a range of sources, comparative analysis is central to my thesis. By comparing the two cities in question, differences in how women engaged with public space and experienced segregation will be highlighted, as will similarities. Rome and Constantinople are chosen for their relatively expansive range of source material, even though the latter offers little in the way of relevant archaeological evidence as compared to the former. Additionally, these cities are well matched in terms of their size, populations, and infrastructure (though all fluctuate across Late Antiquity). Comparison of these two cities also draws out other questions: the differences between east and west, between a new Christian foundation and an ancient pagan capital, and between a city of emperors and one of aristocrats. Finally, there is the symbolic and political relationship between them, Old Rome and New, and how developments in one city impacted upon the other,

Naturally, the focus upon these two cities necessitates exclusion of evidence from elsewhere, although other sources are occasionally referenced to highlight instances in

⁴⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Roman History*, 14.6.7.

⁴⁹ On the use of shame as a teaching tool, see Elizabeth Clark, 'Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: En-Gendering Early Christian Ethics', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol.59, No.2, (1991) p. 221-245; S. Undheim, 'The Wise and the Foolish Virgins: Representations of Vestal Virginité and Pagan Chastity by Christian Writers in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol.25, No.3, (2017), pp. 383-409.

which Rome and Constantinople were, or were not, outliers. The decision to concentrate on these cities has been taken to allow for more precise and specific results. After all, one cannot fully understand the relationship between women and urban space, and those factors that influenced this, without considering the unique conditions of the city in which these relationships played out. Furthermore, such comparative analysis yields more precise results, as we can only know if something was unique to a particular city by comparison with other cities. Therefore, in order to allow for a thorough analysis of female engagement with public places and the various attempts to segregate them in such, I have focussed on Rome and Constantinople as case studies. Moreover, there are few other late antique cities – if indeed any – that compare to Rome and Constantinople in terms of their monumental architecture, urban infrastructure, and expansive textual source base.

This case study approach is also employed with respect to other aspects of the thesis; effectively sub-level case studies within the wider comparison of Rome and Constantinople. For instance, when discussing those places that women visited (chapter two) or their movements through the streets (chapter five) I will focus on several aristocratic women. This will allow for an in-depth exploration of how certain, elite, individuals engaged with public spaces, the places they went, and the movements they undertook in doing so. Moreover, by choosing the subjects of these case studies carefully, ensuring a mixture of Christian and pagan, Roman and Constantinopolitan, I hope to tease out some of the differences and similarities across religions and cities. A case study approach will also be adopted, for the same reasons of precision, when appraising the gendered nature of civic places, focussing on specific sites that are comparable across the two cities, such as the Roman Forum (Rome) and the Forum of Constantine (Constantinople).

I will also be employing spatial analysis, seeking to understand the physical environments in which movement and segregation were taking place. This involves constructing a series of original maps, to represent a range of findings and information, from segregation within churches to movements through the streets. This is because, in my view, maps constitute a helpful visual medium that allow for greater appreciation of the range of urban places visited by women. Not only this, but they neatly showcase the range of places women might have visited, the distances and possible routes of travel between them, and the overall makeup of the cities and their individual topographies. Likewise, plans of building interiors

demonstrate better than textual descriptions the spaces involved and distances between groups of people. In Rome, reconstructing urban plans is reasonably straightforward, at least where major ancient roads and well-studied church plans are concerned. For Constantinople, the lack of any late antique street plan means I have tried to focus my reconstructions on the main, monumental armature; namely the Mese and the south-eastern palatial complex.⁵⁰

As alluded to above, there will be particular focus on religious places and uses of space. This is not because religious action was the primary reason for women entering public places, as I acknowledge from the outset that most women, who were nonelite, frequented busy public environments out of economic necessity. For those of the elite, however, 'religious ritual provided the single public space where women played a significant formal role'.⁵¹ Indeed, classicists have long recognised that pagan ceremonial provided aristocratic women with a legitimate route into public space, and so I will appraise this in a late antique context, determining to what extent Christianity offered such routes and how this compared to what had come before (and in the fourth-century, to what existed alongside). Furthermore, the religiously oriented nature of much of the source material, and its focus on elite persons, means that it is at such sites where differences in practices of segregation, across both cities, can best be measured.

It is worth noting here, when discussing elite women, that I am referring primarily to those of the aristocracy and, more generally, those whom Roman law and discourse were interested in protecting. In other words, I am referring to women who held wealth and property or who belonged to families that had such. I will occasionally consider imperial women, whether empresses or close relatives of the emperor, particularly in terms of their representations in texts and material culture. This is because, in representations, empresses are an interesting case; often held to the same expectations as other women in texts (in requirements of modesty and submission to husbands), but presented very differently in art

⁵⁰ On attempts to reconstruct Constantinople's late antique urban topography, see K. R. Dark, 'Houses, Streets and Shops in Byzantine Constantinople from the Fifth to the Twelfth Centuries', *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol.30, No.2, (2004), pp. 83-107; M. M. Mango, 'The Commercial Map of Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, Vol. 54, (2000), pp. 189-207.

⁵¹ A. Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins: Sex and Category in Roman Religion*, (London, 1998), p. 3.

(portrayed in overtly public statuary).⁵² However, when discussing segregation and women's relation to public spaces, in other words the realities as opposed to the representations, I will focus on nonimperial women. This is because, despite some of their textual representations, empresses were unique in various respects and, rather than conduct a broader discussion of women that includes empresses, I will focus in detail on nonimperial women.

The space and place dynamic

As the social geographer Tuan points out, movement is often equated with freedom, and freedom with danger.⁵³ From the writings of Roman men, there is no doubt that they, too, equated female freedom of movement with danger. Manifold are the complaints from elite authors of those women who, away from the supervision of fathers or husbands, traversed the cityscape immodestly.⁵⁴ Moreover, spaces that were themselves characterised by the free flow of people, whether streets or cemeteries, were perceived as environments in which the risk to female modesty was high.⁵⁵ If women must be in public, then better they attend those places in which people were relatively static, ordered, and overseen. As we shall see later in the thesis, segregation and spatial organisation were more difficult to enforce where people were in flux and, in most such spaces, it appears the authorities never attempted to do so.⁵⁶

In conducting this thesis, then, I have chosen to divide the late antique urban topography into two categories as recognised in the scholarship. These are spaces: areas intended principally for movement, including the network of streets and outdoor spaces, incorporating both narrow alleyways and monumental thoroughfares. As shall be evidenced

⁵² This is, surely, because public statuary was more centrally directed and tightly controlled than the texts of individual historians.

⁵³ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place; the Perspective of Experience*, (London, 1977), p. 6.

⁵⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Roman History*, 14.6.20, spoke of dancing women in the streets who should be married with children; Jerome, *Letters*, 22.13, complained of widows who used their freedom to traverse the city with pomp and ostentation; Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.36, centuries earlier recounted a debate in the Senate House in which concerns were raised that husbands who took up positions in the provinces were leaving their wives unsupervised at home.

⁵⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.25, warned Eustochium that the streets were dangerous places; CT. 9.24.2, shows how the law was clear that women who were violated in the streets were partially to blame as they ought to have been situated safely at home.

⁵⁶ There is no suggestion in rhetoric or legal sources that streets or marketplaces were subject to methods of social segregation (beyond the mobile seclusion of elites ensconced in litters or surrounded by attendants).

below, such spaces could fulfil a variety of functions, but it is their role in facilitating the flow of urban traffic, and their incorporation into the armature of both cities, that marks them out. The second category is comprised of places: those sites to which people moved *towards*, but not principally *through*. These are the places in which, for the most part, movement stopped (churches and theatres serve as obvious examples).

Romans themselves seem to have recognised this distinction between those urban *loci* designed to facilitate traffic flow (spaces) and those that were not (places). Varro succinctly described such when he wrote that 'where anything comes to a standstill is a place'.⁵⁷ Somewhat later, the French social scientist De Certeau proposed a similar model, in which space is associated with movement.⁵⁸ Put simply, space is understood as an environment through which people routinely travel towards a destination. Those destinations, to which people move, are places. A more comprehensive framework has been proposed by others, such as Lefebvre and Tuan, which I will also employ. Here, space and place can be distinguished from one another through not just movement, but also value and security. Places have particular associations, evoke emotions, and bear witness to the practice of certain actions. Spaces, meanwhile, can be defined as follows:

'Space, we have noted, is given by the ability to move. Movements are often direct toward, or repulsed by, objects and places. Hence space can be variously experienced as the relative location of objects or places, as the distances and expanses that separate or link places, and – more abstractly – as the area defined by a network of places'.⁵⁹

There is, of course, a good deal of overlap between the two categories. Both street and forum could serve as either space or place. Each could function as an artery for traffic; a part of the urban armature in which people were simply moving from one destination to another. And yet, in both Rome and Constantinople, the *fora* were also value-laden *loci*, where civic business, ritual and ceremony all played out. Indeed, if Tuan's statement that 'place is a calm centre of established values' holds true, then the late antique forum could lay claim to such a label. Even the streets, principally designed for movement, could serve as places of economic exchange, conversation, and leisure. Meanwhile, places have within

⁵⁷ Varro, *Ling.* 5.15: *ubi quidque consistit, locus*, trans. LCL.

⁵⁸ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (3rd ed, California, 2011); see also H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford, 1991); See also A. Merrifield, 'Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol.18, (1993), pp. 516-531.

⁵⁹ Tuan (1977), p. 12.

them spaces, such as corridors and side aisles. As such, I have attempted to identify parts of the city by their primary function: that is, while a forum or church witnessed movement within itself, such as people entering and exiting, they had other functions and associations that were more apparent than their role in facilitating traffic flow.

As alluded to previously, this distinction between place and space is made on the basis that movement was crucial to the effectiveness of segregation. Where people were reasonably static, as in church, they could be more easily organised, separated, and monitored.

However, as I shall argue throughout the later chapters, movement made such things manifestly more difficult. It is also worth noting that, as we shall see later, movement was a literary topos all on its own, whether concerned with men, women, elite, or nonelite. As previous scholarship has highlighted, even the way in which Roman men and women walked, or the vehicles they travelled in, could be viewed as indicators of their modesty or lack thereof.⁶⁰ The discourse on this, however, changes somewhat with the spread of Christian thinking, as certain ways of travelling (i.e. in a litter) come to be viewed as ostentatious, while more austere methods (i.e. walking on foot) become a mark of piety.

Moreover, another reason that space and place make useful analytical tools within is that, as I shall argue, Romans policed such areas differently with regards to requirements of modesty and segregation. At places, we see methods of segregation enacted and enforced by civic and ecclesiastical authorities, imposing their spatial arrangements onto those men and women who made use of those public places. In spaces, however, people's freedom of movement is left unregulated and thus it falls to individuals to seek their own forms of 'mobile seclusion'; that is, to segregate themselves from those around them while moving through the urban landscape. To this end, we see elite women (i.e. those with the means to do so) employing vehicles and attendants to introduce physical distance between themselves and others. Here, we can see how segregation was not enforced by others, but willingly adopted by the women themselves, who sought not only the practical protections offered by such measures, but also the public display of status they afforded.

⁶⁰ O'Sullivan (2011), pp. 22-28.

iv. Chapters and Research Questions

The structure of this thesis is intended to reflect its core arguments; that there were substantial differences between how segregation functioned in spaces and places, differences between representations of women and urban space in the discourse and daily reality, and that discourses around the ideal woman and public settings changed with Christianity. As such, the thesis moves from addressing discourse in chapter one, to ascertaining realities of female engagement with public places in chapter two, to analysing the workings of segregation with regard to place vs. space in chapters three to five.

Chapter one will explore the representation of women, public settings (I use the term 'settings' when referring more generally to public parts of the city – both spaces and places), and their relationship in the textual and material evidence more closely. It will establish the extent to which late antique discourse favoured female domestic seclusion, the contexts in which it was prepared to accept or even celebrate women in public, and how Christianity influenced this. Chapter two will then address the realities of where women went and why, drawing upon a wide range of sources to try and 'see through' the idealised representations and invective within much of the literary evidence. This will involve establishing those public settings in which women could be found. It will involve asking how often women frequented certain places, spaces they might have engaged with to get there, their reasons for doing so, who we might expect to find there (elites, nonelites, pagans, Christians). This will allow us to determine how far reality reflected the dominant discourse, with respect to the domesticity of elite women.

Chapters three and four will then examine segregation at those places at which women could be found. Here, I shall aim to establish whether and how practices were enforced: were places zoned along lines of gender, or were they instead characterised by attempts to keep men and women apart while in the same space? I will be exploring how effective such measures might have been, while also looking at who they were aimed at: was it about separating the sexes, or about keeping elite and nonelite apart? The chapters are split according to the type of place in question, with chapter three examining secular places and chapter four addressing religious. The reasons for this are that, as I shall argue, segregation

at secular places seems in Late Antiquity to have deviated little from previous traditions, while it is within religious places that we can most clearly detect change.

Chapter five will conclude by looking at women in spaces: the streets and outdoor crowds, discussing female movement through the urban environment and assessing how possible segregation might have been for elite women in such circumstances. In particular, it will look at methods for segregating elite women while moving through urban space, such as the employment of litters and chaperones. It will also address the question of women in crowds, including organised outdoor movements such as Christian processions. Across all of this, I will be looking at how the decline of traditional paganism, alongside the spread and development of Christianity, impacted the types of public places women engaged with, their ability to do so respectably, and the extent and manner of segregation at such sites. I will also be asking, of the two cities in question, whether there were any detectable differences in the ways in which women interacted with public settings or experienced segregation, and whether developments in one city had an impact on those in the other.

Chapter 1

Representations of Women in Public

As discussed in the Introduction, both classical and late antique discourse regarded domesticity as a key component of female modesty. This is clearly reflected in representations of women and their relationship with public environments, which often emphasised their association with the household and sought either to omit, or display as problematic, their presence in public settings. This is seen across a variety of source types, both material and textual, from virtually every region of the empire.⁶¹ While few Roman authors argued for the complete seclusion of women, the discourse is unambiguous in its suspicion of female public presence, activity, and movement (without the supervision of a father or husband). As ever, those women most thoroughly represented and discussed were elite, with little care or attention given to the majority of unpropertied and poor persons, whose domesticity or lack thereof was largely beyond the interests of those crafting our extant sources.⁶²

Though the idealisation of female domesticity and its attendant associations remained largely consistent into and throughout Late Antiquity, it was not entirely impervious to the societal transformations taking place during this time. In the present chapter, I will examine the ways in which this relationship between women and urban public environments was represented in the late antique discourse, assessing how pagan and Christian sources differed in their treatment of women's movements, and how the latter broke from more traditional portrayals in their acceptance and promotion of various female public endeavours. As I aim to demonstrate, the growth of Christianity (at the expense of traditional Greco-Roman paganism) heralded new routes into public for women, allowing them to engage with public settings in ways considered acceptable by those shaping the dominant discourse: elite, and increasingly Christian, men.

⁶¹ Pelagius, *Letter to Demetrias*, 22.2 (from Rome); Augustine, *Letters*, 211.10 (from North Africa); John Chrysostom, *Letter to a Young Widow*, 2 (from Antioch).

⁶² Although not the focus of this dissertation, it should also be noted that rural women (and the rural poor in general) were also largely ignored by our extant sources.

Meanwhile, pagan authors of Late Antiquity continued to discuss women in public in the same ways as classical authors had done for centuries; rarely, and with the appearance of women in public viewed as problematic. In these sources, women seen engaging with public spaces and places often serve as rhetorical devices, used to cast light upon the bad behaviour of related men, or as signifiers of the poor state of affairs into which Roman politics and society had sunk. This can also be seen in material representations, from funerary epitaphs to honorific statuary, which in their idealisation of women typically linked them to the household and distanced them from the public parts of their cities (although, as I will discuss later, empresses in Constantinople were the singular exception to this, as their statues were often placed at overtly public points throughout the eastern capital).

Overall, I aim to show that Late Antiquity, and particularly the spread of Christianity, did herald some changes in the discourse around women in public, though our evidence does not point towards any great transformation for the majority of women. While some have suggested that Christianity fundamentally altered Roman sexual ethics and cultural proscriptions of individual behaviour, the truth is that idealisations and representations of female conduct remained largely similar to what came before, while sources that addressed movements and behaviours of ascetic women were only ever directed at an elite minority.⁶³ This is, I think, because some have taken discourse around *male* behaviour as the norm. Christian authors did, indeed, discuss male conduct differently to their pagan counterparts, in that they sought to bring expectations more into line with those already surrounding women.⁶⁴ However, the discourse on female behaviour, as outlined in the introduction, changed little.

I will begin, then, by discussing the representation of women in public in some of the classicising literature (such as the written histories of Ammianus, Zosimus, Procopius) in late antique Rome and Constantinople. Here, I will show how women's relationship with public, urban environments continued to be discussed in classical terms, deviating little from

⁶³ For most women marriage and motherhood remained the 'traditional expectations for the female life course', as discussed in L. A. Alberici and M. Harlow, 'Age and Innocence: Female Transitions to Adulthood in Late Antiquity', *Hesperia Supplements*, Vol.41, (2007), p. 198; For the argument that Christianity altered Roman sexual ethics see K. Harper, *From Shame to Sin; The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge, 2013).

⁶⁴ This argument is made in G. Cloke, *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, 350-450 AD*, (London, 2003).

preceding centuries. I will then move on to examine how this relationship was presented in Christian discourse. This will involve a careful examination, and comparison, of both Jerome and John Chrysostom, as two Christian authors in Rome and Constantinople respectively, who discussed at some length female engagement with public places and spaces. I will demonstrate how even these conservative theologians and champions of female domestic seclusion could accept, and celebrate, women being present and active in public. I will then briefly address material representations of women in public settings, in which I will show that although art and funerary epitaphs did undergo changes in Late Antiquity, they continued to clearly link women with the domestic sphere, with few (but notable) exceptions.

Before this, however, it is worth noting that in this chapter I will be considering, to some degree, representations of imperial women. While the focus of this dissertation, as outlined in the Introduction, is on nonimperial women, where representations are concerned (both textual and material) I will include some of the imperial family. This is because, as we shall see, imperial women could be discussed by late antique authors in ways similar to nonimperial women; that is, held to the same expectations and requirements of modesty and good female comportment. Despite 'official' attempts from the fifth century onwards to display empresses differently to ordinary women, as we will see in the case of public statuary, our late antique commentators thought even empresses ought to act as dutiful wives and not exercise influence in public. Such representations, therefore, show the extent to which contemporary ideals about female conduct were held by elite men, that they included even the empress, no matter how the imperial court sought to portray her.

i. Women in public: classicising texts

Roman authors had been discussing women and describing their appearances in public long before the advent of Late Antiquity. They did so infrequently, certainly as compared to their discussions of men, and with little interest in the women themselves. As outlined in the introduction, elite men wrote primarily for the benefit of other such men, and a woman's reputation was bound up with that of her household. Where women featured in the written histories and satirical prose of classical authors, they were often representational in nature and served the purpose of 'demonstrating a general principle, or throwing light on the

character of a leading male, rather than advancing the narrative in their own right'.⁶⁵ Thus, when the first- and second-century historian Tacitus wrote of how a certain Annia Rufilla had accosted a senator in public, after he had prosecuted her for fraud, it was presented as an indication of the 'destruction and complete subversion of all law'.⁶⁶

Annia Rufilla's verbal assault was all the more shocking because it had taken place not just in public, and not just in the Forum, but on the very 'threshold of the Senate House'.⁶⁷ Here, we see how the interplay between female behaviour and physical location was, in itself, a rhetorical device. As discussed in later chapters, the Roman Forum was represented as closely connected to elite Roman maleness, and the Senate House even more so.⁶⁸ Annia Rufilla's immodest and unwomanly behaviour is therefore magnified by having unfolded on the cusp of this significant and notably male place. In the same book, Tacitus neatly highlights male anxiety over female location, as he recounts a debate among senators over whether magistrates should be permitted to take their wives to the provinces with them. Leaving them at home risked exposing them to the designs of others, while taking them abroad might encourage unfeminine comportment.⁶⁹ Some such wives could become so emboldened as to appear in public among the soldiers.⁷⁰

Pagan authors of Late Antiquity, writing in both Rome and Constantinople, continued this tradition of expressing disquiet over female public presence (when they deigned to mention women at all). Unlike in the Christian literature, there is little praise to be found for public action by women, which is instead portrayed as problematic. This is perhaps, in part, because pagan textual evidence from late antique Rome and Constantinople is dominated by written histories, such as those of Ammianus, Zosimus, and Procopius, which followed classical styles laid out by forebears such as Tacitus.⁷¹ However, other pagan-authored texts

⁶⁵ Dixon (2001), p. 20.

⁶⁶ Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.36: *abolitas leges et funditus versas*, trans. LCL.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.36: *in limine curiae*, trans. LCL.

⁶⁸ As discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, pp. 147-158.

⁶⁹ Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.33-34.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.55, 3.33, the wife of the statesmen Piso, Plancina, was said to have attended cavalry training exercises.

⁷¹ The desire of Ammianus to follow Tacitus is discussed in G. Kelly, 'Ammianus Marcellinus: Tacitus' heir and Gibbon's guide', in A. Feldherr (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians*, (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 348-361; L. E. Wilshire, 'Did Ammianus Marcellinus Write a Continuation of Tacitus?', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 68.3, (1973), pp. 221-27; Procopius' following of classical precedents as set out by Tacitus is discussed in A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, (London, 2006), p. 151.

of different genres, such as the letters of the urban prefect Symmachus or the orations of the rhetorician Libanius, also suggest a conservative approach to discussing women that deviated little from earlier centuries.⁷² Furthermore, as my later examination of various (Christian-authored) Church Histories will demonstrate, historical accounts could be written in which public appearances by women were presented in a positive light.

The *Historia Augusta* is an interesting text to begin with. This series of imperial biographies deals largely with events of the third century. As biographies, the entries often focus on the personal characteristics and behaviours of the emperors in question, with much of the action taking place in Rome. Originally thought to have been written by a series of authors, careful scrutiny and computational analysis have led to the widespread belief that the text was penned by an individual, anonymous biographer of the fourth-century.⁷³ Most scholars agree that the text stemmed, in large part, from a single historical source, most likely to have been the third-century biographies of Marius Maximus, which are now lost.⁷⁴

Whatever the case, the *Historia Augusta* is known as a wildly unreliable and often anachronistic text. Riddled with errors and inconsistencies, this late antique creation overflows with both malicious gossip and high praise.⁷⁵

While teasing out historical realities from this web of spurious anecdotes is difficult, its representations of women and their relationship to public settings are, to my mind, quite clear. The subjects of its various biographies are almost always represented as either 'good' or 'bad' emperors. This is typically achieved by highlighting their admirable, or lamentable,

⁷² Symmachus rarely mentions women at all, including his own wife, as pointed out in M. Kahlos, *Vettius Agorius Praetextatus: A Senatorial Life in Between*, (Rome, 2002), p. 24; Libanius, *Orations*, 30.42, talks of how the Christian praetorian prefect Maternus Cynegius was a slave to his wife Achantia, suggesting she was ultimately behind his destruction of pagan buildings (although Libanius was in Antioch, he spent a good portion of his life in Constantinople).

⁷³ Johannes Straub suggested the *Historia Augusta* was an anti-Christian work and that its late antique audience would draw allusions with Christianity in their own time, J. Straub, *Heidnische Geschichtsapologetik in der christlichen Spätantike*, (Bonn, 1963); for discussions on the authorship, see J. A. Stover, M. Kestemont, 'The Authorship of the *Historia Augusta*: Two New Computational Studies', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Vol.59, No.2, (2016), pp. 140-157; P. White, 'The Authorship of the *Historia Augusta*', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 1/2, (1967), pp. 115-133.

⁷⁴ A. Kemezis, 'Commemoration of the Antonine Aristocracy in Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*', *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol.62, No.1, (2012), p. 405; See also M. Kulikowski, 'Marius Maximus in Ammianus and the *Historia Augusta*', *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol.57, No.1, (2007), pp. 244-256.

⁷⁵ For example, many of the errors in question relate to the topography of Rome as it would have been during the third century. For this, see D. M. Robathan, 'A Reconsideration of Roman Topography in the *Historia Augusta*', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol.70, (1939), pp. 515-534.

traits and actions. Women and their relationship with public settings plays a key part in this. For instance, a quick (if crude) way to identify 'good' emperors from 'bad' is to look at their supposed record on public bathing. Those rulers considered to be disreputable are said to have legislated for mixed bathing in the public baths (Commodus, Elagabalus, Gallienus).⁷⁶ The more moral emperors, meanwhile, insisted on segregated bathing and passed laws to this effect (Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Severus Alexander).⁷⁷

It is unclear whether laws on bathing really changed this often throughout the third century, and the extent to which men and women actually bathed together, both in Rome and elsewhere, remains open to debate.⁷⁸ In any case, the reality of mixed bathing is a question for chapter three, where I address the question of segregation in secular places. What is clear, is that the idea of women bathing alongside men in public was considered, at least by some, to be wholly inappropriate, as we can see from the varied works of Pliny, Jerome, Cyprian, and Ammianus Marcellinus.⁷⁹ This was clearly known to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, who relied on his audience to infer that only morally deficient emperors would encourage or tolerate such practices. It is no surprise, therefore, that the very worst (Commodus and Elagabalus) are presented as not only permitting mixed bathing, but themselves participating in it.⁸⁰

In other attacks on the character of Elagabalus, a particularly despised figure in the history, we are told that his mother was a harlot who practiced 'all manner of lewdness in the palace' and that the emperor facilitated her entry into the senate-chamber, where she sat on the consul's benches and witnessed the Senate in session.⁸¹ In case any of his late antique audience were unaware of how outrageous this was, the author explicitly stated that such an action was wholly without precedent in the history of Rome.⁸² He wrote that the emperor established a women's senate upon the Quirinal Hill, thus giving scores of

⁷⁶ HA *Commodus*, 5.4, *Elagabalus*, 26.3, *The Two Gallieni*, 17.9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, *Hadrian*, 18.10, *Marcus Aurelius*, 23.8, *Severus Alexander*, 24.2.

⁷⁸ G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, (Michigan, 1999), pp. 26-36; T. McGinn, *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History and the Brothel*, (2004), pp. 23-26; R. B. Ward, 'Women in Roman Baths', *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol.58, No.2, (1992), pp. 125-147.

⁷⁹ Pliny, *Natural History*, 33.153; Jerome, *Letters*, 107.11; Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins*, 19; Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.9.

⁸⁰ HA *Commodus*, 5.4, *Elagabalus*, 26.3.

⁸¹ HA *Elagabalus*, 2.1: *cum ipsa meretricio more vivens in aula omnia turpia exerceret*, 4.1, trans. LCL.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.2.

noblewomen the opportunity to meet and discuss fruitless topics.⁸³ This *senaculum*, which included the emperor's mother, Julia Soaemias, enacted a series of decrees, concerned with matters relating to female dress and courtly manners.⁸⁴ Finally, we are told that Elagabalus broke into the sanctuary of Vesta and 'violated the chastity of a Vestal Virgin'.⁸⁵

It is striking how often the anonymous writer drew on the theme of women and physical space to level criticism at the emperor. Julia Soaemias' insalubrious conduct with various men took place inside the palace; a location that ought to be associated with imperial dignity and which housed the emperor himself, thus sullyng him by proximity. Additionally, the setting for Julia Soaemias' behaviour served to support the author's claim that the emperor was governed by his domineering mother, as she fornicated with lovers within her son's home, thereby highlighting his inability to exercise control over his own household.⁸⁶ This is reinforced by his mother's appearance in the Senate House; an overtly male gendered place into which her admittance constituted an outrageous scandal, as the author explicitly states this meant she was allowed to behave as a man.⁸⁷

Of course, as a young emperor it is not unsurprising that Elagabalus allowed his mother to exercise undue influence. Julia Soaemias would not be the first imperial woman of the Severan dynasty to be accused of pulling an emperor's strings.⁸⁸ Furthermore, both mother and son appeared together on coins, were assassinated together, and when the Senate brought forth memory sanctions after the emperor's death, they referred to both Elagabalus and his mother.⁸⁹ Whatever the extent of Julia Soaemias' control, the suggestion that the emperor was governed by a woman, emphasised as it was by her taboo behaviour and appearance in male gendered places, was clearly an attack on the emperor himself.⁹⁰ As

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.6-7: *In virginem Vestalem incestum admisit*, trans. LCL.

⁸⁶ It is also worth noting that Julia Soaemias was Syrian and therefore not a 'Roman' woman. As such, there are also implications that her inability to behave as a proper Roman woman stemmed from her not, in fact, being a 'Roman' woman.

⁸⁷ HA *Elagabalus*, 4.2.

⁸⁸ For example, Julia Domna and Caracalla. On this topic see J. Langford, *Maternal Megalomania: Julia Domna and the Imperial Politics of Motherhood*, (Baltimore, 2013); R. J. Penella, 'Caracalla and His Mother in the "Historia Augusta"', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol.29, No.3, (1980), pp. 382-384.

⁸⁹ A.Kemezis, 'The Fall of Elagabalus as Literary Narrative and Political Reality', *Historia - Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Vol.65, No.3, (2016), p. 375.

⁹⁰ On this, see M.B.Bittarello, 'Otho, Elagabalus and the Judgement of Paris: The Literary Construction of the Unmanly Emperor', *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*, Vol.37, No.1, (2011), pp. 93-113.

previously highlighted, a man who could not govern the women in his life lacked masculine virtue; to be himself controlled by these women was even worse.

It is also interesting to note that, of the two crimes involving the Vestals, the author appears to have been more incensed by the emperor's encroachment into the sacred place of the Vestals, rather than his defilement of one of the virgin priestesses. The author referenced the sully of chastity almost in passing, but spoke in greater length of the emperor's unacceptable presence in the sanctuary. Evidently then, the breaking of established boundaries in relation to highly symbolic gendered places, whether it be a woman in the Senate or a man in the sanctuary of Vesta, was a grave transgression indeed, even for members of the imperial family. As such, for a late antique author wishing to elicit a strong reaction from his audience, this literary tool was likely effective.

The female relatives of various other emperors are brought in for criticism throughout the work, with women such as Faustina II and Julia Domna accused of adultery, incest and poisoning.⁹¹ The theme of undue female influence also features elsewhere in the biographies. The emperor Gallienus, like Elagabalus, was presented as a debauched lunatic. In the condemnations levelled against him, we are told that he 'invited matrons into his council', effectively allowing these women a hand in government; something which is further implied when the author declared that 'even women ruled better than he'.⁹² Evidently then, emperors of bad character could be identified by the unruly and dissolute women who surrounded them. That these women behaved as they did, and that they found themselves in places where they should not be, pointed towards a failure on the part of those men who ought to have authority over them.

As mentioned above, the *Historia Augusta* continued a long-standing tradition of attacking emperors by recounting the misbehaviour of their female relatives, often situating such behaviour in places that highlighted or increased its severity, or by highlighting the presence of emperors themselves in unsuitable places.⁹³ Long before Elagabalus, Nero was accused by Suetonius of improper relations with Vestal Virgins and of allowing his mother to wield

⁹¹ HA *Marcus Aurelius*, 19.1, *Caracalla*, 10.1-4, 11.5, *Lucius Verus* 10.1.

⁹² HA *The Two Gallieni*, 16.6: *matronas ad consilium suum rogavit*, 16.1: *ita ut etiam mulieres illo melius imperarent*, trans. LCL.

⁹³ HA *Elagabalus*, 32.9, accuses the emperor of visiting prostitutes in the Circus, amphitheatres and theatres of Rome in a single day.

undue influence.⁹⁴ Cassius Dio accused the emperor Caracalla of violating a Vestal priestess, before condemning four of their number to death for unchastity.⁹⁵ Tacitus reported how a despised senator, Calvisius Sabinus, had a wife who purportedly disguised herself in soldier's clothes, snuck into a military encampment, and committed adultery within the headquarters of an unnamed general.⁹⁶ As such, the *Historia Augusta* is notably traditional in its treatment of women and public settings.

Similar sentiments can be found in the works of the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, whose *Res Gestae* is widely considered to be one of the most important historical sources for the late antique period. A pagan who hailed from the Greek east, Ammianus found himself living and writing in Rome during the late fourth century. He appears as a man who loved the Eternal City, but who despaired at the immodesty unfolding within its walls. As scholars have previously noted, the *Res Gestae* rarely bothers to discuss women at all, but where it does give mention, it reveals an author who held firmly to classical ideals of what womanhood ought to entail.⁹⁷ Like many of his peers, Ammianus was deeply suspicious of women stepping outside their traditional roles. For the historian, a decent woman occupied the position of submissive wife and dutiful mother, keeping apart from public affairs wherever possible.

Ammianus believed that the 'state of baseness' into which Rome had descended was evidenced by the hordes of actresses and dancing girls that populated the streets.⁹⁸ Men of high standing cavorted with women of low repute during visits to public baths, while houses of the rich were filled with music and parties.⁹⁹ Cries of 'shrill women' could be heard among the commons, as aristocratic men and 'even matrons' were greeted with shouts at lurid public shows they attended.¹⁰⁰ Officials visited brothels and openly indulged in adultery.¹⁰¹ In this, Ammianus echoed the earlier complaints of Cassius Dio, who saw as a marker of Rome's moral decay the presence of both men and women of equestrian and

⁹⁴ Suetonius, *Nero*, 28.1, 9.1.

⁹⁵ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 78.16.1.

⁹⁶ Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.48.

⁹⁷ See A. Wieber-Scariot, *Zwischen Polemik und Panegyrik. Frauen des Kaiserhauses und Herrscherinnen des Ostens in den Res gestae des Ammianus Marcellinus*, (Trier, 1999).

⁹⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.19: *postremo ad id indignitatis est ventum*, trans. LCL.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.6.18.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.4.34: *acutis vocibus feminarum*, trans. LCL.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 28.4.9.

even senatorial standing in circuses, amphitheatres, and theatres.¹⁰² The result was apparently a state of affairs in which ‘a slave would debauch his mistress in the presence of his master, and now a gladiator would debauch a girl of noble family before the eyes of her father’.¹⁰³

Even when noble ladies took precautions to seclude themselves from the men around them, their movements through the urban environment continued to be represented as improper. Ammianus derided those ‘many matrons’ who ‘rush about through all quarters of the city with covered heads and in closed litters’.¹⁰⁴ In the eyes of Ammianus, veils and litters did not make it acceptable for women to traverse the urban landscape. There is no acknowledgement, as we shall see there are in the writings of Jerome, that there existed acceptable reasons for, and methods in which, elite women might travel across the city. Another crucial difference was that, as we shall see, Jerome understood ascetical virginity to be the pinnacle of female achievement, while Ammianus advocated the traditional life course for Roman women. The historian noted with disapproval that ‘wherever you turn your eyes, you may see a throng of women with curled hair, who might, if they had married, by this time, so far as age goes, have already produced three children’, while he elsewhere complained of those who mistakenly placed value in the unwedded and childless.¹⁰⁵

This, he explained, stood in stark contrast to the virtuous days of Republican Rome in which marriage had been properly respected. In those days, the sight alone of a noble girl who was unmarried was scandalous enough to have made elites blush.¹⁰⁶ Here, we glimpse a theme common among pagan authors of both classical and late antique periods; the past as a better place. As Wieber-Scariot noted, the women of the *Res Gestae* most roundly praised for their comportment are those who lived in the golden age of the Republic.¹⁰⁷ These female exempla existed during a time of less extravagance and greater virtue. As an avid reader of the classics, who modelled his work on the *Histories* of Tacitus, Ammianus sought

¹⁰² Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 62.17.3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 62.15.2: καί τις καὶ δοῦλος τῆ δεσποίνῃ παρόντος τοῦ δεσπότη καὶ μονομάχος εὐγενεῖ κόρη ὀρῶντος τοῦ πατρὸς συνεγίνοντο, trans. LCL.

¹⁰⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.16: *Quos imitatae matronae complures opertis capitibus et basternis per latera civitatis cuncta discurrunt*, trans. LCL.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.6.20: *et licet quocumque oculos flexeris feminas adfatim multas spectare cirratas, quibus, si nupsissent, per aetatem ter iam nixus poterat suppetere liberorum*, trans. LCL.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.6.11.

¹⁰⁷ Wieber-Scariot (1999), p. 52.

to represent the past as a place in which both men and women lived their lives in accordance with traditional ideals of masculine and feminine virtue.

Precisely why Ammianus launched such a vitriolic tirade against the urban elite is not known.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps it was fuelled by personal rancour at the poor reception he had received in the city, and his accusations almost certainly included exaggeration. Certainly, it seems that in writing a traditional history in the style of those before him, he drew on ancient themes of contemporary moral decay. Like his predecessors, Ammianus' attempts to signal the ethical decline of Rome relied, in part, on highlighting female action: low-class harlots with whom highborn men cavorted in the baths, noble ladies who visited bawdy public shows, and wealthy matrons who improperly raced through the streets. For his audience of educated and lettered men, some of whom may not have been familiar with circumstances in Rome, immodest women in public places was a time-honoured indicator of a city's poor moral health.

Like any Roman historian, Ammianus was required to pay some attention to the comportment of imperial women. The *Res Gestae* recognised that such women could exercise real influence, but also that there were proper, and improper, ways in which this could happen. For instance, Ammianus was hostile to the emperor Gallus, who he depicts as a man governed by his manipulative wife Constantina (d. 354 CE). Furthermore, the way Constantina wielded her power was unsuitable. The empress should have quietly counselled her husband with 'womanly gentleness', as a dutiful wife.¹⁰⁹ Instead, she made her influence known to all, exercising authority in full view of others. While present at the trial of numerous people accused of treason, the empress repeatedly 'poked her face through a curtain' that was intended to separate her from the proceedings, in order that she could steer the outcome of the trial.¹¹⁰ Like the mother of Elagabalus before her, Constantina had breached an established boundary, entering a physical and conceptual environment that was reserved for men. It should therefore come as no surprise to the reader that Gallus Caesar's rule ended in ruin.

¹⁰⁸ For a brief overview of the various possible motivations, see L. Cracco Ruggini, 'Rome in Late Antiquity: Clientship, Urban Topography, and Prosopography', *Classical Philology*, Vol.98, No.4, (2003), p. 366.

¹⁰⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.1.8: *lenitate feminea*, trans. LCL.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.9.3: *stimulis reginae exsertantis ora subinde per aulaeum*, trans. LCL.

Conversely, Ammianus was particularly favourable to the pagan emperor Julian. Thus, his treatment of the empress Eusebia (d. 360 CE), who used her marriage with Constantius II to help Julian on more than one occasion, is initially positive.¹¹¹ Like Constantina, Eusebia is represented as a woman who exerted influence, guiding her husband towards a specific course of action. However, the crucial difference was in the arena within which power was wielded. Eusebia did not dictate to officials, but gently counselled her husband. Her influence was exercised behind the scenes, out of view, and within the context of her marriage, in which it was never imagined that she might rule her husband. As Wieber-Scariot points out, Ammianus felt that Eusebia's interventions took place within an acceptable framework; she exerted influence from the position of submissive wife.¹¹² Constantina, meanwhile, flagrantly violated the boundary between what was, and was not, acceptable.

Eusebia later takes on a more sinister role in the *Res Gestae*. She is accused by Ammianus of poisoning Helena (d. 360 CE), the wife of the emperor Julian, in a deliberate bid to prevent her from bearing children.¹¹³ At an earlier date, Helena's new-born child is said to have died as a result of the midwife having cut the umbilical cord too short, which Ammianus suggests was also the result of Eusebia's machinations.¹¹⁴ It is implied that the motivation was born out of spite, as Eusebia was apparently unable to carry children, although the story is not corroborated in any other source and is probably fictitious. As for Ammianus, this very different representation of Eusebia was likely to have, once again, stemmed from his admiration of Julian. As scholars such as Tougher have pointed out, those who esteemed Julian would have been troubled by his failure to produce heirs, and the story of a wicked Christian empress provided an answer to an otherwise inconvenient question.¹¹⁵

Here, we see another application for the rhetorical inclusion of women in texts. As women were principally associated with the domestic and private realms, their actions were often

¹¹¹ It was Eusebia's interventions that secured for Julian the position of Caesar (effectively a junior emperor, serving under her husband who held the position of Augustus, the senior emperor). Eusebia's actions were well-received by Julian himself, who praised her in his *Speech of Thanks* and his *Letter to the Athenians*; See S. Tougher, 'In Praise of an Empress: Julian's Speech of Thanks to Eusebia', in M. Whitby (ed.), *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, (Leiden, 1998), pp. 105-23.

¹¹² Wieber-Scariot (1999), p. 115.

¹¹³ Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.10.18.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.10.19.

¹¹⁵ Tougher (1998), p.112.

understood to take place beyond the view of most. As such, while it was proper for a woman to conduct herself primarily within the bounds of her household, this made them convenient targets for rumour and intrigue. As with Julian and Eusebia, and as we shall see throughout this chapter, it was common practice to attribute problematic male behaviour to the machinations of women, undertaken behind the scenes. Thus, one cannot help but conclude that there was no truly safe setting for notable women and their reputations, as malicious gossip could find them anywhere, and domestic seclusion could not guarantee protection from such.

Looking eastwards, texts from Constantinople do not emerge until Late Antiquity. The *New History* of Zosimus, a bureaucrat living in the city during the fifth and sixth centuries, details events both there and at Rome. The book has little to say about women, who frequently appear as the unnamed victims of military and political violence.¹¹⁶ Those late antique women who are named in the work are, in the main, of the imperial family, though their movements or locations are rarely recorded. For instance, Zosimus is unambiguous in his dislike of the emperor Arcadius, who he denounces as an idiot.¹¹⁷ The emperor's wife, Eudoxia, is characterised as a woman of intense avarice, surrounded by attendants and eunuchs.¹¹⁸ However, we hear little of what she did or where she went. This is also true of another empress who is presented somewhat positively; Laeta, the wife of the emperor Gratian. Zosimus notes how she, along with her mother Pissamena, fed the people of Rome during a famine from their own supplies.¹¹⁹ However, the historian is clear that the credit ultimately lay with the emperor Theodosius, whose generosity made their efforts possible.

One character whose movements and whereabouts Zosimus does record, albeit briefly, is Serena (wife of Stilicho and niece of Theodosius). He accuses her of removing a necklace from the statue of Rhea in the temple of Cybele at Rome. According to the historian, Serena was then rebuked by an old woman who had once been a Vestal. Serena responded with insults and drove the elderly priestess from the temple.¹²⁰ Given the author's animosity towards Christian empresses and his affection for pagan antiquity, this seems a suspiciously

¹¹⁶ Zosimus, *New History*, 1.34, 3.78, 4.108, 4.112, 4.117, 5.113, 5.141, 5.161.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.24.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.24.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.39.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.38.

convenient tale. What it does show, however, is a continuation of the theme of imperial violation of sacred pagan places and misbehaviour against Vestals, as seen in accounts of Elagabalus, Nero, and Caracalla. Zosimus has Serena fulfilling the (unfeminine) role of looting conqueror. As a Christian, she is in a place she does not belong, treating sacred objects with disrespect, before finalising the outrage with abuse of an elderly Vestal.

The sixth-century historian Procopius, who likewise lived and wrote in Constantinople, is suspected by some of being a pagan.¹²¹ Certainly, his written histories of the various wars fought under Justinian were classical in style, and indeed represent one of the final attempts in Late Antiquity to write such traditional works. Where women appear in the texts, it is clear Procopius holds them to ancient standards of behaviour. Good wives are those presented as discreet and with reputations for prudence. When the empress Theodora makes her famous speech before the emperor and his officials during the tumult of the Nika Riot, she begins with an almost apologetic acknowledgement that such public oratory from a woman was unusual and considered unbecoming by many.¹²² Meanwhile, a clear signal of urban discord was that even women joined in the public violence committed by unruly circus factions in the streets and marketplaces.¹²³ As argued by Cameron, for Procopius ‘the emancipation of women, in whatever form, would be an unmitigated evil.’¹²⁴

Of course, it was in his unpublished *Secret History* that Procopius’ invective against certain women was truly put on display. Here, we see that when an author was hostile against an individual, none of their relationships, with either domestic or public settings, would be perceived positively. Theodora (the target for much of his vitriol) was criticised both for her movements, which forced her expansive retinue to criss-cross the city on a regular basis, and for her seclusion within the palace.¹²⁵ She is simultaneously portrayed as a lazy idler who spends most of the day bathing, sleeping, and eating, and as a relentlessly ruthless

¹²¹ For discussion of Procopius’ religious leanings see A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, (London, 2006), pp. 113-134; G. Downey, ‘Paganism and Christianity in Procopius’, *Church History*, Vol.18, No.2, (1949), pp. 89-102; A. Kaldellis, ‘Epilogue’, in C. Lillington-Martin, *Procopius of Caesarea: Literary and Historical Interpretations*, (London, 2017), pp. 261-271; E. Lung, ‘Religious Identity as Seen by Sixth-Century Historians and Chroniclers’, in M. Saghy and E. M. Schoolman (eds), *Pagans and Christians in the Late Roman Empire*, (Budapest, 2018) pp. 119-133.

¹²² Procopius, *Persian Wars*, 1.24.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1.24.6.

¹²⁴ Cameron (2006), p. 81.

¹²⁵ Procopius, *Secret History*, 15.36-38, 15.13-15.

schemer with a hand in all of Constantinople's ills.¹²⁶ Along with Theodora, the wife of the general Belisarius, Antonina, is also depicted as adulterous and immodest. Both women lacked the capacity for feeling shame or embarrassment.¹²⁷ Theodora's youth, spent upon the stages of Constantinople and, supposedly, in the beds of many paying clients, had left her without modesty.

The character of Antonina is noteworthy because of her marriage to Belisarius, whom Procopius served for several years and for whom, at least in his published histories, he had much affection. Thus, when Belisarius suffered a military setback, the blame was laid at the door of his wife, whose adulterous conduct was a source of dismay and distraction to the Byzantine general.¹²⁸ Again, we see how problematic action on the part of a leading male character could be attributed to private female misbehaviour. Not only this, but the concerns echoed by senators in the recounting of Tacitus, centuries earlier, that women taken to the provinces might develop manly attributes and even interact with the soldiery, are born out. Procopius notes how Antonina travelled with Belisarius on numerous campaigns, where she took an active hand in matters, even issuing orders to soldiers and commanders.¹²⁹ Throughout all, Antonina is protected via her friendship with the equally immodest empress, leaving Belisarius humiliated and unable to secure justice against her.¹³⁰

For Procopius, such womanly corruption within the imperial court led to a situation wherein the city had lost all moral virtue, not dissimilar to earlier depictions of Rome. In Procopius' Constantinople, women would conduct adultery openly and without fear, safe in the knowledge that no penalty would be enacted under Theodora and Justinian.¹³¹ The historian claimed that virtually all women in the city had become corrupted. This was terrible, he maintained, because a woman's low reputation did not just impact her, but was carried by her husband and children.¹³² True virtue is represented in the text as being held by an unnamed elite woman, who was traversing the city at night with her husband, and who was kidnapped by a mob of circus factionalists. They placed her in a boat filled with young men

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.6-10.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.13.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.32, 4.40; Cameron (2006), p. 72.

¹²⁹ Procopius, *The Gothic Wars*, 6.7.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, *Secret History*, 9.18.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.24.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 2.10.

and set sail, but she vowed to her husband that no outrage would be committed upon her person and committed suicide by casting herself into the water.¹³³

These major works of Late Antiquity, in the tradition of earlier texts, were no more permissive of female entry into public settings than those which had come before. There is little actual discussion of where a woman's proper place ought to be, and nonelite women rarely appear at all, while the presence of women in public is typically accompanied by problematic behaviour. Improper conduct on the part of imperial and aristocratic women could explain all manner of ills, and such corruption within places and households of power appears linked to the sorry state of affairs into which Rome and Constantinople, at various times, allegedly sunk. As discussed above, while domesticity was idealised for women, when male authors sought to spin invective there was no truly 'safe place' in which women could reside. Operating behind closed doors opened women up to accusations of wielding undue influence beyond the scrutiny of others. Furthermore, this poor state was represented by the appearance of women in public places across the city, as they behaved immodestly in full view of others. In keeping with literary traditions, these pagan authors offered little indication that there were good and proper reasons for women to engage with public places.

ii. Women in public: Christian discourse

While pagan-authored textual evidence from Rome and Constantinople is dominated by written histories, we have a considerably more expansive and varied source base of Christian texts. Among other genres, from these two cities alone we have letters, sermons, poetry, histories, chronicles, and hagiographies. Furthermore, this Christian body of work extends through to the end of our period in the seventh century, while pagan-authored texts become increasingly rare as we move through Late Antiquity. Crucially, among this Christian literature we have numerous works dedicated to providing advice to women, which do not exist among pagan sources in Late Antiquity (and was rare among classical works).¹³⁴ As one might expect, instructional letters addressed to Christian noblewomen in

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 7.36-38.

¹³⁴ G. Cloke, *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, 350-450 AD*, (London, 2003), p. 66.

Rome discuss the issue of women's movements across urban space more than classical histories seeking to cover political events over centuries.

Nevertheless, as Cameron states, Christian authors 'do show an emphasis on women that would have been unusual in pagan texts'.¹³⁵ Pagan literature was predominantly focussed on elite men, with very little attention dedicated to private affairs or daily life. Both women and the nonelite were largely overlooked. The focus, insofar as we can link it to physical settings within our cities, was with places of power and prominence, such as the Senate House, *fora*, and imperial residences. However, as Cameron explains, Christian thinking involved consideration of the inner self, which brought with it an increased interest on what took place in private and domestic environments, with which women were particularly associated.¹³⁶ While Christian texts still, undoubtedly, focussed more on elite men than anyone else, they included more consideration of the poor, and women, than pagan literature.

Even so, we must remember that letters and hagiographies were often written to or about individuals who were hardly representative of women in either Rome or Constantinople. Unmarried and ascetical aristocrats, of the type corresponding with Jerome, were exceptional even among the nobility.¹³⁷ Therefore, while we might see changes arising in the discourse from the fourth century onwards, this surely does not herald a complete transformation in overall attitudes to female movement or women in public. Even sources that appear to address a wider audience, such as sermons and homilies, were likely delivered before a small portion of the urban populace (as will be discussed in the next chapter).¹³⁸ Therefore, while there are certainly changes in the representation of women and public environments within Christian discourse as compared to pagan, at least some of this must be attributed to the different genres of surviving sources, and its impact on late antique women in general should not be overstated.

¹³⁵ A. Cameron, 'Virginitas as Metaphor: Women and the Rhetoric of Early Christianity', in A. Cameron (ed.) *History as Text*, (London, 1989), p. 192.

¹³⁶ A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire : the Development of Christian Discourse*, (Berkeley, 1991), p. 149.

¹³⁷ Jerome, *Against Vigilantius*, 15; *Against Jovinianus*, 1.36, acknowledge this, as Jerome told his critics not to worry about all women becoming lifelong virgins, as it was difficult and few would ever attempt or achieve it.

¹³⁸ See chapter 2 of this thesis, pp. 113-120.

Yet, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Christian discourse does seem to have deviated from more traditional pagan texts in its treatment of women in public, proffering various reasons for women to engage with public places in ways deemed acceptable by an elite male audience. While the household remained the ideal location for modest Christian women, our sources also found numerous reasons to positively present women in public places, even when acting in full view of others. To demonstrate this, and given the range of available sources to scrutinise, I will focus on the works of Jerome and John Chrysostom to draw out and examine some of these changes in sufficient detail. I will then briefly move on to discuss other Christian texts from Rome and Constantinople, in order to demonstrate that Chrysostom and Jerome were not outliers in their representations of women in public

Jerome and John Chrysostom

In studying the representation of women in public in Rome and Constantinople, Jerome and John Chrysostom make apt case studies. In terms of chronology, geography, and ideology, they are neatly lined up for comparison. Born only two years apart, these early church fathers each lived through the latter half of the fourth century and into the beginning of the fifth. Both men were learned theologians, practiced ascetics, and keen spiritual teachers. While Jerome's most famous years were spent in Rome, John's were in Constantinople, and both talked about, and to, women in their respective cities. Indeed, both men enjoyed the support and patronage of some of the wealthiest women in the empire.¹³⁹ Both were from somewhat provincial backgrounds (though Jerome more so) and viewed urban life as problematic.¹⁴⁰ Their stringent beliefs and unwavering positions made them enemies amongst both clergy and elites, in each case leading to exile from their respective cities.

Of course, there were some important differences between the two authors. The most obvious of these was that John Chrysostom, when he came to Constantinople, did so as bishop of the city. As such, he had a wide array of responsibilities, both spiritual and

¹³⁹ Jerome's coterie of women in Rome centred around a group of extremely affluent unmarried widows and virgins living upon the Aventine, while Chrysostom's female supporters included the exceptionally wealthy widow and deaconess Olympias; A. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2009), pp. 33-43, 90-92; W. Meyer, 'Constantinopolitan Women in Chrysostom's Circle', *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol.53, No.3, pp. 265-288.

¹⁴⁰ On Chrysostom's background see P. Allen and W. Meyer, *John Chrysostom*, (London, 1999), pp. 3-17; For Jerome see T. Hunt, *Jerome of Stridon and the Ethics of Literary Production in Late Antiquity*, (London, 2019), pp. 19-27.

administrative. He wielded real authority within the church and influence over the faithful in Constantinople. This might go some way to explaining Chrysostom's seemingly stricter stance, and harsher tone, on the presence of women in public places and their involvement in public activities. As bishop, his position was more stable than Jerome's and he thus had greater freedom to speak his mind with regards to what did, and did not, constitute acceptable female conduct, even when such sermonising proved unpopular with elite women of the city (and by his own acknowledgement it sometimes did).¹⁴¹

Jerome, meanwhile, was not part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and his status as theologian and teacher was not underpinned by office. Instead, his role as spiritual mentor to Rome's aristocratic women relied solely upon his mentees' willingness to receive instruction. It was therefore, surely, not in Jerome's interests to chastise or blame those women he wrote to, or to entirely forbid them from anything that might take them beyond their bedchambers. Furthermore, Jerome's writings come to us in the form of letters, written to individuals, while Chrysostom's words were delivered through sermons to an audience he repeatedly identifies as containing both men and women.¹⁴² As such, we might expect Jerome to have made a greater effort to frame his advice from the viewpoint of the correspondent, while Chrysostom sought to proffer broader counsel (though on several occasions he says he is addressing his words to women specifically).¹⁴³

As noted in previous scholarship, both Jerome and Chrysostom were passionate promoters of female domestic seclusion.¹⁴⁴ Much like pagan authors of the classical world, each believed that a chaste woman ought to restrict her movements, or have them restricted, so that she seldom went abroad. From both his sermons at Antioch and Constantinople (the

¹⁴¹ John Chrysostom, *Homily on Hebrews*, 28.15, the bishop acknowledges some women complained of his criticism; On this, see Meyer (1999), pp.265-288; John also made enemies among the elite more generally for his insistence that money was no good thing, for example see B. Leyerle, 'John Chrysostom on Almsgiving and the Use of Money', *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol.87, No.1, (1994), pp.29-47.

¹⁴² John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 25.4, 26.4, 27.2, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5, 10.1-2, 12.4-5, *Homilies on Eutropius*, 1.3, 2.15, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 4.7, 15.8, 20.5, 28.11.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 26.4, 27.2, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 4.7, 15.8, 20.5, 28.11; It is worth noting that Chrysostom's extant sermons were addressed to different audiences, both in Antioch and Constantinople, and also at various churches across both cities. For more on this, and the task of dating and locating Chrysostom's sermons, see W. Meyer, 'John Chrysostom and his Audience: Distinguishing Different Congregations', *Studia Patristica*, Vol.31, (1997), pp. 70-75.

¹⁴⁴ For example, S. Undheim, 'Veiled Visibility: Morality, Movement and Sacred Virginitly in Late Antiquity', in I. Ostenberg, S. Malmberg, J. Bjørnebye (eds), *The Moving City; Processions, Passages and Promenades in Ancient Rome*, (London, 2015), pp. pp. 59-73.

homilies I reference are from his time at Constantinople, unless I specify otherwise), Chrysostom was clear that he viewed the urban landscape as divided into 'private' and 'public', defined as sites within and without the home. For the bishop, the association of women with the domestic environment was divinely ordained, as was the suitability of men for work outside the household.¹⁴⁵ He preached in Constantinople that men should work outdoors while women stayed home, spun wool, and raised children.¹⁴⁶ These same sentiments, including encouragement for women to work wool, were made by Jerome.¹⁴⁷

In this, both men subscribed to the typical, and ancient, elite male view of womanhood. For Chrysostom, ideal women were bashful, modest, and quiet.¹⁴⁸ A good wife pleased her husband with her beauty in the privacy of their home, where she managed the household and raised their children.¹⁴⁹ Crucially, she must teach her daughter these same virtues, as the bishop warned how daughters were apt to mimic and themselves take up immodest habits.¹⁵⁰ Jerome likewise advised mothers, in multiple letters, to closely supervise the behaviour of unmarried daughters.¹⁵¹ Both men also continued a longstanding tradition of viewing with suspicion attempts by women to beautify and ornament themselves, particularly when venturing into public. Both talked repeatedly about the folly of such enterprise, which seemed designed to attract male attention.¹⁵²

Each described immodest behaviour on the part of elite and worldly women, witnessed in public places across their respective cities, which they employed rhetorically to educate their audience on acceptable comportment. Like the pagan Ammianus before him, Jerome disapproved of those wealthy women who moved immodestly through Rome's streets 'in their capacious litters, with red cloaks and plump bodies, a row of eunuchs walking before them'.¹⁵³ In another letter he complained of those women 'who appear in public preceded

¹⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, *The Kind of Women Who Should be Taken as Wives*, 4; *Homilies on Acts*, 11.3.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 11.3.

¹⁴⁷ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.10.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 27.2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 10.4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.4.

¹⁵¹ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.9, 117.5.

¹⁵² Jerome, *Letters*, 22.27, 24.5, 45.5, 54.4, 107.5, 117.6, 127.3; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 11.4, 12.2, 34.5, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5, 10.1, *Homilies on Philippians*, 10.2, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 11.8, 20.5, 28.13.

¹⁵³ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16: *praecedat caveas basternarum ordo semivirorum et rubentibus buccis cutis farta distenditur*, trans. NPNF.

by a host of eunuchs'.¹⁵⁴ Elsewhere he wrote of those women he saw 'frequenting the baths, flitting through the streets, showing their harlot faces everywhere'.¹⁵⁵ Jerome's main concern with such ostentation on the part of wealthy women was that it seemed deliberately designed to attract attention.¹⁵⁶ It must have worked, for the author spoke of the 'troops of young men' who would follow these shameless ladies through the streets.¹⁵⁷

Chrysostom found such public displays similarly distasteful. He instructed women in Constantinople, upon visiting the forum or church, to put away their trinkets, lest they find themselves pleasing other husbands instead of their own.¹⁵⁸ He noted how women wasted money on decorating their mules, while elsewhere he remarked that some women's love of luxurious display was so intense that they surely wished to dip their hair in molten gold.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the bishop even threatened to exclude from church any woman who came to worship decked in finery.¹⁶⁰ Like Jerome, Chrysostom found expansive retinues of attendants objectionable, designed as they were to attract attention.¹⁶¹ Also like Jerome, he noted that such efforts were often successful, as people would push through crowds to catch glimpses of wealthy women.¹⁶² For Chrysostom, it was not merely the attention-seeking nature of this ostentation that vexed him, but the fact that such finery stood in stark contrast to the multitude of poor persons in the city, on whom money would be better spent.

Certainly, both authors recommended almsgiving, but Chrysostom was especially emphatic on the subject. Whereas Jerome penned letters to women who were, often, already committed to asceticism, Chrysostom stood before a congregation that he repeatedly identified as being both incredibly wealthy and outrageously profligate.¹⁶³ The bishop urged

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.13: *Noli ad publicum subinde procedere, et spadonum exercitu praeunte, viduarum circumferri libertatem.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.4: *adire balneas, volitare per plateas, vultus circumferre meretricios.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.13.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.13: *adolescentium greges post se trahunt.*

¹⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 10.4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.5.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.5.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.9-10.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 28.10.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 11.3, Chrysostom explicitly says if the congregation before him donated all their wealth it would amount to several hundreds of thousands of pounds of gold; on this, see Leyerle (1994), pp. 29-47.

women to give alms, though was unspecific about how or where they should do so.¹⁶⁴ Jerome likewise praised women who gave money to the poor.¹⁶⁵ He urged the widow Furia to clothe, feed, and visit the sick, suggesting such charity involved leaving the house.¹⁶⁶ He also suspected some of giving alms for the sake of self-promotion, such as the unnamed noblewoman who distributed coins to the poor in St Peter's basilica 'with her own hand, that she might be accounted more religious'.¹⁶⁷ That this woman went on to strike an elderly female recipient (for attempting to gain a second coin) served as an indicator that her almsgiving was dedicated more to public display than virtue.¹⁶⁸

Here we see Christian discourse diverge from pagan in its outright promotion of female action in public places. Jerome clearly thought it acceptable and laudable for aristocratic women to engage in public acts of charity, provided their motivations were sincere and they did not, like the unnamed noblewoman at St Peter's, use it as an excuse for public display. He warned widows not to think that 'having ceased to court attention in garments of gold you may begin to do so in mean attire', criticising those who appeared among Christians in order to impress others with their austere living.¹⁶⁹ However, such performative asceticism was acceptable when considered to be genuine. Jerome spoke highly of the aristocrat Fabiola, whose penance for second marriage was carried out in a very public manner in Rome. Jerome emphasised the way she opened herself up to the gaze of many.¹⁷⁰ He also commended her charitable efforts, which included founding a hospital wherein she 'gave food to her patients with her own hand'.¹⁷¹ Such public action was clearly acceptable to Jerome when born out of pure motives.

Whereas pagan-authored texts tended to portray female presence in public as an indicator of dysfunction, our Christian sources were more interested in the *manner* in which women engaged with public settings. For Jerome, then, public display could be acceptable, but not when intended to attract the attention of others. Chrysostom similarly seems to have been

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *Homily on Eutropius*, 2.15.

¹⁶⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 54.6.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.12.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.32: *propria manu, quo religiosior putaretur*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.32, not only this, but the unnamed woman appeared in St Peter's with a retinue of eunuchs.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.27: *ne cogitatio tacita subrepat, ut quia in auratis vestibibus placere desisti, placere coneris in sordidis*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.4.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 77.6: *praebebat cibos propria manu*, trans. NPNF.

concerned with *how* women were engaging with public spaces and places. The bishop wanted women to attend church, no matter how busy it might be, but only if their behaviour was sufficiently modest. He did not want them to speak, applaud, laugh, or appear in finery.¹⁷² Indeed, the bishop even thought there were acceptable ways for women to venture through marketplaces and *fora*. Those who dressed in plain clothes, passing on foot with small retinues of no more than two servants, did so with propriety and without attracting notice.¹⁷³

Alongside laudable action, both men seem to have accepted the reality that ‘worldly’ women (i.e. those not dedicated to a religious life) would engage in certain public movements. In his *Homilies on Hebrews*, delivered in the closing years of his episcopate, Chrysostom did ‘not wonder so much that the wife of a rich man wears gold and silk, for this is the common practice of them all’.¹⁷⁴ He felt such luxuries should be spurned, and was certainly against them in church, but accepted women wore such things in the baths and marketplaces.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, from his time at Antioch onwards the bishop seems to have considered visiting the baths to be a permissible endeavour for women.¹⁷⁶ Jerome, meanwhile, was less accepting of women attending the baths, though on this point he seems to acknowledge he was something of an outlier. He noted how some thought it acceptable for female virgins to bathe together, though he did not.¹⁷⁷ Elsewhere he wrote of perfumed widows who ‘frequented baths’ and yet were ‘saluted as ladies of high rank and saintliness’.¹⁷⁸

In the works of both men, the strictest instruction was reserved for unmarried virgins. These chaste women, maintaining celibacy in devotion to Christ, represented the pinnacle of female achievement in the eyes of theologians like Jerome and Chrysostom.¹⁷⁹ They were

¹⁷² John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.8

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 28.9-11.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.13: Τὴν γὰρ ἀνδρὸς πλουτοῦντος οὔσαν ψυναῖκα οὐχ οὔτω θαυμασόμεθα χρυσία φοροῦσαν καὶ σηρικὰ (τοῦτο γὰρ κοινὸν ἀπασῶν), trans. NPNF.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.13.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 61.3.

¹⁷⁷ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.11.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.4: *Si balneas peterent, unguenta eligerent, divitias et viduitatem haberent materiem luxuriae et libertatis, dominae vocarentur, et sanctae*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Eutropius*, 2.15; Jerome, *Letters*, 22.19, both were clear virginity was the ideal, followed by widowhood, and then chaste marriage.

also perceived to be most at risk from temptation and thus in need of special protection.¹⁸⁰ At Antioch, Chrysostom had declared that virgins ought to be fenced in on every side and not leave the home at any time during the whole year.¹⁸¹ At Constantinople, he decreed the bedchamber to be the only fitting place for a virgin.¹⁸² Jerome, whose correspondence was particularly concerned with instructions on the virginal life, could be extreme in his recommendations for seclusion. He, too, stated that virgins ought to remain primarily in the bedchamber and were not permitted to visit the baths.¹⁸³ They should not leave the house, unless strictly necessary, and always do so with devout female chaperones.¹⁸⁴

Both men were unambiguous in thinking that unmarried virgins and widows needed to avoid the company of extrafamilial men (and Jerome went so far as to suggest that not even kinship was a sufficient safeguard).¹⁸⁵ The range of men who posed a threat was extensive and included both elite and nonelite, clergy, and monks.¹⁸⁶ Jerome warned men could use physical touch, facial expressions, and even humorous words to assail a woman's modesty.¹⁸⁷ He also explained how the reputations and chastity of such women were easily imperilled.¹⁸⁸ It was another reason to be so concerned over the retinues employed by wealthy women, as too many included a 'frizzled steward' or 'ruddy footman'.¹⁸⁹ Such men could bring about lustful thoughts, and women were soon wont to pick a favourite from among their entourage and behave too intimately towards them.¹⁹⁰

Jerome, however, went a step further. Throughout his letters he appears equally concerned, and talks as much about, avoiding the company of worldly women as he does men. He repeatedly urges his correspondents to avoid visiting the houses of other women, as was common among elite ladies.¹⁹¹ His primary worry with virgins visiting the baths was that

¹⁸⁰ Jerome, *Letters*, 117.6, explains that virgins' inexperience means they are more easily tempted by lust; 22.13, he explains that many virgins fall from the church on a daily basis.

¹⁸¹ John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, 3.17.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.4.

¹⁸³ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.17, 22.25.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.13.

¹⁸⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.4; Jerome, *Letters*, 22.12.

¹⁸⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.28.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.24, 22.28, 107.9, 117.6.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.8.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.13: *procurator calamistratus; candidus et rubicundus assecla*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.8.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.16, 22.29, 107.11, 117.6, 127.4.

they would bathe alongside married women.¹⁹² Not only should elite women be avoided, but also female singers, fluteplayers, and groups of boisterous women.¹⁹³ False widows and virgins, who spent their days in idle chatter, should likewise be shunned.¹⁹⁴ Jerome also warned his charges to ‘beware of nurses and waiting maids’ who proffered bad advice in service only to themselves.¹⁹⁵ Such warnings are largely absent from Chrysostom’s sermons, which I would again attribute to their different audiences. Jerome was talking principally to ascetic widows and virgins, and worried that familiarity with women who lived more extravagant or worldly lifestyles might tempt them away from their calling.

However, even these conservative theologians were prepared to accept the presence of virgins in public, provided the cause was religious action. Jerome spoke of the young virgin Asella, who ‘hurried to the martyrs’ shrines unnoticed’ and took pleasure in how she managed to avoid attention.¹⁹⁶ Provided they were chaperoned, Jerome thought virgins could attend both churches and shrines. The chaperones were necessary because even at these places there were men who would seek to approach such especially vulnerable women with ill designs.¹⁹⁷ Again showcasing that his concern was with *how* women engaged with public settings, Chrysostom noted how women could appear in public, even in busy secular places, if they were protected by a good reputation. At Antioch, he said:

‘Appearing in public or retiring from it does not cause shame ... Therefore many women who have been liberated from their apartments walk through the crowded market and are not censured. In fact, they are much admired for their modesty ... In contrast, not a few of those sequestered have surrounded themselves with an evil reputation’.¹⁹⁸

Indeed, at certain key events the bishop also thought it appropriate for virgins to be in public. Throughout Late Antiquity, Constantinople had various martyrial relics delivered into its churches, to compensate for its lack of homegrown saints. Their arrival into the city and subsequent transportation to an ecclesial destination was marked with processions,

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 107.11.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 45.5, 54.13, 107.9.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.29, 107.11.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.5: *cave nutrices et gerulas*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.4: *ad martyrum limina pene invisā properabat*, trans. NPNF.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.9.

¹⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, *On Virginity and Against Remarriage*, 66.2.31-42: οὔτε γὰρ τὸ φαίνεσθαι, οὔτε τὸ κρύπτεσθαι τοῦτο ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἢ κατέχουσα τὴν ψυχὴν ἔνδον προπέτεια, τὸ δὲ ἢ σωφροσύνη καὶ ἡ αἰδώς. Διὰ ταῦτα καὶ τῶν ἀπηλλαγμένων τῆς εἰρκτικῆς ἐκείνης πολλὰ καὶ διὰ μέσου τοῦ πλήθους ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς βαδίζουσαι οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐπεσπᾶσαντο κατηγόρους, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλοὺς ἔσχον τῆς σωφροσύνης τοὺς θαυμαστάς...οὐκ ὀλίγα δὲ τῶν ἔνδον καθημένων πονηρᾶ δόξη περιέβαλον ἑαυτάς, trans. NPNF.

torches, and psalms. In one such procession, involving the transfer of relics from the Great Church of Constantinople to the chapel of St. Thomas at Drypia, Chrysostom remarked how the entire Christian community had attended, including even virgins who rarely left their homes.¹⁹⁹ The empress Eudoxia attended also, and was roundly praised by the bishop for leaving her customary seclusion (which he claimed was extensive) and coming into full view, where everyone present looked upon her radiance.²⁰⁰

Similarly, when the palace eunuch Eutropius fell from favour in 399, he sought sanctuary in the Great Church at Constantinople, wherein he remained for a short while before his eventual execution. During his stay, a hostile congregation gathered, seemingly to see the infamous figure for themselves. The occasion attracted a greater assembly than usual, reflected in the bishop's assertion that men had left the marketplace, married women had left their houses, and virgins their bedchambers to attend church.²⁰¹ As I will discuss later, the referencing of women (and particularly virgins), at public events seems to have served the rhetorical purpose of highlighting the important nature of an occasion. However, this particular rhetorical device was not specific to either Christian or late antique discourse, with classical authors referencing the appearance or involvement of 'even women' at public events to highlight their significance.²⁰²

Clearly, both men addressed persons of different age and marital status, and each tailored their messages accordingly. Jerome wrote to the widow Laeta explaining that her virginal daughter should not visit even places of Christian worship without a chaperone.²⁰³ This, it seems, was not necessary for the older and more worldly-wise widow. Older women could also serve as witnesses, which were necessary whenever a virgin found herself in conversation with an extrafamilial man.²⁰⁴ Indeed, both authors seem to have recognised that guardians had the power, at least in theory, to detain those women at home who were under their authority. Jerome thus advised a mother not to let her daughter step beyond

¹⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, *That People Should Come Together Frequently*, in K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, (California, 1989), p. 57.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁰¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Eutropius*, 1.3.

²⁰² For example, when Dio Chrysostom (*Discourses*, 42.32) spoke of the outrageous behaviour of Alexandrian crowds, gathered on the occasion of games, he included 'not only men, but even women and children'.

²⁰³ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.11.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.13, 127.3.

the *domus*, while Chrysostom noted at Antioch that a father had many resources at his disposal to make the custody of his daughter easy (though he admits not guaranteed), such as the supervision of his wife and numerous maidservants.²⁰⁵

The assumption that his audience had such manpower in their employ reminds us that Chrysostom was talking largely to elites, as was Jerome. However, while Jerome was crafting his instruction for the benefit of his female correspondents, Chrysostom urged his male listeners to enforce proper comportment on elite and nonelite women alike, having told his Antiochene audience to restrain both wives and female servants at home.²⁰⁶ In this, Chrysostom gives us a glimpse of how Christianity could appear as something of a social leveller. His concern was theoretically with the wellbeing of *all* women. At Constantinople, he explicitly told his congregation that if a slave was a virgin, she should remain within the household despite her servile status.²⁰⁷ Elsewhere, at a sermon possibly at either Antioch or Constantinople, the preacher spoke of how, where a woman took her female servants to the baths, their nudity would reveal any bruises or other indicators of cruel treatment delivered by their mistress.²⁰⁸ Meanwhile, Jerome warned his charges not to speak to those maidservants, who were also chaste, as if they were superior to them.²⁰⁹

We should, however, be wary of attributing to either man too much egalitarianism, for both concerned themselves primarily with the wellbeing of elites (though Chrysostom in particular argued for charity towards the poor) and spoke of nonelite women often in terms not dissimilar to authors like Ammianus. As mentioned above, Jerome urged his correspondents to avoid various nonelite women, but otherwise spoke of them rarely. He was clear that virgins should avoid boisterous slave weddings (*nuptiae servolorum*), or other such events in the household, but his attacks on immodest women in the public places of Rome were primarily reserved for the elite and, especially, those who professed to be virgins and widows.²¹⁰ Again, I would attribute this to the particular aim of his letters, in

²⁰⁵ John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, 3.17.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, *Against the Jews*, 4.7.3.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5.

²⁰⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 15.

²⁰⁹ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.29.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.11; household slaves could form recognised unions, but these 'marriages' were not legally binding and could be ended at the whim of a master. On this see G. S. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition*, (London, 2000), p. 24.

which he tried to prevent aristocratic women from living 'worldly' lives. There was little danger, surely, of Marcella or Eustochium behaving like, or mingling with, prostitutes and vegetable sellers.

Chrysostom, meanwhile, used nonelite women as examples of immodest public appearances. Attracting male attention was not for chaste ladies, but was instead for women engaged in the selling of vegetables and other victuals.²¹¹ He accused harlots on stage of destroying entire households with their erotic performances, urged women to remain indoors by highlighting how prostitutes stood outside their houses, and spoke with derision of how old procuresses were dragged into the forum for punishment.²¹² Women who dressed in fine clothes were compared to fluteplayers and pipers.²¹³ Those employed to mourn publicly at funerals should be shunned, for such mourning ought to be done by respectable ladies at home, where nobody could see.²¹⁴ In fact, the bishop warned that anyone employing such women would no longer be welcome in church.²¹⁵ Unlike Jerome, Chrysostom was preaching to women who enjoyed a variety of entertainments, and thus employed the examples of nonelite women to shame them into better comportment.

Both Chrysostom and Jerome, then, seem to have accepted (if not relished) the fact that many nonelite women were frequently in public. These were not ideal women, compared as they were unfavourably to modest elites, but nowhere does Chrysostom or Jerome rail against them selling vegetables in public squares or crafting in workshops. Neither do they disapprove of the many female beggars to be found in the streets, who Chrysostom portrays as publicly imploring passers-by for charity.²¹⁶ Rather, those nonelite women held up for criticism were employed in luxurious, erotic, or impious enterprises. Old women who sold charms and amulets, and those who wailed openly at funerals, were despised not for their public actions but for providing profane services.²¹⁷ Women who sold chamber utensils of silver were castigated for squandering wealth on useless ostentation.²¹⁸ Those women who

²¹¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5.

²¹² *Ibid.*, *Against the Theatres and Circuses*, cited in D. M. Gwyn, *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire: A Sourcebook*, (London, 2015), p. 90; *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7; *Homilies on Acts*, 31.4.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 10.4.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Philippians*, 3.2.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 4.7.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 45.4; *Homilies on Hebrews*, 11.8.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 8.5.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.4.

danced and performed publicly were particular figures of derision because they catered to base desires and inspired lustful, sinful thoughts.²¹⁹

On this last point, we can detect a difference between the works of Chrysostom and Jerome. While both authors agreed that the presence of women in public places was not ideal, they expounded on its hazards in different ways. In the works of each theologian, the visibility of women in public raised problems of temptation and lust. For John Chrysostom, the chief victims of these exchanges were often men. In the city as represented by Chrysostom's sermons, the presence of women in public was problematic because men would look at them. In these situations it was male chastity that was imperilled, as the man who saw women on the stage would receive mortal injuries to his spirit.²²⁰ As alluded to above, Chrysostom believed the sight of such women would lead to domestic dysfunction in the households of those men who looked upon them.

To better understand Chrysostom's representation of women and men, we can turn, as Blake Leyerle has suggested, to the idea of the 'gaze'. Originating within the field of feminist film criticism, it is a 'term denoting the subordinated position of woman as spectacle'.²²¹ The woman is a sexualised object to be looked at, while the man is 'the bearer of the look'.²²² The 'gaze' involves conceptualising the woman as the 'quintessential and deeply problematic object of sight', and few phrases could better define the way in which Chrysostom viewed women, both elite and nonelite.²²³ It was because of this problematic nature, the bishop explained in Antioch, that a respectable girl was 'relieved of every reason which might compel her to come into the gaze of men'.²²⁴ After all, it was adultery 'even to look upon a woman with unchaste eyes'.²²⁵ Through this portrayal, the bishop placed the woman in the passive role, as the object of the 'gaze', while the men in question were the active participants; the ones who did the looking.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, *Against the Jews*, 60.5.

²²¹ B. Leyerle, 'John Chrysostom and the Gaze', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol.1, No.2, (1993), p. 159.

²²² T. de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't*, Indiana University Press, (1984), p. 23.

²²³ N. Scheman, "Missing Mothers/Desiring Daughters: Framing the Sight of Women," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.15, (1988), p.63.

²²⁴ John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, 3.17: Χωρίς δὲ τούτων πάσης αἰτίας ἀπήλλακται, ὡς μὴ ἄν ποτε εἰς ἀνδρῶν ὄψιν βιασθῆναι ἐλθεῖν, trans. NPNF.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 5.4: ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἀκολάστοις ἰδεῖν ὀφθαλμοῖς, trans. NPNF.

Like Chrysostom, Jerome was entirely convinced that sojourns through the city, and attendance at public places, were risky activities for respectable men and women. He too stated that a man who looked lustfully upon a woman 'has committed adultery with her already in his heart'.²²⁶ As in Constantinople, the problem of making oneself visible at public places in the city was primarily one of sight and lust. However, unlike Chrysostom, Jerome tended not to represent the woman as the passive party. Instead, Jerome warned the widow Furia against looking at the handsome youths and attendants.²²⁷ He warned Laeta to keep away from young, effeminate and well-groomed men.²²⁸ To a mother and daughter, he cautioned coming into the company of a 'bearded fop', who he claimed might 'be a temptation to you'.²²⁹

Evidently then, in the works of Jerome it was the woman who was often represented as the active agent. She was the bearer of the look, while dandified men could be objects of sexual desire. This deviated somewhat from Chrysostom's representations, in which men were inflamed by the sight of women, whereas he imagined a disciplined virgin greeting the sight of male nudity with nothing but derision.²³⁰ This difference can again be explained by the audiences the two theologians were trying to reach. Many of Jerome's letters were addressed to a coterie of aristocratic, ascetic women, and so it is understandable that he delivered his advice more in line with their female perspective. They were also widows and virgins, and thus he worried about *their* capacity for lustful thoughts. Chrysostom's sermons, on the other hand, were performed before a congregation of both sexes, typically oriented more towards the dominant, male, perspective.

In sum, both authors clearly thought the ideal location for respectable women was the home, and that public places were more suited to male action. However, their advice on movements and seclusion varied, depending upon the marital and social status of the women in question. Both seem to have accepted that nonelite women plied various trades in public places across their cities, but were opposed to those whose occupations were damaging to Christian living. Regarding the elite, married women and widows were afforded

²²⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.5: *jam moechatus est eam in corde suo*, trans. NPNF.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.13.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.9.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.6: *Dabit tibi barbatulus quilibet manum, sustentabit lassam; et pressis digitis, aut tentabitur, aut tentabit*, trans. NPNF.

²³⁰ John Chrysostom, *On the Kind of Women Who Should be Taken as Wives*. 10.74-76.

more leniency in the discourse, in terms of their movements, than unmarried virgins, for whom the strictest seclusion was recommended. However, our authors were prepared to accept, and even celebrate, the presence of these women in public at religious occasions that merited their attendance.

Each also tailored their message for the audience before them, with Jerome framing his advice more from the female perspective, and with more emphasis on keeping his charges away from other elite and worldly women. For Chrysostom, men had a role to play in keeping women at home, whether as fathers or husbands, and to shape their habits when it came to dress and jewellery.²³¹ Both men also acknowledged that there were some people, whose numbers we cannot know, who disagreed with their austere stance on such matters. Jerome understood that some in Rome regarded those who followed his advice as spiritless, while Chrysostom recognised at multiple junctures that some elite women were unhappy with his constant criticism of their behaviour.²³²

However, it was in their acceptance of, and praise for, certain female public actions that their discourse broke from that of other, pagan-authored texts of Late Antiquity. Chrysostom's delight in Eudoxia's public performance at urban processions could not be further from the hostility of Ammianus or Zosimus to the actions of Christian empresses. Jerome's pleasure in Furia's public, penitential endeavours has no parallel in the letters of late antique pagans. Of course, one could rightly point to the genre of these sources, as Ammianus, Zosimus, and Procopius were writing general histories and not directly addressing an audience containing women. Neither were the letters of Symmachus intended to instruct elite women on religious affairs. For this reason, I will briefly turn my attention to other Christian sources of different genres, to show that even histories were written differently, with regards to representation of women in public, by Christian authors.

Other Christian sources

Like pagan authors before and alongside them, Christians could utilise female movement through public space as a tool of invective. Jerome and Chrysostom did so, as did the fourth-century poet Prudentius. Writing in Rome, his attacks on the city's pagan traditions included

²³¹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 25.4.

²³² Jerome, *Letters*, 24.5; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.4; *Homily on Hebrews*, 28.15.

a tirade against the famous Vestal priestesses, whose public appearances he referenced as proof of their false virginity. The poet, like Jerome, severely disapproved of the highly visible way in which these women moved through the urban landscape. In his *Crowns of Martyrdom*, he described their public movements:

‘She is carried along in the streets in a sort of public procession, sitting in a cushioned car, and with face uncovered obliges an awe-struck city with a sight of the admired Virgin. Then on to the gathering at the amphitheatre passes this figure of life-giving purity and bloodless piety, to see the bloody battles and deaths of human beings and look on with holy eyes at wounds men suffer for the price of their keep’.²³³

Like other Christian writers, Prudentius obviously felt that the amphitheatre was a wildly inappropriate place for supposedly chaste women, and he made an extensive effort to highlight how thoroughly incompatible the setting was with female modesty. Like Jerome, he understood true virginity and chastity to be represented by a lack of public display. The poet wrote that Christian virgins, by contrast, had ‘honour in private while their figure is unknown to the public’.²³⁴ The Vestals, however, like the false virgins and widows Jerome warned his charges about, moved through the streets with pomp, attracting glances from all. In his description, Prudentius demonstrated that the Vestals' use of space deviated from what was known to be acceptable for a chaste virgin. It was designed to question the modesty of these pagan priestesses and, by extension, the validity of the traditional pagan belief system of which they were a part.

Clearly, what was considered appropriate for respectable women varied, depending upon the male voice in question. The traditionalist pagans of Rome saw nothing amiss in the public nature of the roles fulfilled by the Vestals. Conversely, many Christians found the public appearances of Vestals to be disturbing, while seeing nothing out of place in the highly visible roles occasionally fulfilled by Christian empresses or other notable women of faith. Furthermore, the writings of Prudentius and Jerome demonstrate just how flexible women, and public settings, could feature as rhetorical devices. For example, Jerome held up the Vestals' praiseworthy abstinence, comparing them to Christian women in a bid to

²³³ Prudentius, *Against Symmachus*, 2.1088-90: *fertur per medias ut publica pompa plateas/ pilento residens molli, seque ore relecto/ imputat attonitae viro spectabilis urbi. Inde ad consessum caveae pudor almus et expers sanguinis it pietas hominum visura cruentos/ congressus mortesque et vulnera vendita pastu/ spectatura sacris oculis*, trans. LCL.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 21055-9: *et privatus honos nec nota et publica forma*, trans. LCL.

shame his audience into adopting stricter moral standards.²³⁵ However, when the purpose of the text changed, and the author sought to promote Christianity and denigrate paganism, the Vestal took on the role of conspicuous harlot.²³⁶

In Constantinople, the representation of women in public was also being employed in a variety of ways. While the Vestals in Rome were criticised for their high-profile public appearances, the mid-fifth-century *Church History* of Theodoret was ready to heap praise upon the empress Flacilla (356 – 386 CE), wife of Theodosius I. She was heavily commended for going out into the city to visit the houses of the poor and the sick, even going so far as to do so without the assistance of attendants. She visited the sick also in their lodgings at certain, unnamed churches, where she helped to feed them. According to Theoderet, some tried to stop her from doing such things with her own hands, but the empress insisted that it was befitting even for one of her station.²³⁷

While Flacilla was praised for going out into the world, Sozomen's mid-fifth-century history lauded the virginal *augusta* Pulcheria (398/399 – 453 CE) for forbidding men entry into the palace and for keeping herself and her sisters secluded. We are told that she would eat her meals and take walks only in the company of her sisters, and engaged in wool working.²³⁸ The sources suggest that Pulcheria exercised a good deal of authority over the imperial family and, in effect, transformed the palace at Constantinople into something almost monastic by refusing entry to any man.²³⁹ Whereas womanly influence over palace affairs was traditionally portrayed in classical histories as a signifier of dysfunction, as discussed earlier, this was not the case here. Evidently, this is another example of a Christian author seeking to convey a woman in a positive light and able to use Christian virtues in order to commend her for considerable influence, domestic seclusion, and public appearances.

Furthermore, as referenced above, women also featured in these texts in a way that served to highlight the exceptional nature of an event. For instance, when the emperor visited a chapel in the suburbs of Constantinople, throngs of people emerged from their houses to

²³⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 123.8-9.

²³⁶ On the flexible use of Vestals in particular by Jerome and other Christian authors, see S. Undheim, 'The Wise and the Foolish Virgins: Representations of Vestal Virginity and Pagan Chastity by Christian Writers in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol. 25, No.3, (2017), pp. 383-409.

²³⁷ Theoderet, *Church History*, 5.18.

²³⁸ Sozomen, *Church History*, 9.1.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.1-3.

lay eyes upon him, including both women and children.²⁴⁰ Similarly, the church historians Socrates and Sozomen both reported how the church of the Novatians at Constantinople was destroyed.²⁴¹ Afterwards, the community pulled together in order to rebuild the church, doing so with their bare hands. The collective nature of the enterprise was stressed by the authors, as they wrote that 'even women and children assisted in the work'.²⁴² Similar examples can be found elsewhere, such as in the description of the Jews' rebuilding of their temple, where 'even the women carried heaps of earth'.²⁴³

Clearly then, in the world as represented by the Church Historians, the public presence of women was noteworthy, but was perfectly acceptable and even laudable when there was a reason for it. This employment of women as a rhetorical device is similar to that found in Chrysostom's sermons. Indeed, as mentioned previously, the inclusion of 'even women' was used by a variety of authors to indicate the significance of a public event, both positively and negatively. It appeared in late antique panegyrics, to show how *everyone* wished to catch sight of an emperor in public.²⁴⁴ It also appeared in the classical histories of Dio Chrysostom and the late antique writings of Procopius in a negative light, where female involvement in public violence was included to show just how outrageous and extensive the civil disobedience was.²⁴⁵

As such, while we can detect similarities between pagan and Christian representations of women in public, as both tended to believe respectable women ought to remain at home and nonelite women were generally overlooked, there are differences. Overall, I have demonstrated how public appearances and actions on the part of women, mostly of the elite, could be presented in a positive fashion by Christian authors, particularly where the reason for their public presence was religious action. While there were differences between Christian authors, such as Jerome and Chrysostom, we can observe a general trend across the sources, in that descriptions of women in public no longer came to be primarily

²⁴⁰ Socrates, *Church History*, 5.23.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.38; Sozomen, *Church History*, 4.20.

²⁴² Sozomen, *Church History*, 4.20: ἐκοινώνουν γὰρ τοῦ ἔργου οὐ μόνον ἄνδρες, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκες καὶ παῖδες, trans. NPNF.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.22: ὡς καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν γυναῖκας τὸν χοῦν τοῖς κόλποις ἐκφέρειν, trans. NPNF.

²⁴⁴ Claudian, *Panegyric on the Third Consulship of Honorius*, 135-6; *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, 585.

²⁴⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 42.32; Procopius, *Persian Wars*, 1.24.6.

associated with disorder. Having established that this was the case in the discourse, I will move on to demonstrate in later chapters how Christianity impacted the reality of women's movements, contending that it did open up new routes through which women could engage with public settings in a manner considered acceptable by male commentators.

iv. Women in public: material representations

Having focussed on textual sources, I will conclude by turning my attention to material representations of women and urban settings. This includes statues, which depict women while themselves being situated (in some cases) in public settings, and other forms of representation, which could be domestically situated, but which show women in public settings. As I shall demonstrate, beginning with an examination of statuary, there was a clear attempt to link women with the domestic environment of the home, and to distance them from overtly public (and therefore male) settings. This can be seen both in the placement of images and the ways in which those images presented women (the one singular exception to this is the late antique empress, particularly as represented in Constantinople). While there are instances of women being depicted in public settings, or cases of those material representations of women themselves being found in public settings, the women presented in either case tended to be of a select few. Across Late Antiquity, then, the tendency was for only exceptional women (imperial, saintly, biblical) to be depicted in public settings.

After considering statuary, I will then look at other forms of representation, before concluding with imagery of women in late antique churches. While the emergence of churches as legitimate public places in the fourth century presented new routes for women to be represented in artwork outside the home, the women depicted in such scenes were often of biblical or imperial importance, and were not ordinary women, or even ordinary elite women (i.e. nonimperial aristocrats and wealthy persons). While these images were not of everyday women, I will highlight how the placement of female images within churches could speak to the physical location of women within those places (which is something I will address in more detail in chapter four). Thus, the overall image presented in material culture was still one that valued domesticity in women. Such representations also continued to be open, as they had always been, to only a privileged few.

Representations of women in statuary

The importance of looking at honorific statuary within the current inquiry is that statues, as three-dimensional sculptures, represented women directly *in* urban environments.

Moreover, the relationship between statues and the physical sites in which they were located was not random but inlaid with meaning, and this meaning would be perceived and understood by an ancient or late antique Roman audience. As I will go on to discuss, both here and in more detail in chapters three and four, certain public places were associated with civic and religious prestige, and thus to have one's image inscribed into these places was itself a sign of honour and, as we shall see, relationship to that place. Thus, to have a statue of oneself erected within Rome, in a place as culturally significant as, say, the Roman Forum, required the consent of the Senate, emperor, or imperial officials.²⁴⁶ As such, we can look to the placement of female images as yet another insight into how the relationship between women (in this case of the elite) and urban public settings was represented in Late Antiquity.

The statue habit, in which sculptures of individuals were erected, constituted a 'requisite aspect of urban identity' in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.²⁴⁷ It performed a vital role in the promotion of elite persons and imperial dynasties, while 'lubricating' the complex patronage networks that were tightly interwoven with almost all social, political and economic relationships.²⁴⁸ Statues were ubiquitous across the urban landscape, found in virtually every type of space and place, both public and private. They were, Smith explains, a 'defining practice' of Greek and Roman civilisation.²⁴⁹ Yet the production of statuary declined markedly in Late Antiquity. While not consistent or regionally uniform, this reduction can be seen across the Roman world.²⁵⁰ Statue production remained relatively stable in the fourth century, although the repurposing of older statuary was heavily

²⁴⁶ E. A. Hemelrijk, *Hidden Lives, Public Personae: Women and Civic Life in the Roman West*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 275; G. Kalas, *The Restoration of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity: Transforming Public Space*, (Austin, 2015), p. 54.

²⁴⁷ S. Bassett, 'Ancient Statuary in Fourth-Century Constantinople: Subject, Style, and Function', in F. A. Bauer and C. Witschel (eds), *Statuen in der Spätantike*, (Wiesbaden, 2007), p. 192.

²⁴⁸ B. Ward-Perkins, 'Statues at the End of Antiquity', in R. R. R. Smith and B. Ward-Perkins, *The Last Statues of Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2016), p.35.

²⁴⁹ R. R. R. Smith, 'Statue Life in the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias, AD 100 – 600: Local Context and Historical Meaning', in Bauer and Witschel (2007), p. 203.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28.

favoured over the creation of new sculpture.²⁵¹ The practice then fell away sharply in the fifth century, with the erection of new statues in this period unusual. By the sixth century, commissioning of new statuary appears to have been virtually non-existent in almost every part of the Roman world except Constantinople, although the habit was declining there also.²⁵² In Rome, the final statue we hear of was dedicated to the emperor Phocas in 608 CE.²⁵³

It should be noted that the evidence base is remarkably different across our two cities. In Rome, a large amount of physical material has survived until the present day. Although there is little doubt that what exists today represents only a fraction of the original collection, there is still a great deal of evidence to analyse. The overwhelming majority of evidence for Constantinopolitan statuary and other artwork, however, comes to us in textual references. The impressive statue collection, which is believed to have remained largely undisturbed until the city fell to the armies of the Fourth Crusade and, later, the Ottoman Turks, is now almost completely lost. It is only due to the survival of late antique texts, along with some medieval works such as the *Palatine* and *Planudean* Anthologies, that we are able to gain an insight into the visual representations of women in late antique Constantinople.²⁵⁴

The statue habits in Rome and Constantinople were also different to those of other, more provincial centres. In places such as Aphrodisias and Ostia, many statues were erected in recognition of local elites, often in or near those public buildings their munificence had helped found. For instance, excavations in each of these places have revealed the presence of statues, representing both male and female patrons, linked to the construction and embellishment of public baths.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, in Rome and Constantinople the erection of new monuments and buildings resided more firmly in the hands of the emperor and imperial officials. This is reflected in the statue records for both cities, which largely

²⁵¹ P. Stuart, 'Continuity and Tradition in Late Antique Perceptions of Portrait Statuary', in Bauer and Witschel (2007), p. 27.

²⁵² R. R. R. Smith, 'Statue Practice in the late Roman empire: numbers, costumes and style', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), pp. 3-4.

²⁵³ Indeed, without this record, the final such dedications we would hear of in the city would date from the early sixth century.

²⁵⁴ S. Bassett, in Bauer and Witschel (2007), p. 190.

²⁵⁵ J. Trimble, *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture*, (Cambridge, 2011), p. 214; Smith in Bauer and Witschel (2007), p. 210.

focussed on representing members of the imperial household and individuals who held high office. The link between aristocratic female patrons and major public buildings is not seen.

I would argue that as honorific statuary represented a highly traditional medium, like the classical histories of authors like Ammianus and Procopius, its representations of women and public settings in Rome and Constantinople were similarly conservative. In this respect, the relationship between women and urban topography, articulated by where statues of women were themselves placed within urban places, emphasised female connection to the domestic realm and distanced them from overtly public, and male, sites. It has been argued, for instance, that the almost complete absence of female statues from Rome's *fora* served to reinforce the notion that they were male gendered places.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, the ways in which women were portrayed through statuary continued to highlight traditional virtues of elite modesty. However, the one area where late antique female statuary broke from earlier practice, as we shall see, was in representation of empresses.

As one might expect, late antique statues depicting male honorands were more common than those portraying women (as had always been the case). Of the roughly 170 surviving statuary items from late antique Rome, 23% are of female subjects.²⁵⁷ Across the whole empire, the later Roman period saw proportionally fewer female statues than in previous periods, as subjects honoured in statuary were 'increasingly emperors and governors' and thus numbers of 'local benefactor elites go down, as do women'.²⁵⁸ As the statue habit gravitated more towards honouring emperors and holders of high office, at the expense of local patrons, women were increasingly squeezed out. After all, elite women could act as local benefactresses, with public statues set up to honour them in response, but could not hold public office. Furthermore, while 23% of statues found were of women, this does not mean that the average Roman would have seen, in his movements through the public parts of his city, one in every four statues as representing women.

This is because, looking at the statuary items from Rome, those dedicated to non-imperial elite women seem to have been largely situated in private, domestic settings. This can be

²⁵⁶ Boatwright (2011), p. 107; Murer, in M. Flohr (2020), p. 154; See also A. Richlin, 'The Roman Forum as Gendered Space', abstract, *Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association*, Session 8, Section 70, (New York, 1996).

²⁵⁷ Carlos Machado and Julia Lenaghan, 'Rome', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 128.

²⁵⁸ Smith, in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 5.

inferred from examining the ratio of surviving marble portraits to inscribed statue bases. For male statues, there are almost twice as many extant statue bases as actual statues (heavy bases are sturdier constructions better able to withstand the trials of time).²⁵⁹ However, for non-imperial women the precise opposite is true, with 'roughly twice the number of marble portraits as inscribed bases' surviving from Rome, at a ratio of 39:19.²⁶⁰ This can be 'explained by the likely private setting of many of these statues', such as a fourth-century statue set up to a woman by her son-in-law found near the Lateran behind the Scala Santa in 1885, which was situated upon a plinth, as no 'formal inscribed base' was deemed necessary.²⁶¹

In this instance, a statue base was likely not needed due to the private context of the statue's display, within an aristocratic residence, in which the audience would have already been familiar with the honorand. Similarly, busts and portrait heads were much smaller than full-body statues, designed to be viewed in close proximity (rather than seen elevated from afar), and were not accompanied by an inscriptional base. As Smith explains, 'one of the largest single groups honoured in late antique busts consists of women, and they give a strong and immediate indication of the private function of other female portrait heads'.²⁶² Even where a statue was full-bodied and stood upon a base, as seems to have been the case with that of the noblewoman Anicia Faltonia Proba, the findspots and familial character of the dedications suggest they came from a private residence.²⁶³ Indeed, 'public statues of women now became a rarity'.²⁶⁴

One case illustrates the increasingly private context of female statuary nicely. Towards the end of the fourth century, the Vestal priestesses sought to erect a statue in honour of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, a recently deceased pagan statesman, in thanks for his championing of traditional cult practices. From the letters of the urban prefect Symmachus, himself deeply conservative, it is clear some wished to block this unusual move, although it was ultimately permitted (and Symmachus himself had a statue of Praetextatus erected in

²⁵⁹ Machado and Lenaghan, in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 128.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁶² Smith, in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 10.

²⁶³ C. Machado, 'Roman Aristocrats and the Christianization of Rome', in P. Brown and R. Lizzi Testa (eds), *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire: the Breaking of a Dialogue*, (Milan, 2011), pp. 511-512.

²⁶⁴ Kathrin Schade, 'Women', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 250.

the Roman Forum).²⁶⁵ In grateful response, the widow of Praetextatus, Fabia Aconia Paulina, who was likewise involved in various cults, set up a statue to honour the chief Vestal, Coelia Concordia. However, this was not erected in the *atrium Vestae*, in the Forum, as had traditionally been the case.²⁶⁶ Instead, Paulina placed the statue within her own residence upon the Esquiline, indicating how 'statuary dedications for women of senatorial rank, *clarissimae feminae*, were now limited to a closer family circle and the private house'.²⁶⁷

In Constantinople, we are almost entirely reliant on later texts for any insight into female statuary there. Such literature does not describe a single piece of statuary depicting an elite woman beyond those of the imperial family. It has been suggested by Bassett that our authors were naturally more interested in discussing the statues of great imperial figures, pagan deities, and classical heroes. Presumably, the humbler statues of aristocratic women were of less interest. As such, there were almost certainly more female statues on display in Constantinople than literary sources allude to, although still fewer than in Rome. In fact, only one single item from Constantinople is known to have depicted an aristocratic (rather than clearly imperial) woman, which is a bust currently housed in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Evidently made for a domestic setting, this portrayal of a woman holding a scroll was surely not set up in a public environment.²⁶⁸

In terms of how women were presented in statuary, the same virtues of modesty and chastity were on display as in earlier periods. Indeed, 'the canon of female virtues hardly changed at all'.²⁶⁹ What public statues there were of aristocratic women, from across the empire, largely conformed to the standard types. Outlining these in detail is not necessary here, as it is sufficient to say the general portrayal continued to be of women in heavy drapery, with restrained movements and gestures, and with arms often crossing the body.²⁷⁰ However, from the third century onwards, the image of a woman holding a scroll became reasonably commonplace in busts and also on funerary imagery, such as on sarcophagi. It has been argued that this symbolised an elite woman's education and

²⁶⁵ Symmachus, *Letters*, 2. 36.2-3.

²⁶⁶ M. Lindner, *Portraits of the Vestal Virgins, Priestesses of Ancient Rome*, (Michigan, 2015), p. 78.

²⁶⁷ Kathrin Schade, 'Women', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 252.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

²⁷⁰ Trimble (2011), p. 2.

cultured nature, while others believe it points more to efficient management of the household.²⁷¹ Either way, there is nothing about the scroll that suggests a relationship to public places.

As alluded to above, the most apparent change can be seen in statues of imperial women, which differed notably from other elite women in their presentation. There are multiple examples from Rome and elsewhere of empresses, from the fifth century onwards, appearing in ornate and elaborate jewellery, with ornamental headwear, and in some depictions appearing not at all dissimilar to the emperor.²⁷² This is not to say, as some have suggested, that the late antique empress was 'advanced to a nearly asexual appearance', for much of the jewellery and costume is clearly feminine and would not be found in a portrayal of any man.²⁷³ It is also not to say that an empress was not expected to represent modesty, but simply that there were other agendas at work that did not influence the portrayal of nonimperial elite women. From the fifth century, she was displayed as a powerful and important figure, as majestic as the emperor. However, prior to this ceremonial guise, empresses from the third and fourth centuries were depicted with a more classical, feminine appearance.²⁷⁴ As such, while we see continuity in statues of nonimperial elite women, the image of the empress underwent dramatic change in Late Antiquity. Throughout these developing presentations, in seeking to establish and advertise the stability and endurance of dynasties, the role of the empress in maintaining the imperial family was heavily promoted.

This agenda is apparent not only in appearance of imperial women in statuary (and indeed in other media, such as coins) but also in the relationship of these statues with urban topography. In Rome, where the ratio of statues to inscriptional bases was low for nonimperial women, that for imperial women is more similar to that for men, at 9:8.²⁷⁵ That the number of statues and bases were roughly equal suggests that these items were more often intended for public, or at least widespread, reception than those of nonimperial

²⁷¹ J. Huskinson, 'Gender and Identity in Scenes of Intellectual Life on Late Roman Sarcophagi', in M. Richard (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, (London, 1999), p. 199.

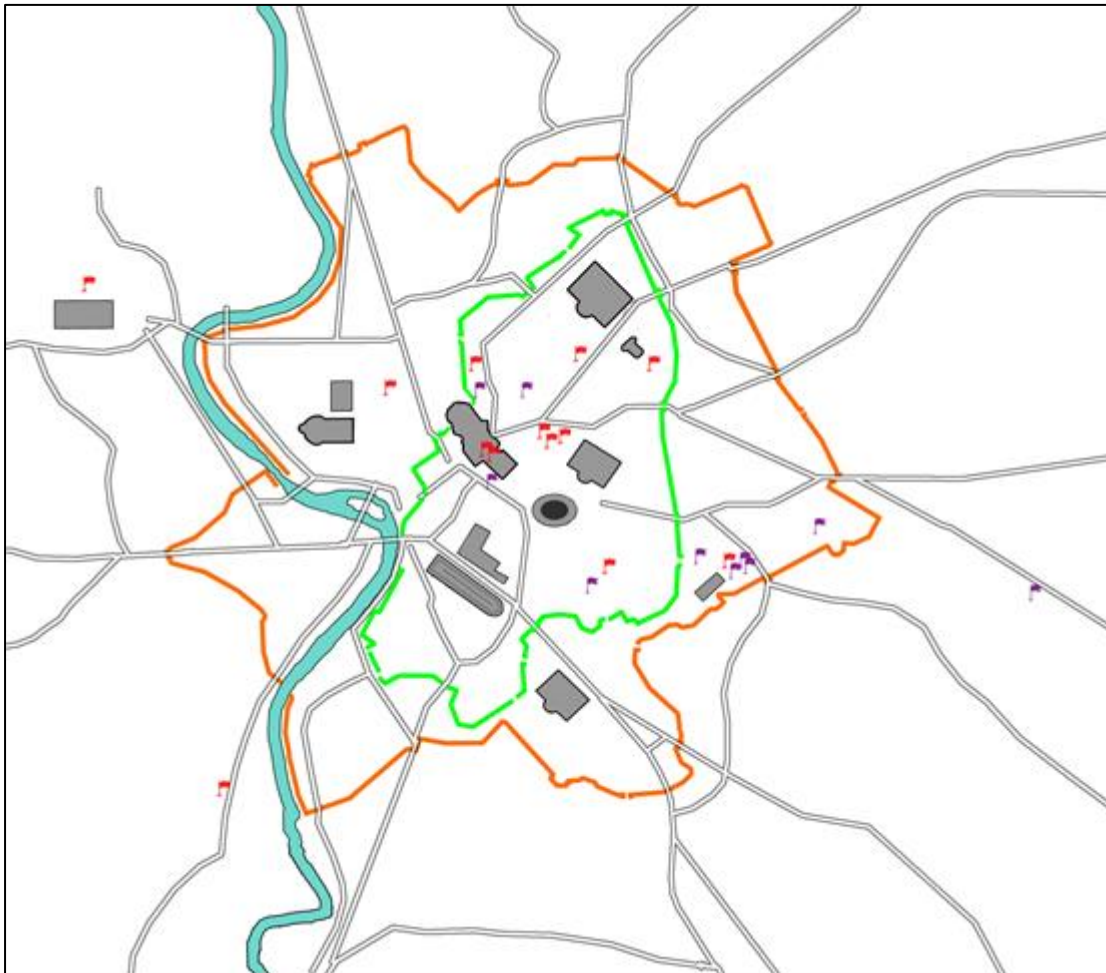
²⁷² Kalavrezou, I., 'Representations of Women in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium', in S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, (Chichester, 2012), p. 117; Holum (1989), p. 29.

²⁷³ Kathrin Schade, 'Women', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 257.

²⁷⁴ J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume*, (London, 2001), p. 93.

²⁷⁵ Machado and Lenaghan, in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), p. 128.

women. Indeed, the only known statue of a woman from the area of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity was that of Thermantia (d. 415 CE), the mother of Theodosius I.²⁷⁶ Meanwhile, a statue of the empress Galla Placidia (d. 450 CE) seems to have been erected in the Forum of Caesar (see Figure 1).²⁷⁷



(Figure 1 – Late antique statues of women and their findspots in Rome)

(Purple = Imperial Red = nonimperial)

However, other imperial statues from Rome, such as those of Helena (d. 330 CE), were not found in similarly central, civic places. Those of Helena seem to have been concentrated in the south-eastern corner of the city, in the area of the Sessorian Palace that served as her

²⁷⁶ CIL 36960G; Kalas, *The Restoration of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity: Transforming Public Space*, (Austin, 2015), p. 87; it is not known for definite if this statue was originally set up in the Forum, or found its way there at a later date.

²⁷⁷ CIL 6.40804.

residence.²⁷⁸ Others were found in the vicinity of the Lateran, including statue bases for the empresses Constantina and Licinia Eudoxia (d. 493 CE; not to be confused with the earlier, Aelia Eudoxia, d. 404 CE, mentioned in Chrysostom's sermons above).²⁷⁹ Certainly, these statues were likely designed for wider reception than statues of senatorial women, situated as they were atop inscribed bases. However, they were not necessarily or typically situated in places of the highest civic honour, which seems to have been mainly reserved for male honorands.

In Constantinople, however, the image of the empress was firmly stamped across the urban fabric, with statuary of imperial women appearing in all the major public parts of the city. Here we are reliant on textual evidence and, while this deprives us of an opportunity to examine surviving items, it has the benefit of telling us where statues were located in their own time. The statues in Constantinople appear to have been positioned along a much clearer, more regimented pattern than in Rome, appearing almost exclusively in key civic areas. The greatest concentration is found within the monumental civic centre of the city, which stands in stark contrast to the picture in Rome. In Constantinople, statues of empresses stood within the hippodrome, in the main public square (the *Augusteion*), at the entranceway to the imperial palace, in the major baths, and in the immediate vicinity of Hagia Sophia (see figure 2).²⁸⁰

Away from here, the statues are spread along the Mese, which was Constantinople's main processional route and urban thoroughfare. This was a monumental, colonnaded street with a number of *fora* spread at intervals between its origin at the Golden Gate and terminus at the palace complex. The only known collection of female imperial statues outside these areas was in the harbour of Sophia, which was also a busy urban area with strong imperial associations.²⁸¹ In Constantinople, then, it would have been virtually impossible to travel to any notable destination in the city without passing beneath the shadow of an empress. Far from residing in domestic or even semi-private settings, these statues were deliberately positioned in some of the most public, most frequented, and most distinguished sites across

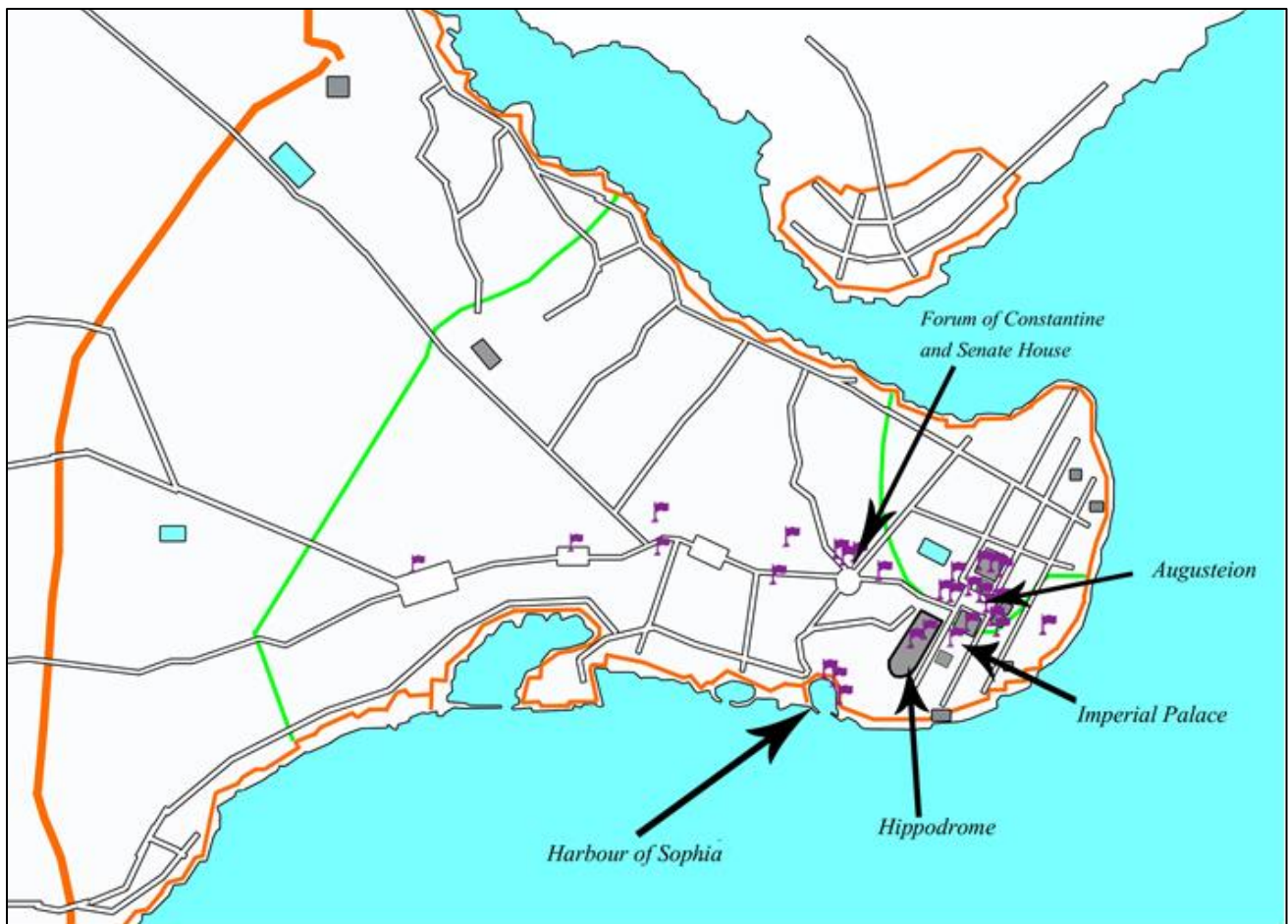
²⁷⁸ *CIL* 6.1134, 6.36950, 6.36903 had findspots in this area; *CIL* 6.40769, 6.1135 had find spots in the vicinity of the Lateran (also broadly in the south-eastern section of the late antique city).

²⁷⁹ *CIL* 6.40790, 6. 40806; the area of the Lateran basilica was connected with the imperial family.

²⁸⁰ The only such statue for which we have material evidence is the base for a silver statue of Eudoxia (*CIL* 3.736) which was set up somewhere close to the Great Church.

²⁸¹ Statues in the Harbour of Sophia are recorded in *Parastaseis*, 35; *Patria*, 2.30, 3.37.

the city. Not only this, but they were often placed atop lofty columns and made from materials such as porphyry or silver.²⁸²



(Figure 2 – Late antique statues of women and their findspots in Constantinople)

(Purple = Imperial)

The Constantinopolitan empress, then, was often linked to highly public and civic environments through their material representations in statuary. Not only this, but the urban fabric of the city bore their names in other ways. In Rome, just one baths in the city held the name of a late Roman empress; that of Helena.²⁸³ Meanwhile, there were five in Constantinople (Helenae, Anastasiana, Carosae, Eudoxiana, and the Baths of Sophia).²⁸⁴ In the eastern capital, the names of imperial women were more firmly embedded in the urban topography. For instance, Theodora is thought to have founded a portico, something no

²⁸² On these representations see J. Herrin, *The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium*, (Princeton, 2013), pp. 161-194.

²⁸³ *CIL* 6.1136, shows the inscription for a restoration at the *Thermae Helenae*.

²⁸⁴ D. N. Angelova, *Sacred Founders : Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome Through Early Byzantium*, (Berkeley, 2015), pp. 170-173.

empress had established in Rome since the time of Augustus.²⁸⁵ The public square in Constantinople's south-eastern palatial complex, the *Augustaion*, was named after Helena.²⁸⁶ Not only this, but entire neighbourhoods took on the names of imperial palaces belonging to imperial women, leaving the city with whole areas named Helenianai (Helena); Pulcherianai (Pulcheria); Plakidias (Placidia); and Ioulianai (Juliana).²⁸⁷

Of course, empresses were not representative of ordinary women, even if certain authors expected them to behave in typically feminine ways (and criticised them when they allegedly failed to do so). As such, they were not portrayed as ordinary women in material, and therefore more centrally directed, representations. No aristocratic woman, no matter how wealthy or respected, could expect to be depicted in silver atop a column in either of Rome or Constantinople's main *fora*. As such, while one cannot discuss the representation of women in late antique statuary without acknowledging the clear change in representations of imperial women, the fact remains that other elite women continued to be represented in traditional forms, emphasising modesty and chastity, and with the placement of such statues indicating a link between elite femininity and domestic settings. Empresses, to an extent in Rome but much more so in Constantinople, were the exception to the rule, represented as they were across civic sites.

Women in public in other material representations

Given the expense involved, women honoured with statuary were invariably of the elite. Many of our surviving funerary epitaphs celebrate the elite also. However, here we can also find inscriptions dedicated to those from the 'middling segments of Roman society'.²⁸⁸ As with statues, most extant funerary epitaphs are dedicated to men, in both the west and east.²⁸⁹ For those of women, of all rank, the focus is often on their modesty and chastity, as well as their familial relationships and devotion to the household.²⁹⁰ This was the case not only for women of different social status, but for both pagans and Christians alike.²⁹¹ As with

²⁸⁵ Galla Placidia did however found a portico at Osia; Angelova (2015), p. 172.

²⁸⁶ Angelova (2015), pp. 170-175.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

²⁸⁸ D. E. Trout, 'Fecit Ad Astra Viam: Daughters, Wives, and the Metrical Epitaphs of Late Ancient Rome,' *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol.21, No.1, (2013), p. 1.

²⁸⁹ E. Davies, 'Written in Stone: Gendered Ideals and the Byzantine Family', in L. L. Larsson and M. Harlow, *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World*, (London, 2012), p. 203.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199; Trout (2013), p. 20.

²⁹¹ Trout (2013), pp. 18-20.

examples from earlier periods, such as those referenced at the very beginning of this thesis, women's associations with the family and the domestic setting of the household were emphasised. Ancient themes, such as working wool, were praised in stone, just as they were in the letters and homilies of Jerome and John Chrysostom.²⁹²

For some women, not of the aristocracy, their occupations were mentioned in their epitaphs.²⁹³ However, this was rare both before and during Late Antiquity, and was even less common in the east than Italy and the west.²⁹⁴ Instead, where any indication was given at all to a woman's relationship with physical space or work, it typically involved the home and activities within it. This focus on the harmonious nuclear family, which is particularly acute in epitaphs from the later Roman period, has been explained as a response to increasing centralisation of the Roman state, wherein the family became the primary social unit. In any case, the overarching aim of late antique epitaphs, as described by Lattimore, does seem to be directed towards presenting a 'picture of an ideally happy family'.²⁹⁵ Therefore, as Wilkinson notes, 'the greater part of biographical detail and especially description of character falls to that of women'.²⁹⁶ Clearly, domestically virtuous women were integral to the portrayal of a successful and contented family unit.

Pictorial depictions of women in a funerary context also tended to emphasise modesty. Pagan elites employed imagery of mythical figures and deities, with women typically aligned with goddesses who embodied feminine virtues of beauty, fertility, virginity and health (Venus, Ceres, Diana and Hygeia).²⁹⁷ From the third century onwards, we increasingly see women upon sarcophagi holding scrolls, often alongside the muses.²⁹⁸ A particularly Christian feature of sarcophagi was also the *orans*, the woman at prayer.²⁹⁹ Poorer persons, meanwhile, tended to eschew mythical and religious symbolism for more basic

²⁹² I. Kalavrezou, 'Representations of Women in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium', in S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, (Chichester, 2012), p. 514.

²⁹³ R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (London, 2013), pp. 80-89.

²⁹⁴ E. Fantham, H. P. Foley, N. Boymel Kampen, S. B. Pomeroy, and H. A. Shapiro, *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*, (New York, 1995), p. 374.

²⁹⁵ R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*, (Illinois, 1942), pp. 299-300.

²⁹⁶ Wilkinson (2015), p. 61.

²⁹⁷ Fantham et al (1995), p. 366; for pagan women see also V. Erhart, 'Inscriptions on Fabia Aconia Paulina', in L. J. Churchill, P. R. Brown, and J. E. Jeffrey, *Women Writing Latin: Women Writing Latin in Roman Antiquity, Late Antiquity, and the Early Christian Era*, (London, 2002), pp. 151-165.

²⁹⁸ J. Huskinson, 'Gender and Identity in Scenes of Intellectual Life on Late Roman Sarcophagi', in M. Richard (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, (London, 1999), p. 190.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202; .

representations of the family itself.³⁰⁰ Such developments have raised questions around whether the funerary image of women (at least for the elite) moved from modesty and beauty to one of intellectuality and faithfulness.³⁰¹ In any case, I can sense no change amongst the imagery in terms of how women and urban topography were represented. There is certainly no trend towards depicting women in public places on funerary images. Interestingly, it is on decorative items of the elite where we are most likely to find any representations of female slaves. One famous example is the fourth century is the Projecta Casket (see figure 3), an ornate silver box found on the Esquiline and belonging to a Christian noblewoman. It has been extensively studied and scholars have concluded that this piece of metalwork ‘includes the most images of slaves of any surviving late antique object’.³⁰² Indeed, while slaves were rarely mentioned in late antique texts, they appear more frequently in art (often in the act of serving their masters).³⁰³ The casket is thought to have initially contained personal belongings and would likely have been displayed, set against a wall, in the bedchamber. Like other such items from across the empire, it displays both pagan and Christian elements (depicting both Venus and a Christian inscription), and focusses upon an elite woman at her toilet, being attended to by multiple female slaves. In one sense, this image is highly domestic. It was likely meant for private display within the home and depicts a Roman matron in the very private act of beautification.³⁰⁴ On the other hand, it is an image designed to convey Projecta’s social status, surrounded as she is by multiple attendants who are all portrayed as being significantly smaller than her. Crucially, one image appears to show Projecta and her servants walking to the baths, and some have suggested the casket was designed to be taken there with her, where it could better be displayed.³⁰⁵ Her servants can be seen carrying various items to the baths, such as soaps and oils, presumably for her to apply after bathing. As such, we are presented with an image of an elite Christian woman engaged in both domestic ritual and pedestrian movement

³⁰⁰ Fantham et al (1995), p. 368; Knapp (2013), p.87.

³⁰¹ Huskinson, in Richard (1999), p. 202.

³⁰² M. E. Rose, ‘The Construction of Mistress and Slave Relationships in Late Antique Art’, *Woman’s Art Journal*, Vol.29, No.2, (2008), p. 42.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.41.

³⁰⁴ J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text*, (Princeton, 2007), p. 213.

³⁰⁵ C. Entwistle, *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology*, (Oxford, 2003), p. 31.

through the city of Rome, amidst a retinue of female servants, to visit the baths. Indeed, much expense was presumably outlaid to depict her doing so.



Figure 3 - The lid of the Projecta Casket, showing Projecta heading to the baths with attendants.³⁰⁶

Most late antique artwork, however, does not represent women in public. The overwhelming tendency, instead, is to depict 'upper-class women in the more private environment of their homes'.³⁰⁷ Typically, objects containing depictions of women or female slaves derive from domestic settings. However, one important development that took place in Late Antiquity, and in the wake of Christianity's official toleration, was that women could also be represented within churches, which were themselves public places. Such representations typically took the form of frescoes and mosaics, and the placement of these images – like with statues – speaks to the relationship of women with particular locations. For instance, in the church of Santa Pudenziana, a fifth-century mosaic on the apse is believed to depict the saintly Pudenziana (whose name the church bears).³⁰⁸ Similarly, at Santa Constanza, built as a mausoleum for Constantine's daughter Constantina, a mosaic

³⁰⁶ *The British Museum*, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613270439>, released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license.

³⁰⁷ Kalavrezou, in James and Dillon (2012), p. 514.

³⁰⁸ J. C. Fischer, *Art in Rome: From Antiquity to the Present*, (Cambridge, 2019), p. 117.

(now lost) might have depicted Constantina herself and her sister Helena (although this is not assured).³⁰⁹

Images of women in churches could also speak directly to where women were themselves located within a church. For instance, and as I shall discuss in more detail in chapter four, it has been argued that the late antique mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore spoke to the gendered division within that church. As it is widely believed that women stood in the left aisle and men in the right, the appearance of 21 biblical women in mosaics above the southern aisle, thus most visible to those gathered on the left side, has been taken as a recognition of this spatial arrangement.³¹⁰ This is similar to the sixth-century mosaics of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, where the left and right sides of the church are decorated with women and men, respectively, moving in procession to the front (where Christ and the Virgin are located).³¹¹

The Byzantine frescoes in the church of Santa Maria Antiqua, in the Roman Forum, have also been suspected of serving a similar purpose.³¹² Multiple women are depicted in frescoes throughout the church, but there is a 'marked concentration of female imagery' in the west isle.³¹³ This is counterbalanced by a similar concentration of male depictions in the eastern isle. While our material evidence for Constantinople is much thinner, there is some indication similar practices were in play there also. For instance, in the church of Hagia Sophia, monograms of the empress Theodora are 'abundant' in those galleries where women were believed to have stood, including the western gallery that was believed to be for the use of the empress.³¹⁴

As such, the representation of women in churches seems to have spoken to the relationship between women and the physical space within a church itself. As funerary imagery and

³⁰⁹ L. James, *Mosaics in the Medieval World: From Late Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*, (Cambridge, 2017), p. 156.

³¹⁰ C. N. de Vegvar, 'Gendered Spaces: The Placement of Imagery in Santa Maria Maggiore', in C. N. de Vegvar and É. Ó Carragáin (eds), *Roma Felix: Formations and Reflections on Medieval Rome*, (London, 2015), pp. 98-100.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³¹² J. Osborne, *Rome in the Eighth Century: A History in Art*, (Cambridge, 2020), p.76.

³¹³ S. J. Lucey, 'Art and Socio-Cultural Identity in Early Medieval Rome: The Patrons of Santa Maria Antiqua', in de Vegvar and Carragáin (2015), p. 154.

³¹⁴ I. H. Garipzanov, *Graphic Signs of Authority in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 300-900*, (Oxford, 2018), p. 81.

domestic art tended to depict women in traditional ways, at least with respect to their relationship with public settings, the emergence of church art was a new development in Late Antiquity with regards to women's material representations. It opened up new opportunities for portraying women in public places, where the images would (at least occasionally) be received by substantial crowds, at a time when honorific statuary of nonimperial women was focussed upon the domestic realm. However, as noted earlier, the women depicted in church artwork were, by no means, representative of most women, elite or otherwise. They were very rarely empresses and more commonly biblical or saintly figures. As such, the options for displaying or representing real, living women were very limited in church and, it seems, not afforded to elite or ordinary women at all. As such, we cannot see the emergence of churches, as public places in which artistic depiction of women could be seen, as any sort of replacement for the declining practice of representing women in honorific statuary (even if this tended to be displayed in the semi-private context of the aristocratic residence).

Finally, it is worth considering how, in the creation and placement of these various forms of artwork, the physical location of the viewer was taken into consideration. As referenced above, and to be discussed in more detail later, female images in churches were intended to be received publicly by a specific audience. Therefore, we see examples of female imagery placed where best viewed by women, ensuring they were displayed principally to those women who were occupying the correct and proper physical location within church (which, as we shall see, meant standing separate from men and thus in line with expectations of modesty). Similar considerations can be seen in items like the Projecta Casket, which may have displayed women in public settings, but were themselves principally located and viewed within a domestic environment. We see this also with busts and statues of elite women, which were again intended to be viewed primarily by members of the household or visitors, who would see the woman displayed within a private, domestic, and therefore suitably modest context. Again, the clear exception is found in statuary representations of empresses. Placed in *fora*, harbours, and busy streets, these statues were not targeted at one specific audience (if anything, they were in places deemed more suited to men). Thus, regarding material representations of nonimperial women, they tended to be best viewed from within a modest setting, whether that be domestic or segregated from men in church.

v. Conclusion

There is no doubt that women in Late Antiquity were held to the same, or at least very similar, expectations of modesty as their classical forebears. Furthermore, while the works of Jerome and John Chrysostom might draw our attention to ascetical and virginal women, we should remember that most Christian women, elite or otherwise, followed broadly the same life course as their pagan counterparts. For most women, then, the domestic environment was the ideal location and constituted the most appropriate environment for those seeking to maintain modest reputations. This is apparent both in textual representations of varying genre, and even more clearly conveyed in portrayals of women through material culture.

Pagan authors held firmly to traditional forms and thus women were largely overlooked, linked to the household, and held up for criticism when their use of public settings strayed from the accepted norm. Female movements and use of public environments were overwhelmingly presented as problematic signifiers of male or moral deficiency. Ancient tropes and rhetorical devices continued to be employed in written histories, while honorific statuary likewise stuck rigidly to its conservative portrayal of women and urban settings, with opportunities for public representations of women declining in the wake of wider societal and structural changes. Meanwhile, churches opened up new environments within which women could be publicly represented, but such opportunities were naturally limited to a select few, namely saints and biblical women.

Christian texts, however, broke with previous traditions. The break was not severe, in that Christian authors still thought modest women ought to limit their movements beyond the home and should primarily reside within a domestic setting. Yet, we see in Christian literature numerous women who are roundly praised for actions carried out in overtly public places and, in some cases, with the aim of being seen. Christian authors appear concerned with *how* women engaged with public settings, rather than dismissing such engagement outright. Public appearances designed for self-promotion were as distasteful to Jerome as Ammianus, but the former thought there were good reasons for visible female conduct outside the home, whereas the latter gave no indication that he thought such.

In this chapter, then, I have outlined some ways in which women in public were represented in both texts and material culture, pagan and Christian, Roman and Constantinopolitan. In the next chapter, I will look at how these representations compared to actual practice, assessing the various routes through which women could, acceptably and otherwise, engage with public sites. As we shall see, there likely existed some significant distance between idealisation and reality. However, one respect in which representations did mirror actuality was in how, as I shall argue, Christianity opened up new routes for women to acceptably engage with public, urban settings.

Chapter 2

Women's Engagement with Public Place and Space

As discussed in the previous chapter, there was an understanding that movements of elite women ought to be restricted. Ideal Roman womanhood, according to both pagan and Christian onlookers, was strongly associated with modesty, family and domesticity. As evidenced previously, this was reflected in not just the dialogue and rhetoric of the time, but was also manifest in the laws and rescripts that regulated female agency in both Rome and Constantinople.³¹⁵ As we have seen, for those elite women conscious of their reputations, engagements with public space were supposed to take place within the boundaries of what was considered respectable comportment: a behavioural framework established through the prevailing aristocratic discourse.

In the first chapter I demonstrated how, nonetheless and increasingly under Christianity, this framework provided for certain, legitimising contexts within which elite women could access, move through, and engage with urban, public spaces and places. In some cases, this could even take the form of highly visible movements and behaviours, in close physical proximity to men from without the household. In some respects, this discourse reflected reality, in that Christianity does seem to have brought with it new routes through which elite women could exercise public action. Furthermore, as the complaints of both pagans and Christians alluded to, elite women could also venture beyond the *domus* for reasons considered less acceptable. Away from engagement with religious settings, our sources give little indication of significant change. Indeed, women's appearance at secular sites seems to have differed only marginally between the cities and over time. Instead, it is increased possibilities for religious, public action that represent the most observable development, both in terms of change over time and in differences between Rome and Constantinople.

³¹⁵ *CT* 9.24.1, a law passed in 326 CE punished women who were abducted on the grounds they should have remained safely at home; see also J. Evans-Grubbs, 'Abduction Marriage in Antiquity: A Law of Constantine (*CTh* IX 24.1) and Its Social Context', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol.79, (1989), pp. 59-83; M. Kuefler, 'The Marriage Revolution in Late Antiquity: The Theodosian Code and Later Roman Marriage Law', *Journal of Family History*, Vol.32.4, (2016), pp. 343-70.

The present chapter addresses the question of *where* women went and *why* they left the home. It puts forward an argument that late antique women in both cities, under scrutiny from conservative pagans and austere Christians, found multiple ways to engage publicly, in a manner most could accept, with both the civic and religious lives of their urban communities. As we shall see, evidence for women's daily lives and economic activities, outside of a religious context, suggests little change from the preceding period, or indeed between the two cities, in terms of their access to public settings. Nonelite women of Late Antiquity appear to have continued in the same types of occupation as their classical predecessors, while elite women continue to make social calls, visit the baths, and travel in retinues, all as they had done for centuries. Furthermore, the lack of interest of our sources in the daily lives of women makes detecting any changes that *might* have happened difficult.

Our sources are, however, more forthcoming on religious matters. Admittedly, religious action was surely not the most common reason for most women to leave the home (with exceptions being some consecrated virgins and widows), and yet it is engagements with religious public settings that we can best measure on account of our sources. However, the developments we can detect here are significant in themselves. For one, I will argue that late Roman paganism grew more restricted over time, offering fewer avenues into public as compared to its earlier, classical iteration. I will demonstrate that while opportunities for 'official' involvement in religious activity, such as the roles of priestesses, likely offered some opportunities for female public appearances, these grew more restricted over time and were limited to a small strata of aristocratic women in Rome, and possibly none in Constantinople. By Late Antiquity, pagan festivals that catered to a wider section of society offered fewer opportunities to women in the fourth century, with the removal of numerous festivals from the religious calendar in which women had held prominent public roles.

Similarly, we shall see that Christianity offered women, this time in Constantinople and not Rome, opportunities for 'official' involvement through the role of the deaconess. While its attendant duties likely involved significant, public, movements, this position too was limited to a select number of women. In terms of other Christian engagements, I will demonstrate that the new faith offered many more opportunities for elite women to enter public spaces than did traditional cult practice, as it encouraged church attendance, visits to martyr shrines, almsgiving, and participation in processional worship. Moreover, the duties of a

deaconess seem more clearly to have required engagement with public spaces than did those of pagan priestesses, which may well have been more domestically oriented. I will also suggest that Christianity offered a greater range of movement to women in Constantinople, compared to those in Rome, through its focus on largescale processions, which began much earlier in the eastern city and took place far more frequently.

When discussing female involvement in religion, I am working on the basis that the participation of women in cult practices and religious rites can be divided as follows; into official, and unofficial roles. In this instance, the former refers to the fulfilment of certain acts within the context of a specific religious office or title (obvious examples of this would include the Vestal Virgins, or the deaconesses of Constantinople) while the latter concerns any activities not undertaken as part of a sacred office (such as the transportation of food to suburban cemeteries during the rites of the *Parentalia*, or visits to a Christian martyr shrine). The two categories are by no means mutually exclusive, and just as a woman could hold multiple religious offices, so too could she engage in various unofficial religious duties, either independently or alongside whatever formal role she might have occupied.

Finally, I will suggest that Constantinople's continued role as imperial residence, political capital, and ceremonial space – along with its particular urban plan and topography – resulted in more civic, and religious, occasions in which large crowds of people were brought together. As it had been in Imperial Rome, so the presence of the royal court and imperial family generated a constant stream of overtly public events, both regularly held and spontaneous, that drew enormous crowds of spectators and celebrants. It seems that, for the most part, even modest matrons were expected to attend such collective experiences, as part of the eastern city's imperially sponsored, civic community. In Rome, the absence of the emperor, and the eventual impoverishment of the city's senatorial aristocracy, disrupted and weakened this cycle of largescale civic events and celebrations, to be replaced with something altogether more Christian than classical.

In the present chapter, then, I will discuss the extent to which religious engagement offered elite women routes into public settings, some of the different ways in which this took place, how the situation changed over time, how it differed between the two cities in question, and the impact of the shift from Greco-Roman paganism to Christianity. I will then move on to look at the ways in which elite women, outside religion, were able to legitimately - and

sometimes illegitimately - access public settings and come into contact with extrafamilial men. With respect to nonelite women, I will also assess their opportunities for engagement with public settings in a religious context within the two cities in question, comparing opportunities for involvement across both pagan and Christian groups, between the two cities, and over the course of Late Antiquity. I will also explore some of the ways in which their economic activities, from which the elite were largely spared, brought them into public spaces, public view, and contact with men, all subject to the same comparative analysis.

Methodology

The particulars of our source base make direct comparison on the question of paganism difficult. Material remains for Constantinople are few, while textual evidence there speaks little of pagan women or their activities. Therefore, the upcoming discussion of pagan priestesses is limited to Rome. Meanwhile, the examination of women's official involvement with Christianity is heavily centred upon Constantinople, as this was where the office of deaconess existed, while it was absent from Rome. However, this does not preclude the possibility of comparison, as we can consider how official involvement in Rome's cult practices compared, on the basis of providing opportunities for female engagement with public settings, to the role of a deaconess. Furthermore, the absence of any evidence for pagan priestesses in Constantinople, a seemingly Christian foundation, might imply fewer such opportunities in that city than in Rome, which was famously more conservative, for longer, in its religious practices (especially where the aristocracy were concerned).

For reasons of precision and focus, as discussed in the thesis introduction, this chapter will employ a case study approach. Exploration of pagan priestesses in Rome will centre around two elite individuals; Fabia Aconia Paulina and the noblewoman Caecinia Lolliana, wife of the urban prefect Lampadius.³¹⁶ While our sources for both cities are typically less forthcoming on the details of pagan women than Christian, we are fortunate enough to have some indication of where these women might have lived and the cults with which they were associated. A similar approach will be adopted with regards to the Constantinopolitan deaconess, focussing on Olympias, the wealthy widow and supporter of John Chrysostom. Again, we have some notion of the duties involved in the office of deaconess, what might

³¹⁶ PLRE, Vol.1, p. 511, 675.

have taken them into public, and more specific information on which of her (many) properties Olympias made use of.

For all of these women, I will seek to understand where they went within the urban topography, in terms of the places they frequented and the spaces they moved through to reach them. In order to achieve this, I will analyse a range of evidence, from hagiographic recounting of Olympias' movements to the funerary epitaph of Paulina. I will use our knowledge of where these women lived, and the religious sites with which they were associated, to theorise on their possible routes of travel through the respective cities. I will then plot these movements and locations onto maps, to provide a better sense of precisely where in their cities these women might have gone, both in terms of the places they were going and the spaces they were moving through to get there. As we shall see, the indication is that while both roles could provide opportunities for engaging with public settings in legitimate ways, it seems this was more apparent for the deaconess.

i. Women in public: pagan priestesses

As alluded to above, our evidence does not support the presence of pagan priestesses being active, in public, within late antique Constantinople.³¹⁷ This is despite the existence of several temples in the city, such as those of Venus, Aphrodite and Artemis, which are known to have hosted priestesses in other parts of the Empire.³¹⁸ While there is some small indication that pagans still practiced some public ministrations in the early part of the fourth century, we know nothing about their makeup, regularity, or use of space.³¹⁹ In the absence of any such evidence from Constantinople, however, we must conclude that priestesses were either not performing public roles there, or were doing so in a way that was sufficiently infrequent and peripheral for the written sources to have entirely ignored it (which is a possibility we cannot discount, given their largely Christian authorship).

Women as pagan priestesses in Rome

³¹⁷ K. Harl, 'Sacrifice and Pagan Belief in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Byzantium', *Past and Present*, Vol.128, (1990), p. 18.

³¹⁸ John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.39; Sozomen, *Church History*, 5.10; J. Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, (Cambridge, 2012), p. 261.

³¹⁹ Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations*, 38.5-6, refers to the festivals of the Greeks, but offers no further information.

In Rome, however, we have both material and literary evidence that points to the existence of pagan priestesses active from the time of the Republic through to the fourth century. Turning to Table 1 in the appendix, the evidence presents us with around 61 specifically-named women who all held at least one religious office, within Rome, at some point in their lifetime. This data runs from the Republic through to the fourth century. Of these 61 individuals, the majority (54) come to us from inscriptions, mostly funerary. The remaining few (7) are found in textual sources, having featured in a wide range of works. These figures do not include the Vestal Virgins, whose addition would, I think, distort the picture. After all, they are disproportionately represented in the texts and some are semi-legendary. Furthermore, we know there were a small group of Vestals in Rome at any one time, so adding them to the figures serves little practical purpose in terms of our understanding of women's roles, and presence, within Rome's pagan religious landscape.

Certainly, scholars disagree on the extent and importance of women's engagement in Roman religion. In her 1998 study on sex and category in Roman religion, Staples claimed that 'religious ritual provided the single public space where women played a significant formal role'.³²⁰ Indeed, the evidence is clear that, while women were prevented from holding any political office, they occupied a variety of priesthoods across the Empire, lasting well into Late Antiquity. However, like the overwhelming majority of studies on the role of women within Roman religion (as pointed out in the thesis introduction), Staples' arguments are concerned chiefly with the centuries preceding Constantine's ascension. Throughout the literature, the role of women within the varied cults of fourth century Rome is relatively undiscussed.³²¹ And yet, there is a growing degree of scholarly consensus on the significance of women's roles within pagan cult practice for earlier periods.³²²

³²⁰ A. Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins: Sex and Category in Roman Religion*, (London, 1998), p. 3.

³²¹ Some notable exceptions include Clark (1994); more specific studies such as S. K. Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World*, (Leiden, 1975).

³²² For instance, Scheid is something of an outlier in his dismissal of women's religious roles in the classical period as marginal, given their association with 'exotic' deities from the east, which he considers unimportant when compared to the great gods of state. More recently, scholars such as Flemming, Schultz, and DiLuzio have all sought to highlight the important, and public, religious functions fulfilled by women. Like Staples, however, their arguments only rarely extend into the fourth century or beyond; R. Flemming, 'Festus and women's role in Roman religion', in F. Glinister and C. Wood (eds), *Verrius, Festus and Paul*, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement*, Vol.93, (2007), pp. 87-108; C. E. Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic*, (Chapel Hill, 2006); M. J. DiLuzio, *A Place at the Altar: Priestesses in Republican Rome*, (Princeton, 2016).

Secondly, while scholars such as Scheid have been dismissive of women's religious roles in earlier periods, on account of their association with less prominent 'exotic' cults, the situation in Late Antiquity is different, with the cults of Isis and Magna Mater being the two most frequently found in the inscriptional evidence.³²³ Once regarded as foreign, or even sexually questionable, these cults were now en vogue. As Alföldi has shown, these 'oriental' religions had come to represent Rome's paganism.³²⁴ The Egyptian cult of Isis had taken on Roman features and, as we shall see, its associated festivals continued into Late Antiquity.³²⁵ Meanwhile, the once private rites of the *taurobolium* had, as McLynn points out, been transformed into a highly public affair. The cults may have been the same, but by Late Antiquity these were no longer marginal, clandestine sects on the fringes of acceptability. Instead, they witnessed the participation of some of Rome's loftiest senatorial class.

Returning to the figures, then, we can take away four important points. Firstly, the decline in pagan priestesses in the fourth century is clearly evident in the data. If we select only those from Late Antiquity then, in grimly predictable fashion, the number of named inscriptions for women's priesthoods declines dramatically, from 61 to just 6, disappearing completely in the latter half of the fourth century. The reasons for this decline in the fourth century are not hard to grasp, given the increasingly hostile measures enacted against the public practice of such religious rites. We can safely surmise that these priestesses ultimately went the way of the Vestals, as successive Christian emperors stripped them of their income, lands, temples, and eventually their legal right to perform sacrifices. Even so, if we take our starting point to be the year 300 AD, that still leaves us with at least eighty years in which they were definitely active.

Secondly, claims from scholars such as Staples that women's roles in religion were 'prominent' is also not supported by the evidence. Here, women were certainly significant, but notably less so than their male priestly counterparts. For instance, the evidence shows there were more male priests of Isis than female, and the descriptions for the varied rites of

³²³ J. Scheid, 'The Religious Roles of Roman Women', in P. Schmitt Pantel (ed.), *A History of Women in the West: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 377-408.

³²⁴ A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins*, (Leiden, 1965), p.66; For a discussion of Alföldi's argument, see A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, (Oxford, 2010), p. 695.

³²⁵ Heyob (1975), p. 13.

Magna Mater and Attis speak of public processions dominated by male office-holders.³²⁶ Furthermore, while Rome had more priestesses in some cults than elsewhere (37.1% of all recorded Isis adherents in Rome were female, compared to 18.2% overall) it also had fewer in others.³²⁷ Certain female priesthoods that were available in some provincial cities, such as those of the imperial cult, appear to have been closed to women in Rome.³²⁸ The archaeological record for various smaller towns in the west, such as Baetica or Arelate, shows evidence of important female priesthoods operating in full view of the public.³²⁹ However, the evidence gives no indication that this was true for Rome in the fourth century.

Thirdly, the information suggests that these priesthoods were, increasingly, restricted to a small group of elite women. The data in Table 1 shows that, from the Republic through to the fourth century, women occupied a variety of priestly roles. Judging from the graves at which many inscriptions were uncovered, it seems apparent that the role of *sacerdos* (priestess) was largely reserved for women of high status. Only two inscriptions detailing women of this rank appear to be commemorating women of nonelite status, and none such exist in the fourth century. The less senior positions, such as *aeditua* (temple warden) and *ministra* (attendant) were more frequently occupied by women of lower social standing than the higher positions, both across the Empire and in Rome. Figure one, for example, details a slave woman serving as *aeditua* and a freedwoman as *ministra*. However, none of these positions are to be found in the evidence from late antique inscriptions, which represent only aristocratic women in senior positions such as *sacerdos* or *hierophantia* (high priestess).

It is perfectly possible that the cult of Isis, among others, provided women of less salubrious social pedigree with religiously-sanctioned opportunities to engage with public settings through recognised priestly duties. However, our evidence suggests priesthoods for women became more tightly focussed on the elite. Of course, it is difficult to know if, in this, we are seeing real practice or simply a consequence of the extant funerary material. At any period in Rome's history, elite representation eclipses that of ordinary Romans. The dominance of

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

³²⁸ For a time, in the early empire, empresses could hold these positions, as Livia did, but there is no material record of any imperial priestesses in Rome beyond the early empire; E. Hemelrijk, 'Local Empresses: Priestesses of the Imperial Cult in the Cities of the Latin West', *Phoenix*, Vol.61, (2007), p. 326.

³²⁹ For Baetica, *CIL* 2.1978 = AE 1917/18, 10; *CIL* 2.7, 3a; *CIL* 2.5, 89; *CIL* 2.5, 69; For Arelate, *CIL* 12.690.

the imperial family, officials, and Vestals in Rome's pagan imagery also makes the role of the more 'ordinary' priestess hard to define.³³⁰ Yet it has been noted that, in Rome, the trend between the classical and late antique periods was for female priesthoods in cults such as Isis and Magna Mater to grow in popularity and prestige, becoming more fashionable amongst the elite, and if this were the case then it is perhaps unsurprising that such roles become dominated by these individuals.³³¹ I will now turn my focus to two such individuals, to discuss how such priesthoods could have facilitated movement and entry into public.

Case studies: Fabia Paulina and Caecinia Lolliana

Paulina was the wife of the famous statesman Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, himself often referred to as one of the last great pagans of Rome. His renown in the latter half of the fourth century would be hard to overstate, and his tremendous influence is evinced by his repeated appearances in a wide range of texts. Ammianus Marcellinus and Macrobius both spoke of him fondly, and he was a regular correspondent of Symmachus, receiving at least 16 letters from the famous orator, politician, and nobleman.³³² Even Jerome, who seems to have generally avoided naming contemporary pagans, referenced him specifically.³³³ A onetime urban prefect, Praetextatus died in 384 CE. Steeped in many aspects of traditional Roman religion, he held numerous titles and membership of various mystery cults. He was also a strong proponent of the cult of Vesta, a fact which clearly underpinned the chief priestess Coelia Concordia's efforts, discussed in the previous chapter, to erect a statue in his honour.³³⁴

Upon his death, his wife Paulina commissioned an impressive funerary monument, complete with a touching, poetic inscription, today found in Rome's Capitoline Museum.³³⁵ Paulina was herself a public figure and, according to the writings of a contemporaneous Jerome, delivered an oration at the funeral of her husband.³³⁶ Paulina could apparently be heard making false claims as to the whereabouts of her husband's eternal soul, which

³³⁰ Hemelrijk (2007), p. 325.

³³¹ E. A. Hemelrijk, *Hidden Lives, Public Personae: Women and Civic Life in the Roman West*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 105.

³³² Ammianus Marcellinus, 22.7.6, 28.1.24; Symmachus, *Letters*, 44-55, and throughout Macrobius, *Saturnalia*.

³³³ Jerome, *Letters*, 23.3.

³³⁴ Symmachus, *Letters*, 2.36.

³³⁵ *CIL* 6.1779 = ILS 1259.

³³⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 23.3; though it is unclear whether Paulina would have delivered this in person or, instead, have an orator do so on her behalf. Either way, we would expect Paulina herself to be present at the event.

Jerome was certain now resided in hell.³³⁷ Later, when Paulina died, her inscription would reveal that she, like her husband, had been deeply involved in Roman religion. She was a senior priestess (*hierophantria*) of Hecate and the holder of an unknown function in the cult of Ceres, as well as an initiate of various mystery cults; including Eleusis, Lerna, and Liber.³³⁸ She was also an initiate of both Isis and Magna Mater, as well as sharing in her husband's support for Vesta.³³⁹ In fact, it was Paulina who erected a statue of the *vestalis maxima* Coelia Concordia within her own substantial residence on the Esquiline, to thank the virgin priestess for her statutory honouring of Praetextatus.³⁴⁰

We cannot know for certain where Paulina's priesthoods would have taken her, as her duties and movements are not recorded. In this regard, she shares the fate of virtually every other pagan woman in Rome and Constantinople; the women who, as Denzey rightly states, 'slipped away unnoticed from the historical record; they are named but almost entirely silent'.³⁴¹ However, if we accept that Paulina was at least a semi-public figure (a woman discussed by both Jerome and Symmachus alike surely must have been), and if we accept that she was actively involved in pagan religious expression, then it seems reasonable to surmise that at least some of these sacred offices could have seen her moving across the cityscape.³⁴² Fortunately, we are armed with a healthy degree of topographical knowledge for the fourth-century city, largely thanks to the regionary catalogues (administrative lists of the various buildings situated in the different regions of Constantinian Rome).³⁴³ As such, I believe we are well placed to analyse some possible movements of Paulina.

For her role as a priestess of Hecate we can extrapolate very little. This particular goddess, of Thracian origin and concerned with walls and liminal spaces, had few known temples in the ancient world, and none we can detect in Rome.³⁴⁴ If there were shrines to her in the city, their location was not recorded, or at least such records have not survived. Hecate was

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.3.

³³⁸ *CIL* 6.1779 = ILS 1259.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *CIL* 6.2145.

³⁴¹ N. Denzey, *The Bone Gatherers: The Lost Worlds of Early Christian Women*, (Boston, 2007), p. 32.

³⁴² Jerome, *Letters*, 23.3; Symmachus, *Relatio*, 12.2.

³⁴³ See S. B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2015).

³⁴⁴ S. I. Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, (Harvard, 2004), p.269.

a goddess that could, it is thought, be honoured primarily through domestic devotion.³⁴⁵ Indeed, from a late antique lararium found within a *domus* at Rome, a bust of Hecate was discovered, lending further weight to the idea of domestic devotion.³⁴⁶ Of course, that Hecate could be worshipped domestically opens up the possibility that people would have gathered at one of Paulina's residences to collectively honour the goddess and attend to whatever rites were appropriate. If such domestic, group devotion was taking place, then as a notable aristocrat and senior priestess with properties across the city, Paulina would have surely made an obvious host. After all, that the erection of a statue depicting a Vestal Virgin took place within her home, and that it was public knowledge, suggests – at the very least – that some people would have seen it.

What, then, of Paulina's associations with Isis, Magna Mater, and Ceres? If we consult the regionary catalogues, they show us at least two points in Rome associated with the worship of Isis, and quite possibly three. The main temple was situated in the *Campus Martius*, while another shrine was located near the Via Appia, in the vicinity of the Baths of Caracalla.³⁴⁷ A possible third shrine, at the southern tip of *Regio III*, was also present at one time, although possibly not in late antiquity.³⁴⁸ With regards to the worship of Magna Mater, her famous temple stood unharmed atop the Palatine throughout the fourth century and there were shrines dedicated to her on the eastern side of the *spina* in the Circus, and on the right bank of the Tiber, at the edge of *Regio XIV*.³⁴⁹ The primary sanctuary for Ceres, meanwhile, was the temple of Ceres, Liber and Liberia on the edge of *Regio XI*, which stood to the west of the Circus upon the slopes of the Aventine, although how far up the hill remains unclear.³⁵⁰

We might also suppose, quite reasonably, that Paulina's close association with the cult of Vesta could have resulted in the occasional visit there, at least during the rights of the *Vestalia* (more on this particular festival later), which involved women visiting the sanctuary

³⁴⁵ L. Weiss, 'Perpetuated Action', in R. Raja and J. Rüpke, *A Companion to the Archaeology of Religion in the Ancient World*, (Hoboken, 2020), p. 74.

³⁴⁶ G. Fowden, 'Public religion - Late polytheism', in A. Bowman, A. Cameron, and P. Garnsey, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 561; Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 20, shows how Bona Dea could be worshipped by women at shrines in their homes.

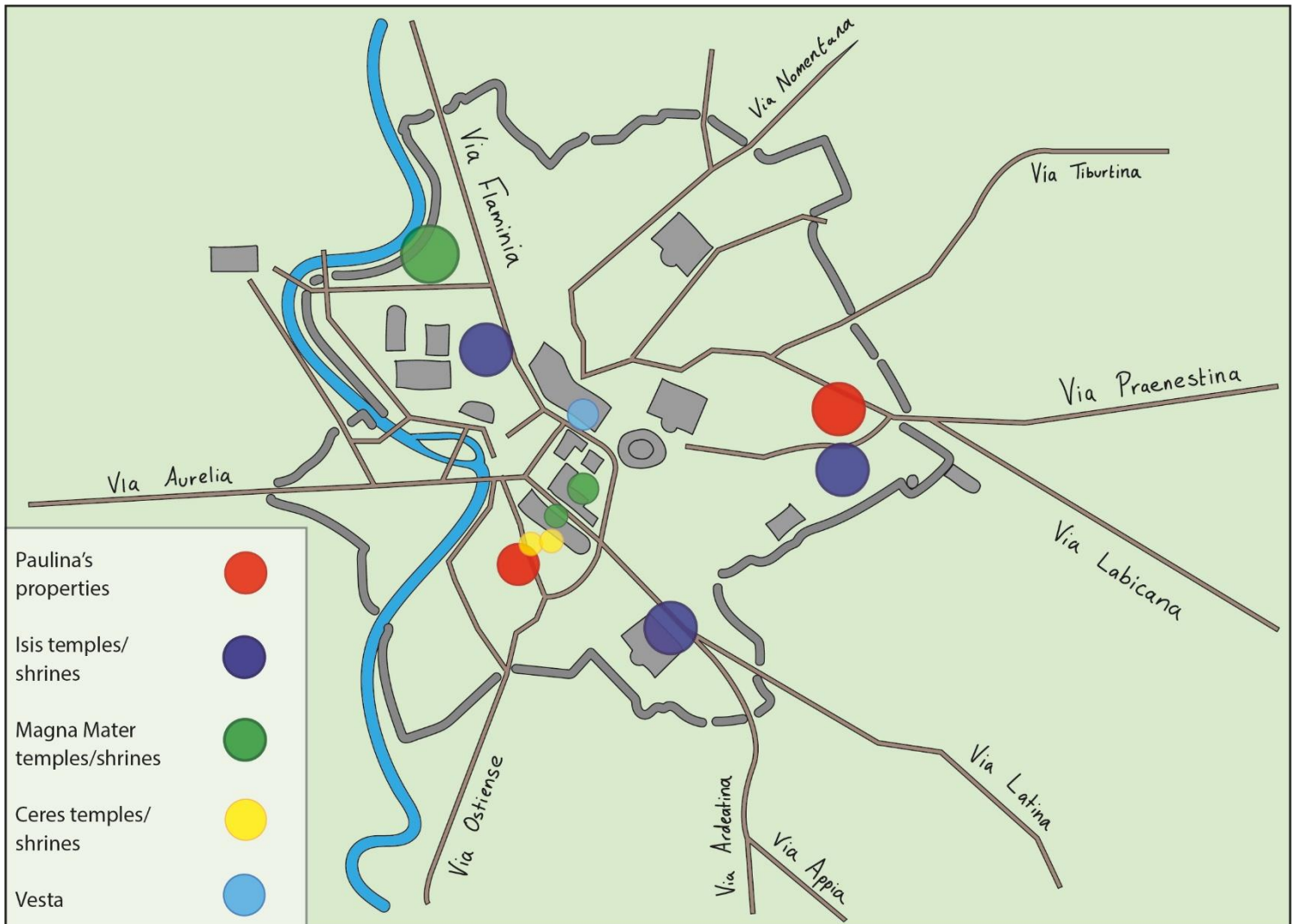
³⁴⁷ Platner and Ashby (2015), pp. 283-286.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 286; there were also domestic shrines to Isis, such as one unconvered in the area of the Esquiline (where Paulina lived) dating from the fourth century, S. L. Dyso, *Rome: A Living Portrait of an Ancient City*, (London, 2010), p. 286.

³⁴⁹ Platner and Ashby (2015), pp. 323-326.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

itself. Finally, when thinking about Paulina’s possible movements between these sites, we should consider where she lived; i.e. from which location she would begin, and end, her journeys. Aristocrats as wealthy and influential as the ones in question owned numerous properties, often several within the same city, but in this instance, we know of only two; one residence on the Aventine (the precise location is unclear) and the other on the Esquiline (not far from the early modern Palazzo Brancaccio).³⁵¹



(Figure 4 – Places in Rome associated with Paulina)

As we can see from Figure 4, the various places throughout the city to which Paulina had connections were to be found in almost every part of the central *urbs*, and passage through some of the busiest parts of Rome were likely involved in visiting these sites. However, this does not mean that Paulina would have been forced to travel, with any regularity, through

³⁵¹ CIL 6.2145.

the most crowded parts of the city. In fact, as Figure 4 above shows, the known residences of Paulina are notably close to some of the sites she is associated with, allowing for minimal travel to these locations. Between these local sites, and the domestic shrines to deities such as Hecate and Isis that people were known to have in their homes, there is no reason that Paulina's duties would have demanded regular movement; at least not in the way that, as we shall see later, a Christian deaconess in Constantinople might be required to make.³⁵²

Of course, that Paulina visited any of these places, even once, is speculation. Perhaps she never did. Perhaps her connection to these cults went no deeper than the titles she enjoyed. Perhaps she never held any real interest in these offices, occupying them solely through marriage to a man at the centre of Rome's pagan community. All of this, however, seems unlikely. The religious titles held by Paulina were honours of which she was deeply proud. Her offices are listed within her funerary inscription, evidencing that it was her devotion not just to her husband, but also to her faith, that she wished to have preserved for posterity.³⁵³ Her own memorial represents her as being 'devoted to temples and a friend to the divine beings', suggesting a physical, spatial element to her relationship with these sacred sites; a relationship that was sincere and substantial.³⁵⁴

If Paulina was involved in the public ministrations of various cults, she would not have been alone. Caecinia Lolliana was another wealthy woman of senatorial class and a priestess of Isis, married to the onetime urban prefect Lampadius; who features in the works of Ammianus as a prideful politician who wished even for his manner of spitting to be praised.³⁵⁵ Whatever the merits of her husband's exhortation, Lolliana and her family were, like Paulina and Praetextatus, connected to the performance of pagan cult practice throughout the city.³⁵⁶ Furthermore, we have some idea of where they lived. Ammianus recounts the embarrassing tale of Lampadius' retreat across the Milvian Bridge, as he fled from an angry mob that sought to burn down his house in response to an unspecified grievance.³⁵⁷ The historian places the prefect's residence near the Baths of Constantine,

³⁵² V. Karras, 'Female Deacons in the Byzantine Church', *Church History*, Vol.73, No.2, (2007), pp. 272-316.

³⁵³ *CIL* 6.1779 = ILS 1259.

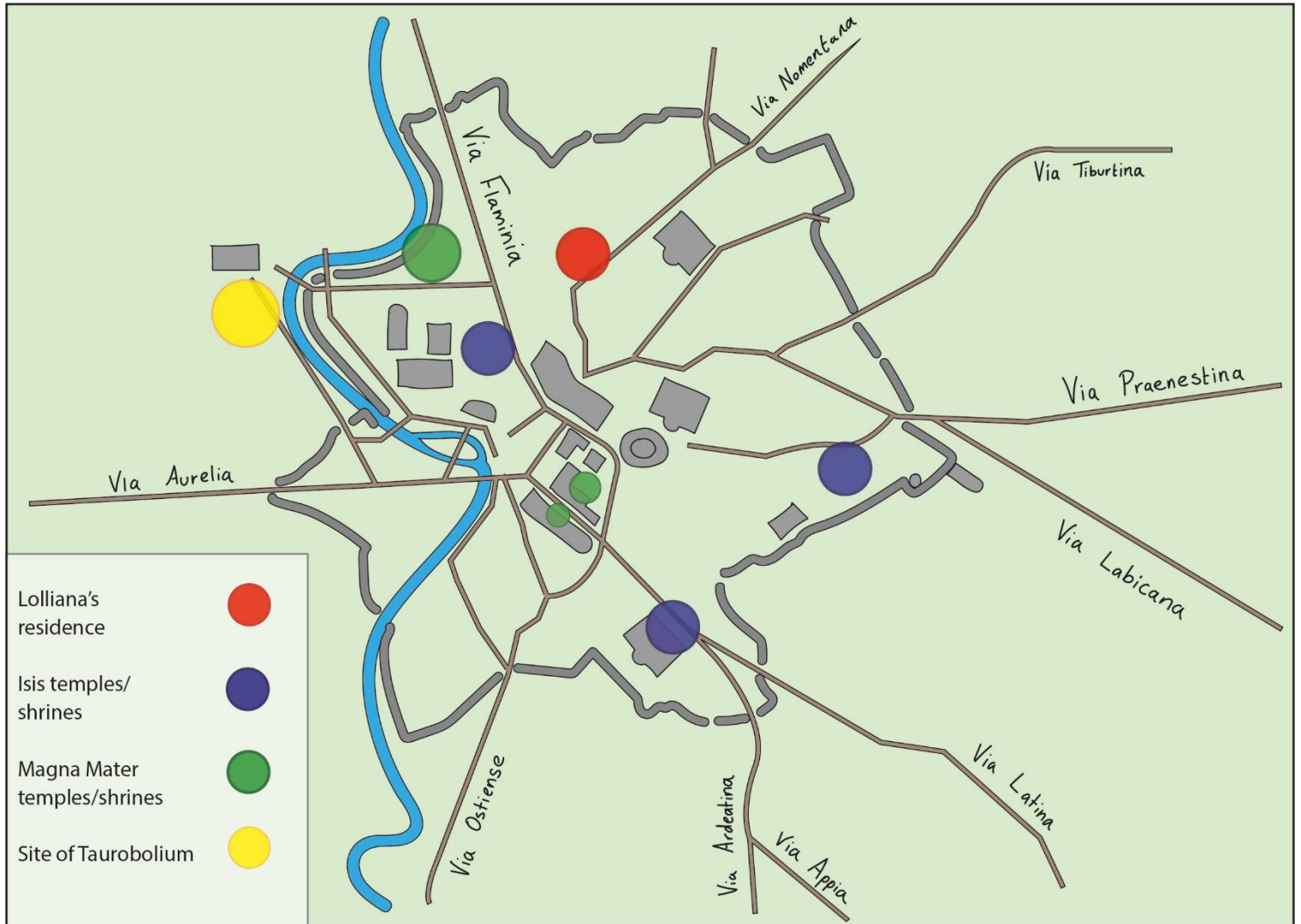
³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.3.5; T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, (Cornell, 1998), p. 116.

³⁵⁶ N. McLynn, 'The Fourth-Century Taurobolium', *Phoenix*, Vol.50, No.3, (1996), p. 310.

³⁵⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.3.8.

which would mean it was situated north of the Forum, probably in the area of the Quirinal hill. As such, it seems that Lolliana, as a *sacerdos* of Isis, lived a reasonably short distance from the goddess' main temple in the Campus Martius (see Figure 5).



(Figure 5 – Places in Rome associated with Lolliana)

From earlier sources we can piece together some of the types of duties both women may have been expected to fulfil in their roles within the Isiac cult. Earlier sources indicate that public processions – involving women - were involved in both the *Isidis Navigum* (5 March) and the festival of *Isia* (28 October - 1 November).³⁵⁸ We know that priestesses and initiates participated not only in these processions, but also in tending to the votive statuary within the sanctuary, holding objects of sacred significance such as lamps and ladles, and

³⁵⁸ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11.9.

interpreting dreams.³⁵⁹ There is also evidence of singing, chanting and mourning taking place at temples and elsewhere, such as on the banks of the Tiber.³⁶⁰ Classical sources also attest to people frequenting, and even residing within, the temples of Isis.³⁶¹ However, these sources were written centuries before either Lolliana or Paulina were initiated into the cult, and we cannot be sure that the rites of Isis had not changed drastically during the intervening period. Nevertheless, they do provide us with a clear indication that, whatever the late antique iteration may have looked like, the cult of Isis within Rome grew from a foundation in which women had roles to play that took them outside the home.

While we cannot be certain what the daily rhythms of a pagan priestess (of any cult) looked like, we can be sure of one specific rite they would have attended; that of the *taurobolium* in Rome. In her funerary poem, Paulina states that her husband honoured her with the *taurobolium*, an exercise in spiritual purification associated with the rites of Attis and Magna Mater, involving the ritual sacrifice of a bull. Lolliana would have been deeply familiar with this rite also; a dedication at Ostia tells us that her husband, Lampadius, received the *taurobolium*, as did their son and two of their daughters in Rome.³⁶² One received it alongside her husband, while the other, Sabina, received not only the *taurobolium* but also dedicated an altar to Attis and Rhea, who were each associated with the Mother of Gods and this particular sacrifice.³⁶³ Sabina's inscription also states that she knew the mysteries of Demeter and Hecate, as did Paulina.³⁶⁴

This particular ceremony is often depicted, at least in the popular media, as an exceptionally bloody practice in which the unfortunate animal is slaughtered upon a metal grille, while the honorand stands beneath, duly drenched in the creature's pouring blood. However, as Neil McLynn has pointed out, the rituals taking place in fourth-century Rome were, in all

³⁵⁹ Lolliana, as a *sacerdos*, was a priestess of the cult, while Paulina appears to have been an initiate only. Both would have, if the classical sources hold true in Late Antiquity, been involved in the processions and rites of the goddess, but as Heyob points out in her study of women in the Isiac cult, Paulina might not have been required to involve herself quite so much (it is interesting to note that of the two women, the one most intimately involved with the cult – Lolliana – had her house closest to its main temple within the city); Heyob (1975), p. 36.

³⁶⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.522–41.

³⁶¹ Flavius Josephus, *Of the Jews*, 18.

³⁶² *CIL* 6. 509.

³⁶³ *CIL* 6.3096.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

probability, less sanguinary affairs.³⁶⁵ As the epigraphic, archaeological, and written records all suggest, it seems more likely that Paulina would have received the rite in a bowl, rather than through a grille.³⁶⁶ Whatever the mechanics of the ceremony, McLynn believes we can be 'certain' the fourth-century *taurobolium* was a 'significant public event'.³⁶⁷ Given the popularity of Magna Mater amongst fourth-century pagans in Rome, and when one considers the public profile of the attendees, we can safely assume that this ceremony involving Paulina and Praetextatus would have been a notable affair.

The significance of the event was surely heightened by the fact that *taurobolia* were held only rarely (probably one occasion a year). We can also reasonably assume that both men and women were present for at least some of the ceremony. Paulina herself would have been there, of course, with some female retinue in attendance. We should expect other, traditionally-minded aristocrats to be present also, particularly those with connections to the cult, such as the unknown woman whose name a damaged funerary inscription no longer reveals, but who received the *taurobolium* and dedicated an altar to Attis in 383 CE, the year before Paulina's death.³⁶⁸ Male priests, known as *quindecemviri*, would also have been in attendance, as they were recorded as being present at the *taurobolium* for Serapias, a *sacerdos* of Magna Mater who received the *taurobolium* in Rome, and who dedicated an altar to the goddess in 319 CE.³⁶⁹ In fact, it is probable that Praetextatus, honouring his wife with the ritual, did so in his role as a *quindecemvir*.

We cannot be certain when, or where, these sacrifices took place. However, we can narrow it down, both chronologically and geographically, by reviewing the material record. Excavations have revealed that, in the fourth-century city, the area around the Vatican was closely associated with the performance of these particular rites.³⁷⁰ A number of inscriptions have been discovered that, according to scholarly consensus, show that this area was used for *taurobolia*.³⁷¹ McLynn convincingly places the ceremonies for people such as Paulina upon the Vatican hill, not far from the basilica of St Peter's, and imagines the two sites

³⁶⁵ McLynn (1996), p. 310.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³⁶⁸ *CIL* 6.502 = ILS 4150.

³⁶⁹ *CIL* 6.508 = ILS 4146.

³⁷⁰ McLynn (1996), p. 314.

³⁷¹ *CIL* 6.499, 500, 508, 512.

attracting their respective crowds at the same time, in unspoken competition.³⁷² Whether this ever happened is unclear, but the area of the Vatican does seem to have a connection with this particular element of pagan ritual. In the case of Paulina, this meant a reasonably lengthy journey from (one of) her urban residences to the area in question, across the city and beyond its walls. It would have also been a reasonably lengthy journey for Lolliana, if indeed she were departing from the residence highlighted in figure 5.

Of course, this particular journey probably took place no more than once a year. As for when this sacrifice would have taken place, the most likely time was in the spring, after the festivities of Magna Mater and Attis, which ran from 15 – 28 March. Scholars such as Salzman, Graillot, and Duthoy suggest this was the time in which most *taurobolia* were performed.³⁷³ In fact, of the 32 *taurobolia* recorded by Duthoy, 12 were specifically dated as having taken place between 7 April and 5 May.³⁷⁴ This came after nearly two weeks of celebrations, including at least four separate processions of indeterminate size and splendour (all involving crowds of unspecified makeup), and a day of revelry and festivities in the form of the *Hilaria* on 25 March.³⁷⁵ The role of priestesses, such as Paulina and Serapias, in these annual events is not known, but if these processions were public affairs dedicated to Magna Mater, and women such as Paulina were patrons and priestesses of the goddess, and if – as we have seen – these women were keen to display their religious honours to the people of the city, then it is difficult to imagine them having no role to play whatsoever during the cult's busiest and most important time of year.

Outside these religious locations, we might imagine that such women attended other significant events. For instance, Paulina was not only present at the funeral of her husband, but was likely to have been present some years earlier, when Praetextatus led a procession of pagans to the summit of the Capitoline, looking for all the world like a triumphant general. Jerome does not specify who attended this event, beyond the man himself and the 'highest dignitaries in the city'.³⁷⁶ But he stresses the expansive nature of the procession

³⁷² McLynn (1996), p. 315.

³⁷³ H. Graillot, *Le culte de Cybèle*, (Paris, 1912); R. Duthoy, *The Taurobolium: Its Revolution and Terminology*, Brill, (1969); M. R. Salzman, *On Roman time: the codex-calendar of 354 and the rhythms of urban life in late antiquity*, (Berkeley, 1990).

³⁷⁴ Duthoy (1969), p. 102.

³⁷⁵ Salzman (1990), p. 168.

³⁷⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 23.4.

and the attendance of crowds.³⁷⁷ Certainly, if the appearance of a classical triumph was deliberate, and not merely a product of Jerome's rhetoric, then presumably the wife of the 'triumphant general' could have been present as wives had, previously, made appearances in triumphal processions of their husbands.³⁷⁸ Moreover, in the last few years of her life, it seems unthinkable that Paulina would not have visited her husband's resting place beyond the boundaries of the city (especially during the religious festivals that were dedicated to fulfilling precisely this function – which will be discussed later in the chapter).

As such, while their precise movements will remain lost to us, the evidence suggests that Fabia Aconia Paulina and Caecinia Lolliana were, by virtue of their priestly roles and direct involvement with their religion, presented with opportunities to engage with public, urban settings. However, these opportunities were not necessarily regular, as the precise requirements of their priestly roles, and the scope for conducting rites within the *domus*, are not known. We cannot discount the possibility that the rites in which they participated were primarily carried out within domestic spaces, with public appearances rarely necessary. Furthermore, as we have seen, the positioning of religious sites and aristocratic properties was such that these women could have visited temples and shrines, as needed, without extensive movement through the city. Therefore, while their priestly titles likely offered some legitimate routes into public settings, it is unclear how extensive they were.

ii. Women in public: Christian roles

Opportunities for official, female involvement within Christian practice followed a similar pattern to that for pagan priestesses. As scholars such as Madigan, Osiek, Hylan and Clark have noted, the scope for female participation in ecclesiastical ministrations was much greater in the early days of Christianity, before it was officially tolerated, imperially sponsored, and adopted as the religion of empire.³⁷⁹ By Late Antiquity, this was no longer the case. As we shall see, opportunities for female involvement in this regard were severely limited in Constantinople and, in all probability, non-existent in Rome. However, those positions available – namely that of the deaconess – do seem to have entailed more

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.4.

³⁷⁸ See M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, (Harvard, 2009).

³⁷⁹ K. Madigan and C. Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History*, (Baltimore, 2011), pp. 1-11; S. E. Hylan, *Women in the New Testament World*, (Oxford, 2019), pp. 113-131; K. H. Clark, 'The Changing Role of Women in the Early Christian World', *Theology Today*, Vol.49, No.2, (1992), pp. 225-238.

movement, and more clearly defined public duties, than anything seen by the pagan priestesses in Rome.

On the question of whether official participation was possible for Christian women in Rome, Jorg Rüpke argues that, in the fourth century, a number of women might have held some form of office within the Roman church. Rüpke's position is based upon two peculiar funerary inscriptions uncovered at St Paul's basilica, dating from the latter half of the fourth century. One is of a woman named Regina, while the other's name is lost.³⁸⁰ On the inscriptions, the women are titled *cubicularia*, and Rüpke posits two explanations for this. It is possible, he maintains, that each was the wife of a *cubicularius*, a position that entailed serving as custodian of saintly relics.³⁸¹ In this scenario, the husbands presumably worked in and around the basilica, watching over Paul's remains, while their wives shared in their titles (but not necessarily in their duties).

Rüpke's thinking here is clear, as there was certainly precedent for a wife to adopt the feminine form of her husband's title, as pagan priests and their spouses had done for centuries (the *flaminica dialis* being the most obvious example).³⁸² The second theory presented is that *cubicularia* was, in fact, the women's own title. Rüpke argues that Christian *cubicularii* were not officially established until the pontificate of Leo (440-461), at which point they are recorded as exclusively male. He goes on to suggest that these inscriptions might indicate the presence of female office holders who occupied the position before it became more fully incorporated into the ecclesiastical 'career structure' and strictly earmarked for men. In the fourth century, then, he suggests that 'women acted as custodians of Paul's remains'.³⁸³

Let us consider, for a moment, the plausibility of this. It is generally agreed upon that some women had, historically, played a role in the collection and guardianship of saintly relics. Denzey convincingly demonstrates that this had previously been the case in Rome.³⁸⁴ Indeed, Pope Damasus (366-384) recalled how an aristocratic woman, Lucilla, had moved

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 479, 868.

³⁸¹ J. Rüpke, *Fasti Sacerdotum: A Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499*, (Oxford, 2008), p. 479, 868.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 479.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

³⁸⁴ N. Denzey, *The Bone Gatherers: The Lost Worlds of Early Christian Women*, (Boston, 2007), p. 32.

the bones of Saints Peter and Marcellinus from the relatively obscure Via Ardeatina to a 'more suitable place' beside the Via Labicana.³⁸⁵ However, historians have called into question the existence of at least some of these women. The first of Rome's bone gatherers, named Lucina, has been dismissed by Kate Cooper as a 'pious fiction'.³⁸⁶ Cooper is equally sceptical with regards to Damasus' Lucilla, whom she believes to have been a later, literary iteration of Lucina, and equally as fictitious.³⁸⁷

Nevertheless, I think it reasonable to assume that some women, particularly those of means, could have played a role in the transportation and protection of relics, as they are associated with such in the hagiography. However, this is not the same as claiming that they held ecclesiastical office prior to Leo's pontificate. In truth, Rüpke's theory has little basis in evidence and appears to be mostly speculation. The similarity of the title with that of *cubicularius*, and the location beside St Paul's basilica, appear to be the only facts drawn upon to reach such a conclusion. Moreover, there is another possible explanation that Rüpke does not mention. *Cubicularia* was also the title given to women who served as personal assistants (ladies of the bedchamber) to imperial women. We know of several in Constantinople, such as Marcella, Droseria, and Euphemia.³⁸⁸ As Julia Hillner has demonstrated, there were multiple imperial women in Rome in Late Antiquity.³⁸⁹ These women, we can be sure, had their own retinues, household staff, and ladies-in-waiting. Therefore, I see no reason not to give equal credence to the idea that this title was, in actuality, referring to two women who, in life, had served an imperial woman in Rome during the fourth century and who, at the end of their lives, were buried in the vicinity of St Paul's basilica. Beyond this one possible (but arguably improbable) title, there are no other ecclesiastical offices that were, in light of the evidence, occupied by women in Rome (in the period in question). This is not to say that women in Rome had no role to play within the Christian community; countless scholars have comprehensively demonstrated the inverse

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

³⁸⁶ K. Cooper, 'The Martyr, the Matrona and the Bishop: The Matron Lucina and the Politics of Martyr Cult in Fifth- and Sixth-century Rome', *Early Medieval Europe*, Vol.8, No.3, (1999), p. 300.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

³⁸⁸ *Life of Hypatius*, 44.1-7; W. F. Beers, "'Furnish Whatever is Lacking to their Avarice": The Payment Programme of Cyril of Alexandria', in N. S. Matheou, T. Kampianaki, and L. M. Bondiolo (eds), *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, (Leiden, 2016), p. 83.

³⁸⁹ J. Hillner, 'A Woman's Place: Imperial Women in Late Antique Rome', *Antiquité Tardive*, Vol.25, (2017), pp. 90-91.

and I shall discuss this in more detail later. However, insofar as the official participation of women goes, the evidence does not, to my mind, indicate that such happened in Rome.

Constantinople and the Deaconess

We can be certain that some women participated, in an official capacity, within the church at Constantinople. Here, women could be ordained as deaconesses, thus holding an ecclesiastical office unavailable to those in the west. As Gillian Cloke has demonstrated, there were numerous women throughout Late Antiquity, largely in the eastern half of the empire (especially Constantinople and Jerusalem) who were referred to as deaconesses in various histories, letters, and hagiographies.³⁹⁰ Here, I will again employ a case study approach, to allow for comparison against what we have seen with respect to Rome's pagan priestesses and their possible public actions. The individual in question is the deaconess Olympias (368-408). As she lived in an area popular with aristocrats at the time and visited the most popular church in the city (the Great Church), her movements were likely repeated by other, wealthy Christian women who went to hear the bishop's sermons.³⁹¹

Olympias was a woman of extensive means, coming from a well-connected aristocratic family and having been married to a certain Nebridius, who served as prefect of Constantinople. After her husband's death, she is said to have refused the numerous offers of marriage that came her way, instead choosing to dedicate her life to the church. She was ordained as a deaconess at just thirty years old, exactly half the age that was usually required.³⁹² The imperial authorities had wanted her to remarry, on account of her high status and vast wealth, but she resisted their overtures and founded a large, female convent by the Great Church, which later became a centre for almsgiving. She was publicly known throughout the capital, in which she owned multiple properties, and exchanged several letters with John Chrysostom, of whom she was a close supporter. The bishop's eventual downfall led to her exile, shortly after which she died of illness in Nicomedia, aged 40.

Before we can start to think about her movements, we should first consider the role of deaconess and its attendant duties. For starters, deaconesses were typically recruited from

³⁹⁰ Gloke (2003), pp. 208-9.

³⁹¹ P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, (New York, 1988), p. 283.

³⁹² PLRE, Vol.1, p. 642 (Olympias 2); Brown (1988), p. 283.

aristocratic widows, and therefore from women who, as Jerome suggested, were often seen outside of the home already. The precise liturgical functions of the deaconess are not known – only some. For instance, the fourth-century deaconess was expected to participate in the full-body baptisms of nude, adult women. After this, the women would be quickly and chastely covered, at which point the bishop would then ‘officially’ baptise them.³⁹³ This particular duty would have declined over time as infant baptisms became more commonplace, and adult baptisms less. Of course, this change was by no means immediate, and adult baptisms were held throughout Late Antiquity, including in mass spectacles that took place outside the city, such as that observed by the emperor Arcadius as he rode through the city gates in 404.³⁹⁴

As well as attending baptisms, deaconesses of Constantinople were also expected to fulfil certain public, liturgical functions within church services, such as chanting and singing. The deaconess Lampadia, for example, oversaw the women’s choir at the Great Church.³⁹⁵ They also served as doorkeepers for the women’s entrances into church and, it is argued, were responsible for supervising female congregants during church services and maintaining order, in much the same way as male deacons did both in the east and west.³⁹⁶ In addition to this, the role of the deaconess also involved visiting housebound women, who could not attend church due to illness or childbirth, with the eucharist.³⁹⁷ Deaconesses were thus sent out into the city, to visit the homes of numerous women on a regular basis.³⁹⁸

In the case of Olympias, we happen to know where two of her three residences were situated. Her preferred home was located in the area around the Baths of Constantius, near the northern branch of the Mese and not far from the Church of the Holy Apostles.³⁹⁹ This was a particularly fashionable area in which numerous wealthy elites were located at the

³⁹³ Karras (2007), p. 277.

³⁹⁴ Palladius, *Life of John Chrysostom*, 9; P. Brown, ‘Christianisation and Religious Conflict’, in P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol.13, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 657.

³⁹⁵ Karras (2007), p. 280.

³⁹⁶ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 12.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 281; A Martimort, *Deaconesses: An Historical Study*, (San Francisco, 1982), p. 232.

³⁹⁸ V. A. Karras, ‘The Liturgical Functions of Consecrated Women in the Byzantine Church’, *Theological Studies*, Vol.66, No.1, (2005), pp. 96-116.

³⁹⁹ PLRE, Vol.1, p. 642; Magdalino (2007), p. 49.

time.⁴⁰⁰ Olympias' second property was a substantial, palatial residence close to the Great Church (where her friend and co-religionist John Chrysostom was primarily based). It was this residence that Olympias would eventually transform into something akin to a nunnery, in which the deaconess originally housed 50 ladies-in-waiting, with the number later growing to 250.⁴⁰¹ This complex also housed a bakery, baths, and a tribunal for dispensing alms.⁴⁰² The location of Olympias' third urban residence is unknown.

Now that we know where, roughly, Olympias would have begun her journey (from one of either two known locations), and the sorts of duties she would be involved with, we can start to piece together some of her possible movements. The route we can be most certain of is the one between her favoured residence in the area known as 'Constantiniana' and her convent near the Great Church (see figure 6). While we cannot possibly know the precise route she would have taken, or how frequently she made the journey, the most plausible course would have seen her travel down the northern branch of the Mese, to where it connected with the southern branch at the point of the Philadelphion.⁴⁰³ She would have then proceeded along the main Mese, through the busy Forum of Theodosius, past the Tetrastion, through the even busier (and heavily commercial) Forum of Constantine, past the Million, and into the monumental south-eastern centre of the city.

Thus, the journey between her two properties would have seen Olympias travel, just as Paulina likely did in Rome, through some of the very busiest and most crowded parts of her city. Of course, it is possible that she took a much quieter, albeit more meandering route between the two locations. However, as I will discuss in more detail later, given the apparently poor condition of the streets away from the main thoroughfare, and the fact that the Mese was one of Constantinople's few perfectly level pathways, this seems unlikely.⁴⁰⁴ Not only this, but if Olympias were to cut across the city, through its various narrow streets, then she would have to contend with the rather steep Third Hill in Regio VII, near the

⁴⁰⁰ P. Magdalino, 'Aristocratic *Oikoi* in the Tenth and Eleventh Regions of Constantinople', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, (Leiden, 2001), p. 57; P. Magdalino, *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople*, (London, 2007), p. 49.

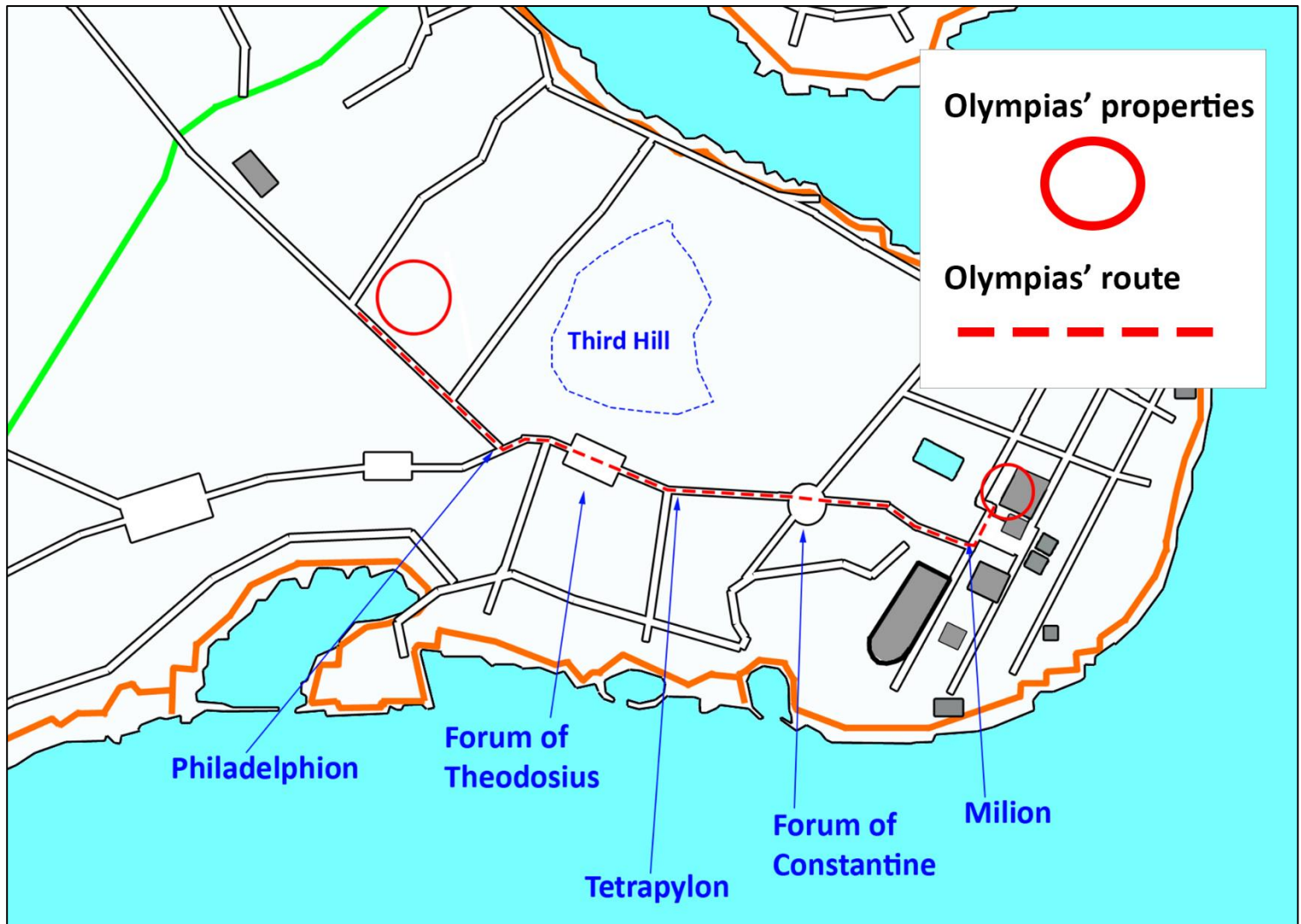
⁴⁰¹ S. Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 1996), pp. 178-182.

⁴⁰² *Life of Olympias*, 6-7, 131-132; Brown (1988), p. 283.

⁴⁰³ A. Berger, 'Streets and Public Places in Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, Vol.54, (2000), p. 162.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 162; on the Mese more generally see C. Mango, 'The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate', *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, Vol.54, (2000), pp. 173-188.

location of the Great Nymphaeum, which she could have avoided by travelling along the main, monumental thoroughfare.⁴⁰⁵ As such, it seems reasonably safe to assume that this journey was undertaken, at least occasionally.



(Figure 6 – Places associated with Olympias in Constantinople and possible route taken)

Olympias' relationship with Chrysostom, along with her duties as deaconess, would have seen her visit the bishop and attend his church. If she were travelling from her preferred residence, the route taken would have been almost identical to the one just described. However, if she were travelling from her second, closer, property then she need not have entered public space at all. We are told that a tunnel connected her convent to the Great Church, allowing Olympias and her female attendants to travel between the two buildings,

⁴⁰⁵ Berger (2000), p. 162.

in part to ensure that the bishop received his daily economic assistance, which Olympias provided.⁴⁰⁶ There were, of course, other churches in Constantinople in the late fourth century, and it is perfectly possible that Olympias attended some, if not all, of them upon occasion. However, if the *Notitia* is to be believed, then by as late as 425 CE there were only 14 churches in Constantinople, and presumably even less in the fourth century.⁴⁰⁷ Also, given that the main churches tended to be focussed in the south-east, and along the two branches of the Mese, the routes taken would have likely, again, been similar.

Of course, we cannot know where Olympias, or other deaconesses, travelled when visiting women at their homes, but presumably this varied depending upon the women in question. In any case, the range of duties deaconesses were expected to fulfil means we can be reasonably certain their roles were not only carried out in public settings, but also necessitated movement across the city. We can be surer of this than we can of the movements of Rome's pagan priestesses (with the possible exception of the Vestals). Furthermore, we should remember that the role of pagan priestess, however much movement and engagement with public space it might have entailed, ceased to be available from the late fourth century onwards. Therefore, the office of deaconess and its attendant public functions was available, for women in our two cities, only to those in Constantinople.

iii. Women in public: Pagan festivals

Of course, the holding of a specific title or office was not the only, or even the most common, form of participation in religion for either men or women. In this section, I will examine some of the routes into public space provided by 'unofficial' religious action. This will again involve comparison, this time of pagan festivals in Rome and, for Christianity, attendance at churches, martyr shrines, processions, and more. Again, discussion of pagan festivals is limited to Rome, as our Constantinopolitan sources offer no real indication of pagan ceremonies taking place in that city, and certainly provide no details that might allow us to infer the presence or otherwise of women. For discussion of Christian engagements, however, we are fortunate to have evidence from both cities.

⁴⁰⁶ W. Mayer, 'Constantinopolitan Women in Chrysostom's Circle', *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol.53, No.3, (1999), p. 271.

⁴⁰⁷ *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, O. Seeck (ed.), *Notitia Dignitatum. Accedunt notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et laterculi provinciarum*, (Rome, 1876), pp. 227-245.

Before beginning with pagan festivals, it is worth noting that the overwhelming majority of evidence that details pagan religious activity comes from the first, second, and third centuries CE. This is not to say that no late antique textual evidence exists; it does, and I make use of it. Indeed, the fourth century provides us with religious calendars, eyewitness descriptions, Christian sermons, and legal sources that all discuss, in some manner, the performance of pagan rites and festivals within Rome. However, we should treat with extreme caution the descriptions provided to us by Christian authors, such as the fourth-century poet Prudentius, who betray their ignorance of certain rites and rituals, and who have very obvious axes to grind.⁴⁰⁸ Aside from these rather unreliable accounts, the extant sources most dedicated to describing the makeup, location, and other specifics of pagan rites were written before our inquiries begin at 312 CE.

In light of this, I have chosen to include evidence from classical sources to help understand the possible content of religious festivals, provided there is evidence of them continuing in the fourth century or beyond. For example, the description of the rites of the *Matralia* are provided by Ovid in the early first century CE, and include functions carried out by women.⁴⁰⁹ The festival continues into Late Antiquity, listed in a religious calendar of 354 CE, but no other information is on offer.⁴¹⁰ In this instance, then, we have no way of knowing how similar the fourth-century manifestation of the festival was to that recounted by Ovid; did it remain unchanged, or would the poet have found it unrecognisable? Both outcomes are plausible given the passage of more than three centuries. Certainly, for those festivals where we do have some information regarding their late antique iterations, such as the *Floralia* or *Lupercalia*, they appear to have remained largely, if not entirely, similar.⁴¹¹ As such, I will include festivals where there is reason to believe that; A) women are noted to have been involved at some point in time, and B) the festivals continued into Late Antiquity.

⁴⁰⁸ On Prudentius' errors see J. Scheid, 'The Religious Roles of Roman Women', in P. Schmitt Pantel (ed.), *A History of Women in the West: From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, (Cambridge, 1992), p. 383.

⁴⁰⁹ Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.475.

⁴¹⁰ 'The Chronography of 354 AD. Part 6: the calendar of Philocalus', *Inscriptiones Latinae Antiquissimae*, Berlin, (1893) pp. 256-278.

⁴¹¹ Salzman (1990), p. 241; see also A. W. J. Holleman, *Pope Gelasius I and the Lupercalia*, (Amsterdam, 1974).

Women and pagan festivals in Rome

At various points throughout the year, the city of Rome would play host to ancient festivals (approximately 175 days were devoted annually to public holidays in the fourth century) and, in some of these, women of all classes had roles to play.⁴¹² In others, they simply took part alongside everyone else, in a spirit of collective worship, devotion and celebration. Inevitably, in some others they have no recorded role at all, which of course should not be taken as definitive proof of their absence, given the nature of the sources. Such festivals were important not only from a religious perspective, honouring and supplicating the beings who governed the forces of nature, but they formed part of the Roman tradition and could, in many cases, be traced as far back as the Republic.

While much of our information on Roman festivals comes from earlier centuries, Late Antiquity provides us with one of our single most important sources for the holding of celebrations in Rome. The Codex Calendar of Filocalus, assembled in the middle of the fourth century, contains lists, illustrations, and a religious calendar (*fasti*) for the city. The recipient was Valentinus, a wealthy and, judging from the lists of bishops and saints' days within the Codex, Christian aristocrat in Rome. However, when looking at the breakdown of the months in the Calendar, it is immediately obvious that the life of fourth-century Romans was marked by religious, principally non-Christian, festivals. The year of its assembly was 354 CE, at a point when emperors were Christian and had been for some time.⁴¹³ Rome's inexorable drift towards Christianity, and the decline of pagan cult worship, is not reflected in the rhythm of daily life as represented to us in the Calendar. Evidently, the great city-wide occasions that took place throughout the year were, at this time, of a primarily pagan nature. As Salzman and others have pointed out, there was much vitality in late Roman paganism, and the civic life of Rome had yet to be separated from its religious traditions.⁴¹⁴

Before looking at some of the festivals within the Calendar, it is worth briefly considering the argument of Mommsen that these particular *fasti* did not represent the practices actually taking place in Rome, but were instead eulogising the past.⁴¹⁵ Scholars such as

⁴¹² Salzman (1990), p. 6.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴¹⁵ T. Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, (Frankfurt, 1982), p. 28.

Salzman, Wissowa, Geffcken, Alfoldi, and Stern have all worked to demonstrate that the Calendar did, in fact, represent actual local practice for the city of Rome.⁴¹⁶ Indeed, a number of the festivals listed, such as the *Lupercalia*, *Floralia*, and *Saturnalia* are attested elsewhere as having taken place in Late Antiquity.⁴¹⁷ Furthermore, a law passed just thirteen years before the Calendar's creation was explicit in its instruction to the Urban Prefect that he not damage those temples outside the walls that were associated with festivals that 'provided the regular performance of long established amusements for the Roman people.'⁴¹⁸ Not only this, but temples were still being restored years after the Calendar had been written, and Libanius declared in 386 CE that 'they have not yet dared rob Rome of its sacrifices'.⁴¹⁹

I include on the next page a table (Figure 7), outlining those festivals throughout the year in which I have reason to believe women had a role to play. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, this will include information, preceding the fourth century, in which women are noted as having some role or other to play. Here, I am only including those festivals that, in light of the evidence, we have reason to believe were still being held in the fourth century.

⁴¹⁶ A. Alfoldi, *A Festival of Isis in Rome Under the Christian Emperors of the Fourth Century*, (Budapest, 1937); H. Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354*, (Paris, 1953); G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Romer*, (Munich, 1912); J. Geffcken, *The Last Days Greco-Roman Paganism*, (Amsterdam, 1978); Salzman (1990).

⁴¹⁷ John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.45.

⁴¹⁸ *CT* 16.10.3.

⁴¹⁹ Libanius, *Orations*, 30.33-34; though we cannot, admittedly, be sure that he is here talking about the city of Rome, rather than 'Rome' as embodiment of the empire.

Month	Date	Festival	Details
January	16	<i>Dies carmentariorum</i>	Festivals to nymph Carmenta. We are told that it was chiefly observed by women, although spatial elements unknown
	19	<i>Carmentalia</i>	
February	13-21	<i>Parentalia</i>	Rites for the ancestral dead – families would visit tombs and dine there
	15	<i>Lupercalia</i>	Fertility / purification rite – men would run around the Palatine, striking the hands of women with hide strips
	21	<i>Feralia</i>	Offerings to the <i>manes</i> – both domestically and at familial tombs
	22	<i>Caristia</i>	Families would meet at the house of the <i>paterfamilias</i> and dine
	23	<i>Terminalia</i>	Celebrated at the meeting point between two neighbouring properties. Wives recorded as cooking, and bringing, food. Unsure of the spatial elements when applied to a city like Rome
March	2	<i>Pelusia</i>	A day in which women are said to have consulted fortune-tellers
	5	<i>Isidis Navigum</i>	'The sailing of Isis' – involving processions, with priests and priestesses
	15-28	Rites of Attis and Magna Mater	A series of events, including several processions – references to presence of a priestess
	25	<i>Hilaria</i>	Associated with Magna Mater and Attis, but also a city-wide day of fun
April	1	<i>Veneralia</i>	Devotions to Venus. Women prayed to Venus for good marriages. Female attendants washed the cult statue in the men's baths
	12-18	<i>Cerealia</i>	To Ceres. Women in white clothes move around the Circus Maximus
	28	<i>Floralia</i>	In the <i>Valis Murcia</i> . Celebrations in Circus. Female performers and prostitutes present
May	??	<i>Rosalia</i>	Moveable, but often in May. Women garlanded the city with flowers
June	9	<i>Vestalia</i>	Women (and women only) would go to temple of Vesta with offerings
	11	<i>Matralia</i>	Ritual beating of a slave girl by upper-class, married women in temple
	18	<i>Annae Sacrum</i>	To Anna Paremma – couples celebrate and drink on banks of Tiber

(Figure 7 – Festivals in Rome where it is suggested women were in public)

When looking at the above table, you could be forgiven for thinking it is only half-complete, given that it runs only to June. While there were numerous festivals held in the latter half of the year during the fourth century, such as the *Neptunalia*, I am not aware of any records that show participation of women, even if they may have served as unstated spectators (we simply have no way of knowing). Therefore, looking at the Calendar and the festivals within, we see that women's religious movements in Rome, and the provision of these legitimising

contexts for their use of public space, were heavily concentrated in the first half of the year. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss each festival in-depth and, as such, I will focus on the *Parentalia*, using this example to demonstrate how pagan festivals and practices might have impacted women's movement through, and engagement with, public space. This festival is also noteworthy because, as we shall see later, the rites of this particular festival were performed by some Christian families in much the same way.

On 13 February, the *Parentalia* began and would last for eight days. As previously discussed, these rites commenced with a procession and sacrifice conducted under the supervision of a Vestal priestess, probably atop the Capitoline. After this, the festival was largely marked by private worship. It was left to individual families to make their way to the tombs of their ancestors outside the city, where they would feast, drink, and celebrate in close connection to their deceased relatives. As scholars such as Dolansky and Holland have suggested, the preparation of food was surely, in most cases, left to the care of women, especially in those households without slaves, cooks, or attendants.⁴²⁰ Wealthier women were undoubtedly spared from having to rustle up the festive menu themselves, but would still have travelled to eat the food at the burial sites that encircled the city. Much of the activity must have taken place in public, around the tombs that ringed the city, in addition to whatever private devotions were undertaken within the home.

For those with deeper pockets, the necessary preparations could be carried out at the tombs themselves, removed from the domestic setting entirely. Tombs can be seen, primarily from Rome, Ostia, and Isola Sacra, with amenities necessary for the provision and consumption of food. The rites of the *Parentalia* were so engrained in the Roman calendar that some of these tombs were equipped with communal kitchens and water supplies, geared towards facilitating the preparation and consumption of food and drink on site.⁴²¹ In fact, 'some individual tombs were equipped with their own wells or cisterns, kitchens, ovens, dining rooms, and means for storage'.⁴²² As Hopkins states, groups could be seen

⁴²⁰ F. Dolansky, 'Honouring the Family Dead on the Parentalia: Ceremony, Spectacle, and Memory', *Phoenix*, Vol.65, No.1, (2011), p.132; L. L. Holland, 'Women and Roman Religion', in S L James and S Dillon (eds.), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, (2012) pp.204-214.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

‘picnicking alfresco at the family tomb, where, according to Christian critics, they often got boisterously drunk, with their dead relatives around them.’⁴²³

Details of the *Parentalia* in the fourth century, and the role of women within it, come mostly from outside Rome. However, I would argue that the sources point towards a reasonably universal practice. Augustine is perhaps the best-known critic of this festival, which he saw as being imitated by Christians in North Africa and elsewhere. He described his mother’s role during the *Parentalia*, as she moved around the cemeteries with a basket of festive food and drink, visiting shrines and serving wine to the people around her.⁴²⁴ She performed the same duties in Milan, where the bishop Ambrose attempted to dissuade her from doing so.⁴²⁵ The Milanese bishop’s intervention was performed ‘both for fear that to some they might be occasions for drunkenness and also because they bore so close a resemblance to the superstitious rites (*Parentalia*) which pagans held in honour of their dead’.⁴²⁶ Evidently then, the practices were similar in Italy and North Africa. This is reinforced by the complaints of Zeno, bishop of Verona in Northern Italy (c. 350– 80), who noted people having funerary meals at the sites of tombs.⁴²⁷ Likewise, the bishop Gaudentius of Brescia (c. 390– 410), in the same area of Italy, complained of excessive eating and drunkenness at tombs.⁴²⁸

Returning to figure 7, it is apparent that late Roman paganism provided opportunities for women to engage with the public spaces of their cities. However, the lack of festivals that involved women in the second half of the year is remarkable, and is even more noteworthy when one considers how the religious calendar had changed, for women, by the fourth century. Festivals that are recorded as involving women in the classical period, such as the *Caprotinia* (July) or the *Nemoralia* (August) appear to have fallen out of favour, as they no longer feature in the calendars or writings of the fourth century. Both of these particular festivals involved women leaving the boundaries of the city, such as their journey in the latter festival to Lake Nemi, some several kilometres south of Rome. The celebrations to Jupiter Stator (June) involved public processions of women. Likewise, the worship of

⁴²³ K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, (Cambridge, 1983), p. 233.

⁴²⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 6.2.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.2.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.2: *et quia illa quasi parentalia superstitioni gentilium essent simillima*, trans. NPNF.

⁴²⁷ Zeno, *Tractatus*, 1.25; E. Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity*, (Cornell, 2009), pp. 144-145.

⁴²⁸ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 4.14-5; Rebillard (2009), p. 145.

Fortuna Muliebris (July) involved female-only devotions, but is absent from the record in Late Antiquity. Meanwhile, the women-only public rites of Bona Dea (May) seem to have gone, although the cult appears to have still been in existence. Likewise, the women-only cults of Pudicitia and their public competitions of modesty seem to no longer be observed.

In particular, I think it noteworthy that a number of the festivals that seem to have been discontinued by the fourth century involved not only female movement, but elements of role-reversal. The *Matronalia* (March), saw women travelling to the temple of Juno on the Esquiline. Sources record women wearing their hair loose, on this day, and receiving gifts from their husbands, who were also expected to offer prayers for their wives at this time.⁴²⁹ It was also custom, according to Ovid, for the matrons to prepare and serve food to their female slaves, in a manner not dissimilar to that performed by male masters during the *Saturnalia*, which took place in the fourth century.⁴³⁰ Similarly, the *Caprotinia* (July) is no longer mentioned in Late Antiquity, nor included in the Calendar of 354. In this festival, it was customary for men to serve food to servile women during the *Ancillarum Ferae*. Finally, the *Nemoralia* (August) saw women leave the city in a procession to Lake Nemi, several miles outside Rome.⁴³¹ As D'Ambra has noted, this festival also saw gender roles reversed, with young girls 'aspiring to the masculine world of risk and adventure'.⁴³²

As such, the late antique pagan calendar appears to have grown more restrictive in terms of female movement over time, favouring a social framework in which women were more tightly tethered to their homes and families. Whether this was in response to a conscious decision, or a natural process of gradual change in which religious expression came to reflect prevailing social attitudes, is unclear. As outlined in the previous chapter, there is an argument that Late Antiquity saw the household emphasised as the primary social unit, which may help explain this change. In any case, what is apparent is that an entire raft of festivals, in which female movement formed a central part, fell from the calendar sometime

⁴²⁹ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.229; Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 19; Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 14; Horace, *Odes*, 3.8; John Lydus, *de Mensibus*, 4.42.

⁴³⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.229; Martial, *Epigrams*, 5.84.11, refers to it as the *Saturnalia* for women.

⁴³¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.259-275; Propertius, *Eligies*, 2.32.10; Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 100.

⁴³² E. D'Ambra, 'Daughters as Diana: Mythological Models in Roman Portraiture', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, Vol.7, (2008), p. 173.

before 354 CE. Instead, the festivals that tended to involve women in the fourth century saw their actions and movements take place as part of their familial unit and household.

It is also unclear which women were involved in many of these festivals. We do not know, for instance, if the very poor visited the sanctuary of Vesta during the *Vestalia*, or whether this was reserved for respectable women. Certainly, experience and use of space for some of the festivals differed depending on both social and marital status. Slave girls were excluded from the temple of Mater Matuta during the *Matralia* (with the sole exception of the unfortunate recipient of a ritual beating), while the cult statue could only be decorated by a woman who had married once.⁴³³ We might also reasonably imagine that senatorial women, such as Paulina and Lolliana, did not lounge drunkenly in the grass with their husbands on the banks of the Tiber during the celebrations to Anna Paremma.⁴³⁴ Meanwhile, funerary events like the *Parentalia* were surely open to a wider range of people, as one did not have to be especially lofty to bury a relative. I will return to discuss these differences in chapter 4, where I consider more closely the spatial elements of women's religious action.

From midsummer through until the new year, then, women's religious activity seems to have decreased in Rome, focussing instead on the earlier months. It was during these months in which those rites were held that were centred upon familial ties, performed not by individual women but by family units (*Parentalia*, *Caristia*, *Feralia*, *Terminalia*). Festivals that saw women leaving the home and engaging with public spaces on their own, or in the company of other women, (often in the warmer months characterised by longer days and more outdoor movements) seem to have fallen out of favour. However, we should be aware that women may well have attended some festivals in later months, such as the *Saturnalia*, but our evidence does not specifically state so. In addition, simply because many of these festivals were associated with traditional 'womanly' preoccupations, such as childbirth, we should not overlook the fact that they were performed in highly public places (the Circus, Forum, Palatine) in the presence of many others, including men.

As such, late Roman paganism still provided women with legitimising contexts for entering public spaces, but these were not as commonly spread throughout the year as they had

⁴³³ Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.475; Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 16.

⁴³⁴ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.523; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.12.6; John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.49.

been in earlier centuries. The passage of time appears to have restricted the amount of movement offered to women, on a cyclical basis, by the rhythms of ancient paganism. Ultimately, the traditional round of festivals would cease to offer anything at all, as in 389 CE the emperor Gratian removed the legal status of all pagan holidays. Six years later, under Arcadius and Honorius, they were removed from the calendar and abolished.

iii. Women in public: Christian worship and action

With the decline of traditional Greco-Roman religion, the only substantive legitimising contexts for female religious use of public space came to rest with Christianity. Although there were almost no routes via which late antique women could participate in an 'official' capacity, aside from the role of deaconess, there were other ways to engage publicly with their faith. Attendance at church services, visits to martyr shrines, almsgiving and participation in processions could all involve highly visible appearances in public, urban settings. As we shall see, elite women of means conducted Christian duties, in public places, and moved freely around the city in doing so. Crucially, I would maintain that Christianity offered many more routes for elite women to engage with public space and take on visible roles within their cities. However, for the nonelite, there is little evidence to suggest Christianity greatly altered access to public settings, in many of which the nonelite had always been present (as we shall discuss later in the chapter).

Women and church attendance

There is no doubt that women attended church. In both Rome and Constantinople, the sources are clear on this point.⁴³⁵ The questions, then, are thus: how regularly did women leave their homes and travel to churches? How much movement through the urban landscape was typically required to make these journeys? And finally, what proportion of women in each city were actually embarking on this movement? In order to address these points, we will need to consider the development of stational liturgies within the two cities across Late Antiquity; that is, the organisation of regular services throughout the year and the different churches in which they were held. We must also examine the number, and locations, of churches in each city and the composition of their attendees. As we shall see,

⁴³⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 26.4, 27.2, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 4.7, 15.8, 20.5, 28.11; Jerome, *Letters*, 107.11.

attendance at church services did provide a route into public space for some women, but we should note that this was probably not the case for most, given the limited capacity of churches. However, alongside other elements, such as processions and almsgiving, we can see how Christianity provided more routes, certainly for elite women, into public spaces that fourth-century paganism appears to have.

In the early fourth century, neither city had anything like sufficient church capacity for the entire urban, Christian community. The number of Christians living in Rome during the fourth and fifth centuries is far from clear, with estimates from scholars such as Christie suggesting around 250,000 (almost 25% of the urban population) by the mid-fourth century, while others such as MacMullen suggest the figure was much smaller (roughly 7% of the population) during the same period.⁴³⁶ Estimates for the total capacity of Rome's known churches, including both basilicas and tituli, has been calculated at around 35,000 by the close of the fourth century, which would represent – if such calculations are to be believed – room for no more than 14% of the Christian population within the city's churches.⁴³⁷ As Sessa points out, even when the city was at its lowest population level (somewhere between 60-80,000 in the sixth century), 'Rome's churches still could not accommodate all its Christian citizens'.⁴³⁸

Constantinople fared no better in this regard. According to the *Notitia Urbis*, by the mid-fifth century the city had only fourteen churches.⁴³⁹ After Constantine's founding, the city did not witness any significant growth in its Christian topography until the reign of Theodosius, at which point it again plateaued until Justinian's rule in the sixth-century, when substantial church building (and rebuilding) once again took place.⁴⁴⁰ In the fourth century, certainly, the major sites of Christian worship were heavily concentrated in the monumental centre and along the two branches (north and south) of the Mese. MacMullen estimates that, throughout the fourth century, Constantinople's churches could not hope to accommodate

⁴³⁶ N. Christie, *From Constantine to Charlemagne: An Archaeology of Italy AD 300–800*, (London, 2016), p. 130; R. MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity AD 200-400*, (Atlanta, 2009), p. 88.

⁴³⁷ Macmullen (2009), pp. 87-89; R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals, Topography and Politics*, (Berkeley, 1983), p. 94, 102.

⁴³⁸ K. Sessa, *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge, 2018), p. 209.

⁴³⁹ *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, Seeck (1876).

⁴⁴⁰ S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, (Cambridge, 2007), p. 30; for a more in-depth discussion of the various phases and churches built within them, see T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (London, 1971).

more than a mere 2.5 - 3% of the city's population.⁴⁴¹ Although the new church-building phases would, later, increase this capacity, it was never sufficient to permit the entire Christian population (which we are led to believe was significant) to worship in church.

Clearly, in the fourth and early fifth centuries, Christian women intent on attending church would have likely been required to make considerable journeys through either city, given the relatively sparse distribution of churches. However, the numbers increase substantially in both urban centres throughout the period, with many large and small foundations springing up throughout Rome and Constantinople between the fifth and sixth centuries. The effect of this, as Sessa points out, would have been that people probably had two, or even three, local churches to choose from by the close of Late Antiquity.⁴⁴² This surely then applied to women, meaning those living in close proximity to churches did not have to travel overly long distances to reach such places. As such, attendance at church did not necessarily entail great amounts of travelling. A woman living upon the Aventine in the sixth century, for instance, could have attended services at the nearby Santa Prisca, Santa Sabina, Santa Balbina, or the *tituli* Fasciolae and Crescentianae. Sessa goes on to explain that, for most people, the decision of which church to attend would have been made, in all likelihood, upon the bases of location and social connections.⁴⁴³

In addition to choosing nearby churches, there was also the option of domestic worship. Just as archaeological evidence has revealed domestic, pagan shrines, so too has it uncovered evidence of domestic, Christian places of veneration. A Late Antique aristocratic *domus*, excavated beneath the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo upon the Caelian Hill, reveals a small shrine decorated in Christian imagery, which is believed to have been used for private worship. It is still visible today and observers will notice a niche, built into the wall, which possibly contained relics or, perhaps, was used for holding the Eucharistic bread.⁴⁴⁴ That such shrines received regular use by women is supported by the sources. Both Chrysostom and Jerome instructed women to remain at home and engage in prayer

⁴⁴¹ Macmullen (2009), p. 34.

⁴⁴² Sessa (2018), p. 210.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁴⁴ R. Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, (Princeton, 2000), p. 336; A. M. Yasin, 'Sacred Space and Visual Art', in S. Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2012), p. 323; K. Sessa, *The Household and the Bishop: Establishing Episcopal Authority in Late Antique Rome*, (Berkeley, 2003), p. 172.

there.⁴⁴⁵ Clearly, it was possible to engage in regular worship, at home or at a nearby church, without extensively traversing the city.

There were, however, reasons why a Christian woman might choose to travel further afield in attending church. Firstly, the Eucharist was administered in church. The stipulation in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a fourth-century collection of Christian treatises on liturgy and Church organisation, is that the deaconess was to take the Eucharist to only those women who were housebound through illness or childbirth.⁴⁴⁶ Otherwise, able-bodied women were generally expected to attend church and receive the rite. Furthermore, important moments in the Christian calendar, such as the Lenten period, were often marked by church services held in the major basilicas of Rome and Constantinople, under the supervision of the bishop. These were occasions that, it seems, were designed to draw together the urban faithful.⁴⁴⁷ In addition, there was a growing tendency throughout Late Antiquity for the Roman bishop to celebrate different occasions at different churches, as part of a developing system of stationary liturgy. Certainly, by the seventh century, the Lenten period in particular was focussed on moving services around the entire city of Rome, never repeating an ecclesiastical region in two consecutive days.⁴⁴⁸

This does not seem to have been the case at all times, however. In Rome, evidence of an emergent stationary liturgy does not appear until the mid-fifth-century, under the pontificate of Leo. From the bishop's own sermons, we can detect that he celebrated the Eucharist in a variety of churches across the city, with a focus on St Peter's upon the Vatican.⁴⁴⁹ There is also evidence, from another sermon, that the bishop presided over a service at the martyrrium of St Lawrence, on the Saint's feast day, beyond the walls along the Via Tiburtina.⁴⁵⁰ A third sermon tells of Leo preaching at the basilica of Santa Anastasia, wherein

⁴⁴⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.26, 107.7; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 26.4.

⁴⁴⁶ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 3.2.

⁴⁴⁷ R. F. Taft, 'Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When-And Why?' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol.52, (1998), p. 62; D. G. Hunter, 'A Liturgical Innovation and its Implications', in J. Day, R. Hakola, M. Kahlos, and U. Tervahauta (eds), *Spaces in Late Antiquity: Cultural, Theological and Archaeological Perspectives*, (London, 2016), p. 91; B. Lançon, *Rome in Late Antiquity: Everyday Life and Urban Change, AD 312-609*, (New York, 2001), pp. 139-141.

⁴⁴⁸ K. Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere*, (Cambridge, 2011), p. 152; J. F. Baldwin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stationary Liturgy*, (Rome, 1987), pp. 106-118.

⁴⁴⁹ M. R. Salzman, 'Leo's Liturgical Topography: Contestations for Space in Fifth-Century Rome', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol.103, (2013), pp. 208-32.

⁴⁵⁰ Leo, *Sermons*, 85.

he railed against the Monophysites.⁴⁵¹ While this does not necessarily represent an official, organised system of stational liturgy for the city, it certainly suggests that by the mid-to-late fifth century, the bishop of Rome could be expected to preach at different locations, for the celebration and veneration of different, religiously significant events.

There is similar evidence in Constantinople, beginning with the patriarchate of John Chrysostom (397-404), in whose homilies (along with a passage from the Church Historian, Socrates) we can detect a number of churches in use by the bishop. It is generally agreed that, for the most part, Chrysostom preached in the Great Church, located in the south-eastern monumental centre of the city, just north of the Imperial Palace.⁴⁵² However, we also have evidence of the bishop in attendance at an octagonal church in the suburban area of Hebdomon, for the feast of the Prodomos, as well as at a shrine at Elaiai, across the Golden Horn, for the feast of the Ascension.⁴⁵³ A homily delivered at an unknown event took place in the Hagia Eirene, while a sermon in honour of Theodosius' death was made in the Church of the Holy Apostles.⁴⁵⁴ There is also evidence of a sermon that was delivered, in response to a drought, at an unnamed martyrion outside the Adrianople Gate, and one delivered to the Goths in the church of St Paul the Confessor, near the Golden Horn.⁴⁵⁵

We know that Chrysostom, in particular, was an especially popular preacher. His journey to Constantinople began with the authorities sneaking him out of Antioch, for fear that his departure would spark civil unrest.⁴⁵⁶ Indeed, his eventual (and second) exile from Constantinople is recounted as an overtly public event with crowds of people gathering to see the bishop, as well as an emotional farewell with those women, including the deaconess Olympias, to whom John was close.⁴⁵⁷ Given his reputation for eloquence, and the level of popular adoration he appears to have enjoyed, it seems reasonable to assume that a significant number would have travelled across the city, even to the more distant churches,

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁵² P. Allen and W. Meyer, *John Chrysostom*, (London, 1999), p. 20; A. Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages*, (London, 2008), p. 54.

⁴⁵³ Allen and Meyer (1999), pp. 20-25.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-25; see also W. Meyer, 'John Chrysostom and his audience: distinguishing different congregations', *Studia Patristica*, Vol.31, (1997), pp. 70-75.

⁴⁵⁵ J. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom - Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*, (Cornell, 1988), p. 143.

⁴⁵⁶ Allen and Meyer (1999), p. 21.

⁴⁵⁷ Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 10.

to hear the bishop's words. Indeed, during a sermon outside the Adrianople Gate, Chrysostom remarked that he had brought out the entire urban population.⁴⁵⁸

Having established, then, that attendance at church could necessitate movement across the urban landscape, the next step is to assess how often women attended such services. Of course, actual numbers are impossible to attain and, given the paucity of evidence for the late antique period on liturgies or attendance, estimates should be treated with supreme caution. However, as already discussed, we have reasonably reliable information on the number of churches in both Rome and Constantinople (making them unique among most late antique urban centres), alongside estimations of the numbers of people living in either city throughout the period. Supplemented by the texts of sermons and homilies, we can use this varied evidence to draw some conclusions on who actually attended church and who, on a regular basis, might travel from one place of worship to another.

While Sundays were, in theory, marked out for worship, we can be certain that not everybody attended church on a weekly basis.⁴⁵⁹ Leaving aside the fact that non-Christian populations existed in both cities, the economic demands placed upon the majority of Roman citizens – i.e. the constant struggle to keep oneself and one's family housed, clothed, and fed – would have undoubtedly trumped their desire to sit in church. Regular attendance was not, in fact, generally expected of most people during this period.⁴⁶⁰ In addition to economic concerns, there were also other activities that could draw people away from church. In both Rome and Constantinople, sources indicate that the church often competed against the allure of civic entertainments, and it did not always win. Many people were, it seems, instead drawn to games in the Roman arena, races in the Constantinopolitan hippodrome, or the dances and music of theatres.⁴⁶¹

Of course, the rhetoric of bishops, over the sins and failings of their congregants before them, was often exaggerated. We should be similarly sceptical when asking bishops to tell

⁴⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, *That People Should Come Together Frequently*, 1; on this particular sermon see W. Meyer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom: Provenance, Reshaping the Foundations*, (Rome, 2005), p. 157; Baldwin (1987), p. 182.

⁴⁵⁹ Sessa (2018), p. 209; A. Busine, 'Introduction: Religious Practices and Christianisation of the Late Antique City', in A. Busine (ed.), *Religious Practices and Christianization of the Late Antique City (4th – 7th cent.)*, (Leiden, 2015), pp. 7-10.

⁴⁶⁰ Sessa (2018), p. 209.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

us who, as well as how many, attended church. For instance, MacMullen has claimed that, when one examines late antique homilies and sermons, the picture presented is one of a majority male, elite audience. He concludes that those addressed by bishops are 'only rarely women, and never slaves or children'.⁴⁶² I am not convinced, however, that sermons tell us much about the sexual composition of the audience. We should expect late antique bishops to address their messages, primarily but not exclusively, to the elite men before them. In this, their texts and speeches align with almost every other literary source of the time; male-authored and male-directed. There was also, one assumes, a practical purpose to this, given that men – and elite men in particular – were most capable of implementing the bishop's instructions, as the main wielders of influence within a household.

Nor am I convinced that the evidence, at face value, suggests an absence of female congregants. John Chrysostom, for example, speaks repeatedly and directly to the women before him in sermons both at Antioch and Constantinople.⁴⁶³ He repeatedly urges the female members of his flock to abandon their jewels and perfumes, and to adopt simpler ways of living.⁴⁶⁴ Gregory, an earlier bishop of Constantinople, references seeing women in church there.⁴⁶⁵ The Church Historian Sozomen, likewise, places women in Constantinopolitan churches.⁴⁶⁶ Olympias and her fellow deaconesses were also to be found there.⁴⁶⁷ In North Africa, Augustine made it clear that, in his experience, women were a more common sight within church than men. He imagined a bearded man being mocked for visiting church, for 'going where the widows and old ladies go'.⁴⁶⁸ Jerome understood that elite women visited church and thought this one of the few legitimate reasons for consecrated virgins and widows to leave the home (even if it was not without risk).⁴⁶⁹ Ambrose also referenced female virgins in the church at Milan.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶² MacMullen (2009), p. 15.

⁴⁶³ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 26.4, 27.2, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 4.7, 15.8, 20.5, 28.11.

⁴⁶⁴ See previous chapter, p. 49.

⁴⁶⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, *Dream about the Anastasia Church*, 19-20.

⁴⁶⁶ Sozomen, *Church History*, 7.5, 7.16.

⁴⁶⁷ Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 10.

⁴⁶⁸ Augustine, *Sermons*, 306B.6.

⁴⁶⁹ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.11.

⁴⁷⁰ Ambrose, *De Lapsu*, 6.22.

However, I am prepared to accept that our sermons point to a mostly elite – if not mostly male - audience. For example, the homilies of John Chrysostom (both those delivered in Antioch and Constantinople), strongly suggest that, by and large, he is addressing the upper echelons of society. Chrysostom's focus is often upon wealth and luxury, and he explicitly says his congregation owned, collectively, extraordinary sums of gold.⁴⁷¹ Slaves are mentioned so frequently, and in passing, that their presence within the household is taken for granted.⁴⁷² Those he addresses own rural estates and travel in litters.⁴⁷³ Of course, we must always consider that the poor could have been there, if rarely addressed. There is an indication that some in Chrysostom's audience were illiterate and worked with their hands.⁴⁷⁴ In Leo's sermons in Rome, however, the poor appear as a faceless 'vehicle for the salvation of the rich', and despite his repeated discussion of poverty and almsgiving, Leo does not address the poor as though they are there, present, in the church.⁴⁷⁵

In short, then, it seems as if attendance at church was not a frequent feature of most people's lives. I would argue that the limited capacity within churches, the economic and social demands upon ordinary women, and the language used by bishops themselves suggest that church attendance was likely the preserve, for the most part, of the socially superior. Women of means could engage on a regular basis with their religion, entering and engaging with public places in the view of others. Moreover, the paucity of churches in the earlier part of the period might have necessitated extensive movement, the range of which possibly became smaller as the number of nearby churches increased. However, regular church services, at different locations throughout the city, and those ministered by the bishop, were probably not a feature of most women's lives, just as regular attendance at the temple of Isis, alongside initiates and priestesses, had never been.

⁴⁷¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 11.3.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5; *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.9-10; *Homilies on Ephesians*, 15.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 18.2-4.

⁴⁷⁴ On this see J. Maxwell, *Sermons*, in S. McGill and E. J. Watts, *A Companion to Late Antique Literature*, (London, 2018), p. 352; MacMullen (2009), pp. 14-32, 104-11; it also worth noting that we do not know what Chrysostom's definition of a poor congregant is. Being illiterate or working with one's hands did not mean a person was abjectly impoverished.

⁴⁷⁵ P. Allen, B. Neil, and W. Meyer, 'Reading the Texts: A Methodology of Approach to Genre', in P. Allen, B. Neil, and W. Meyer (eds), *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities*, (Leipzig, 2009), p. 43.

Martyr shrines

For women in Rome and Constantinople, sermons and services held within the cities' churches did not represent the only way to engage, publicly, with the Christian faith. Nor were they the only, acceptable, religious route beyond the walls of the *domus* and into the public spaces of the urban landscape. The martyr shrines, which ringed the city of Rome and lined the boundaries of Constantinople, became important focal points for the Christian populace. Large, outdoor processions began to characterise the Christian communities first in Constantinople and, later, Rome. In these arenas, women of varying social status had roles to play. As Peter Brown points out, women were actively encouraged to take up duties in relation to the poor, the saints, and processional veneration.⁴⁷⁶

Returning to the Calendar of 354, discussed previously in the chapter, we can see that the veneration of martyrs, in Rome, was linked to specific days and places. The Calendar marks out 25 days throughout the year in which individual saints are to be commemorated, often at cemeteries situated far from the city walls.⁴⁷⁷ However, visits to these shrines were not limited to specific days. In Rome, the catacombs and shrines effectively encircled the city and, depending on which particular shrine was being visited, movement in any direction through the city might be required.⁴⁷⁸ Jerome regards the shrines of martyrs as acceptable places for even the young virgin Asella to regularly visit – provided that she kept her head down and moved quickly, in a manner designed to attract as little notice as possible.⁴⁷⁹ Likewise, in the *Life of Melania*, the eponymous aristocrat is described as visiting various shrines around Rome, such as that of Saint Stephen, although it is made clear that she would not do so at night, out of concern for her virtue and reputation.⁴⁸⁰

Constantinople, likewise, had a reasonable number of shrines to which women could visit. In fact, after leaving Rome, Melania visited the shrines beyond the Theodosian Walls before venturing inside the city.⁴⁸¹ Unlike Rome, however, Constantinople did not have a ready supply of local martyrs, with the singular exceptions of Mocius and Acacius who were

⁴⁷⁶ P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Functions in Latin Christianity*, (Chicago, 1981), p. 46.

⁴⁷⁷ *The Chronography of 354 AD*, Part 12: commemoration dates of the martyrs, in Salzman (1990), p. 23.

⁴⁷⁸ N. Denzey Lewis, *The Early Modern Invention of Late Antique Rome*, (Cambridge, 2020), p. 95.

⁴⁷⁹ Jerome, *Letters*, 24.4.

⁴⁸⁰ Gerontius, *Life of Melania*, 4-6.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 50-52.

venerated by Constantine.⁴⁸² To remedy this, numerous relics and remains were transported from across the empire to the new capital, ensuring the city was furnished with enough sites of religious significance as befitted an urban centre of such ceremonial and political importance.⁴⁸³ As we have seen with the churches, in each city the number of saints shrines increased throughout the period. Naturally, as the number of significant shrines increased in either city, so would opportunities to visit and venerate them.

Other sources, such as the *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, indicate that the suburban areas of Constantinople became a locus of religious veneration, as in Rome. Women, alongside children and husbands, would visit the shrines there, as well as those remarkable individuals who set themselves up in these areas, like Daniel himself. In his *Life*, there are certainly references to women and entire families who, in visiting these sites, then went to see the man atop his column.⁴⁸⁴ As previously touched upon, such suburban cemeteries and shrines had been, for centuries, areas of what Peter Brown calls 'low gravity' for women.⁴⁸⁵ In these spaces, he explains, 'their movements and choice of company were less subject to male scrutiny and the control of the family'.⁴⁸⁶ This is, we can suppose, partly why the bishop Ambrose tried to prevent Augustine's mother, Monica, from excessive veneration at the Milanese cemeteries, where he complained of loose behaviour.⁴⁸⁷ In addition to women, these were also spaces in which the poor could congregate and, because of this, shrines could serve as suburban focal points of charity and giving, shifting the focus away from the monumental centre, with its temples and public buildings.⁴⁸⁸

At Rome, as I will discuss in more detail in chapter 4, there were also a number of cemeterial basilicas established beyond the walls. These were effectively large, covered cemeteries in which people could hold all-night vigils, feast, and drink. Examples include St Lawrence, St Agnes, St Sebastiano, and Ss. Peter and Marcellinus.⁴⁸⁹ Our sources are clear

⁴⁸² B. Ward-Perkins, 'The Cities', in P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol.13, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 401; Socrates, *Church History*, 2.38; Sozomen, *Church History*, 4.21.

⁴⁸³ B-Ward Perkins, in Garnsey and Cameron (1998), pp. 401-2.

⁴⁸⁴ *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, 39, 59.

⁴⁸⁵ Brown (1981), p. 44.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴⁸⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, 6.2.2.

⁴⁸⁸ R. Finn, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice*, (Oxford, 2006), p. 102

⁴⁸⁹ M. Hellström, 'Constantine's Circiform Basilicas in Rome', in M. R. Salzman, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome; Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century*, Cambridge, (2015), p. 298.

that women would go to visit these places, as Jerome characterises them as sites of lewd behaviour, where a woman might venture to engage in adulterous liaisons beyond the supervision of her husband.⁴⁹⁰ However, the use of these places by women protective of their modesty seems to have varied. At night they were raucous, but seem to have been slightly less so during the day.⁴⁹¹ Eventually these extramural basilicas were brought under the control and supervision of the clergy and hosted regular liturgical worship. In any case, the presence of these basilicas, and saints' shrines more generally, indicates that Christianity provided women with reasons for travelling considerable distances, through a city and beyond its walls.

Processions

Not only did women visit martyr shrines in the suburbs of their cities, they also partook in the largescale processions that, in some cases, were linked to the transportation of relics to such shrines. In this respect, Constantinople clearly outcompeted Rome by a wide margin. In the Eternal City, the first concrete evidence for liturgical processions in which women were able to participate comes from the pontificate of Gregory in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.⁴⁹² In Constantinople, on the other hand, we are presented with evidence from the fourth century that recounts such processions, beginning with Gregory of Nazianzus' complaints about the processions of other, non-Nicaean religious groups.⁴⁹³ In fact, scholars such as Sheperdson and Bauer have argued that it was precisely this battle between rival groups for control of the city's spaces, and their competing displays of unity – designed to indicate that they represented the 'true' Christian community within the city – that caused these large, outdoor, public processions to become so popular from an early stage in Constantinople's history, certainly far more so than in Rome.⁴⁹⁴ An exhaustive list of every procession (both regular and singular) recorded in the various textual sources for Constantinople is not necessary here, but is recounted in some detail by Baldovin.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁰ Jerome, *Against Vigilantius*, 9.

⁴⁹¹ Gerontius, *Life of Melania*, 4-6.

⁴⁹² Baldovin, (1987), p. 158.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.181; Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations*, 38.5-6.

⁴⁹⁴ C. Sheperdson, *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy*, (Berkeley, 2014), p. 166; F. A. Bauer, 'Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity', in J. R. Brandt and O. See (eds), *Imperial Art as Christian Art – Christian Art as Imperial Art*, (Rome, 2001), pp. 38-40.

⁴⁹⁵ Baldovin (1987), pp. 185-190.

Unlike Christian processions in Rome, which are not recorded until the very end of our period, the routes undertaken in Constantinople were not usually circular, but involved returning from the destination to the original point of departure via the same course. As Bauer points out, the topography of the eastern city, hemmed in on either side by the sea, and the fact that it had few porticoed, monumental streets, meant that the patterns of movement as seen in the later, Roman processions were not suited to the pathways of Constantinople.⁴⁹⁶ In fact, as Berger notes, only one street built after Constantine's founding was used in any recorded procession, with the rest all taking place along either the north or, in most cases, south branch of the Mese.⁴⁹⁷ The overwhelming majority of these began in the monumental centre, at either the palace or the Great Church, proceeded along the main thoroughfare and out of the Golden Gate, before returning back via the same route. Along the way, a common stopping-point, which became increasingly central to the life of these processions throughout Late Antiquity, was the Forum of Constantine – one of the busiest civic and economic hubs in Constantinople. This, as Bauer explains, would have entailed enormous disruption as the processions passed through the busiest districts of the city, suggesting that 'every person in the city must in some way have been affected'.⁴⁹⁸

That women were present at these processions is not in doubt. These events were designed around the concept of bringing the entire Christian community into the open, on display, to operate alongside and in tandem with representatives of the imperial court. Chrysostom is unambiguous that female participation was accepted, expected, and without concern in these circumstances. The bishop explained that those urban spaces which were usually considered profane could be rendered, temporarily, safe and sacred through the singing of psalms, the burning of wax, and the glow of torches – these drove out the polluting sounds, smells and sights and, in the company of other Christians, even the most fragile women were safe.⁴⁹⁹ As highlighted in the previous chapter, during the procession to the martyr church of St Thomas, Chrysostom explicitly points out not only the presence of women, but even of those who would not normally venture outdoors, including the empress Eudoxia.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁶ Bauer (2001), p. 34.

⁴⁹⁷ Berger (2000), p. 125.

⁴⁹⁸ Bauer (2001), p. 35.

⁴⁹⁹ Sheperdson (2014), p. 155.

⁵⁰⁰ John Chrysostom, *That People Should Come Together Frequently*, 1, (PG 63, 461-468), cited in K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, (California, 1989), p. 57.

This is a theme that runs throughout the descriptions of other processions in the city; no doubt serving as a rhetorical device to demonstrate that the *entire* community was participating. However, given that the audience to such sermons and texts were also likely to have witnessed, and participated in, the processions, we can assume there was truth to these claims also.

As previously mentioned, no such liturgical processions are noted in Rome until the sixth century. Fourth and fifth century processions involving Christians had taken place prior to this, but had not been liturgical in function and, as Latham has pointed out, primarily involved contenders for the papacy marching on select locations and attempting to hold them.⁵⁰¹ For example, in 418 CE the supporters of Boniface marched on St Peter's, attempting to seize the basilica against the rival claimant Eulalius, who had already been ordained as Pope.⁵⁰² In these processions, however, women are not mentioned as taking part, although they are alleged to have been caught up in some of the ensuing factional violence, such as those killed in the conflict between supporters of Damasus and his rival Ursinus at the Liberian basilica in 368 CE, which might indicate their involvement.⁵⁰³ Furthermore, Latham is clear that these events are recorded in militaristic language, of siege and attack, and so perhaps the absence of female participation in these processions, in the sources, is a consequence of rhetoric.⁵⁰⁴

The liturgical processions in Rome do not commence, in the sources, until after the Byzantine reconquest. Later, Pope Gregory would initiate the *Laetaniae Septiformes*, an extraordinary penitential procession in response to a devastating famine. This procession saw the Christian community separated into seven different groups, each setting out from a different church, with everyone converging at S Maria Maggiore. The seven groups were: clergy, monks, nuns, children, laymen, widows, and married women – each accompanied by priests of the different ecclesiastical regions.⁵⁰⁵ Several years later, the Pope initiated the

⁵⁰¹ J. Latham, 'From Literal to Spiritual Soldiers of Christ: Disputed Episcopal Elections and the Advent of Christian Processions in Late Antique Rome', *Church History*, Vol.81, No.2, (2012), p.300.

⁵⁰² *Collectio Avellana*, 14-37.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1.7.

⁵⁰⁴ Latham (2012), p. 301.

⁵⁰⁵ M. M. Andrews, 'The Laetaniae Septiformes of Gregory I, S. Maria Maggiore and Early Marian Cult in Rome', in I. Ostenberg, S. Malmberg, J. Bjørnebye (eds), *The Moving City; Processions, Passages and Promenades in Ancient Rome*, (London, 2015), p. 155.

same programme, but with different starting points assigned to the groups, in response to another, this time unspecified, disaster.⁵⁰⁶ Latham has noted the high degree of inclusivity across all social groups in these processions.⁵⁰⁷ As Andrews explains, in order to take part, the residents of Rome 'had to identify as a member of a society classified in Christian terms rather than in economic or political ones'.⁵⁰⁸ Men and women were not assigned to their groups on the basis of their elite status, but their marital status and dedication to religious living: virgins, widows, and the married.

While it has been speculated that these processions were inspired by those already taking place in Constantinople, the *Laetaniae Septiformes* are different to those as described by, say, John Chrysostom. In Constantinople, processions seem to have taken place for a variety of significant events, as well as on a regular, recurring basis. They also seem to have focussed upon, as lauded by Chrysostom, everyone marching together. Whatever the case, it is clear that throughout Late Antiquity processions were far more important in Constantinople, to the extent that Justinian made it illegal to interfere with their progress, or to initiate one without the supervision of the church.⁵⁰⁹ This was, I would suggest, because of the fact that Constantinople continued to function as an imperial, ceremonial city throughout Late Antiquity, in which processions of all types remained popular. Also, in Constantinople, the monumental thoroughfare, civic centre, and fora (in particular, that of Constantine) remained central to the ceremonial life of the city throughout Late Antiquity, in a way that the Roman Forum and Capitol did not.

This touches upon another key difference between the two cities, which is that in Constantinople the secular and Christian spaces were much more entwined than in Rome. The traditional civic buildings, in and along the city's monumental armature, became integral to Christian worship. Not only did two thirds of all recorded liturgical processions in Constantinople involve an 'intermediate service' in the Forum of Constantine, but places such as the Hippodrome and Imperial Palace were incorporated into the city's Christian topography, serving as points along processional routes as well as places of collective

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵⁰⁷ J. Latham, 'The Making of a Papal Rome: Gregory I and the letania septiformis', in A. Cain and N. Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, (2009), p. 296.

⁵⁰⁸ Andrews (2015), p. 158.

⁵⁰⁹ Baldovin (1987), p. 212.

worship, particularly in times of dire circumstance.⁵¹⁰ Church services were held, quite literally, in the shadow of Constantine's statue of the emperor as Sol Invictus – atop a porphyry column that, some believed, housed the intensely pagan Palladium.⁵¹¹ This combination of the civic and Christian lent itself to a processional system, in which women participated, that engaged with the most public, and busiest, parts of the city.

In Rome, meanwhile, Christian authors delighted in characterising the places that had once been central to civic life, such as the Forum and Capitol, as relics of a bygone age. Jerome particularly enjoyed describing how temples that had once been highly important were now forgotten and rendered ugly with disuse.⁵¹² The churches of most importance in Late Antiquity were not found in such central locations, with no church appearing in the vicinity of the Forum until as late as 527 CE. That Rome's religious action took place at a distance removed from such places can also be seen in the first liturgical procession in Rome. This involved the Eastern Roman general Narses and Pope Pelagius, and saw the people processing from St Pancras' to St Peter's, in a relatively short movement that took place wholly outside the walls, avoiding the city's monumental centre entirely.⁵¹³

Thus, at a time when late antique paganism appears faint in Constantinople and less inclined to provide women with festive routes into public settings in Rome, Christianity provided them with various legitimate routes beyond the home in both cities. These avenues into public settings ranged from largescale processions, which involved movement across the urban landscape, to both regular and irregular visits to places of worship. Certainly, as compared to the calendar of pagan festivals in the fourth century, the increasingly dominant Christian faith seems to have provided more routes beyond the *domus*.

Almsgiving

In addition to the above, both women and men were encouraged to give alms. Jerome and John Chrysostom were clear on this point, writing letters and delivering sermons that encouraged their charges to distribute wealth to the needy.⁵¹⁴ Charity was also a regular

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵¹¹ For discussion on the story of Constantine and the Palladium, see R. Wisniewski, *The Beginnings of the Cult of Relics*, (Oxford, 2019), pp. 65-66.

⁵¹² Jerome, *Letters*, 107.1.

⁵¹³ *Book of Pontiffs*, 62.2; Latham (2012), p. 306.

⁵¹⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homily on Eutropius*, 2.15; Jerome, *Letters*, 54.6.

feature of Pope Leo's sermons.⁵¹⁵ The sources suggest that women could dispense charity to the poor themselves; either in the street, from their homes, or at a martyrial site.⁵¹⁶ They could also delegate this duty to monasteries or churches, to distribute the donations on their behalf.⁵¹⁷ The *Apostolic Constitutions* suggest, for instance, that charity should ideally be left in the hands of the bishop. Indeed, sources indicate that some elites, both men and women, were reluctant to directly engage with the destitute and so preferred to give alms through ecclesiastic or monastic intermediaries. For example, Chrysostom advised giving with one's own hand and recounted some of the excuses the elite would give so they might avoid handing money to beggars in the street, such as claiming that they were too far from a money-changer, or that they did not have their attendant with them.⁵¹⁸

It seems that almsgiving could often be carried out beyond the home and in person by elite women. Jerome told the widow Furia to give to whoever asked of her, and urged her to go visit the poor and the sick herself.⁵¹⁹ He praised the widow Fabiola for tending to, and feeding, the sick with her own hands.⁵²⁰ Similarly, the virgin Laeta was praised for visiting the sick and destitute, as even the pagan Zosimus acknowledged her efforts in keeping Rome's poor fed during the Gothic siege in 409.⁵²¹ Empresses were lauded for carrying out such acts in person, as Flacilla was praised in Constantinople for going to visit the sick and poor, feeding them and distributing charity with her own hands and without the assistance of attendants.⁵²² Such charity could also take place at certain martyrial sites, such as St Peter's, where Pammachius held a largescale funerary banquet for the poor, on account of his wife's death.⁵²³ As discussed in the first chapter, Jerome recounted seeing a noblewoman there distributing coins to the poor with her own hand.⁵²⁴

It was also possible for elites, both men and women, to dispense charity from their own properties, as Olympias did in Constantinople from her residence near the Great Church,

⁵¹⁵ Leo, *Sermons*, 9.2-3, 10.2-3, 16.1-2, 17.1.

⁵¹⁶ M. R. Salzman, 'Leo's liturgical topography: Contestations for space in fifth-century Rome', *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol.103, (2013), pp. 215-17.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁵¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, 35.7; *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, 43; Finn (2009), p. 101.

⁵¹⁹ Jerome, *Letters*, 54.12.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.6.

⁵²¹ Zosimus, *New History*, 5.39.

⁵²² Theoderet, *Church History*, 5.18.

⁵²³ Jerome, *Letters*, 66.5.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.32.

which became a locus for alms and a place where the poor could receive food.⁵²⁵ In writing to a widow at Rome, Jerome praised her late husband Nebridius for his generosity, which had been so widely acknowledged that their doors were swamped by the poor (a notable development from the classical form of salutation, wherein patrons met their clients).⁵²⁶ However, we might imagine that giving often took place in public environments, as the above examples suggest, because this involved an element of promotional self-display. Even when charity was taking place at an aristocratic residence, Jerome wrote of those who employed trumpeters to summon the poor to their banquets, so their generosity was still broadcast to others.⁵²⁷ Indeed, as Richard Finn has posited, the desire on the part of some elites to give through the church, or at high profile martyrial sites, was likely driven by the need to have their largesse recognised by others.⁵²⁸

As such, we can see that Christianity offered women unique opportunities for, in some cases, highly visible engagement with public spaces, coming into contact with not just men, but those from whom they were typically socially distant from. Between church services, visits to martyr shrines, participation in processions and the dispensation of alms, Christianity seems to have offered women more opportunities for movement and entry into public space than traditional Roman religion could manage in its final stage of life in the fourth century. In this sense, we can see how the representations of women and urban space, as discussed in the previous chapter, reflected to some degree real practice. It does seem as if an increased interest in discussing women, across the Christian sources, was linked to an increase in the ways in which women could publicly engage their faith.

iv. 'Secular' engagements with public spaces and places

The main focus of this chapter has, thus far, been on women's presence in public via religious routes. It has also tended to focus more on the actions of the elite. This is, in large part, due to the nature of our extant sources, which focus disproportionately on wealthier individuals and on religious matters. It is also because it is on the issue of women's religious routes in public settings that we can detect change. Meanwhile, the nature of our sources

⁵²⁵ *Life of Olympias*, 6-7, 131-132; Brown (1988), p. 283.

⁵²⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 79.2.

⁵²⁷ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.32.

⁵²⁸ Finn (2009), p. 108. Indeed, it is possible that charity formed part of the public outings already set out in this chapter, such as visiting shrines and churches.

make the movements and actions of the nonelite, in settings outside of religious contexts, difficult to detect. References are often passing and brief, scattered across our varied sources, making detailed comparison between our cities, or between the classical and late antique, difficult to undertake. Even so, I think we must also consider the possibility that, in this area, there was no obvious change. Women appear to have fulfilled the same jobs in Late Antiquity as they had done in previous periods, and elite men continued to either ignore, or sneer at, them with similar ardour as that displayed by their forebears.

In any case, it is clear that for many women, economic actions would have brought them frequently into public environments. For most women, it was non-religious movements that would have been the main route beyond the *domus*, even where these were not considered particularly respectable or modest by our elite authors. As such, I will now consider how these routes, from imperial spectacles to humdrum everyday activities of nonelite life, brought women outside the home. This will then lead into the next chapter, where I will examine in more detail the spatial arrangements and methods of segregation employed in such secular, or non-religious, settings.

Civic occasions

Rome and Constantinople, unlike most towns and cities in Late Antiquity, continued to stage largescale spectacles throughout the period. By the sixth century, this practice had declined in many provincial urban centres, with chariot races held in fewer and fewer places as the years progressed.⁵²⁹ Amphitheatre games, in particular, witnessed a sharp decline in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁵³⁰ However, both the Old and New Rome expended vast sums of wealth in the furnishing of games, retaining a key feature of the classical city well into Late Antiquity.⁵³¹ These occasions were held for the citizen body *en masse*; men and women, old and young, Christian and pagan, rich and poor. Women of low social standing attended and, we are told, made unseemly loud noises at the approach of famous charioteers.⁵³² Vestal Virgins, in Rome before the dissolution of their college, sat in privileged seats and watched

⁵²⁹ D. Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, (London, 2001), p. 221.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁵³¹ R. Lim, 'People as power: games, munificence, and contested geography', in W. Harris (ed.), *Transformations of Vrbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, (Portsmouth, 1999), pp. 265-82.

⁵³² Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.34.

the violence unfold below.⁵³³ An event recounted by John Malalas, in which an aristocratic woman approached the emperor in the Hippodrome at Constantinople, serves as a reminder that elite, wealthy women were also in attendance.⁵³⁴

Returning to the Calendar of 354 CE, it is clear that fourth-century Rome played host to many games throughout the year. Within the Calendar, an incredible 94 days are marked out for *ludi* (public games).⁵³⁵ After the fourth century, however, we have no sources for Rome's cycle of games as comprehensive as the Calendar. We can sense decline, but cannot quite see it happen or judge its pace. Certainly, at some point in our period the number of public games reduced. There is no suggestion that, towards the end of the sixth century, Rome was still holding 94 days of largescale, public games each year. One must also imagine that the unfortunate circumstances that befell the city in the fifth and sixth centuries led to a reduction in the scale of such games. As Peter Brown demonstrates, during the fourth and early fifth centuries, games were enormous and demanded extortionate sums of wealth.⁵³⁶ The flight of the city's resident aristocracy, beginning in 410 CE and then exacerbated by the devastating wars of the sixth century, removed a vital source of funding.⁵³⁷ This problem was, we can assume, compounded by the eventual loss of North Africa to the Vandals, lending further disruption to the infrastructure necessary for the provision of wild beasts.

However, this does not mean that public spectacles ceased altogether. Theodoric's lamentation in the sixth century that, in a just world, as much money would be spent on the lives of men as was spent on their bloody deaths was tempered by his acknowledgement that there existed a need of the people to have entertainments.⁵³⁸ Furthermore, the Ostrogothic king insisted that, on promoting men to the rank of Consul, he would choose only 'those who know that their fortunes are equal to its demands'.⁵³⁹ Clearly, large sums were still required for the holding of games and, as such, they must have continued on some reasonable scale,

⁵³³ Prudentius, *Against Symmachus*, 2.1088-90.

⁵³⁴ John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.340.

⁵³⁵ 'The Chronography of 354 AD. Part 6: the calendar of Philocalus', *Inscriptiones Latinae Antiquissimae*, (Berlin, 1893) pp. 256-278.

⁵³⁶ P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*, (Princeton, 2012), p. 115.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁵³⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 1.31-2; J. J. Arnold, *Theodoric and the Roman Imperial Restoration*, (Cambridge, 2014), p. 215.

⁵³⁹ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 1.31-2.

if not by the standards of former times.⁵⁴⁰ Beast hunts took place in the Colosseum until 523 CE.⁵⁴¹ Therefore, men and women could find cause to venture to places of public entertainment, in Rome, throughout Late Antiquity. But the scale, and frequency, of such events was in decline from at least the fifth century onwards.

In Constantinople, the monumental centre continued to play host to civic ceremonies, games, and races. The only source we have that lists such events is a manuscript from the tenth century, which on several occasions seems to confuse and conflate different events, and attributes dates that are suspect.⁵⁴² As such, it does not provide us with the same level of useful, contemporary information as the Calendar of 354 does for Rome. For more reliable details, we must turn to textual sources of our period. The first thing these reveal to us is that the Hippodrome, as the focal point of Constantinopolitan spectacles, was the city's primary entertainment venue. This enormous structure, the imprint of which is still visible in Istanbul today, seated an impressive 100,000 people (this was still less than half the capacity of Rome's Circus Maximus, whose vast size surely became redundant in the face of population decline).⁵⁴³ Here, men and women gathered for a variety of celebrations, from ordinary public games to celebrations of the emperor's birthday, accession, victories, and for a series of de-sacralised pagan festivals, such as the *Lupercalia* and *Brumalia*.⁵⁴⁴ Like the arena in Rome had been, the Hippodrome was also an intensely political space; it served as the setting for factional violence, rioting, and acclamations to the emperor.⁵⁴⁵

One product of the games, with their rival circus factions, was sporadic violence and unrest. No doubt some women took part in this, alongside the men. For instance, Procopius was outraged that women joined the thuggish members of the Blue and Green factions in accosting people in the streets of Constantinople.⁵⁴⁶ However, despite the numerous instances of urban rioting and violence, women rarely appear in the sources. The authors of

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.1.

⁵⁴¹ Bomgardner (2013), p. 220.

⁵⁴² Constantine Porphyrogenetos, *Book of Ceremonies*, A. Moffatt and M. Tall (trans.), (Leiden, 2012), p. xxvi.

⁵⁴³ G. G. Sortis, 'The Organization of Chariot-racing in the Great Hippodrome of Byzantine Constantinople', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol.17.1, (2000), pp. 36-68.

⁵⁴⁴ D. Underwood, *(Re)using Ruins: Public Building in the Cities of the Late Antique West, A.D. 300-600*, (Leiden, 2019), p. 108.

⁵⁴⁵ F. Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era*, (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 163-181, 201-217.

⁵⁴⁶ Procopius, *Persian Wars*, 1.24.6.

Late Antiquity, like those before them, tended towards gender neutral terms when describing urban crowds. Ammianus, for example, uses the terms *multa*, *vulgus*, and *plebs* to describe large gatherings of people and rioting mobs in Rome.⁵⁴⁷ Therefore, while we know both Rome and Constantinople hosted many such games, and other spectacles, that drew wide-ranging crowds, the presence of women at most of these events is speculative.

Of course, we can infer that women were present at some occasions, such as those centred upon the imperial family. Women are referenced as being in the crowds at imperial weddings in Constantinople and, we can infer from a letter of Sidonius, were involved in celebrating the marriage of Ricimer, the Western Roman general, to the emperor Anthemius' daughter, Alypia, in Rome.⁵⁴⁸ Sidonius is explicit that everyone in the city was celebrating, to such an extent that all business had ground to a halt.⁵⁴⁹ Clearly, imperial ceremonies were city-wide events. For instance, the arrival of emperors and their families, into either city, is always described as an occasion that draws out the entire urban population. An imperial *adventus*, in which the emperor entered a city with pomp and fanfare, was an event that attracted female spectators as a matter of course. Pacatus' panegyric to Theodosius, in Rome, praised the emperor for visiting the shrines and sacred places, before entering the city proper and allowing himself to be seen by all.⁵⁵⁰ Claudian, across several panegyrics in Rome, references the women scattering flowers upon the roads, the innocent girls who blush at the sight of mail-clad soldiers, and even modest maidens venturing out to catch sight of the emperor.⁵⁵¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, this seems to have been a rhetorical device intended to showcase that *everyone* wanted to see the man of the hour. This seems even more apparent when one compares it to Ammianus' unfavourable description of Constantius' entry into Rome. The spectating crowds are there, but their composition is not mentioned. Instead the focus is mainly upon the emperor's overlong and ostentatious retinue. The populace, in fact, are described as living quite peacefully and having no desire whatsoever to see such

⁵⁴⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.26, 15.7.4-5, 16.10.6, 19.11.10-11, 28.4.31.

⁵⁴⁸ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letters*, 1.5.10; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 4.49, suggests men and women also both attended and celebrated (separately) at the wedding of Constantine's son Constantius.

⁵⁴⁹ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letters*, 1.5.10.

⁵⁵⁰ Pacatus, *Panegyric to Theodosius*, 47.3.

⁵⁵¹ Claudian, *Panegyric on the Third Consulship of Honorius*, 135-6; *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, 585.

spectacles.⁵⁵² From what we know of such occasions, the idea that the people of Rome were uninterested in watching an emperor, with such an eye-catching procession as this one, entering their city seems unlikely, but it fits Ammianus' designs. In truth, it seems as if the *adventus* was a major spectator event. Women were accepted, expected parts of this public performance, as they had been at previous, spectacular, imperial entrances.⁵⁵³

Eusebius states that Constantine's entry into Rome was witnessed by the whole urban populace and, Eusebius notes, not only the men of rank.⁵⁵⁴ Ammianus recounts Julian's approach to Constantinople, giving a much more positive narrative than his description of Constantius' visit to Rome, as 'all ages and sexes poured fourth' to greet him.⁵⁵⁵ The *adventus* continued, undiminished, in Constantinople long after it had ceased to play a role in Rome's ceremonial life.⁵⁵⁶ The ceremonial route in Constantinople for such an event is easy to trace, as there was one obvious choice. The emperor entered through the Golden Gate, proceeded along the southern branch of the Mese, through the monumental archways and busy *fora*, towards the imperial and ecclesiastical south-eastern centre of the city; the area that housed the Great Church, Imperial Palace, and Hippodrome.⁵⁵⁷ This was the route taken, in most cases, by all types of ceremonial procession, as discussed previously in relation to liturgical processions. As in Rome, it required attendance along the city's busy, monumental armature.

Over time, the emperors in Constantinople became more resident within the city, to a point where their departure (and therefore their arrival) became a rare event. This did not mean, however, that huge moving spectacles ceased to occupy the thoroughfares of Constantinople. As mentioned earlier, liturgical processions were a frequent occurrence within the city. Not only this, but the movements of the imperial family within the city could still attract much attention. When Arcadius went to visit a chapel within the city, built on the site of Acacius' martyrdom, Socrates recounts that so many people crowded to see the emperor, and

⁵⁵² Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.10.2.

⁵⁵³ Pliny, *Panegyric*, 22-23

⁵⁵⁴ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 1.39.

⁵⁵⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, 22.2.4: *effundebatur aetas omnis et sexus tamquam demissum aliquem visura de caelo*, trans. LCL.

⁵⁵⁶ B. Coke, 'Justinian's Constantinople', in M. Maas, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 60-61.

⁵⁵⁷ A. Berger, 'Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, (Leiden, 2001), pp. 76-80, for a map see p. 87.

followed him on his way back from the chapel, that a building was caused to collapse.⁵⁵⁸ In this instance, both women and children are referenced as being in the crowd.⁵⁵⁹ The presence of the imperial court meant, in effect, that the city played host to all sorts of crowd-drawing events, ranging from the empress Theodora's journey out of the city to bathe in hot springs, to imperial wedding ceremonies, ranging from the third to the sixth centuries, in which we have records of women in attendance and in the crowds that gathered for celebration.⁵⁶⁰

In this regard, the presence of the emperor, his family, and his court ensured that Constantinople would play host to largescale, civic events more frequently, and for a longer period of time, than Rome could manage in Late Antiquity. The very nature of these events, designed to reinforce and emphasise the city's devotion and adoration for its ruler, and to showcase that ruler's care and generosity towards his city in return, ensured that it was appropriate for men and women of all types to be present, in public, alongside one another. As with the liturgical processions, it seems as if normal conservative grumblings about women in public were, temporarily, suspended. Women could attend, and their attendance was not viewed as immodest or inappropriate, but on the contrary was highlighted by even the strictest observers, who pointed to their presence as evidence of a unified, Christian, Constantinopolitan community under the care of a generous imperial dynasty.

Women's work and daily lives

Finally, we must consider those actions and movements that were not centred either around religion or special events, but that took place in the context of everyday activities. This section comes at the end of this chapter as it is difficult to detect any change here from previous centuries, or between the cities, as references to women's daily routines and occupations appear usually as passing references, spread across a variety of sources. Unsurprisingly, our authors are profoundly uninterested in the actions of ordinary working women. As we saw in the previous chapter, even authors like Jerome and John Chrysostom, who spoke about women more frequently than most classical authors ever did, showed almost no interest in the daily lives of the nonelite. However, it is worth briefly considering these referential

⁵⁵⁸ Socrates, *Church History*, 5.23.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.23.

⁵⁶⁰ Procopius, *Secret History*, 15.36-38; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 1.39;

inclusions, to give a sense of how women could be seen in a variety of places and moving through their cities, even if we cannot detect change.

As alluded to in the previous chapter, both elite and nonelite women visited the baths, as represented in both texts and material culture.⁵⁶¹ Chrysostom and the Projecta Casket are just two sources, from Constantinople and Rome, to make clear that both elite women and their attendants did so.⁵⁶² We also know that women worked at the baths themselves.⁵⁶³ Elite women also made visits to the homes of other women in their social group, as Jerome makes abundantly clear.⁵⁶⁴ The distances travelled surely depended on where friends lived and, given the tendency for certain urban areas to become fashionable, we might imagine elite women often had nearby friends and relatives with whom they visited. Their daily movements certainly must have taken them through busy parts of the city, and Chrysostom is clear that elite women could be found in *fora* and marketplaces (though as we shall see in chapter 3, the presence of elite women in Rome's *fora* is less certain).⁵⁶⁵ Likewise, Jerome and Ammianus both attest to seeing women in the streets.⁵⁶⁶ Women could also be found outside the home for legal reasons, either in defence of their own interests or as the accused.⁵⁶⁷

The interest of Christian sources in the poor, which represents another break from pagan literary tradition, also sheds some light onto the movements and whereabouts of the most unfortunate women in the late antique city. We know that, in Rome, they could be found in the vicinity of churches, and there seems to have been a semi-permanent presence of the impoverished outside St Peter's.⁵⁶⁸ In Constantinople, we hear of the poor and sick in and around churches.⁵⁶⁹ Chrysostom describes how the poor could also be found in the streets,

⁵⁶¹ Jerome, *Letters*, 45.4, 77.4; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 61.3; Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.9.

⁵⁶² John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 61.3; *Homilies on Ephesians*, 15; J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text*, (Princeton, 2007), p. 213.

⁵⁶³ *Miracles of St Artemios*, 11.1; A. Kaldellis, 'The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions', in P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World*, (London, 2010), p. 65.

⁵⁶⁴ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16, 22.29, 107.11, 117.6, 127.4.

⁵⁶⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 10.4.

⁵⁶⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16, 54.13, 77.4; Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.19.

⁵⁶⁷ John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.39; John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, 84.28-31, recounts how the emperor Aelia Eudocia, before she was known by that name, travelled to Constantinople in order to seek restitution after her brothers had cut her out of inheriting her father's estate.

⁵⁶⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.3.6; E. D. Hunt, 'Beggars from the Vatican: Ammianus Marcellinus on Roman Christianity', in F. M. Young, M. J. Edwards, P. M. Parvis, *Biblica*, pp. 65-71; P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*, (Madison, 1992), p. 91.

⁵⁶⁹ Sozomen, *Church History*, 9.1.

displaying their destitution for all to see, showing their maimed limbs to passers-by in the hopes of receiving sympathetic charity. The bishop is clear that women participated alongside men in these displays, as poverty removed concerns over modesty.⁵⁷⁰ He was also clear that even elite women could, if unfortunate, find themselves reduced to such conditions, as he describes the elite woman Artemisia, now blind, going door-to-door for charity.⁵⁷¹ Indeed, Jerome's writings suggest the doorways of elite houses were another gathering point for the poor.⁵⁷² Here we might detect some change, certainly in that churches became a place for the poor to coalesce. However, beggars had previously stationed themselves around temples, and the general trend for the impoverished to congregate at whatever public site they might reasonably expect to receive charity seems to have continued.⁵⁷³

It is on the question of women and their economic activities that ordinary, nonelite individuals come to the fore. Both the archaeological and literary sources speak to a range of other, public roles occupied by women in Rome and Constantinople. That women were brought into public places by such work is clear from the jobs they are attested as having held. They served in wine shops, mills, and taverns.⁵⁷⁴ They were fortune-tellers, market vendors, street cooks, and mid-wives.⁵⁷⁵ They served in the retinues of prominent, aristocratic and imperial women, accompanying them in their movements.⁵⁷⁶ They provided entertainment on the streets, in the baths, at the theatres; as mimes, singers, actresses, and dancers.⁵⁷⁷ They were employed to wail and mourn at the funerals of both pagans and Christians.⁵⁷⁸ According to Chrysostom, they even sold silver chamber utensils.⁵⁷⁹ Much of it was not regarded as especially respectable, but it was undoubtably public and prominent.

⁵⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 11.8.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, *Letter to a Young Widow*, 4.

⁵⁷² Jerome, *Letters*, 79.2

⁵⁷³ A. Parkin, "You do him no service': an exploration of pagan almsgiving", in M. Atkin and R. Osborne, *Poverty in the Roman World*, (Cambridge, 2006), p. 66.

⁵⁷⁴ Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, 387; *CT* 9.7.1; K. Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425*, pp. 138-9.

⁵⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 8.5, 12.5, E. Davies, 'Written in Stone : Gendered Ideals and the Byzantine Family', in L. L. Larsson and M. Harlow, *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World*, (London, 2012), p. 203.

⁵⁷⁶ The Projecta Casket serves as a good illustration of this; R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (London, 2013), pp. 80-89.

⁵⁷⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.19, 28.4.9; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7; *Homilies on Acts*, 31.4.

⁵⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, 3.2.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.4.

A comparison of all these varied professions across Rome and Constantinople offers little insight here, as references to women at work are sparse and misleading (there is a tendency in the sources to assume lots of working women were also prostitutes). Looking at the jobs listed in the paragraph above, one can see that the majority fall within what might be termed the 'service' sector; primarily in providing entertainments and leisure. No doubt women were employed in manufacturing, as we know they worked on producing textiles and in bakeries, but the nature of the sources largely hide this from view. Our late antique authors did not frequent mills, warehouses, or workshops. The lower-status women they wrote about were the ones they most often encountered; those who performed publicly, providing services and entertainments to the urban populace *en masse*, by dancing upon the stage and singing in the streets.

One such profession that does receive considerable attention in the sources, as an occupation that constantly raised questions of sexual ethics and female modesty, was that of prostitution. I will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter, where I investigate its spatial elements, but it is sufficient to say here that this work brought women into many public places. At Rome, for instance, we are told that prostitutes could be found in the Circus and near the Amphitheatres, at the baths and around certain temples.⁵⁸⁰ I also think we can detect a greater hostility to this particular occupation in Constantinople than in Rome (again, the argument and sources for this will be discussed in next chapter). It is in the eastern city where we hear of repeated attempts to regulate where prostitutes and brothels were, as well as efforts to eradicate it entirely. While it is unclear how much these sources reflect real events, or how successful any such measures were, we are presented with a picture where prostitution was quietly tolerated in Rome, but less so in Constantinople.

v. Conclusion

We are, to some extent, prompted by our sources to look towards religious uses of space and elite actions when considering women and their movements beyond the *domus* in late antique Rome and Constantinople. The nature of what is recorded makes detecting change in non-religious uses of space and everyday experiences difficult. However, as mentioned

⁵⁸⁰ HA *Elagabalus*, 32.9, accuses the emperor of visiting prostitutes in the Circus, amphitheatres and theatres of Rome.

above, I also think it is the case that, in many respects, there was much continuity here. As the previous chapter outlined, male attitudes over female use of space remained broadly the same for most women, with exceptions for those engaged in specifically Christian action. Women were involved in the same type of occupations, enjoyed the same types of leisure activities, and socialised in much the same way as they had done for centuries. Indeed, in the next chapter we will see how, in non-religious contexts, women's experience of segregation and use of space seems to have remained consistent in Late Antiquity.

It is on the issue of religious movements, particularly with regard to the elite, where our sources most strongly indicate change, both over time and between our two cities. In the fourth century, the round of pagan festivals no longer included many of those in which women had traditionally embarked on movement away from their husbands and families, in the company of other women and involving elements of role reversal. Instead, a raft of summer and springtime festivals seem to have fallen out of use, with women's involvement increasingly focussed on occasions centred around the household and familial unit. Priesthoods for women were, possibly, ever more the preserve of the elite, possibly quite domestically focussed and, at the very least, ceased to be open to them by the end of the fourth century.

Meanwhile, Christianity introduced numerous routes into public settings for women. In Constantinople, the office of the deaconess involved various duties carried out beyond a domestic environment, which was not available to women in Rome. Attendance at church was open to the elite and, it seems to a far lesser extent, those of lower status. Almsgiving, similarly, was a form of public action open primarily to those of means. However, visits to martyr shrines and participation in largescale outdoor processions were available to a wider range of persons, with even the most secluded women expected to participate. While both cities saw this development take place, Constantinople began processions much earlier than Rome and with far greater frequency. In addition to its multiple imperial spectacles and events, we might reasonably suppose the New Rome hosted far more largescale, outdoor, urban movements than the Old.

Having demonstrated, then, that women had a variety of routes into public settings through both religious and non-religious contexts, the next chapter will begin to address how, and to what extent, they experienced segregation while in such places.

Chapter Three

Female Segregation in Secular Places

Having demonstrated that both elite and nonelite women visited, and made use of, public places in Rome and Constantinople, the next two chapters will address the question of spatial segregation. That is, if women were venturing beyond the confines of the *domus*, to what extent were they physically separated from men upon doing so? How effective might methods of segregation have been, and were places in the city entirely zoned along gender lines? Who were these measures attempting to separate and was it always women from men? Finally, how did such practices change with the advent of Late Antiquity, the spread of Christianity, and between the two cities under consideration?

As discussed in the introduction, the next two chapters are organised along the basis of 'secular' and religious places, with the present chapter addressing the former. It is worth clarifying, briefly, what I mean when using the term 'secular', as it is not always easy to distinguish this from the religious in late antique urban environments. After all, spectacles and games had long been linked to pagan veneration in Rome.⁵⁸¹ Meanwhile, civic spaces in Constantinople became sites of ecclesiastical display, as churches were settings for imperial promotion.⁵⁸² However, just as I define 'space' as a site where the *principal* purpose is one of movement, so I define 'secular' as a site where the *principal* purpose is not religious. While Christian processions marched along the *mese* in Constantinople, the *mese* was not principally a religious space. Similarly, the Colosseum in Rome continued to host games long after the emperor and aristocracy had converted to Christianity.

Overall, the next two chapters will demonstrate that few places (value-laden loci, wherein the principal purpose was not to aid traffic flow) were completely and permanently off-limits to one sex. Indeed, the requirement that a civic or religious community be present at various public ceremonies, through representation of all its constituent strata, ensured elite women could appear in the same places as men. However, at such places deeply embedded

⁵⁸¹ A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, (Oxford, 2010), p. 65.

⁵⁸² F. A. Bauer, 'Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity', in J. R. Brandt and O. See (eds), *Imperial Art as Christian Art – Christian Art as Imperial Art*, (Rome, 2001), p. 38.

cultural concerns over female modesty were reflected in attempts to physically separate persons along both sexual and social lines (though their effectiveness is questionable). This is because, as argued previously, segregating elite women was not only about protecting their bodies and reputations; it was also intended to serve as a visible marker of their superior social status and modesty. As such, distance must also be introduced between these women and those who, in the eyes of our sources, were absent of moral virtues.

i. Models of segregation

There is no doubt that segregation along social and sexual lines was practiced in a variety of places in Rome, Constantinople, and across the Mediterranean. Those enforcing these measures varied, depending upon the place in question. Presumably, civic officials bore responsibility for ensuring that segregation in public buildings, such as imperial *thermae* and amphitheatres, was appropriately organised, while attendants on the ground worked to ensure that rules were actually enforced. Meanwhile, as I will show in the next chapter, church authorities oversaw practices within those Christian places under their control, with deacons and others supervising the imposed boundaries. It was also possible for women to segregate themselves or have it enforced upon them by familial men, as we have seen.

As outlined in the introduction, when considering sexual segregation, I am discussing social efforts that are primarily engineered towards keeping groups of people (men and women, elite and nonelite) from physically engaging with one another. These methods need not themselves involve corporeal barriers, but might simply be aimed at introducing space between women of varying status and extrafamilial men. I will also be considering, under the umbrella of segregation, attempts to limit non-physical exchanges between men, women, and other women, such as verbal or visual interactions. This means considering attempts to break lines of sight, or introduce sufficient distance to reduce the possibility or efficacy of communication.

As the enforcers and sites of segregation differed, so too did the methods employed. Monica Trümper, in her work on gender and space in Ancient Greece, proposed four models of spatial segregation that could be employed within an urban landscape.⁵⁸³ These models

⁵⁸³ M. Trümper, 'Gender and Space, "Public" and "Private" .', in S. L. James and S. Dillon (eds), *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, (Oxford, 2012), p. 292.

are equally applicable to the cities of Late Antiquity, or indeed to any place where people come together and there is a desire to introduce some form of separation based on group identity. Certainly, the four models outlined by Trümper cover the different strategies in use at both Rome and Constantinople, as identified in the source material. These models are as follows:

Model 1: Places (understood here as umbrella term for defined outdoor areas, buildings, and rooms) can be reserved for either men or women only.

Model 2: The same places can be used at different times of the day, or days of the month, by men and women.

Model 3: Places can include independent areas for men and women that use a common entrance.

Model 4: Places are provided with separate entrances for men and women.⁵⁸⁴

As we shall see, the evidence points to all four models being utilised, to varying degrees, at both Rome and Constantinople between the fourth and seventh centuries. Interestingly, the two most effective methods (models 1 and 2) appear to be the rarest, with very few secular or religious places entirely off-limits to either sex on a permanent basis (model 1) and little evidence for places, besides baths, alternating between male and female use (model 2). Naturally, both of these models offered the best guarantee of separating the sexes, ensuring that only men or women were present in a specific place at any given time. However, from the evidence available it seems that models 3 and 4, which saw men and women both present at the same time, if still separated physically, were more commonly employed at secular sites.

Unsurprisingly, differentiating between these final two models is often difficult.

Archaeological evidence pointing towards the presence of multiple entrances and exits, without any further description, leaves us to speculate on who could be found where. In many cases, we do not know. However, I will consult a wide array of source material, including archaeological, epigraphical, legal, and textual evidence, to reconstruct as far as

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289. Where Trümper uses the word 'space', I have replaced this with 'place', to avoid confusion with the place/space dynamic.

possible the methods and practices employed in Rome and Constantinople. I will also argue that this preference for models 3 and 4, which saw men and women segregated while at the same place, stemmed from a recognition that certain events necessitated the presence of an entire community, be it a civic or religious affair. This included elite and, to a lesser extent, nonelite women.

Models of segregation in secular places

Regarding secular places, at such sites there were clear attempts to separate the sexes, to introduce distance between elite women and nonelite, and (in some rare cases) to exclude women entirely. This latter measure (model 1), seems to have been limited to specific buildings and acute sites of political power, such as the Senate House. Civic places more generally, such as *fora*, do not seem to have been 'zoned' in a way that prevented access to women, even if such places were universally described by our sources as male. Meanwhile, sites of entertainment and leisure hosted different methods of segregation, linked to their individual functions. For instance, places involved in civic ceremonies, such as amphitheatres and circuses, separated people into different areas (model 3) and used different entrances (model 4). Like churches, there was an expectation that all strata of society were represented in the audience at such venues.

Alternatively, places like bathhouses, which were not typically involved in such ceremonies and thus did not seek to create within themselves a microcosm of the urban populace, employed measures such as allowing each sex access to a single space at different points in the day (model 2). Furthermore, the multitude of places that we rarely hear about, such as the many workplaces of the poor (mills, warehouses, workshops) and less salubrious places of leisure (taverns, mimes, brothels) surely witnessed the ready mixing of the sexes, but were presumably avoided by elite women. Here, there is an assumption of much *de facto* zoning or segregation. After all, respectable women were not legally prohibited from setting foot inside a dirty manufactory, but would presumably avoid such places. An elite *matrona*

must have had neither need nor desire to visit an odious tannery and her absence from such places, pleasing to elite men, was surely no great loss to herself.⁵⁸⁵

In this, late antique practices seem to have continued in much the same vein as earlier, classical traditions. While spatial organisation at Christian sites was developing in the fourth century, as officially recognised and purpose-built churches were still rather new, many civic and secular venues were ancient features of the urban landscape with longstanding customs. Places of entertainment, spectacle, and public leisure appear in the sources as no more or less segregated than they were in earlier centuries. As I shall demonstrate, the differences between Constantinople and Rome with regards to segregation at such places were minor and, in many cases, the paucity of detailed information for one city or the other, or both, makes comparison difficult. Particularly in the eastern city, but in Rome too, our sources are more interested in religious developments, or the events surrounding imperial figures, than in the humdrum business of marketplaces and bathhouses.

Of course, it is widely acknowledged that in Rome, where the size of its population and the wealth of its resident aristocracy declined over Late Antiquity, the function of many such places changed. The amphitheatres and circuses of the sixth century were not hosting spectacles on the scale of those witnessed in the fourth.⁵⁸⁶ Before the advent of the seventh century, the Circus Maximus had seen its final race and the Colosseum its last beast hunt.⁵⁸⁷ The consequences of the Gothic War, which saw all but one of the aqueducts cut, put an end to the functionality and use of large imperial *thermae*.⁵⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the *fora* at the physical centre of the city became ever more peripheral to its administrative and religious needs. Some of these changes were linked to the Christianisation of Rome in the centuries

⁵⁸⁵ On the topic of dirty and disreputable workplaces, see S. Bond, *Trade and Taboo: Disreputable Professions in the Roman Mediterranean*, (Ann Arbor, 2016).

⁵⁸⁶ D. Y. Ng and M. Swetnam-Burland, *Reuse and Renovation in Roman Material Culture: Functions, Aesthetics, Interpretations*, (Cambridge 2018), p. 212.

⁵⁸⁷ D. Potter, 'Entertainment', in C. Holleran and A. Claridge (eds), *A Companion to the City of Rome*, (Oxford, 2018), p. 524; C. Eplett, 'Beast Hunts', in P. Christesen and D. G. Kyle (ed.), *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2014), p. 515.

⁵⁸⁸ D. M. Deliyannis, 'Urban Life and Culture', in J. J. Arnold, M. Shane Bjornlie and K. Sessa (eds), *A Companion to Ostrogothic Italy*, (Leiden, 2016), p. 244. Deliyannis points out that some baths may have been still been operating in the sixth century.

following Constantine, and much to the disruption and dislocation associated with the end of the Western Empire and its subsequent conflicts.⁵⁸⁹

Conversely, Constantinople's development between the reigns of Constantine and Justinian saw the growth and expansion of such places. Unlike Rome, and as referenced in the previous chapter, the city on the Bosphorus enjoyed imperial patronage throughout the whole of Late Antiquity, ensuring spectacles and bathhouses continued to provide entertainment and leisure. The centre of the city remained in the south-eastern palatial complex and, again unlike Rome, there was no doubt over where the focus of religious and political life was located. However, while the individual trajectories of the two cities impacted hugely upon the secular, public places available to both men and women across time, there seems to have been little difference between the two in how they managed segregation at such places, or how this management changed over time.

ii. Segregation at Civic Places

As the jurist Ulpian made perfectly clear: 'women are separated from all civic and public functions'.⁵⁹⁰ It is therefore unsurprising that we hear decidedly little about them in places that were associated with such things. In Rome, we know that women were prohibited from entering the Senate House. Violations of this boundary were extremely rare, though they happened. The mother of Elagabalus, Julia Soaemias, provoked outrage by her presence in the Curia.⁵⁹¹ That women could also be present directly outside this place is suggested by the aforementioned tale of Tacitus, who recounts that the noblewoman Annia Rufilla accosted a senator on the very steps of the building.⁵⁹² Meanwhile, we hear little of Constantinople's Senate House(s), with no indication that women were found within such a place.

⁵⁸⁹ On the discussion of whether declining use of entertainment spaces was a Christian change, see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*, (Cambridge, 1986).

⁵⁹⁰ D 50.17.2: *feminae omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt*, in B. W. Frier, T. A. J. MacGinn, T. A. McGinn, *A Casebook on Roman Family Law*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 457.

⁵⁹¹ HA *Elagabalus*, 4.3-4.

⁵⁹² Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.36.2-4.

Women also seem to have been kept separate, for the most part, from certain courts and places where legal proceedings unfolded. Machado has pointed out that, in Rome, there were numerous courts into which access was restricted, such as the *Secretarium Tellurensis*, *Secretarium Senatus*, and the *Secretarium Circi*.⁵⁹³ The first was situated near the temple of Tellus on the Esquiline, the second stood behind the Curia to the south of Caesar's forum, while the third might have been found at the short side of the Circus Maximus, near the Tiber and the Forum Boarium.⁵⁹⁴ Similarly, there was a court built into the Hippodrome at Constantinople.⁵⁹⁵ Machado has argued that these exclusive closed courts were accessible only to illustrious men.⁵⁹⁶ Certainly, there seems to have been a habit of secluding legal proceedings, in whichever building they were held, behind a curtain. A law preserved in the Theodosian Code warned against allowing persons to bribe their way past the curtain.⁵⁹⁷ As referenced in chapter one, the empress Constantina was said to have inappropriately looked past a curtain at treason trials in Antioch, in order to interfere in their progress.⁵⁹⁸

The urban prefect seems to have presided over courts in various buildings, such as secular basilicas.⁵⁹⁹ There is little doubt that women, who as discussed in the previous chapter were often litigants themselves, were able to observe these events (at least from some distance). The Theodosian Code suggests there were public trials that ought to be 'investigated with raised curtains'.⁶⁰⁰ An earlier reference, from Pliny, discusses both men and women spectating from the upper galleries of a basilica while a case was heard below.⁶⁰¹ In some cases, the women involved were present during proceedings. However, concerns over modesty prompted a law of Constantine that threatened 'exquisite tortures' on any judge who, in the course of civil litigation involving a woman, ordered a bailiff to 'drag her into

⁵⁹³ Machado (2019), p. 34.

⁵⁹⁴ For the *Secretarium Tellurensis* see Platner and Ashby (2015), p. 432; for the *Secretarium Senatus*, F. Coarelli, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide*, (Berkeley, 2007), p. 57; for the *Secretarium Circi*, Machado (2019), p. 34.

⁵⁹⁵ Machado (2019), p. 34.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁹⁷ *CT* 1.16.7.

⁵⁹⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.9.3.

⁵⁹⁹ J. Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284 to 363*, (Edinburgh, 2012), p. 109.

⁶⁰⁰ *CT* 13.9.4. The law states that cases involving a sunken ship should be held in this manner.

⁶⁰¹ Pliny, *Letters*, 6.33. This case actually involved a noblewoman named Attia Viriola, who sought to secure an inheritance from her father.

public'.⁶⁰² As convicts, rather than defendants, women were afforded less respect, though there were limits. Ammianus recounts the shameful treatment of one Flaviana, who had her clothes stripped by an executioner.⁶⁰³ Overall, it seems that sites of legal process were not explicitly out of bounds to women, even if they are rarely referenced there, and even if such places were presented as masculine spaces.

Fora as gendered spaces?

To allow for a more detailed discussion and comparison of how women interacted with *fora*, I shall focus on two particular case studies; the Roman Forum (Rome) and the Forum of Constantine (Constantinople). Each represent the most important forum in their respective cities, appearing more than any of their neighbours in the historical record. In Late Antiquity, they were both heavily involved with imperial representation and promotion, and served many of the same functions. By adopting this case study approach, I will be able to identify some of the key differences between these *fora*, and a woman's place within them, across both cities. It will also enable me to demonstrate that, in effect, there is little evidence to suggest outdoor places, in either city, were zoned along lines of sex.

The oldest of Rome's *fora*, the Roman Forum had long been represented by classical writers as a clearly gendered, male space. Since the time of the Republic, the Forum was a place of justice, speeches, and politics.⁶⁰⁴ These were understood as masculine endeavours, with few things considered more unwomanly than public speaking and senatorial politics.

Furthermore, the Forum was intrinsically linked to Roman manhood. It was the place where young boys were taken to exchange their *toga praetextata* for the *toga virilis* (toga of manhood). Even in the sixth century, long after the Forum had ceased to function as the centre of public life, it retained its close association with male civic experience. Clearly, then, the Forum was related to manly endeavour, but was it, in any real or physical sense, a gendered place?

⁶⁰² CT 1.16.22.

⁶⁰³ Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.1.28. This was considered so outrageous that the executioner was apparently burned alive.

⁶⁰⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 3.67.

If the Forum was ever zoned, this was not consistent throughout its history, as we do see women there, if only rarely. Given the masculine associations outlined above, it is unsurprising that references to women within the Forum appear infrequently within the sources. The extant, relevant texts are all male-authored, while the ability to erect statues and dedicate buildings within the Forum – the basis of our material evidence – also rested in male hands.⁶⁰⁵ Therefore, we cannot know what women themselves thought about this space in Late Antiquity, because no sources tell us. Additionally, we should avoid assuming that a paucity of references to women within the Forum is indicative of a strictly male gendered space. We know, by now, that our Roman authors rarely opted to acknowledge the presence of women in public spaces.

Yet, the literary sources do record women appearing within the Forum throughout the first two centuries CE. These occurrences are rare and, in many cases, portrayed as problematic. As discussed in chapter one, the presence of women in places where they ought not to be was a common rhetorical trope in the arsenal of Roman invective. Unsurprisingly, the women cited were often close relations of the emperor, such as Augustus' daughter Julia and her orgies upon the rostra, or Tiberius' mother Livia urging people to help extinguish a fire near the Temple of Vesta; unladylike behaviour that was said to have irked her son.⁶⁰⁶ Or, in the case of aristocratic women, they were used to showcase the sorry state into which Roman social order had declined, as evidenced by the verbal abuse from Annia Rufilla, among others, hurled at senators on the steps of the Senate House.⁶⁰⁷ However, while women in the Forum were often seen misbehaving, our sources never suggest they were forbidden from being there.

In her study of women and the Roman Forum, Boatwright has argued that, as we move into the Middle Empire, we begin to see this apparent hostility cool, as the presence of women within the Forum becomes normalised over time.⁶⁰⁸ Certainly, the references within the literary sources of the third century no longer smack of invective. In his panegyric to Trajan, Pliny recounts women as being amongst the cheering crowds in the Forum that watched the

⁶⁰⁵ Machado (2019), p. 53.

⁶⁰⁶ Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 50.2-3.

⁶⁰⁷ Tacitus, *Annals*, 3. 36.2-4.

⁶⁰⁸ M. T. Boatwright, 'Women and Gender in the Forum Romanum', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol.141, No.1, (2011), p. 107.

emperor ascend the Capitoline.⁶⁰⁹ Meanwhile, Cassius Dio gives us the first glimpses of sexual segregation within the Forum, as he describes the funeral of Pertinax, in which men were standing out in the open sky while women were beneath the porticoes.⁶¹⁰ A similar practice was undertaken in the Forum during the funeral of Septimus Severus, when wives of senators were placed on temporary seating erected to one side of the open space of the Forum.⁶¹¹ In each of these instances, the women we are presented with are stationary and, in every example from the Middle Empire, serving as passive observers of male-centred spectacle. Besides being present, and watching, we hear nothing more about them.

Boatwright presents the comparison between these sources and the earlier texts as an argument for changing attitudes. She concludes that female presence within the Forum grew more acceptable over time. I am not convinced, however, that the evidence paints such a picture. For instance, it is not merely the *presence* of women within the Forum that is presented as problematic in the earlier sources. Indeed, in each case (Julia, Livia, Annia Rufilla) it was the *behaviour* of the woman that was unseemly. Again, none of the sources suggest the presence of women in the Forum was, by itself, problematic. Indeed, the women who feature in the third-century sources were watching the emperor's arrival, or attending an imperial funeral, which were evidently events they were expected to witness.⁶¹² These were ceremonies that mandated the presence of all sections of society and, in the case of the funerals, women are appropriately separated from men. Therefore, I would argue that the texts for the Middle Empire are not hostile because the women presented are all engaging with the Forum in an acceptable context.

Certainly, the material representations within the Forum spoke to a masculine space. In the republican and early Imperial periods, female statuary in the Forum seems to have been vanishingly rare. As mentioned in chapter one, not a single statue base found there, from the first-century CE, held a female image.⁶¹³ Female statues *were* erected there during the

⁶⁰⁹ Pliny, *Panegyricus*, 22-23.

⁶¹⁰ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 74.4.5.

⁶¹¹ HA, *Severus*, 24; Herodian, 4.2.

⁶¹² It is unclear to what extent this was enforced upon them. At the funeral of Pertinax they stood under the porticoes and away from the sunlight. Presumably, such segregation could have been employed for practical reasons as much as anything, or initiated by the women themselves.

⁶¹³ Boatwright (2011), p. 107.

Middle Empire, however, in addition to buildings such as the temple of Faustina.⁶¹⁴

Boatwright presents this evidence in support of her argument that female presence in the Forum became more acceptable over time, as the material evidence for representations of women within the Forum begins to emerge in the third century. However, I am not convinced this evidence points to changing attitudes regarding women and the Forum. For starters, the statues of women erected in the Forum, during the Middle Empire, were almost exclusively of imperial women. As discussed previously, such women were exceptional in how they were represented and, to my mind, statues of empresses in the Forum do not necessarily suggest the presence of non-imperial women there.

Additionally, the increase in female statuary in the third century is not specific to the Forum. This trend is seen across the city, as a huge amount of statuary was produced in this period, leading to vast overproduction.⁶¹⁵ This increase in statues of imperial figures, including women, can be linked to the fact that a wider array of persons became able to dedicate honorific portraits. While the Senate and emperor still erected statues, the Middle Empire also saw other persons and bodies, such as magistrates, *collegia*, and private individuals, dedicating statues to both male and female imperial figures.⁶¹⁶ In the Forum, this resulted in approximately three times as many female statues erected for the Middle Empire as compared to earlier periods, just as it did across Rome.⁶¹⁷

The Late Antique sources, which Boatwright does not address, further challenge the idea that attitudes towards women within the Forum were softening over time. The Forum underwent significant changes in the aftermath of a fire in 284 CE. Under Diocletian and the Tetrarchic system, the Forum was reframed as an imperial space. Images of emperors stood atop lofty columns, flanking the central plaza and looking down upon the rostra. From here onwards, the emperor and his officials dominated representations within the Forum. While there are no known statues of *non-imperial* women in this space from any period,

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.131.

⁶¹⁵ R. R. R. Smith, 'Statue Practice in the Late Roman Empire', in R. R. R. Smith and B. Ward-Perkins, *The Last Statues of Antiquity*, Oxford, (2016), p.20.

⁶¹⁶ Boatwright (2011), p. 132.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

throughout Late Antiquity the only known female statue in the Forum, at all, was of Thermania, the mother of Theodosius I.⁶¹⁸

There is one woman visible, on the Arch of Constantine, in a *liberalitas* scene, which could presumably be set in one of the city's *fora*. In the relief, the emperor is sat upon the magistrate's chair, atop a platform, distributing money to those who approach. A woman, clearly dressed in the clothes of a *matrona*, stands below the platform. The setting and occasion are clearly civic and public, but the exact location is not apparent, and the relief itself was originally Trajanic.⁶¹⁹ On the Constantinian friezes upon the same arch, in an *oratio* scene depicting the emperor atop the rostra, we see the population gathered below him in the Forum. There are adults and children present, elite and nonelite, bearded old men and clean-shaven youths, but without exception they are male. Of course, we cannot know how closely this reflected the reality of such occasions in the Forum (speeches by emperors, in Rome, were rare in Late Antiquity), but a decision was taken to portray only males.

The Late Antique textual sources only very rarely allude to the presence of women in, or near, the Forum.⁶²⁰ In fact, the Forum itself features far less in texts from the fourth century onwards than in previous periods, although it seems to have retained its traditional associations, despite the increased imperial representations. Symmachus alludes to men taking strolls through the Forum, but the place is ignored by Ammianus, including in his topographical descriptions of the city.⁶²¹ The *Historia Augusta*, which looks back on the events of the third century, mentions the Forum only twice, as the site of Commodus'

⁶¹⁸ Kalas (2015), p. 87. There is some doubt whether this statue was originally erected in the Forum itself.

⁶¹⁹ J. R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315*, (Berkeley, 2006), p. 65; S. B. Pomeroy, *Women's History and Ancient History*, (Chapel Hill, 2014), p. 220. The reuse of *spolia* in this arch has been seen both as an attempt to associate Constantine with the 'good' emperor Trajan to legitimise his rule, and also as a cost-effective and time-saving alternative to original creation. On this discussion, see H. Brandenburg, 'The Use of Older Elements in the Architecture of Fourth- and Fifth-Century Rome: A Contribution to the Evaluation of *Spolia*', in R. Brilliant and D. Kinney (eds), *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, (London, 2016), pp. 53-75, especially pp. 56-60.

⁶²⁰ There is a reference in Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.16.30. Here, Macrobius mentions a sacrifice to Jupiter in which the *Flaminica Dialis* assists, somewhere in the *regia* (house of the chief pagan priest) on the Via Sacra near the edge of the Roman Forum.

⁶²¹ Symmachus, *Letters*, 2.12, translated in A. Cameron, 'Were Pagans Afraid to Speak Their Minds in a Christian World? The Correspondence of Symmachus', in M. R. Salzman (ed.), *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome; conflict, competition, and coexistence in the fourth century*, (Cambridge, 2015), p. 87.

gladiatorial spectacles and the place where Severus Alexander would listen to oratory.⁶²² Jerome likewise frequented there, as a student, for the same purpose.⁶²³

Perhaps the Late Antique author who wrote most about the Forum was Cassiodorus, and even he explicitly mentions the space on only five occasions. Writing in the sixth century on behalf of the Ostrogothic kings, Cassiodorus hints at the dual nature of the late antique *forum romanum*. In one sense, it had retained its traditional functions, as the author references men strolling through the Forum, hearing legal cases, and listening to speeches.⁶²⁴ Throughout the *Variae*, the Forum is presented in traditional, civic, and masculine terms. And yet, at the same time, Cassiodorus hints at the ways in which the Forum had changed. Writing on behalf of Theodoric, he conveyed to the patrician Albinus that the king was, indeed, happy for him to erect workshops at the north-western end of the Forum and increase the number of private homes found there.⁶²⁵ Later, writing for Athalaric, he talks of strolling through the Forum and being able to actually peer inside and watch a craftsmen at work.⁶²⁶

As Boatwright acknowledges, from the Augustan period through to Late Antiquity, the archaeological and textual evidence points to the Forum becoming ever more an administrative centre, while *tabernae* began to spring up around the North-Western end, towards the south in the vicinity of the Atrium Vestae, and along the Nova Via.⁶²⁷ As such, it seems reasonable to assume that this increase in workshops and mercantile activities, in and around the Forum, could have had the effect of altering the gendered nature of the place to some degree. As discussed in the previous chapter, women in both Rome and Constantinople were employed in all manner of industries, and the increase in aristocratic housing in the vicinity of the Forum must have, likewise, involved the presence of not only those women who dwelt there, but of their female household staff, slaves, and personal attendants.

⁶²² HA *Clodius*, 6.7; *Severus Alexander*, 35.3.

⁶²³ Jerome, *Commentary of the Epistle to the Galatians*, 1.2.11-12.

⁶²⁴ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 8.31, 9.21, 11.4.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.30.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.31.

⁶²⁷ Boatwright (2011), p. 132; Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 4.30.

This remains speculative, as the evidence prevents us from drawing definitive conclusions. While staff, slaves, and working women may have moved through the Forum on their business, we never see this in Late Antiquity. Women in the Forum are presented as *doing* something there, engaging with it as place rather than space. We hear of men walking through the Forum, but never women. Of course, this does not mean that women did not do so. While there is little doubt that the Forum is presented, in the sources, as a male space overall, we have no evidence that states – directly or otherwise – that women were prevented entry, or that their entry was restricted. Yet both Trümper and Boatwright have speculated that this might have been the case, and Trümper in particular imagines the use of guards, attendants, or physical screens such as curtains to either close off the entire Forum, or parts of it, from women during the conduct of public business. As such, I would contend that the maleness of the Forum was, like female domesticity, an ideal with limited bearing upon real practices.

As discussed in the previous chapter, religious duties allowed women to engage with public spaces in an acceptable manner, and the same seems to be true in the case of the Forum. The Temple of Vesta and the Atrium Vestae were situated in the south-eastern part of the Roman Forum and, as previously evidenced, there was at least one annual festival still underway in the fourth-century that involved women from across the city visiting the temple (*Vestalia*). There were also several temples in the Forum that seem to have continued to operate in the fourth-century and, if we can rely on the information from earlier sources, these were served by female attendants and visited by devotees. These were the temples of the Dioscuri, Saturn, and Concordia, as well as the shrines to Venus Cloacina and the Fons Juturnae.⁶²⁸

In fact, Macrobius gives us one of the only late antique accounts of a woman in the vicinity of the Forum, when he explains that the *regina sacrorum* (wife of the *rex sacrorum*) would perform a sacrifice in honour of Juno upon the kalends.⁶²⁹ Additionally, we know that the *Lupercalia* were held in Late Antiquity, and (as evidenced previously) this involved a circuit around the Palatine, and along the Via Sacra, in which aristocratic young men would strike spectating women with strips of goat hide. Clearly then, religious activity could bring women

⁶²⁸ Trümper (2012), p. 299.

⁶²⁹ Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.15.19.

into the vicinity of the Forum. However, with the abolition of public pagan rites, such religious association with the Forum ended. Throughout most of Late Antiquity the Roman *fora* were not associated with forms of Christian veneration, making it difficult to see what reason women would have had for utilising this space, other than to pass through it. This would, presumably, only have changed after the first church appeared there in 527 CE.⁶³⁰

In Constantinople, the *fora* were mostly situated along the southern branch of the city's monumental thoroughfare, the *Mese*. There were four main *fora* along this roadway, running from the south-eastern centre of the city towards the Golden Gate. Moving westwards, they were the Forum of Constantine, Forum of Theodosius, Forum of the Ox, and the Forum of Arcadius.⁶³¹ A fifth forum, of the emperor Leo, was situated somewhere in the vicinity of the acropolis, in the north-eastern district of the city, but its exact site and makeup are unknown.⁶³² Unlike in Rome, the archaeological evidence for these public places is extremely limited, with only a few fragmentary pieces (mostly from monumental archways) that do not, sadly, shed much light on the present discussion. Thus, we are left to mine the textual sources for references to these spaces and those who populated them.

The main Constantinopolitan forum in Late Antiquity, without question, was that of Constantine. Unique among the others in the city, it was circular in construction. Its diameter is unknown, but it seems to have been surrounded by porticoes and a two-story colonnade, as first described by Zosimus.⁶³³ Several authors, and the *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae*, state that it was home to one of the city's two senate houses, as well as buildings erected for the hearing of legal cases, a nymphaeum, and a colossal statue of Constantine atop a porphyry column at its centre.⁶³⁴ As such, this public place fulfilled many of the same functions as the Roman Forum; with senatorial, legal, and monumental associations. It was the closest of the city's main *fora* to both the Great Church and Great

⁶³⁰ The first church in the area of the Forum, that of Cosmas and Damian, was not dedicated until 527 CE; D. Watkin, *The Roman Forum*, (Harvard, 2012), p. 107.

⁶³¹ See M. M. Mango, 'The Porticoed Street at Constantinople', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, (Leiden, 2001), pp. 29-53.

⁶³² See K. Dark and A. L. Harris., 'The last Roman forum: The forum of Leo in fifth-century Constantinople', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, (2008), Vol.48, No.1, pp. 57-69.

⁶³³ Zosimus, *New History*, 2.30.4.

⁶³⁴ The column can still be seen today, but the statue and base are both lost; A. Kaldellis, 'The Forum of Constantine in Constantinople: What do we Know About its Original Architecture and Adornment?', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, Vol.56, (2016), p. 717.

Palace, marking the boundary between the Constantinian city and later developments. Also, like the Roman Forum, it was decorated with monumental archways on either side. Clearly, then, the Forum of Constantine was, to many people at many times, a *place* of established value.

Despite this, I would argue that one of the crucial differences between the *fora* in Constantinople and those in Rome was that the major Constantinopolitan *fora*, incorporated as they were into the busiest and most central street in the city, were intended to facilitate movement. As Basset explains, the *fora* explicitly ‘marked progress through the city’.⁶³⁵ While Rome’s *fora*, including the Roman Forum, could be avoided with relative ease while moving across the urban landscape, this seems not to have been the case in Constantinople. Away from the *Mese* the streets were much narrower and quickly became steep, especially to the north of the main thoroughfare, to the degree that steps were built into some on account of their incline.⁶³⁶ It therefore seems safe to assume that individuals, such as the deaconess Olympias, would have made frequent use of the main street during their travels, necessitating movement through the *fora*. Of course, it is perfectly possible that those seeking to distance themselves from crowds travelled under the surrounding porticoes, rather than through the open centres, but this cannot be deduced from the texts.

As discussed in the previous chapter, we have evidence of women being present within the Forum of Constantine, and its location along the central thoroughfare assumes its frequent use as a site through which movement occurred. However, once again we are faced with a situation wherein the sources portray women primarily engaging with the Forum as a place. This, I would argue, can be explained by the fact that almost all the references to women in the *fora* of Constantinople come to us through Christian texts, such as the work of the Church Historians and the sermons of John Chrysostom. The presence of women, otherwise ignored, becomes worthy of mention precisely because of why they are there. In a procession, singing psalms, at an imperial *adventus*; they are depicted as spectators and

⁶³⁵ S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, (Cambridge, 2007), p. 30.

⁶³⁶ Berger (2000), p. 162.

participants at unifying and ceremonial events at which their attendance was both permitted and expected.

If Tuan is right, and space is equated with freedom, and freedom with danger, then it is no surprise that Late Antique authors did not want women moving freely through *fora* outside these legitimising, and organised, contexts. As Christianity continued to spread amongst the inhabitants of the Late Roman world, the unsuitability of the urban *fora*, with all their worldly and pagan connotations, became relevant to all decent Christians, not just women. Pope Leo, Basil, Theoderet, and Chrysostom all railed against these places as violent, unclean, and dangerous.⁶³⁷ As Christian authors came to dominate the sources, and as Christians urged *all* people to eschew the Forum, it becomes increasingly difficult to discern the particular relationship between these places and women.

Interestingly, however, these negative descriptions were not applied to the *fora* of Constantinople in the same manner. Basil, Theoderet, and Leo were referencing the public spaces of other cities in the east and, in Leo's case, in Rome. As for Chrysostom, his severe warnings about the dangers of the forum were delivered almost entirely in Antioch, where he refers to the forum as a space that 'supplies material for melancholy'.⁶³⁸ The Antiochene forum, according to Chrysostom, was a place in which fights broke out, blasphemy was heard, and where all things were earthly and corruptible.⁶³⁹ The *fora* of Constantinople, however, were referenced in a more matter-of-fact manner, and the presence of women in such spaces did not seem to shock or offend the bishop to nearly the same degree.

Rather, as outlined in chapter one, Chrysostom was concerned by the way in which women engaged with these places, urging his female congregants to put away their ornaments when they visited the Forum.⁶⁴⁰ The bishop was clear that these spaces were busy and tumultuous, and that women there would necessarily attract the attention of men. This tells us several things. Firstly, that wealthy women did visit the *fora* in Constantinople outside planned processions and events, as we might have already supposed, even if we are not told what they are doing there. Secondly, that women and men were in close enough proximity

⁶³⁷ Leo, *Letters*, 167.3; Basil, *Letters*, 74.3, 150.1; John Chrysostom, *Homily on Statues*, 1.33, 10.1; Theoderet, *Church History*, 4.21.

⁶³⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues*, 4.1.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on the Statues*, 10.2.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 10.4.

for one to gaze upon another's jewellery, suggesting that women were not exclusively restricted to the shaded porticoes, removed from the central plaza and its business. But, crucially, it indicates that unlike in other cities, the *fora* of Constantinople were, on account of Christianity's total dominance over the cityscape, apparently less contaminated by corrupting influences than those elsewhere.

Another key difference between the *fora* in Rome and Constantinople was the presence of female statues in the latter. While we know of just one female statue set up in the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity (that of Thermantia), textual sources allude to the presence of female, imperial statuary in all of Constantinople's four main *fora*.⁶⁴¹ The important role fulfilled by women in securing the ruling dynasty, and their public presence within the city, was firmly stamped upon each of these key public spaces. Both men and women moved along the city's major thoroughfare, in the shadow of female statues atop lofty columns. I repeat this point because, in their analysis of the Roman Forum, Boatwright and Trümper conclude that a lack of female representation, in both literature and statuary, indicates that 'the Forum reinforced a masculine public civic identity by excluding women visually and ideologically.'⁶⁴² If this argument stands, and a lack of female portraiture was indicative of attempts to exclude women from certain public spaces, then the *fora* of Constantinople do not seem to have been particularly gendered, either as represented in texts or statuary.

These differences (of representations of women in the *fora*, of their treatment by Christian authors, and of their facilitation of movement) have several explanations. Firstly, as mentioned above, the *fora* of Constantinople were part of the single busiest street in the city, meaning that women must have passed through them on a regular basis. Secondly, these spaces did not have the longstanding attachment to pagan practice that the *fora* of Rome, or Antioch, must have done. These public spaces might well have housed many buildings similar to those in the Roman Forum, and no doubt women were as excluded from the civic business there as elsewhere in the Empire, but they were newly created by a succession of Christian emperors, in a city that seems to have been largely free from pagan-

⁶⁴¹ See discussion in chapter 1, p. 72; see also U. Gehn and B. Ward-Perkins, 'Constantinople', in Smith and Ward-Perkins (2016), pp. 143-145.

⁶⁴² Trümper (2012), p. 299; Boatwright (2011), p. 108.

Christian competition (as previously discussed, Christianity afforded women more freedom of movement and use of places).

Not only this, but as discussed in chapter two, both the ecclesiastical and imperial ceremonies that took place in Constantinople, often in the *fora* (and the Forum of Constantine especially), were designed to bring out the *entire* urban community. Women, whether they were married or widowed, consecrated or otherwise, were expected to take part in ecclesiastical processions or observe imperial ceremonial. They were a recognised part of their urban and Christian societies and thus their presence was required, alongside men, to display a coming together of an entire community. Constantinople's *fora*, like its churches, were imperially managed stages upon which such events unfolded. Rome's *fora*, on the other hand, were less so.⁶⁴³ Indeed, while the public squares of Constantinople were apparently free of all pagan corruption, the bishop in Rome, even in the fifth century, was still complaining about pagan ceremonial in the Forum (the *Lupercalia*).

As such, we see no real attempts in either city to 'zone' these places, even though we are told of their unsuitability for women, for both social and religious reasons. In Constantinople, certainly, we have more evidence of women appearing in the *fora*, both within the protective confines of an ecclesiastical procession and on their own initiative. The Christian nature of Constantinople's urban topography, in effect, meant that much of the armature was viewed as a more acceptable place for women to engage with, at least in the mind of our Christian sources, than those similar places elsewhere. In Rome, meanwhile, I sense no great change in the way women made use of the Forum. They seem to have been tolerated, mostly ignored unless they gravely transgressed, with no evidence to suggest exclusion at any time from the Republican era through to the time of the Ostrogothic kings.

iv. Places of spectacle: amphitheatres and hippodromes

It is widely accepted that audiences at Roman theatres and amphitheatres were segregated along lines of gender and social status. Our most famous example, the Colosseum at Rome, kept most spectating women at great distance from events unfolding on the arena floor.

⁶⁴³ Although when Constantine was in the city, after his defeat of Maxentius, he gathered together beggars in the Forum and distributed charity to them there. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 1.43.

Only members of the imperial retinue and Vestal Virgins were afforded a decent vantage point. Yet despite much scholarship on the issue, there is no absolute consensus on where even these most notable women sat. Some place the empress, imperial women, and Vestal priestesses in the imperial box, on the south side of the arena, with the emperor and other male members of his retinue.⁶⁴⁴ Others have argued that empresses and Vestals sat in the opposite box, separate from the men, on the north side.⁶⁴⁵ However, as Beard and Hopkins have concluded, it seems that ‘no one knows’ where these women were located, and the northern box ‘might not have always been used by the same people, or even used at all’.⁶⁴⁶

At the arenas, we again see the spatial organisation of women along social lines. Vestals and empresses occupied exceptional positions in Roman society and were and honoured beyond even senatorial women. Other female spectators, it seems, were greatly removed from the centre of the arena, and none more so than noblewomen. Elite female spectators were assigned to the canopied area that encircled the very summit of the Colosseum, the *summum maenianum in ligneis*. Here, it was possible to segregate women of quality from those below, both physically and visually. A stone wall, five metres tall, ensured that women in the highest echelons could not be seen by those beneath. Meanwhile, the presence of sixteen stairways between the levels, with multiple external entrances, might have allowed elite women access to the highest altitudes without needing to encounter extrafamilial men during the ascent.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, it has been somewhat cynically noted that the estimated 220 stairs between the ground entrance and these lofty seats might have, not accidentally, functioned as a disincentive for elite women intending to visit the games.⁶⁴⁸

Peripheral not only physically, but also in the attentions of our sources, the precise layout of these areas is unclear. It may well have been that elite women sat, upon wooden chairs, in reserved sections between the various *cunei* in which the poor were stationed.⁶⁴⁹ Nonelite

⁶⁴⁴ A. Claridge, *Rome*, (Oxford, 2010), p. 314.

⁶⁴⁵ D. L. Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, (London, 2001), p. 9; R. Dunkle, *Gladiators: Violence and Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, (London, 2013), p. 262; R. B. Abrams, *The Colosseum: A History*, (New York, 2017), p. 76.

⁶⁴⁶ M. Beard and K. Hopkins, *The Colosseum*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 134.

⁶⁴⁷ The sources do not tell us if these stairways and entrances were segregated in such a manner, although they clearly could have functioned in this way.

⁶⁴⁸ Bomgardner (2001) p. 13.

⁶⁴⁹ Calpurnius Siculus, *Eclogues*, 7.26-7, describes the seats at the rear of an amphitheatre in Rome, where the poor ‘watched the shows from between the chairs of women’: *venimus ad sedes, ubi pulla sordida veste / inter femineas spectabat turba cathedras*, trans. LCL; See also E. A. Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in*

free women seem to have occupied the *summa cavea*, alongside those of ‘undifferentiated status’, such as slaves, freedmen, and foreigners.⁶⁵⁰ This was only one level below that of the *summum maenianum in ligneis* and thus also removed by some distance from the arena floor. If nonelite women were segregated from the rest of the urban poor in this section, there is no indication of this. Given the lack of care for the reputations of such women, in either late antique discourse or law, I see no reason to assume strict seating arrangements were enforced. Either way, the effect of restricting both elite and nonelite women to the most remote parts of the Colosseum must have ensured that the immediate audience encircling the action (those most able to perceive and interact with those in the elevated boxes) was almost entirely male.

As with much else, most of our information regarding segregation in the Colosseum predates the fourth century. We are told that Augustus was the first emperor to introduce measures to separate spectators at amphitheatres according to sex and status.⁶⁵¹ These were later re-enforced by Domitian after they had, apparently, grown lax.⁶⁵² Such measures seem to have been broadly employed across the empire, with only minor regional differences.⁶⁵³ Our late antique evidence does not, to my mind, suggest that this situation changed much at all between the fourth and sixth centuries. What little we hear of the Colosseum, for instance, suggests it continued to function in much the same way as it always had, with seat allocation following suit.⁶⁵⁴ However, by the sixth century, as the scale of Rome’s wealth and spectacles dwindled, the upper tiers of the Colosseum were no longer in use, as the amount of functional space for entertainments within the amphitheatre shrank.⁶⁵⁵

the Roman Élite from Cornelia to Julia Domna, (London, 2004), p. 247; E. A. Hemelrijk, *Hidden Lives, Public Personae: Women and Civic Life in the Roman West*, (Oxford, 2015), pp. 218-221.

⁶⁵⁰ Bomgardner (2001) p. 18.

⁶⁵¹ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 44.2.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, *Domitian*, 8.3; C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2002), p.112.

⁶⁵³ The overall policy of segregation along lines of sex and status seems to have been employed in both east and west. However, those women exempted from these rules varied depending upon the place. For instance, in the Greek East we see certain priestesses given special seating, who were not afforded the same privileges in the West, where exceptions seem to have been rare. See Hemelrijk (2004), p. 247.

⁶⁵⁴ The names of occupants (all elite men) were inscribed on some of the more privileged seats, with the final phase of inscriptions dated to between 470 and 520. See N. Christie, *From Constantine to Charlemagne: An Archaeology of Italy AD 300–800*, (London, 2016), p. 130.

⁶⁵⁵ F. Marazzi, ‘The Last Rome: From the End of the Fifth to the End of the Sixth Century’, in S. J. B. Barnish and F. Marazzi (eds), *The Ostrogoths from the Migration Period to the Sixth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, (San Marino, 2007), p. 313.

Our late antique sources are equally vague regarding the seating in circuses. In Rome and Constantinople, the focus of public entertainment in Late Antiquity seems to have shifted from amphitheatre to circus, as chariot racing overtook gladiatorial combats and beast hunts as the most popular spectacles in Rome and Constantinople.⁶⁵⁶ It was in and around the Circus Maximus, in Rome, where Ammianus situates the hubbub of the commons; he describes the Circus as ‘their temple, their dwelling, their assembly, and the height of all their hopes.’⁶⁵⁷ Constantinople, like other tetrarchic residence cities before it, side-lined the amphitheatre even more than Rome. The sources there often discuss the Hippodrome, but almost never reference amphitheatres – of which there was at least one (called the Kynegion) in the area of the old Acropolis.⁶⁵⁸ Given Constantine’s antipathy towards gladiatorial spectacles, and the Christian character of the New Rome, this is not surprising.⁶⁵⁹

Despite the repeated references to the Hippodrome and Circus, we know very little of the seating arrangements, or spatial organisation, of either in Late Antiquity. Classical sources are clear that, at the Circus, men and women sat together even after the decrees of Augustus.⁶⁶⁰ There was still segregation along social lines, separating elite from poor, but we hear of no efforts to keep men and women apart.⁶⁶¹ In fact, our late antique sources rarely, and only indirectly, place women at the Circus. Ammianus Marcellinus alludes to their presence there when he says that even respectable women were greeted by the shouts of actors and charioteers, although we have no way of knowing where they were seated.⁶⁶² The Calendar of 354 suggests some events presented opportunities for movement within and around the Circus, as it attests to the continuation of both the *Cerealia* and *Floralia* festivals in Late Antiquity, both held in April.⁶⁶³

⁶⁵⁶ K. Sessa, *Daily Life in Late Antiquity*, (Cambridge, 2018), p. 72.

⁶⁵⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.29: *eisque templum et habitaculum et contio et cupitorum spes omnis Circus est maximus*, trans. LCL.

⁶⁵⁸ A. Cameron and J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, (Leiden, 1984), p. 201; J. Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, (Cambridge, 2012), p. 261; Bomgardner (2001), p. 219.

⁶⁵⁹ On this debate see McCormick (1986), pp. 100-111.

⁶⁶⁰ Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 1.135-42.

⁶⁶¹ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 21; *Nero*, 11; J. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing*, (Berkeley, 1986), p. 102.

⁶⁶² Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.33.

⁶⁶³ The *Cerealia* involved matrons carrying torches (to represent Ceres’ search for her lost daughter Proserpine) and spectating at games in the Circus. Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.494; Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.53; At the *Floralia*,

Regarding nonelite women, we should imagine them plying their trade at both the Circus and Hippodrome as performers, prostitutes, cooks, vendors, and attending as spectators. According to Lactantius, writing at the beginning of the fourth century, female performers could be found in the Circus during the *Floralia* as mimeplayers.⁶⁶⁴ Prostitutes were also to be found here, as they were at other entertainment venues (and presumably wherever else crowds gathered).⁶⁶⁵ In particular, prostitutes were known to gather around the lesser-known Arch of Titus by the Circus, while certain rooms in the portico that surrounded it are thought to have been used by these women to entertain their clients.⁶⁶⁶ As for other low-status women, Ammianus places them in the crowds that gathered in the vicinity of the Circus, where their ‘shrill voices’ could be heard, and it seems some were involved in cooking food that could be purchased by those prone to ‘over-stuffing themselves’.⁶⁶⁷

Meanwhile, we have no knowledge of where women were located within the Hippodrome at Constantinople. This might seem rather surprising, given the importance of this place in the civic life of the city and its frequent appearance in written sources from the fourth to sixth centuries. However, given the relative silence surrounding women at the Circus Maximus, we should not take this to mean women were not in the audience at Constantinople. Some scholars believe that the Hippodrome’s benches were devoid of women, based upon Procopius’ claim that women kept away, or were kept away, from the games and races.⁶⁶⁸ However, a story of John Malalas, recounting how a woman approached the emperor at the Hippodrome to discuss a property dispute, suggests it was not unthinkable that respectable (i.e. propertied) women might have some agency and freedom of movement in this particular civic space.⁶⁶⁹

female entertainers and dancers, and possibly prostitutes, performed in the Circus and on the slopes of the Aventine. Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.249; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 1.20; see also ‘The Chronography of 354 AD. Part 6: the calendar of Philocalus’, *Inscriptiones Latinae Antiquissimae*, (Berlin, 1893) pp. 256-278.

⁶⁶⁴ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 1.20.

⁶⁶⁵ Prostitutes could be found in the vicinity of the Colosseum and also Domitian’s Circus. J. L. Papandrea, *Rome: A Pilgrim’s Guide to the Eternal City*, (Eugene, 2012), p. 61.

⁶⁶⁶ Not to be confused with the better-known triumphal Arch of Titus, but rather a smaller arch at the eastern end of the Circus Maximus. T. A. McGinn, ‘Sex and the City’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2013), p. 375.

⁶⁶⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.34: *In his plerique distentioribus saginis addicti, praeunte nidoris indagine acutisque vocibus feminarum, a galliciniis ipsis in modum pavonum ieunitate clangentium humum summis pedum unguibus contingentes aulis adsistunt, digitos praerodentes dum patinae defervescent*, trans. LCL.

⁶⁶⁸ Procopius, *Persian Wars*, 1.24.6.

⁶⁶⁹ John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.340.

As at Rome, lower-status women could be found at the Hippodrome performing very similar services to their western counterparts. The extant base of a Theodosian obelisk from the *spina* of the Hippodrome at Constantinople, still on display in Istanbul today, shows dancing girls and musicians performing before the emperor, who is pictured laying a crown upon the head of a victor.⁶⁷⁰ In the textual sources, the most famous female performer from the Hippodrome and theatre stages of Constantinople was, unquestionably, the empress Theodora. Procopius, in his lengthy invective against the wife of Justinian, situates her on the very floor of the Hippodrome as a young girl with her mother, approaching the various circus factions for their support.⁶⁷¹ Such women, seen as lacking any modesty that might otherwise need protecting, are clearly depicted as coming into contact with extrafamilial men as part of their roles.

Evidently then, elite women at places of spectacle and entertainment were separated from men and, it seems, from lower status women. Certain places, like the Circus and perhaps the Hippodrome, were less stratified than other venues. From what evidence we have, it seems that models 3 and 4 were utilised at such sites, with no suggestion that women were excluded wholesale from entertainment venues (with the sole and aforementioned exception of Procopius' comment on women not attending the races). Furthermore, there is nothing in the sources to suggest that Late Antiquity, or its growing Christianisation, had any substantial impact on the ways in which segregation at these places was managed. Finally, the use of these models, and the presence of women of varying esteem, at such venues is unsurprising. After all, these were also sites of imperial ceremonial, particularly in Constantinople. Again, there is an expectation that all sections of society were present at such places and events, as the audience of the circus or amphitheatre was, in effect, intended to serve as a 'snapshot' of the wider urban populace.

v. Places of leisure: baths

Regarding segregation in bathhouses, the general consensus is, as Fagan puts it, that practices differed not just from region to region, but even between individual establishments.⁶⁷² Mixed bathing could be found in some places but not others, as the

⁶⁷⁰ R. Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*, (Harvard, 2008), p. 94.

⁶⁷¹ Procopius, *Secret History*, 9.2-7.

⁶⁷² G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, (Ann Arbor, 1999), p. 27.

Empire provided baths to suit 'both the prude and the pervert'.⁶⁷³ In the fourth century, Constantinople could boast of 8 imperial and 153 private baths throughout the city.⁶⁷⁴ Rome, host to a large population and wealthy elite for much longer, had amassed 11 imperial baths and a staggering 856 private sites by the time of Constantine's reign.⁶⁷⁵ Even as late as the sixth-century, Justinian was spending so much on maintaining baths that only the military, bureaucracy, and fortifications received more public expenditure.⁶⁷⁶ Clearly, baths remained a vitally important part of civic life and urban culture throughout Late Antiquity.

Quite how many women made use of public establishments, and how many bathed in private places, is unknown. It is unclear how accurate either the *Notitia* or the regionaries are, the purposes they served, what criteria were employed in defining *thermae* and *balnea*, or how these numbers changed throughout Late Antiquity. However, our sources are unambiguous that women, in both cities, visited public baths. As Angelova states, there seems to have been no 'major changes in the "ethos" of bathing in Late Antiquity'.⁶⁷⁷ Pagan orators and Christian bishops, such as Libanius and Chrysostom, exhibited equal disdain for women socialising at the baths or meeting men there, adopting a longstanding literary tradition as old as the Empire itself.⁶⁷⁸

And yet Chrysostom was prepared to accept women bathing as an inescapable feature of urban living.⁶⁷⁹ Furthermore, it seems that both rich and poor used the baths, although it is not clear if they are supposed to have been present in the same places. Nudity was also an accepted feature of late antique bathing in both Rome and Constantinople. Chrysostom, far from prudish on the matter, confirmed both these facts when he remarked how all appeared equal when naked in the baths, stripped of their clothing and jewellery.⁶⁸⁰ It was in the baths, the bishop warned, that any cruelty on the part of a mistress towards her

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁷⁴ *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, Seeck (1876).

⁶⁷⁵ *The Notitia, Curiosum, and Appendices*, in H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, Vo.2, Part 2, (Berlin, 1871), pp. 539-574.

⁶⁷⁶ D. N. Angelova, *Sacred Founders : Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome Through Early Byzantium*, (Berkeley, 2015), p. 162.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁶⁷⁸ Libanius, *Orations*, 4.523.5-524.5; on Chrysostom's complaints see Angelova (2015), p. 176.

⁶⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.13.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Ephesians*, 15.

female slaves would be revealed, as bruises and marks upon flesh were sharply revealed by nakedness.⁶⁸¹

While bathing was accepted by Christian authors, mixed bathing between men and women was overwhelmingly disapproved of, with texts such as the *Didascalia* and *Constitutions* warning against the practice. Interestingly, the earlier text of the *Didascalia* does permit women to participate in mixed bathing where unavoidable, provided they do so with ‘modesty and shame’, while the *Constitutions* forbid it entirely.⁶⁸² Certainly, it does seem that attitudes towards the practice hardened at some juncture. It is generally assumed that, perhaps as early as Hadrian’s reign, mixed bathing was forbidden.⁶⁸³ The *Historia Augusta* credits various good emperors with banning the practice, bad emperors with permitting it, and accuses the truly awful of engaging in it themselves.⁶⁸⁴ It is clear that mixed bathing was considered disreputable by its late antique creator, just as it was by Jerome and Chrysostom.⁶⁸⁵ Regarding material evidence, as Squatriti notes, ‘almost nowhere are men and women shown bathing together’.⁶⁸⁶

Despite assertions that segregated baths were ‘virtually certain’, I would argue that our sources suggest mixed bathing was not, in fact, completely alien to the late antique urban experience. The warnings of Chrysostom and Jerome, that young men should be prevented from bathing with women, suggest that some were doing precisely this. Meanwhile, Evagrius claimed that certain ascetics would display their religious credentials constantly attending the baths, and deliberately mingling with women there, to showcase how they had attained mastery over their passions.⁶⁸⁷ In the mid-fourth century, the Synod of Laodicea ruled that no priests were to bathe in the baths alongside women.⁶⁸⁸ In Rome, Jovinianus argued publicly against Jerome, by stating clear approval for baths in which both sexes bathed.⁶⁸⁹ Furthermore, a law of Justinian decreed that a wife who bathed or dined

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁸² *Didascalia*, 3.1.9; *Apostolic Constitutions*, 1.9.

⁶⁸³ Fagan (1999), p. 27.

⁶⁸⁴ On emperors banning mixed bathing, HA *Hadrian*, 18.10, *Marcus Aurelius*, 23.8, *Severus Alexander*, 24.2; On emperors permitted it, HA *Commodus*, 5.4, *Elagabalus*, 26.3, *The Two Gallieni*, 17.9.

⁶⁸⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 77.4, 107.11.

⁶⁸⁶ P. Squatriti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy, AD 400-1000*, (Cambridge, 2002), p. 49.

⁶⁸⁷ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, 1.21.

⁶⁸⁸ R. B. Ward, ‘Women in Roman Baths’, *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol.58, No.2, (1992), p. 135.

⁶⁸⁹ Jerome, *Against Jovinianus*, 2.2.36.

with men, without the consent of her husband, could be divorced or flogged.⁶⁹⁰ The clear implication here being that women could legally visit the baths, and bathe in proximity to extrafamilial men, provided they had approval from their husbands.

It is worth noting that, here, we have another example of how Christian discourse broke with previous tradition, by seeking to bring expectations around male sexual behaviour more closely into line with those surrounding female conduct. For Chrysostom, Jerome, and those at the Council of Laodicea, their admonishments were directed primarily towards men. While mixed bathing might not have been eminently respectable in Late Antiquity, it had long been accepted. Ammianus was aware that men met courtesans at the baths, while classical satire portrayed bathhouses as places of flirtation and seduction (or harassment and abuse, depending on your place in these exchanges).⁶⁹¹ By the fifth-century, however, our sources are clear that male sexual behaviour ought to be restrained and thus segregation, in their eyes, also served to distance and protect men in addition to women.

Overall, then, I would argue that the conclusion for bathing in Late Antiquity is much the same as for the classical period: mixed bathing, nude or otherwise, was practiced in some baths. It might have been only a small minority, and largely avoided by elite women (and some elite men), but it does seem to have taken place. It is plausible that the major imperial baths, in either city, might have avoided the practice, but given the large number of private baths in both Rome and Constantinople we should imagine that Fagan's conclusion holds steady: that both prude and pervert could find somewhere to bathe, within either great metropolis, in the manner they preferred (finances and social status permitting).⁶⁹² The question that follows, then, is how did segregated bathing, in those places that employed it, actually function?

Returning to the models at the beginning of this chapter, we can imagine all or none of them in place, depending on the individual baths in question. For mixed baths, both men and women are presumed to have occupied the same space, with few or no restrictions on their movements. Where the sexes bathed separately, we can imagine models 1 and 2 being employed, and we have some evidence for both. As with much else, the size of the buildings

⁶⁹⁰ *Justinian Novels*, 117.8, 117.14.

⁶⁹¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.18; Martial, *Epigrams*, 3.51.

⁶⁹² Clement of Alexandria observed that both rich and poor women enjoyed the baths, *Paedagogus*, 3.31-33.

would have been an important factor in deciding which models were most feasible. Large *thermae* and other expansive premises could presumably host men and women in separate rooms, away from one another but present in the baths at the same time (model 1). From the fourth century, archaeological evidence arises from across the Empire that suggests this was practiced, with baths having two separate sets of rooms.⁶⁹³ Unfortunately, the imperial baths in Constantinople have left no trace and, regarding the archaeological evidence from Rome, the baths there appear to show only one set of rooms. As such, while some scholars assume that model 1 was employed in the baths there as elsewhere (which is perfectly plausible) the extant evidence provides no confirmation.

As the baths at Rome show only one common set of rooms, the general assumption is that model 2 was employed in many such places, where men and women both occupied the same space but at different times. This is supported by epigraphic evidence from elsewhere in the empire, and is also reflected in the text of the *Constitutions*, which warns women not to bathe 'in the middle of the day' and to instead 'let the tenth hour of the day be the set time for such seasonable bathing'.⁶⁹⁴ Again, the sources here are not from, nor directly relate to, Rome or Constantinople. However, as we know that women frequented baths in both cities, and that mixed bathing was of questionable respectability, in the absence of any direct evidence pointing towards the adoption of model 1, I think we should assume that some, if not most, bathing establishments separated the sexes by admitting them at different points during the day.

Of course, segregation was not always successful. From outside Rome and Constantinople, there are occasional references to such measures being breached. For instance, St Symeon, in Emesa, was said to have charged into the women's sections of a baths, where he was driven out by the offended female bathers.⁶⁹⁵ In Alexandria, a demonically possessed nun was said to approach clerics in the baths, where she would try to tempt them into sexual acts.⁶⁹⁶ While these seem exceptional, we should note that men and women would have also encountered one another as workers at the baths, such as the woman who managed

⁶⁹³ Fagan (1999), p. 26.

⁶⁹⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 1.9.

⁶⁹⁵ D. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City*, (Berkeley, 2018), p. 46.

⁶⁹⁶ H. J. Magoulias, 'Bath-house, Inn, Tavern, Prostitution, and the Stage as Seen in the Lives of the Saints of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries', *EpetByz*, Vol.38 (1971), p. 245.

the Twin Baths of the Paschentios Hostel in Constantinople, in the seventh-century miracles of St Artemios.⁶⁹⁷ Paulinus' *Life of Ambrose* also references a female caretaker of some unspecified baths in Rome.⁶⁹⁸ The baths also seem to have been a place where prostitutes plied their trade. The evidence points to this happening in Rome from the classical through to the late antique period.⁶⁹⁹ However, whether such women worked within the baths themselves from the fourth century onwards, or whether the baths were merely a suitable meeting place, is unknown.

Finally, one change that took place in both cities was the emergence, over time, of baths adjoining churches and monasteries. As the church acquired more property over the centuries, including aristocratic residences equipped with private baths, it found itself operating an increasing number of bathing facilities.⁷⁰⁰ Certainly, in Rome, we can imagine these becoming ever more important as the major imperial *thermae* ceased to function in the sixth century. There is little to say in detail regarding such places, as the sources do not tell us about the spatial organisation within. However, we might reasonably suppose that, as these facilities were managed by the church, and given Christian attitudes towards mixed bathing, the sexes would have been segregated through some of the available methods referenced above. Thus, we might also suppose that there was more segregation in Rome when the church eventually took over bathing.

vi. Women at work

As previously discussed, nonelite women worked in a wide array of places beyond the home, often bringing themselves into contact with extrafamilial men. Yet we see little of this in the sources for Rome and Constantinople. As outlined in chapter two, our letter-writing men were utterly uninterested in the humdrum and economic activities of women who were required, by lack of wealth, to work. Those able to leave their own record through epigraphy, often stationed below the elite, seem not to have highlighted such things either.

⁶⁹⁷ *The Miracles of St. Artemios*, 11; V. S. Crisafulli and J. W. Nesbitt (trans), *The Miracles of St. Artemios: A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh Century Byzantium*, (Leiden, 2007), p. 97.

⁶⁹⁸ Paulinus, *Life of Ambrose*, 3.10.

⁶⁹⁹ McGinn (2004), p. 24; however, we have no evidence for prostitutes in the baths at Constantinople.

⁷⁰⁰ On this see J. B. Kulberd, 'When Bath Became Church: Spatial Fusion in Late Antique Constantinople and Beyond', in B. Shilling and P. Stephenson, *Fountains and Water Culture in Byzantium*, (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 145-163; on some late antique baths in Rome, see J. Moorhead, *The Popes and the Church of Rome in Late Antiquity*, (London, 2014), p. 33.

Looking at funerary inscriptions from across the empire, female work is rarely mentioned.⁷⁰¹ Naturally, this makes an inquiry into segregation within such places difficult, as we know nothing of the spatial arrangements of, say, a Constantinopolitan mill. Consequently, we must mine the textual sources for passing references to women at work. We can also look towards the way in which elite discourse perceived working women, and their status in law, for clues to their spatial relationship with extrafamilial men. As we shall see, it seems that segregation by sex was probably not a feature of these women's daily lives.

Women seem to have been present in marketplaces of both cities, both as workers and consumers. For instance, Chrysostom approved of wool-working at home, but where a woman could not do so, he thought it acceptable for them to buy it from other women who sold their goods in the markets.⁷⁰² Here, the bishop acknowledges that some women sold their goods in the busy urban marketplaces, where elsewhere he references them selling cooked food there.⁷⁰³ We also hear of women selling vegetables in the markets at both Constantinople and Rome.⁷⁰⁴ Women also sold other goods, such as amulets, charms, and even silver utensils.⁷⁰⁵ Chrysostom references wealthy women visiting the marketplaces also, though it is not clear if they were simply passing through or perusing the goods there.⁷⁰⁶ At a marketplace in Constantinople, not far from the imperial palace, prostitutes could also be found there.⁷⁰⁷ As such, we can imagine there many men there also, with no measures of segregation in place at such sites.

From Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists*, we find another passing reference to a woman at work in a public place that saw her in close contact with extrafamilial men. The author spins a tale of an Egyptian traveller, in Rome, who visited a wine shop. Here, the hostess prepared him some spiced wine, approached the traveller, and set the cup down before him. Then, a neighbour burst into the shop exclaiming to the hostess that her friend was in danger during

⁷⁰¹ On lack of women's occupations in funerary inscriptions as compared to men see R. Knapp, *Invisible Romans*, (London, 2013), p. 81.

⁷⁰² John Chrysostom, *Against Those Men Cohabiting with Virgins*, 9; Knapp (2013), p. 82.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5; Richlin (2014), p. 315, discusses a relief from Ostia, showing a woman selling vegetables.

⁷⁰⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 8.5.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, *On Virginitiy and Against Remarriage*, 66.2.31-42; *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 61.3; *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.9-11.

⁷⁰⁷ J. A. Evans, *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian*, (Austin, 2003), p. 31.

childbirth. The hostess stopped what she was doing, leaving the shop before she could pour the wine. Upon her return, after delivering the baby, she apologised to the irritated Egyptian and explained the reason for her absence.⁷⁰⁸ While the tale itself is spurious (involving as it does a prophecy) the referential mention of the hostess points to a world where women in such places were common. The hostess is clearly not of the lowest social standing, as the text implies she was running the wine shop, and she is locally recognised as a midwife of some skill.

While we do see references of women in taverns, mingling freely with men, they are typically portrayed as workers rather than customers, as in the above tale of Eunapius. When Chrysostom complained of men and women cavorting in alehouses after nightly vigils (again seeking to curb the immoral conduct of male congregants), it is unclear whether the women in question went to drink in such places after their religious observations, or whether they were employed at the inn and met by the men there. Either way, the sources are clear that such places, which were too unsavoury for respectable elites, witnessed the close physical mixing of men and women. Furthermore, both modern scholars and contemporary commentators assumed that sex was available for purchase in many such places.⁷⁰⁹ The evidence certainly suggests a good deal of overlap, at least in the minds of letter-writing men, between taverns and brothels. As such, those women referenced as being in taverns might have been customers, barmaids, landladies, or prostitutes. Indeed, they might well have been all these things at one time or another.

Assuredly, late antique discourse assumed that women who worked in such places were made physically accessible to men. A law of Constantine from 326 AD, preserved in the Theodosian Code, deals with the crime of adultery on the part of women working in taverns. According to the text, it must be established whether the woman was 'mistress of a tavern' or a 'servant girl'. The key question, it seems, was whether the woman would 'herself frequently serve the wines of intemperance' to customers. If she was the mistress, then she was liable to punishment under the law. However, if she was indeed one of those women who 'give service to those who drink', then no crime of adultery could have been committed, as she was one of those whose lack of modesty meant she was beneath the

⁷⁰⁸ Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, 463.

⁷⁰⁹ McGinn (2004), p. 20.

concerns of the law.⁷¹⁰ In sum, if a woman's work required her to be often in the presence of men (and drunken men at that), then she was not expected to have chastity or modesty that would, in more respectable women, need protecting.

In classical sources, the Roman mindset had long regarded many working women as prostitutes. Hairdressers, for example, were assumed to also provide sexual services.⁷¹¹ It is impossible for us to tease apart these distinctions, partly because the sources themselves never make them, but also because the overlap between low income, insecure work and prostitution probably reflected the real experiences of (at least some) women. Work in the late antique urban economy was often seasonal, and the financial health of some poorer families would have fluctuated dramatically. It is not difficult to imagine that some women turned to prostitution to supplement or provide an income. It hardly needs stating that prostitutes, by the very nature of their work, were not segregated from men. Whether they worked within brothels, taverns, bathhouses, cribs, or on the streets – their work depended on physical interactions with extrafamilial men.

Beyond this, there is little else to say about the segregation of poorer, working women from men. It is clear from the sources that late Roman law and society functioned on the understanding that such women were accessible to a wide array of strange men, thus rendering them unworthy of consideration by the law and without any modesty they might need to be concerned with. Not only this, but the places they were associated with, such as mills and taverns, were shunned by those who considered themselves respectable. Some of these were, as Evagrius might have put it, in the obscure parts of the urban topography – deliberately ignored and overlooked by our Late Antique authors.⁷¹² While these maligned and ignored women form a tiny minority of those featured in the source material, common sense tells us they must have made up the majority of women in either Rome or Constantinople.

However, we should not overlook that these women were also, in some cases, kept at a distance from respectable ladies (and now also respectable men). They were separated at the amphitheatres and, possibly, in the baths. Furthermore, there were certain places, such

⁷¹⁰ *CT* 9.7.1.

⁷¹¹ Martial, *Epigrams*, 2.17; McGinn (2004), p. 29.

⁷¹² Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, 3.3.

as the women's senate in Rome, referenced in both the *Historia Augusta* and by Jerome, that were evidently designed for the use of elite *matronae*.⁷¹³ Similarly, there were places that were frequented by ordinary women, but where members of the elite would surely not be seen. The numerous taverns, brothels, erotic dance performances, and mimes appear as places where respectable women would not venture. So too, might we imagine, the various sites of physical labour, such as workshops, mills and bakeries, were rarely ever frequented by elite women.⁷¹⁴ As such, there must have been many places that both nonelite and elite women would have *de facto* avoided, even where they were not excluded *de jure*.

vii. Conclusion

Across this chapter I have demonstrated that, overall, segregation continued to function in certain secular places in Late Antiquity in a largely similar way to how it had in classical times. Likewise, across the two cities the practices are not especially dissimilar. For instance, at both Rome and Constantinople we see that few places were entirely gendered, instead permitting both men and women, even if they were kept apart. With regards to civic places, this inclusion of women was surely because they were a recognised part of their urban communities and were thus expected to attend spectacles and such (even if some of our sources would prefer them to remain at home). However, this is not to suggest that no differences existed between the cities. As we see in the case of urban *fora*, the unique topographies, and histories of the two cities led to places functioning, and appearing in the sources, in somewhat different ways.

Moreover, we see across several of our secular places a desire to segregate women based on their social status, both through rules and also, we assume, through individual action. Thus, elite women are separated from nonelite women in the Colosseum by structural barriers and enforced arrangements. Meanwhile, elite women were presumably absent from many of the places in which you might expect to find nonelite women, such as taverns and brothels, by virtue of their status and reputational concerns. As referenced previously, nonelite women were surely present at a much wider variety of places than our sources

⁷¹³ HA *Elagabalus*, 4.3, *Aurelian*, 49.6; Jerome, *Letters*, 43.3; the precise location of this site is unknown. We also cannot rule out that some lower-class women were permitted entry.

⁷¹⁴ Suetonius *Augustus*, 4.2, records Augustus was taunted with accusations his mother was actually the daughter of a baker.

explicitly attest to, and had many more reasons for leaving the home than we are told. However, while our sources frequently overlook the presence of nonelite women and ignore happenings within humdrum environments, they are far more interested in circumstances surrounding women's presence within religious places. It is to segregation within these religious places that we now turn our attention.

Chapter Four

Female Segregation in Religious Places

In the previous chapter, I assessed the methods, and extent, of segregation employed at various secular places in Rome and Constantinople. Trümper's four models of segregation were applied to a range of civic and non-religious settings, revealing how few secular places were entirely gendered, with most seeking to admit both men and women while keeping them separate. I demonstrated how late antique practice did not seem to break with previous tradition in the ways it sought to separate elite women from men and other, nonelite women at such places. The two cities also seem to have applied segregation in similar manners, although there were some differences, such as those identified between *fora*. Moreover, it was shown that for nonelite women, experiences of segregation were dramatically different to those faced by their elite equivalents.

With respect to segregation at religious places, however, we can detect notable differences between the two cities. For instance, pagan ceremonial was a feature of Rome's public life for much of the fourth century, unlike at Constantinople. Meanwhile, Christian churches in the eastern capital could place female congregants in elevated galleries, whereas Roman churches seem to have separated sexes across the nave. Comparison also reveals possible exchange between the two cities, particularly around the time of Justinian's reconquest of Italy. For instance, by the late sixth century we see church galleries added to Roman basilicas and popes leading largescale outdoor processions, both of which had been features of Constantinopolitan Christianity since the fourth century.

Applying the same four models of segregation, we can see different models in application. We find a number of sacred pagan places that were entirely gendered, either on a permanent basis or during certain festivals and rites. As alluded to in chapter one, even these boundaries could be breached in exceptional circumstances, though the outrage such contraventions provoke in the sources suggest this did not happen frequently. At Christian places, meanwhile, we do not see entirely gendered public places, instead the desire was again to admit both men and women and have them separated. While some pagan and

secular sites were explicit in keeping elite and nonelite women apart, our Christian sources are more ambiguous on this, given their rhetorical championing of the poor. However, the presence of the very poor in the churches of Rome and Constantinople, alongside the elite, is questionable and, I would suggest, social segregation did take place in such places.

i. Pagan places

The nature of the extant evidence makes it difficult to deduce, with great confidence, the spatial arrangements of pagan worship and celebration in either city during Late Antiquity. The absence of Constantinopolitan paganism in the sources, as outlined previously, makes an analysis of segregation within a pagan religious context virtually impossible for the eastern capital. In Rome, however, we have rather more to work with. As highlighted in chapter two we can identify several elite pagan women who were involved, in some form, with religious rites at Rome. Paulina and Lolliana were two such women and their funerary inscriptions attest to their associations with various pagan cults.⁷¹⁵ In the discussion, I outlined a number of sites across the city that, it seems, were connected with these two women and others like them. The questions, then, are how and to what extent did these women, and others who attended pagan ceremonies, experience measures of segregation.

For Rome, most evidence of spatial arrangements at pagan sites comes from earlier sources, leaving us to speculate as to whether things had changed by Late Antiquity. For instance, we cannot know if those places associated with Lolliana and Paulina, such as the temples of Isis and Ceres, permitted the entry of both men and women, either separately or alongside one another. The sources that shine a light on the interior of such places are early, such as the first-century account from Josephus of a man who disguised himself as Anubis, in the temple of Isis in Rome, so that he could defile a noblewoman (also called Paulina) who had been hoodwinked into believing she would be meeting the god himself.⁷¹⁶ Meanwhile, as alluded to in the previous chapter, we have evidence that both men and women attended the rites of the *Taurobolia*, which Lolliana surely witnessed, suggesting that sites of such

⁷¹⁵ Paulina, *CIL* 6.1779 = ILS 1259; Lolliana, *CIL* 6.512.

⁷¹⁶ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 18.63–8; though the act sparked outrage, the presence of both Paulina and her aggressor, Mundus, suggests that, at one time, men and women were each permitted access to the temple of Isis in Rome.

events were not restricted to either one sex, although there could have been some segregation of people during attendance.

Other, earlier evidence does point to some sacred places that were, either temporarily or permanently, gendered. For instance, classical sources suggest that few men were allowed within the temples of Bona Dea or Mater Matuta.⁷¹⁷ The temple of Diana, on the Vicus Patricius, was likewise restricted to women, as was the temple of Juno Lucina on the Esquiline during the rites of the Matronalia.⁷¹⁸ Temples to Pudicitia, in the Forum Boarium and on the Vicus Longus, may also have been female-only places.⁷¹⁹ Other sites became gendered during particular festivals, as respectable matrons segregated themselves within a special area of the baths (*matronicia*) during the Parentalia, in order to perform their rites separately to the ordinary men and women outside.⁷²⁰ Meanwhile, access to cult statues within the temples of Pudicitia, Fortuna Muliebris, and Mater Matuta was restricted to women who had married only once (*univira*) and during the rites of the Matralia it was custom for female slaves to be ritualistically driven from the temple of Mater Matuta by respectable matrons.⁷²¹

Perhaps most famous of all Rome's gendered places was the temple of Vesta, into which no man, save for the chief priest, could enter. This was a gendered place par excellence, so famous for its prohibition of male visitors that it served as a literary trope from the Republic through to Late Antiquity. Long after the sacred hearth had been extinguished, Claudian still referred to the temple when he railed against the eunuch Eutropius, saying 'none but the Vestal Virgins approach the shrine of Trojan Minerva', while Pacatus praised Theodosius for letting the people see him and not, like some previous emperors, cloistering himself within the palace 'as if in some sanctuary of Vesta'.⁷²² Clearly, the Vestals were ancient symbols of feminine modesty, which explains why Claudian weaponised their memory in his invective

⁷¹⁷ Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 3.633–638; Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 5.14.

⁷¹⁸ Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, 3; Ovid, *Fasti*, 3. 258.

⁷¹⁹ Livy, *Roman History*, 10.23.3-5; Festus, 242.

⁷²⁰ John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 2.29. As discussed in the previously, Lydus was a sixth-century author based in Constantinople, and his *De Mensibus* was an antiquarian work. See M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian*, (New York, 1992), pp. 53-67.

⁷²¹ Titus Livius, *Ad Urbe Condita Libri*, 5.14; Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.789–90.

⁷²² Claudian, *Against Eutropius*, 1.350: *Troianam sola Minervam virginitas Vestalis adit*, trans. LCL; Pacatus, *Panegyric to Theodosius*, 21.3: *tamquam aliquod Vestale secretum*, trans. B. S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*, (Berkeley, 2015). The 'Trojan Minerva' refers to the *Palladium*, an ancient and sacred symbol, supposedly from Troy, placed under the care of the Vestal priestesses.

against Eutropius, whose status as a eunuch provided the panegyrist with ample opportunities for mockery. Their sanctuary was also typified as an inaccessible place, which is why Pacatus compares the palace of those emperors who secluded themselves (a womanly thing to do) with the Temple of Vesta.

As discussed in the previous chapter, it seems likely that certain women with a connection to this temple, such as Paulina, would have occasionally visited the site. This was surely the case during the *Vestalia*, when women were expected to visit the temple and make offerings. It is almost certain that, during this time, they were entirely separate from men while in the grounds of the sanctuary. After all, the violation of Vestals was committed by the very worst emperors: Elagabalus and Nero.⁷²³ Indeed, violating sacred places and mistreating Vestals were accusations that continued to be levelled against despised imperial figures well into Late Antiquity. Zosimus continued the tradition when, in the sixth century, he accused the empress Serena (wife of Stilicho and niece of Theodosius), of removing a necklace from the statue of Rhea in the temple of Cybele at Rome. According to the historian, Serena was then rebuked by an old woman who had once been a Vestal. Serena responded with insults and drove the elderly priestess from the temple.⁷²⁴

Naturally, we should proceed with caution when dealing with Zosimus. Given the author's animosity towards Christian empresses and his affection for pagan antiquity, it seems a suspiciously convenient tale. What it does show, however, is an expectation that elite women, such as empresses and (former) Vestals, were free to move around and interact with such places. As Lançon notes, this story could be taken as evidence that even after Theodosius closed down places of pagan worship, some were still open to interested parties, Christian or otherwise, who wished to marvel at their architecture, decoration, and antiquity. He also notes that some priestesses, stripped of their sacred offices, still associated themselves with places of pagan worship, such as the temple of Cybele.⁷²⁵ Furthermore, Zosimus has Serena fulfilling the (very unfeminine) role of looting conqueror.

⁷²³ HA *Elagabalus*, 3.4, 6.6-9; Suetonius, *Nero*, 19.1. Both men entered the sanctuary and, later, violated a Vestal priestess. In Nero's case, he was temporarily stricken blind while in the temple.

⁷²⁴ Zosimus, *New History*, 5.38.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.38; Lançon, (2001), p. 94.

As a Christian, she is in a place she does not belong, treating sacred objects with ignorance and disrespect, before finalising the outrage with abuse of an elderly Vestal.

Interestingly, while we see numerous examples of sacred places that were off-limits to men of all rank, we hear of very few pagan shrines or temples that forbade entry to women. The various *Mithraeum* across the city were, we assume, male-only places, but in this they might have been rather exceptional.⁷²⁶ It is true that major deities and state gods were normally served by male priests and, as scholarship has long noted, women were largely excluded from holding positions of significance within these cults.⁷²⁷ However, this does not necessarily mean that women were prevented, or even dissuaded, from entering the temple precincts of divinities with masculine associations. Indeed, if women were prohibited from accessing certain pagan sites across Rome, this is omitted from our extant sources (who were all too ready to point towards those places into which men were forbidden entry). This omission could be explained by the fact that few such prohibitions existed for women, or, conversely, because there was nothing noteworthy about male-only places. For instance, there exists no reference among the sources to any prohibition of women into the cult, or sites, of Mithras, and yet many scholars believe this was the case.⁷²⁸

Our earlier sources also make it clear that men and women were expected to be in each other's company at certain places. According to Cassius Dio, husbands and wives would jointly visit the temple of Venus and Rome, in the Forum, and there make offerings together.⁷²⁹ Ovid claimed that, during the *Veneralia*, the cult statue of Venus would be taken into the men's baths and washed by her female attendants, while men and women sought the assistance of the goddess in their romantic endeavours.⁷³⁰ The rites to Anna Parenna, according to Ovid, took place on the banks of the Tiber and involved promiscuous encounters between drunken revellers.⁷³¹ The *Cerealia* involved festivities within the Circus

⁷²⁶ That women were forbidden entry into the cult of Mithras was proposed by Franz Cumont (translated by T. McCormack), *The Mysteries of Mithra*, (London, 1903). This argument has been accepted elsewhere, see M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome*, Vol. I, (Cambridge, 1998).

⁷²⁷ Scheid (1992), p. 379.

⁷²⁸ Some have sought to reassess this consensus, see J. David, 'The Exclusion of Women in the Mithraic Mysteries: Ancient or Modern', *Numen*, Vol.47.2, (2000), pp. 121-41; A Griffith, 'Completing the Picture: Women and the Female Principle in the Mithraic Cult', *Numen*, Vol. 53.1 (2006), pp. 48-77.

⁷²⁹ Cassius Dio, 71.31.

⁷³⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.133-9, 145-50.

⁷³¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.523; John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.49.

in which women would dress in white and carry lit torches, while other women (apparently prostitutes) danced and performed for a mixed audience in the Circus during the *Floralia*. Meanwhile, at the *Juvenalia*, both men and women could be found dancing on stage⁷³²

Again, we see that certain rules and customs, which were applied to women, varied depending upon the social and marital status of those concerned. This seems to have been the case with the *Lupercalia*, which is one of the few late antique pagan festivals that we are told of in Rome.⁷³³ As described in the previous chapter, it involved close contact between men and women in the area around the Capitoline, where aristocratic youths would race around the hill, striking the outstretched hands of women with strips of goat hide. According to Plutarch, writing in the second century, the women involved were of the nobility.⁷³⁴ In the fifth-century, however, a letter of Pope Gelasius, who wrote disapprovingly of the festival, suggests that by this time women of rank were no longer involved, leaving the ceremonial flagellation to be carried out upon actresses or other women of the lower orders.⁷³⁵ Of course, that this festival had aristocratic defenders, like the senator Andromachus, suggests it might also have had an aristocratic audience, meaning elite women may have been present at the rites in Late Antiquity, but as spectators and not participants.⁷³⁶

As these examples demonstrate, segregation could be aimed at different groups. While some places sought to keep men at a distance, such as the temples of Bona Dea and Diana, others focussed on distinguishing and separating elite women from those of lower social standing. For instance, the claim of John Lydus that some elite women celebrated the *Parentalia* in the baths seems unconcerned with men. While such separation surely kept these women from members of the opposite sex, Lydus says only that these matrons were ‘so concerned about their modesty that they would not associate with the majority of women’ and thus worshiped ‘apart from the crowds’.⁷³⁷ Meanwhile, rites associated with

⁷³² Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.494; Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.53; Livy, *Roman History*, 22.56, 34.6.

⁷³³ *Collectio Avellana*, Ep. 100, CSEL 35.453-64.

⁷³⁴ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 61.3.

⁷³⁵ *Col. Avell. Ep.* 100.

⁷³⁶ On senatorial support for the *Lupercalia*, see F. Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East: From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Era*, (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 163-184.

⁷³⁷ John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 2.29. Of course, this could have been because the ‘majority of women’ were in crowds of mixed sex, but this is never stated.

deities such as Pudicitia and Fortuna Muliebris were likewise focussed on distinguishing respectable women from the rest, by limiting access to temples, cult statues, and involvement in some associated ritual to those deemed lacking in modesty.⁷³⁸ So, too, was the distinction between free and servile women highlighted at certain festivals, such as the *Matronalia* where mistresses would serve food to their female slaves.⁷³⁹

As discussed in the introduction and first chapter, the sources suggest that proximity to immodest and unchaste women could have been as damaging to a woman's reputation as contact with extrafamilial men, and this is clearly reflected in the nature of Roman paganism's gendered places. It is clear that attempts to regulate access to some sacred sites were as concerned with social distinctions among women as they were with separating the sexes, and that festivals not only served to highlight the traditional roles of women and their close ties to the family unit, as argued in chapter two, but that they also reinforced the distinctions among women, which invariably centred upon their social and marital status. This is, I think, because ancient and deep-rooted cultural norms had greatly influenced the development of pagan ceremonial over time, and were thus reflected in the way Rome's pagans understood their relationship with the divine.

For instance, respectable wives were essential to the production of legitimate offspring, and so deities involved with childbirth and the rearing of infants were ineluctably linked to such women. The cult statue of Mater Matuta, a goddess associated with fertility, could therefore only be garlanded by married women of the highest virtue, as slaves were driven from her temple.⁷⁴⁰ The *Matronalia* celebrated Juno, who held similar connotations, and thus the goddess' temple was a female-only place during this time.⁷⁴¹ However, some attempts to regulate these places were, it seems, historically more social than religious. For instance, Livy claimed that a patrician woman named Verginia was forbidden access to a temple of Pudicitia by her fellow noblewomen on account of marrying a plebeian consul.⁷⁴²

⁷³⁸ Livy, *Roman History*, 10.23.3-5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 8.56.4. On this see DiLuzio (2016), p. 87.

⁷³⁹ John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.42; Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 19; Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 14.

⁷⁴⁰ M. Carroll, *Infancy and Earliest Childhood in the Roman World: 'a Fragment of Time'*, (Oxford, 2018), p.71; Titus Livius, *Ad Urbe*, 5.14; Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.789–90.

⁷⁴¹ L. L. Holland, 'Women in Roman Religion', in James and Dillon, (2012), p. 211.

⁷⁴² L. Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, (London, 1992), p. 322; Platner and Ashby, (1929), p. 434. It has been argued that this temple did not exist and that, instead, a veiled statue of Fortuna was mistaken for Pudicitia, another theory maintains that this story was invented simply to explain the

In response, she simply founded her own temple to Pudicitia Plebeia (plebeian modesty) and worshipped there instead.⁷⁴³

Given the nature of the sources, I think the most we can conclude is that Rome's late antique paganism developed from a tradition that recognised permanently gendered places (model 1), with some few clearly still active in the fourth century, such as the temple of Vesta. This tradition also recognised temporarily gendered spaces (model 2), such as the temple to Juno during the *Matronalia*.⁷⁴⁴ We have no evidence of pagan religious sites, in Rome, at which women and men were separated within the same public place or made use of different entrances (models 3 and 4). Where we do hear of gendered spaces, they are often connected to female deities and those aspects of Roman life with which women were principally associated. In particular, the focus was often on respectable women, and so we see festivals and temples concerned with separating women from other women, based on social and marital status. Furthermore, we can also see that Rome's paganism involved numerous occasions in which the sexes were knowingly brought together and that, while we do not know how many of these functioned in Late Antiquity, we do know that some (such as the *Lupercalia*) continued to involve contact between women and extrafamilial men.

ii. Christian places

While our evidence leaves us unable to say a great deal about segregation in pagan rites, particularly at Constantinople, we are fortunate to have a good deal more that relates to the practice within a Christian context. As discussed in chapter one, Christian thinkers and authors were convinced of the need for separating women from extrafamilial men. It should come as no surprise, then, that certain Christian places witnessed attempts to physically segregate the sexes while in public. As we shall see, the models typically employed at Christian sites were different to those seen in pagan cases, namely utilising models 3 and 4, where men and women were both in attendance together, but were kept apart and (in the case of model 4) made use of separate entrances. As discussed in previous chapters, Christian ceremonial was often concerned with bringing together the entire community of

presence of the plebeian temple, while others have stated there is no reason to suppose this temple did not exist.

⁷⁴³ Richardson (1992), p. 322. Unlike its patrician counterpart, this temple is clearly attested in the sources and Verginia was said to have established the temple inside part of her residence on the Vicus Longus.

⁷⁴⁴ Graf (2015), p. 215.

the faithful, which included even the most modest widows and virgins, thus rendering models 1 and 2 inappropriate for application in churches.

Though overarching aims and efforts were largely similar across the two cities, the methods employed to separate men and women, and the circumstances in which exceptions were made, differed between Rome and Constantinople. For instance, I shall aim to show that, at least within churches, segregation appears to have been more complete in Constantinople, where laywomen were (seemingly) absent from the nave and kept at some distance from both the altar and male congregants. As will also be demonstrated, these efforts were not wholly effective or permanently enforced, as movement within holy places, such as churches, could lead to men and women coming into close contact with one another. Finally, the influence of developments in Constantinople on those in Rome, particularly around the time of the reconquest, will be highlighted.

The Development of Segregation in Early Churches

We shall begin our discussion with perhaps the most obvious Christian places of either city, the churches. In both cities, as elsewhere, it was standard practice to separate men and women during worship. A series of texts from Asia Minor reveal multiple strategies for achieving this. These Church Orders, which purport to offer apostolic instruction on such topics as liturgy and church organisation, recognised segregation as an important element in collective Christian worship. A third-century text, the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, and two slightly later texts from the fourth and (possibly) fifth centuries, the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Testamentum Domini*, devote considerable attention to the matter of spatial organisation. They set out the basis for segregation within church as a way of achieving decency and order, drawing upon Paul in 1 Cor 14:40 that ‘all things should be done decently and in order’.⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, the *Didascalia* tells bishops to keep churches in order.⁷⁴⁶

Of course, in the third century these ‘churches’ were nothing like the basilicas, or purpose-built foundations, that would spring up in the wake of Constantine’s conversion. Before the religion enjoyed official toleration and imperial promotion, there seems to have been little architectural uniformity to Christian places of worship. Perhaps the only thing we can say,

⁷⁴⁵ Paul in 1 Cor 14:40: πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω, KJV.

⁷⁴⁶ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 12.

with any certainty, was that their sites were smaller, more modest, and less conspicuous than some of the early churches of the fourth century.⁷⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the Church Orders prescribe a series of measures, aimed at organising congregations spatially along social lines. To this end, women in churches ought to stand apart from men, with young women sitting separately or standing behind the old. Married women and those with children should stand apart, as should widows and the elderly.⁷⁴⁸

Again, we are confronted with a situation in which segregation was not only intended to separate the sexes, but to ensure that congregations were arranged along social lines. For women, the focus was upon marital status and relationship with the church. Deaconesses, widows, virgins, married and unmarried women all had their allotted place. The *Didascalia* is clear that this organisation is achieved, in the first instance, by having men stand towards the front of the church, with women behind.⁷⁴⁹ The *Apostolic Constitutions*, written in the fourth century and most likely in Antioch, makes similar recommendations, requiring women to be separated from men, with young and married women stationed away from virgins, widows, and the elderly.⁷⁵⁰ However, the *Didascalia's* stipulation that women should stand behind men is absent in the *Constitutions*, which requires only separation.

Given the need to have both men and women attending church, the Christians of Late Antiquity were limited to using models 3 and 4 in their efforts to physically separate the sexes. However, as the above texts indicate, there was not one method for segregating congregants. Practices seem to have varied locally, with different customs developing across the empire and even between churches in the same city. Furthermore, that the early churches were of no uniform shape or structure must surely have introduced a great deal of variation in how spatial organisation functioned. Certainly, the texts reveal an appreciation of the impact that physical space could have on these practices, acknowledging that some buildings did not have sufficient room to separate the various groups of women from one another in the manner suggested: young women should ideally be seated apart from the

⁷⁴⁷ V. A. Alkin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, (Leiden, 2010), pp. 49-57; see also B. Green, *Christianity in Ancient Rome: The First Three Centuries*, (London, 2010); R. MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity AD 200-400*, (Atlanta, 2009).

⁷⁴⁸ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 12.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁵⁰ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 2.7.

others, but if this was not practicable then they could instead stand behind the older women.⁷⁵¹ There is no allowance, however, for men and women standing together.

We can see the development of this advice proceed alongside the changing nature of church architecture. The earlier third-century Church Orders, such as the *Didache* and the *Didascalia*, place few stipulations on the nature of the buildings with regards to segregating the sexes. Men and women must be separate, and the women themselves arranged appropriately, but this was to be carried out insofar as the physical space of a building allowed. For instance, the *Didascalia* says little about entranceways, referring only to the presence of a deacon at the door without, to observe those arriving.⁷⁵² The *Constitutions*, however, which were written later in the fourth century, are more precise on the architectural requirements of a church. They state that churches should be long, with their head to the east, and with vestries on both sides.⁷⁵³ They are also clear that churches should have separate entrances for men and women, and that a deacon and deaconess should oversee these portals respectively.⁷⁵⁴ As such, we move from separating men and women in a room with a common entrance (model 3), to a situation where the sexes were supposed to access the church through different portals (model 4).

While the *Constitutions* make clear women should stand separate from men, they do not specify precisely where they should be located. However, the *Testamentum Domini*, which is believed to have been written later, most likely in the fifth century, is more specific.⁷⁵⁵ It instructs that a church should have three entrances, along with a portico, forecourt, and other specific architectural requirements.⁷⁵⁶ There should be separate porches for men and women, on opposing sides.⁷⁵⁷ Not only this, but the text requires men to stand on the right side of the church and women on the left (in an oriented church, men to the south and women to the north of the altar).⁷⁵⁸ From the *Didache* to the *Testamentum*, then, the stipulations around segregation in church grew more complex over time and, as some

⁷⁵¹ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 12.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁵³ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 2.7.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 2.7.

⁷⁵⁵ P. F. Bradshaw and M. E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, (London, 2012), p. 159.

⁷⁵⁶ *Testamentum Domini*, 1.19.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.19.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.4.

degree of uniformity was introduced to church structures, more precise requirements emerged. Given this, it seems likely that the need to separate men from women, and to then separate them further based on status, influenced the development of church architecture and was, in turn, influenced by that development.

iii. Church segregation in Rome and Constantinople

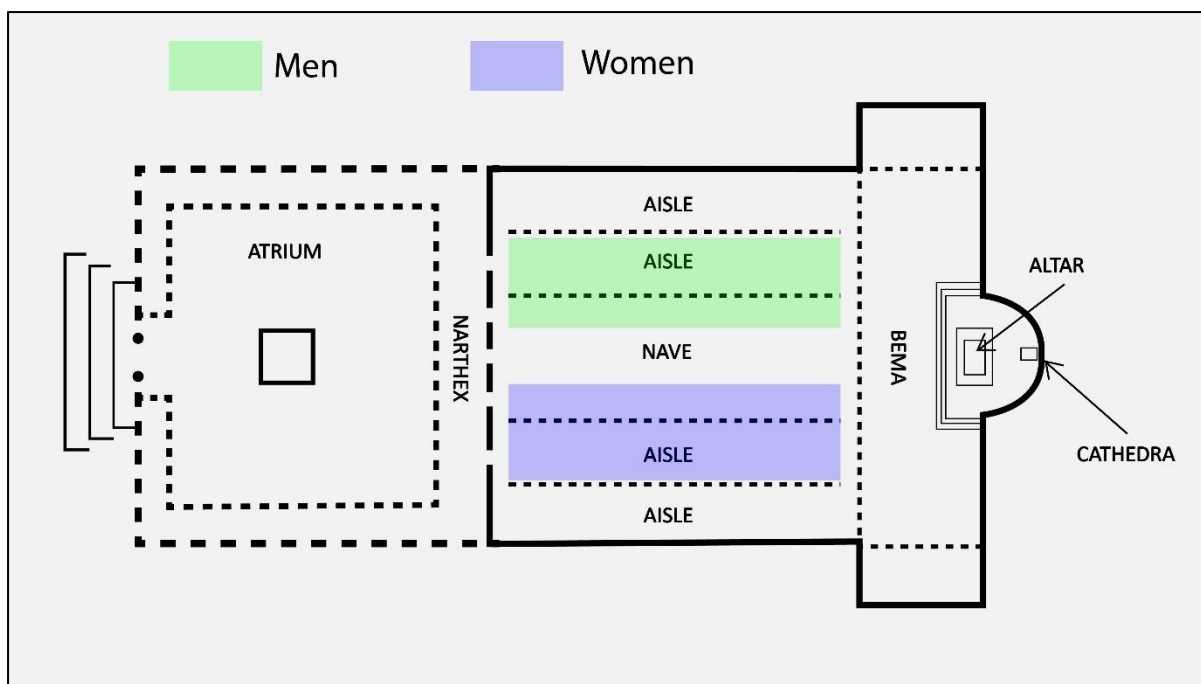
There is a general consensus that, in Rome, men and women stood in separate rows at either side of the nave and, possibly, in the porticoed side aisles (see Figure 8). There are several pieces of evidence to suggest this. The first detailed description of a liturgy at Rome is found in *Ordo Romanus I*, a text most likely compiled in the seventh century. While some have cautioned that this source is limited in what it can tell us about fourth- or fifth-century liturgical practices at Rome, it certainly states that, by the end of Late Antiquity, there were ‘men on the right, women on the left’.⁷⁵⁹ This is supported by an inscription from St Peter’s, which makes ‘clear that the left was the men’s side of the church’ (St Peter’s was a westward-facing church, meaning the south side was to the left of the altar).⁷⁶⁰

Furthermore, we have pictorial evidence from Italian churches, to be discussed in more detail later, that indicates men and women stood on either side of the central nave. This evidence also sits alongside references by authors such as Paulinus, Jerome, and Ambrose that point, more generally, towards men and women occupying different parts of the church.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁹ *Ordo Romanus Primus*, 1.37: *Masculi in dexteram, feminae in sinistram*, trans. A. Griffiths, *Ordo Romanus Primus: Latin Text and Translation with Introduction and Notes*, JLS 73, (Norwich, 2012).

⁷⁶⁰ M. M. Schaefer, *Women in Pastoral Office: The Story of Santa Prassede, Rome*, (Oxford, 2013), p. 198; See also T. M. Matthews, ‘An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement’, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, Vol.38, (1962), pp. 73-95. It is worth noting that, while men are not usually seen on the left side of the nave, St Peter’s was a westward-facing church.

⁷⁶¹ Paulinus, *Life of Ambrose*, 11.1; Jerome, *Letters*, 13.2; Ambrose, *De Lapsu Virginis*, 6.22.



(Figure 8 – Plan of St. Peter’s)

If we accept, then, that men and women stood on different sides of the nave in Rome’s churches, how segregated might they have been? Upon arrival, we should imagine that men and women entered the church through separate portals, as envisioned in the *Testamentum* and *Constitutions*. At St. Peter’s, for instance, there were five entranceways, with three leading directly into the central nave and two into the inner aisles (see Figure 8).⁷⁶² While large basilicas tended to have similar configurations, individual churches had different layouts and access points. For example, open façades have been identified in several Late Antique churches, including San Clemente, San Vitale, San Sisto Vecchio, and San Pietro in Vincoli.⁷⁶³ In such cases, people would enter through a series of open archways, where traffic could flow in either direction between the columns. Although it has been suggested that some churches opened directly onto the street, it seems more likely that a portico or atrium separated the open façade from the roadway.⁷⁶⁴ Such portals were presumably overseen by deacons, and open façades must have needed greater supervision than individual doorways. In either case, by the fifth century Roman churches were no longer

⁷⁶² R. McKitterick, *Old Saint Peter’s, Rome*. (Cambridge, 2013), p. 125; T. C. Bannister, ‘The Constantinian Basilica of Saint Peter at Rome’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol.27.1 (1968), pp. 3-32.

⁷⁶³ O. Brandt, ‘The Archaeology of Roman Ecclesial Architecture and the Study of Early Christian Liturgy’, *Studia Patristica*, Vol.71, (2010), pp. 40-45.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

being built with open façades, and many of those that had been constructed in the fourth century were quickly filled in and replaced with standard entranceways.⁷⁶⁵

Once inside the church, congregants would have been separated by the space in the central nave. The amount of space between them would have obviously depended on the size of the church in question, with larger basilicas having particularly wide naves, such as that of Santa Maria Maggiore with a width of 30 metres. It would also have depended on the number of people in attendance and, as discussed in chapter two, we cannot be certain how full these buildings were or how often they were busy. While a bishop might complain that people were not attending church, so too could he grumble about seething crowds fighting to hear him speak, suggesting levels of attendance varied considerably. In a busy church, it would be unlikely that the empty space of the nave was sufficiently expansive, by itself, to entirely prevent exchanges between men and women, even if it inhibited physical contact.

As part of a study designed to establish the extent to which congregants could interact at various late antique churches in Jordan, Clark enlisted volunteers to determine at what distance engagement between people is impeded. The conclusion was that ‘at roughly 20 to 22 metres, social communication is significantly diminished by losing perception of facial expression and hand gesturing’.⁷⁶⁶ Indeed, ‘by 22.9 metres, no participants could distinguish facial expressions’.⁷⁶⁷ If so, men and women who were separated by nothing but the nave could be partially obscured from one another, but only in the very largest basilicas. While even this would not have removed either sex from view of the other, it meant that interactions could be obscured to a degree by mere spatial separation. Furthermore, beneath the eyes of the bishop, the supervising deacons, and the gaze of fellow congregants, the intervening space might have functioned as an effective impediment.

There were other ways, besides entrances and overseers, to assist with the separation of sexes across the nave. In St Maria Maggiore, in Rome, the fifth-century mosaics along the two sides of the nave, depicting scenes from the Old Testament, have been understood as

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45. We are offered no indication as to why this feature of ecclesiastical architecture fell so quickly out of vogue, although it is entirely possible that church authorities came to the realisation that such entranceways were too porous.

⁷⁶⁶ D. L. Clark, ‘Viewing the Liturgy: A Space Syntax Study of Changing Visibility and Accessibility in the Development of the Byzantine Church in Jordan’, *World Archaeology*, Vol.39, No.1 (2007), p. 88.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

reinforcing the gendered division of this space.⁷⁶⁸ The surviving mosaics along the southern side of the nave, opposite the women in the northern aisle and thus most visible to them, contain images of 21 biblical women. As de Vegvar has noted, this is ‘on a scale comparable to the patriarchs with whom they are associated’.⁷⁶⁹ If Brenk and Deckers are correct in their reconstructions of the lost pieces (two images each representing both Rachel and Rebecca), then the original mosaics would have displayed 25 biblical matriarchs in total.⁷⁷⁰ Contrast this with the northern side, facing the men, where there are only 14 women visible and all but four of these are found in the first two scenes.⁷⁷¹ Moreover, these four women in the other scenes along the north wall are so small as to be ‘virtually invisible from the nave floor’, in stark contrast to the matriarchs best viewed by the women.⁷⁷²



Figure 9 - Mosaics from the Southern part of the Nave in St Maria Maggiore. (Left depicting Jacob’s flight from Mesopotamia, and right depicting Jacob fleeing to Laban).⁷⁷³

The difference between the two sides of St Maria’s nave is striking and, I would suggest, corresponds to the positioning of men and women within the basilica. The images served not only the theological function of linking the Old Testament to Christ, but also fulfilled a practical role in reinforcing the spatial arrangements in place during attendance. Something

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-113.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷⁷⁰ B. Brenk, *Die frühchristlichen Mosaiken in S. Maria Maggiore zu Rom*, (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 116; J. G. Deckers, *Der Alttestamentliche Zyklus von S. Maria Maggiore in Rom*, (Bonn, 1976), p. 121.

⁷⁷¹ De Vegvar (2015), p. 104.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.* P. 104.

⁷⁷³ *Christian Iconography*, <https://www.christianiconography.info/staMariaMaggiore/naveMosaics.html>, released under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

similar can be seen in the sixth-century mosaics of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. The images on the left and right of the nave show two processions, each moving towards the area of the altar. On the right-hand side, where male congregants were situated, we see a procession of male saints and martyrs, marching towards the enthroned Christ at the front. On the left side we see female saints and martyrs, following magi to the Virgin and Child.⁷⁷⁴ As Berger states, 'a congregation gathering for worship in this church would have seen "permanent gender labels" for their particular side and aisle in the nave'.⁷⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Osborne has noted that Marian images in San Clemente and Santa Maria Antiqua were placed at eye level, 'where most accessible to the women of the congregation'.⁷⁷⁶ As demonstrated in chapter one, the positioning of female images was not random and often seems to have reflected their location in physical space.

The *Constitutions* instructed deaconesses to guard the women's entrance into church. As this office existed in Constantinople, unlike Rome, we might assume they fulfilled this function there.⁷⁷⁷ Once inside, one of the most striking differences between the churches of Rome and Constantinople is that, in the latter, our sources never place female laity in the nave. Rather, they are referenced as being in the upper galleries and, less reliably, in the colonnaded side aisles. Regarding the galleries, the evidence points to these in several Constantinopolitan churches of Late Antiquity. Hagia Sophia (both before and after its reconstruction in the sixth century), the Holy Apostles, and Hagia Irene appear to have had galleries.⁷⁷⁸ So too did the churches of Sergios and Bacchos, Ioannes Hebdomon, Petros and Paulos, the Chalkoprateia, and several others.⁷⁷⁹ These galleries were quite possibly adapted from those found in secular basilicas, which themselves may have been used by women.⁷⁸⁰

That these galleries were a Byzantine, rather than Italian, feature can be inferred from the two earliest examples of church galleries in Rome. In the basilica of St Lawrence outside the

⁷⁷⁴ T. Berger, *Gender Differences and the Making of Liturgical History: Lifting a Veil on Liturgy's Past*, (London, 2011), p. 56.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷⁷⁶ J. Osborne, *Rome in the Eighth Century: A History in Art*, (Cambridge, 2020), p. 140.

⁷⁷⁷ *Apostolic Constitutions*, 8.28 .

⁷⁷⁸ V. Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople: Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries*, (Cambridge, 2014), p. 92.

⁷⁷⁹ T. Matthews, *Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*, (University Park, 1971), p.72; R. Taft, 'Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When and Why?' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol.52, (1998), p. 43.

⁷⁸⁰ Pliny, *Letters*, 6.33. Certainly, if this were the case then such an adaptation seems to have been more popular in the east, where galleries appear earlier and more frequently than in the west.

storey galleries in the major churches of Constantinople were used by, and associated with, women.

This raises several questions, the first of which relates to the efficacy of such galleries as methods of segregation. If the goal of separation was to create a truly insurmountable barrier between men and women, while still offering each group a place within the church, then galleries were highly effective. Firstly, the entrances to these upper levels were usually placed on the outside the church, meaning those persons designated for the galleries could arrive there without having to mingle with those below. Secondly, the height of the galleries and their distance from the altar could ensure that those within them were far removed from the action beneath, beyond the point at which they could perceive facial gestures and, in some cases, hear the sermon. Certainly, for a man intent on physically approaching a woman within church, the gap between the ground and the galleries was more difficult to traverse than that across the nave.

Another question, however, is whether such galleries were exclusively reserved for the use of women. Here, the names of these galleries might immediately raise an eyebrow, as they are referred to in the sources both as *gynaecium* and *catechumena*. While the first suggests they were 'the women's place', the latter indicates a function for hosting the catechumens. Indeed, as Matthews has pointed out, the galleries seem the ideal place for the catechumens to have been located; removed from the action, distant from the altar, with exits that led directly outside, meaning their departure from the church before the end of the full service would not have disturbed the faithful.⁷⁸⁸ However, despite this obvious convenience there is not, to my knowledge, a single source that locates any catechumens in these galleries. Meanwhile, as discussed above, numerous sources point to the presence of women there and state, sometimes explicitly, that galleries were the place of women within the building of the church.

This does not mean, however, there were no circumstances in which a man might set foot within the galleries of a Constantinopolitan church. Here, as in all things, the imperial family were the exception. The evidence suggests that the empress attended the liturgy in the

⁷⁸⁸ Matthews (1971), pp. 125-8.

galleries of churches, with her male guards and retinue.⁷⁸⁹ So too could the emperor, on occasion, attend from an elevated position in the galleries with his own entourage.⁷⁹⁰ Beyond this, however, the sources attesting to the presence of men in the galleries, including accounts of scandalous behaviour between the sexes, date only from the medieval period. Our late antique sources place no men in the galleries beyond those associated with the imperial party, and even in these cases it is not clear that those women who normally occupied the galleries ever had to come into close contact with the male arrivals.

A further question might be whether, having determined that these galleries were primarily female spaces, women could be found in any other part of the church. Both Matthews and Taft think they might have been, based on a passage of Procopius in which the historian wrote that there were two porticoed aisles on either side of Hagia Sophia's nave, one for each of the sexes.⁷⁹¹ He goes on to ask 'who could fittingly describe the galleries of the women's side, or enumerate the many colonnades and the colonnaded aisles by means of which the church is surrounded?'⁷⁹² Matthews argues that women could be found in these ground-floor side aisles, as the logistics of women receiving communion in the galleries would have been too difficult for regular practice.⁷⁹³ However, as Taft points out, if the sacrament could be taken up to the imperial party in the galleries, then it could presumably be taken there for women and that, by this time, the eucharist was taken so infrequently that this problem would have arisen only at Easter and a few other special occasions⁷⁹⁴

For Hagia Sophia, the church most commonly discussed in the sources, Procopius is clear these 'colonnaded *stoas*' had 'nothing to distinguish them' and did not 'differ from one another in any way', suggesting men and women occupied these opposing porticoes with the entirety of the nave between them, while other women were located above and in the galleries.⁷⁹⁵ If so, this meant that laity of all sexes were far more removed from the altar and bishop than they were in a church like St Peter's, where the elite were perhaps much closer

⁷⁸⁹ Taft (1998), p. 36; Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, 4.31, places the empress in the galleries.

⁷⁹⁰ Taft (1998), p. 36.

⁷⁹¹ Procopius, *Buildings*, 1.56.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 1.58: τίς δ' ἂν τῶν ὑπερώων τῆς γυναικονίτιδος ἐρμηνεὺς γένοιτο, ἢ τὰς τε παμπληθεῖς διηγοῖτο στοὰς καὶ τὰς περιστύλους αὐλάς, αἷς ὁ νεὺς περιβέβληται, trans LCL.

⁷⁹³ Matthews (1971), pp. 130-133.

⁷⁹⁴ Taft (1998), p. 62.

⁷⁹⁵ Procopius, *Buildings*, 1.57: παραλλάξ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔχουσιν, οὐδὲ διαφέρουσι δήπου ἀλλήλαιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἴσον αὐταῖν τῷ ἱερῷ ἐς κάλλος διήκει καὶ ὠραῖζει τὸ ἐμφερές, trans LCL.

to the sanctuary. Of course, Hagia Sophia's nave itself was over 30 metres long, meaning those in the opposing aisles were possibly separated beyond the point at which they might meaningfully communicate, although Procopius is clear that there were no barriers or impediments between the aisles and the nave. Karras, meanwhile, has argued that women were placed in both the north and south aisles of Hagia Sophia, in the colonnades, while men stood in the central nave.⁷⁹⁶ Our sources are insufficiently detailed to confirm this either way, but certainly offer no suggestion that women occupied the nave.

Of those women present, we can speculate as to which might have been situated in the aisles and which in the galleries, but the evidence does not tell us. Certainly, there are tentative suggestions that those in the galleries were elite women. For instance, the reference of Gregory Nazianzus to women in the galleries was concerned with 'pure maidens together with the married women'.⁷⁹⁷ The aforementioned Eliana was the wife of a praetorian prefect.⁷⁹⁸ And it seems that the empress and her retinue were typically found in the upper galleries.⁷⁹⁹ Besides this, the tendency to segregate elite women most securely of all, and to do so by elevating them physically, is seen in other, secular buildings (as I shall discuss later). Where nonelite women were located, if indeed they were in church at all, is not revealed by our sources.

The only women who, I should think, might have been in the nave were the deaconesses. As discussed in the previous chapter, deaconesses were to be found in Constantinople but not Rome. At Hagia Sophia, they apparently took communion at the altar, but did not remain there throughout the service. Instead, they seem to have been stationed somewhere close to the altar, near the front of the northern aisle. If so, this would certainly have placed them closer to the bishop than any other women. Chrysostom's desire to hide the weeping deaconesses (Olympias among them) from public view at the time of his exile indicates they were widely recognised among his congregants, as their close association with him was known to many.⁸⁰⁰ It therefore would not seem strange for them to be located physically

⁷⁹⁶ Karras, (2007), p. 278. The sources that discuss Constantinople's late antique liturgy are simply insufficiently detailed to tell us, one way or the other, whether men occupied the nave.

⁷⁹⁷ Gregory Nazianzen, *Dream about the Anastasia Church*, 19-20: Αἱ δ' ἀρ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῶν τεγέων εὐκοσμον ἀκουήν ἄγναι παρθενικαὶ κλίνων ἅμα ἐσθ' ἰσχυροῖς, trans. Taft (2001).

⁷⁹⁸ John Rufus, *Plerophoria*, 36, trans Taft (2001), p. 87.

⁷⁹⁹ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, 4.31; Taft (1998), p. 36.

⁸⁰⁰ Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 10.

close to the bishop during the liturgy. Beyond those mentioning the deaconesses, we have no sources placing women in the nave of any Constantinopolitan church between the fourth and seventh centuries. Clearly then, there was a very physical separation of men and women, reinforced by the structure of the churches themselves, in Constantinople.

Whether physical barriers existed in Rome's churches is much less certain. For instance, it seems perfectly possible that colonnaded side aisles could have been used to segregate certain women from other congregants. In some churches, this surely could have been done without hampering movement, such as in St. Peter's, which had four aisles with two on either side of the nave. Certainly, there were other areas besides the nave that could have been utilised. For instance, Paulinus and Ambrose allude to virgins occupying a 'women's part' of the church in Milan.⁸⁰¹ Furthermore, a passage from the *Liber Pontificalis*, regarding the ninth century pope Paschal I (817-24), states that the bishop was irked by the sound of women's voices coming from the area within the apse, behind the bishop's *cathedra*.⁸⁰² This deambulatory could have served as a *matroneum*, where elite women would have been somewhat separate from others.⁸⁰³ However, the source is of medieval provenance and so we ought to exercise caution in assuming this applied to late antique practices.

It has been argued that chancel barriers operated as physical providers of separation in some churches. Sometimes referred to as *schola cantorum* or *solea*, these structures tended to create an exclusive zone around the altar, to be occupied by the bishop and clergy, with a corridor extending down the centre of the nave in the direction of the main entrance (see Figure 10). It is not clear when or where they first came into use, with some suggesting they were employed as early as the fourth century.⁸⁰⁴ While this earlier date has been questioned, they were a known entity by the sixth century, having been identified in the archaeology of various sites across both cities. In Rome, numerous churches have been found to show evidence of such barriers, including San Clemente, San Vitale, San Pietro in Vincoli, Santa Pudenziana, San Lorenzo in Damaso, Santa Maria Antiqua, and the Lateran Basilica.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰¹ Paulinus, *Life of Ambrose*, 11.1; Jerome, *Letters*, 13.2; Ambrose, *De Lapsu Virginis*, 6.22.

⁸⁰² *Book of Pontiffs*, L. Duchesne (ed.), (Paris, 1955), 100, Ch.30, 2:60.

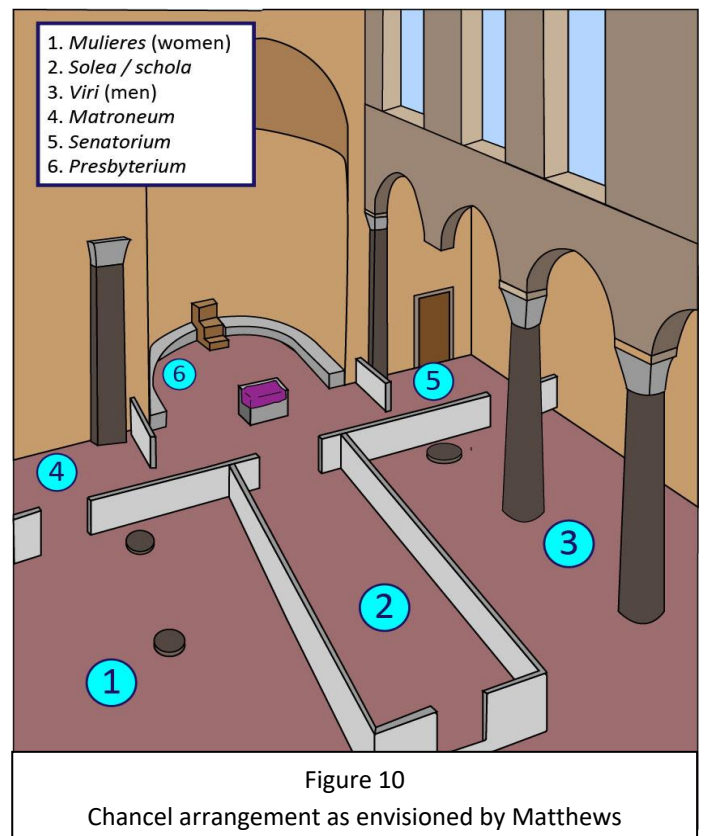
⁸⁰³ De Vegvar (2015), p. 103.

⁸⁰⁴ O. Nicholson, *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2018), p. 1402.

⁸⁰⁵ Brandt (2010), pp. 47-51.

The barriers themselves were not of uniform type, height, or length. Guidobaldi identified three main variants: upright marble slabs, built walls (designed to look like marble slabs), and columns.⁸⁰⁶ According to Brandt, the marble slabs (*plutei*) used in Rome's churches were 'imported from Constantinople before and after the Gothic wars in the sixth century', with the earliest confirmed being found at San Clemente, where they were later incorporated into the building and still bore the monogram of Pope John II (533-535).⁸⁰⁷ This might suggest that the chancel barriers of Rome were yet another Constantinopolitan import, arriving in the city around the time of Justinian's reconquest. However, evidence of similar barriers in use at the Lateran Basilica have been dated, by some such as Krautheimer, to the fourth century.⁸⁰⁸ As such, some have suggested that, in fact, chancel barriers originated in fourth-century Italy, before being adopted in the east and 'particularly in the churches at Constantinople'.⁸⁰⁹

We do not know precisely what purpose these barriers served in the churches of Late Antiquity. Certainly, they appear to have functioned as a visual reminder that the altar was an especially sacred part of the church, and that the bishop and clergy occupied a unique place within the Christian community, separated as they were from the majority of congregants. Beyond this, multiple uses have been proposed, such as demarcating a processional route for the entrance of a bishop, or a space in which readings took



⁸⁰⁶ F. Guidobaldi, 'Struttura e cronologia delle recinzioni liturgiche nelle chiese di Roma dal VI al IX secolo', in *Arredi di culto*, (2001), pp. 81-99. The marble slabs are the only type relevant for this inquiry, as the built walls and columns are later iterations

⁸⁰⁷ Brandt (2010), p. 48; see also F. Guidobaldi, *San Clemente. Gli edifici romani, la basilica paleocristiana e le fasi altomedievali*, (Rome, 1992), p. 152.

⁸⁰⁸ R. Krautheimer, *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae. Le basiliche paleocristiane di Roma (IV-IX sec.)* Vol.2, (Rome, 1980), pp. 44-5.

⁸⁰⁹ Nicholson (2018), p.1402.

place.⁸¹⁰ In any case, their impact upon the segregation of women from men depends, in part, upon their height and length. For instance, it has been proposed, though not proven, that some such barriers extended the full length of the nave from altar to entranceway.⁸¹¹ If this were the case, the space between the sexes within the nave could have included a very physical barrier, further reinforcing the desired spatial arrangements.

Certainly, Matthews imagines chancel barriers to have been involved in demarcating an area of the church, which he refers to as a *matroneum*, where elite women could be found.⁸¹² This was effectively opposite the *senatorium*, which was the equivalent space for men (see Figure 10). This would suggest segregation along social lines in church, which is difficult to detect in the textual sources of our period. Truthfully, however, we do not know if such physically bounded spaces were a standard feature of Roman churches. For instance, Elaine de Benedictis pointed out that while *Ordo I* does situate elites at the front of their respective aisles, the women's space is referred to in that text as *pars mulierum* and not, in fact, *matroneum*.⁸¹³ De Benedictis further explains that there is no evidence to suggest spaces for elite women were structurally separated from the rest of the church in Rome.⁸¹⁴ She goes on to argue that, as the word for elite women was *matronae*, that the area for such women was *not* labelled a *matroneum* in *Ordo I* suggests this term had a different meaning.⁸¹⁵ For De Benedictis, the *matroneum* was a separate place where consecrated widows and virgins would reside, rather than lay elites. Certainly, the two appearances of the term *matroneum* in the *Liber Pontificalis* suggest a built environment, as argued by De Benedictis and others.⁸¹⁶

This presence, or absence, of a bordered corridor down the centre of the nave has implications not just for the separation of men from women, or elites from nonelites, but also for the ways in which movement within a church might unfold. As mentioned, the

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁸¹² Matthews (1962), p. 83.

⁸¹³ E. de Benedictis, 'The *Senatorium* and *Matroneum* in the Early Roman Church', *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, Vol.57, (1981), pp. 71-75.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74; this view is shared by J. F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome*, (London, 2016), p. 34.

⁸¹⁵ De Benedictis (1981), p. 75.

⁸¹⁶ The argument is echoed in M. Carver, *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 162.

purpose of the porticoed side aisles in late antique churches is not wholly clear, with some suggesting they were occupied during worship, while others have maintained they were used to facilitate movement around those gathered in the central nave.⁸¹⁷ Indeed, the presence of a long corridor, bordered by marble slabs, down the entire length of the nave would challenge the assumption that the nave was for assembly and the aisles for movement, as this processional corridor would reduce available space in the nave, meaning people would need to either assemble in the side aisles, or simply that ‘there were fewer people at each celebration than one could imagine when seeing these churches empty today’.⁸¹⁸ Additionally, if this corridor was used for readings, offertory, and communion, then we might imagine those assembled on either side facing away from the altar during these moments, instead looking inwards to the corridor and those on its opposite side.

While I think it perfectly possible that certain, consecrated, women were physically separate from other congregants, I am not convinced that chancel barriers were involved in such segregation, or indeed that they were intended to facilitate sexual or social segregation at all (beyond separating the clergy and altar from the laity). For starters, as De Benedictis has pointed out, the sources themselves are unclear with respect to precisely what function a *matroneum* served, where it was found, or how it was demarcated. Secondly, we see evidence of chancel barriers in several of Constantinople’s churches, including Hagia Sophia, St. John of the Studium, and the Martyrion of St. Euphemia.⁸¹⁹ If, as noted above, women were not stationed in the nave of Constantinopolitan churches, then clearly the chancel barriers there were not designed to separate the sexes.

Additionally, where partitions were erected in church to separate the sexes, they appear as distinct to chancel barriers. For example, while preaching in the octagonal Great Church at Antioch, Chrysostom remarked upon the partitions erected between the aisles to separate men from women. Perhaps surprisingly, he did not approve of such methods, which had only been introduced in recent times due to some unspecified transgressions among the congregation. Men and women ought to pray together, Chrysostom believed, but this

⁸¹⁷ C. N. de Vegvar, ‘Gendered Spaces: The Placement of Imagery in Santa Maria Maggiore’, in C. N. de Vegvar and É. Ó Carragáin (eds), *Roma Felix: Formations and Reflections on Medieval Rome*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 24; Brandt (2010), p. 51; Matthews (1962), p. 83.

⁸¹⁸ Brandt (2010), p. 51.

⁸¹⁹ S. G. Xydis, ‘The Chancel Barrier, Solea, and Ambo of Hagia Sophia’, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 29.1 (1947), p.6.

required them to possess inner resolve.⁸²⁰ It was the apparent weakness of these inner fortifications that had left the church with no option but to erect external barricades.⁸²¹ It is unknown whether such barriers extended above eye level, removing others from view, or simply provided a physical demarcation of the boundary that neither sex should cross. While the purpose of such partitions was clear, we are told nothing more about them beyond their being made of wood, quite unlike the chancel arrangements.

Finally, as alluded to above, there were other groups in church, besides men and women of the laity, with their own allocated places. Certain women were seemingly granted privileged access to the area of the altar, such as deaconesses in Constantinople, who may very well have taken communion there. In the west, from the fourth century onwards, the formal consecrating of Christian female virgins (*velatio*) took place in western churches. The virgin would enter the church in a procession, accompanied by other virgins and the newly baptised, in what Peter Brown describes as a 'fully public affair'.⁸²² According to Ambrose, the veiling took place at the altar, rather than in a separate baptistry.⁸²³ Ambrose suggests that, in Milan at least, the woman then joined the other virgins in a section of the church set apart from the rest of the congregation.

We might imagine the virgin's processional entrance moving down the central corridor, flanked on either side by the marble chancel barriers. We might, then, imagine that her place in the church, once she had taken the veil, was likewise marked by a barrier of some sort.⁸²⁴ In any case, it is worth noting that this ceremony placed the virgin in a highly visible position before the whole congregation, as it was performed (at least in part) at the altar. The sacral centre and focal point of the church, the altar was an especially sacred space that was rarely accessible to women.⁸²⁵ In fact, that virgins were consecrated at the altar in the western churches, and deaconesses permitted to receive communion there in the eastern, was a powerful signal of their special place within the Christian community. Even the most

⁸²⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Mathew*, 73-4.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸²² P. R. L. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, (New York, 1988), p. 356.

⁸²³ Ambrose, *De Lapsu Virginis*, 6.22.

⁸²⁴ Peter Brown suggests they sat behind some sort of marble railing, Brown (1988), p. 356.

⁸²⁵ The fourth-century Council of Laodicea ordered women not to approach the altar, L. L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity*, (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 65.

elite laywomen were not always permitted access to this space. In Constantinople, the empress Pulcheria wished to receive communion within the sanctuary, as the emperor did and as she had been permitted to do by the previous bishop, Sisinnius. However, the new bishop Nestorius 'hastened to meet her at the door to the Holy of Holies and stopped her and did not permit her to enter'.⁸²⁶

Alongside the clergy, the elite, ordinary men and women, catechumens, and consecrated women, penitents too might occupy a particular part of the church. These individuals, doing penance for their sins, would seemingly dress in sackcloth robes and stand apart from the rest of the congregation until they were readmitted to the community proper. We know surprisingly little about the details and development of this practice across Late Antiquity, but what evidence we do have certainly points to a physical separation within church. Not only this, but it seems that overtly public acts, carried out in very public spaces, were at least an optional feature of the penitential search for reconciliation with the Christian body. However, the practice seems to have differed considerably between the two cities.⁸²⁷

In his letter to Oceanus, Jerome eulogised the Christian noblewoman Fabiola, who had died in 399. Among many laudable exploits, Jerome recounted her penitential endeavours, performed at Rome, in atonement for having remarried. She wore sackcloth clothes and entered the Lateran basilica, before the eyes of the whole congregation, in a state of dishevelment. There she 'stood in the ranks of the penitents' until such time as she was readmitted, presumably by the bishop.⁸²⁸ Throughout the description, Jerome goes to considerable lengths to emphasise the intensely public nature of the display. He stated that Fabiola made 'public confession', watched by 'the entire city', and was 'exposed' in the church before the bishop, priests, and people.⁸²⁹ She was 'laid bare' before the 'gaze of all',

⁸²⁶ *Letter to Cosmas*, 8, (PO, 8, 278); see also K. G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley, 1989), p. 153.

⁸²⁷ On this, see M. De Jong, 'Transformations of Penance', in F. Theuvs, J. L. Nelson (eds), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, (Leiden, 2000), pp. 185-225; C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, (Berkeley, 2013); A. Firey, *A New History of Penance*, (Leiden, 2008).

⁸²⁸ Jerome, *Letters*, 77.4: *staret in ordine poenitentium*, trans. NPNF.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Letters*, 77.4: *Saccum indueret, ut errorem publice fateretur; et tota urbe spectante Romana, ante diem Paschae in Basilica quondam Laterani, qui Caesariano truncatus est gladio, staret in ordine poenitentium, Episcopo, Presbyteris, et omni populo*, trans. NPNF.

as her limbs were bared and her head uncovered.⁸³⁰ Consequently, Fabiola was 'restored to Communion before the whole church'.⁸³¹ Jerome holds Fabiola in direct contrast to those women who used their widowhood to enjoy leisurely freedoms and expose themselves publicly by going to the baths, moving through the streets, and showing their immodest faces throughout the city.⁸³²

While Fabiola's penance was surely extraordinary, accompanied as it was by an enormous charitable divestment of wealth, the important thing here is the reference to an *ordo paenitentum*, in which she supposedly stood. This sounds similar to the *locus paenitentiae*, or 'place of penitents', referred to by Augustine as an area in which penitents stood within church.⁸³³ Apparently, these people eagerly awaited the imposition of hands by the bishop.⁸³⁴ According to Sozomen, there was a 'place appropriated to the reception of penitents' in the western churches, and particularly at Rome. Here they were relegated until, after much wailing and lamentation, they were able to once more assemble with the other congregants.⁸³⁵ This readmittance was performed publicly and by the bishop.

Unfortunately, we are not told where in the church this place was, or whether male and female penitents were separated from one another.⁸³⁶ Sozomen himself was writing in the fifth century, at Constantinople, and so his reporting on the matter might not be entirely accurate. However, the practice in the eastern city was different, as Sozomen provides his reader with a brief history of how things had developed in Constantinople. There, he claims, penance had once been performed publicly, but the priests disliked seeing such things conducted before an assembly. To this end, a trusted presbyter was appointed to oversee the practice. People would visit him in private, where they would be advised on how best to carry out their penance. This was until a noblewoman visited the priest and, after receiving instruction, stayed in the church to fast and pray. There she was raped by a deacon and the

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.5: *Aperuit cunctis vulnus suum, et decolorem [al. dedecorem] in corpore cicatricem flens Roma conspexit. Dissuta habuit latera, nudum caput, clausum os*, trans. NPNF..

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 77.6: *Recepta sub oculis omnis Ecclesiae communion*, trans. NPNF.

⁸³² *Ibid.*, 77.4.

⁸³³ Augustine, *Letters*, 153.7; *Don.* 20.28.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, *Letters*, 153.7.

⁸³⁵ Sozomen, *Church History*, 7.16.

⁸³⁶ The narthex seems like a sensible place to me, or certainly somewhere at the back of the church, near the exits.

subsequent scandal saw the bishop Nectarius abolish the role of the presbyter, allowing instead for a variety of penitential practices, including private confession.⁸³⁷

In summary, unlike with some pagan and secular sites, it is difficult to detect segregation along social lines (elites from nonelites), and instead we see segregation along sexual lines and, where social dynamics are involved, they relate to marital status and a woman's relationship to the church (widows, virgins, deaconesses, etc).⁸³⁸ Indeed, we shall see more of this with regards to processions in the next chapter. Moreover, it is difficult to know precisely why the two cities proceeded along different lines with respect to how they segregated the sexes within churches. Some of this was clearly due to their individual developments with regards to church organisation and ritual, such as the presence of deaconesses in the east and the *velatio* in the west. We should also acknowledge that some differences were perhaps the result of nothing more dramatic than individual aesthetic tastes and the development of localised customs, which could account for changing preferences regarding features such as open facades. Certainly, there seems to have been a translation of Constantinopolitan features to Rome, particularly around the time of the reconquest.

However, the question of galleries can, I think, be explained by the presence of the imperial court in Constantinople and the frequent use of ecclesiastical space for the performance of imperial ritual. Looking beyond the period in question, to the tenth-century antiquarian *Book of Ceremonies*, compiled in Constantinople to preserve the details of both current and past ceremonies, it is clear that the imperial party, and the empress in particular, made use of elevated galleries within church.⁸³⁹ Just as statues of imperial women were almost universally placed atop lofty columns in the eastern capital, so too were these women stationed above all others within church. This was to the extent that the south gallery of Hagia Sophia became connected to the Great Palace by a passageway along the raised portico of the Augustaion.⁸⁴⁰ While there were imperial women in Rome throughout Late

⁸³⁷ Sozomen, *Church History*, 7.16.

⁸³⁸ In practice, there was surely much overlap between consecrated virgins and deaconesses with elite women.

⁸³⁹ L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, (Leicester, 2001), p. 51.

⁸⁴⁰ G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, (Cambridge, 2003), p. 96.

Antiquity, the absence of emperors meant there was no comparable development of imperial ceremonial, and no effort to elevate empresses above all but the emperor.

iv. Disorder in churches

Up until now, the discussion of segregation within church has assumed that such spatial arrangements were enacted within an orderly and controlled environment. Certainly, the various Church Orders appealed to, and envisioned, organised congregations under the watchful supervision of clergy. No doubt, the use of space within churches was intended to be carefully choreographed, with each person occupying a specific place in relation to their position within the Christian community. However, numerous sources point to occasions in which this discipline and organisation broke down, and this is especially the case where a place or event is characterised by freedom of movement. Certainly, the textual evidence alludes to a world in which churches could, in certain circumstances, become unruly places in which segregation was seemingly abandoned.

Occasions that seem to have attracted rowdy behaviour included nocturnal vigils, where the celebrants would stay awake into the night and sing psalms, prayers, and hymns. So too were funerary commemorations, which might include feasting and drinking, known to inspire unruly action. In Rome, those martyrial churches beyond the city walls were particularly noted for their revelry and lewdness. Cemetery basilicas, such as St Lawrence, St Agnes, St Sebastiano, and Ss. Peter and Marcellinus were initially constructed as large covered cemeteries, where people could honour the saint or those deceased relatives who were buried beneath.⁸⁴¹ These basilicas ‘were not regular parish churches like those built inside the walls of the city for regular Sunday eucharistic celebration’ and thus seem to have escaped, for quite some time, the oversight of the bishop and his clergy.⁸⁴²

Quite unlike the city’s liturgical churches, such cemeterial basilicas were typically circiform in plan, meaning they resembled the shape of a Roman circus, and seem to have (initially)

⁸⁴¹ On these cemeterial basilicas see F. Coarelli, D. P. Harmon, and A. J. Clauss, *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide, Updated Edition*, (Berkeley, 2014).

⁸⁴² R. M. Jensen, ‘Dining with the Dead: From the *Mensa* to the Altar in Christian Late Antiquity’, in L. Brink and D. Green (eds), *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context. Studies of Roman, Jewish and Christian Burials*, (Berlin, 2008) p. 132.

been without altars, baptistries, or clergy.⁸⁴³ Crucially, they appear to have been designed to facilitate the free flow of people around the building. For example, the basilica upon the Via Labicana had a 'vast open forecourt' which faced directly onto the road, while the basilicas in general tended to favour large gathering spaces.⁸⁴⁴ This spatial arrangement, alongside the absence of supervising clergy and an ancient tendency to associate funerary commemorations and cemeterial spaces with drink and celebration, allowed for the mixing of sexes. Indeed, such basilicas were found nowhere else beyond Rome, were no longer built after the middle of the fourth century, and – like the open facades of intramural churches – were quickly altered.⁸⁴⁵ This was achieved, in this instance, via the installation of altars, clergy, and liturgical services to bring the cemeterial basilicas back under ecclesiastical oversight.

The desire to regulate these places, through architectural changes and the arrival of clergymen, surely stemmed from their poor reputation. Taking place at some distance from the city proper, the feasts and vigils held at such sites were characterised, at least in our sources, as particularly boisterous affairs. According to Jerome, these basilicas of the martyrs were places in which those prone to adultery would go to indulge in their sinful behaviour.⁸⁴⁶ The late night vigil, he admitted, was where a wife might find for herself an opportunity to fornicate and behave lewdly beyond the supervision of her husband.⁸⁴⁷ He warned that daughters should stay close to their mothers at such vigils.⁸⁴⁸ Melania the Younger, when pregnant, prayed at home rather than visit the basilica of Saint Lawrence outside Rome's walls, for such a raucous place was apparently unsuited to a young woman of her station and modesty.⁸⁴⁹

However, movements within churches and the breakdown of segregation were not limited to these circiform structures. When Augustine chastised his congregants in Hippo for their lewd behaviours at vigils and feasts, they retorted that such conduct must be acceptable,

⁸⁴³ M. Hellström, 'Constantine's Circiform Basilicas in Rome', in M. R. Salzman, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome; Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century*, (Cambridge, 2015), p. 298.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁸⁴⁵ Hellström (2015), p. 298, demonstrates that the earliest such basilicas in Rome predate Constantine's victory over Maxentius, suggesting they were built for funerary, rather than specifically Christian, functions.

⁸⁴⁶ Jerome, *Against Vigilantius*, 9.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁴⁸ Jerome, *Letters*, 24.4.

⁸⁴⁹ Gerontius, *Life of Melania*, 4-6.

citing the 'daily excess in the use of wine' at St Peter's in Rome.⁸⁵⁰ Augustine explained that such practices were, in fact, forbidden, but that 'because the place was at a distance from the bishop's control' it was difficult to supervise.⁸⁵¹ In its design, St Peter's was very much a 'proper' liturgical church, but it was still an extramural site. It could also be temporarily appropriated by wealthy aristocrats who wished to indulge in both Christian charity and self-promotion. Some such events, like Pammachius' feast in honour of his departed wife Paulina, were exemplary affairs that attracted the praise of authors like Jerome, thus suggesting they were sufficiently orderly.⁸⁵² Others were less laudable, such as the unnamed matron who distributed coins to the poor at the same basilica, but who then physically struck an elderly female beggar whom attempted to receive a second donation.⁸⁵³

Indeed, even without the presence of covered cemeteries, men and women still visited tombs in a manner considered problematic by Christian sources. For instance, no such funerary basilicas are known to have existed at Constantinople, yet there too vigils and martyr feasts were looked upon as instigators of poor behaviour. Gregory of Nyssa referenced women at the vigil of his sister, Macrina, while St Matrona, who would become an abbess at Constantinople, was said to attend vigils with other women despite having been forbidden by her husband from doing so.⁸⁵⁴ In both Antioch and Constantinople, Chrysostom advised women – especially virgins – to avoid funerary banquets and vigils. These events, he claimed, would conclude with both men and women patronising the city's taverns, where they would 'drink together lavishly and lasciviously'.⁸⁵⁵ According to both the bishop and his biographer, Palladius, women were ultimately prohibited from attending vigils in Constantinople.⁸⁵⁶ However, it is unclear how typical such a prohibition was, as twenty-five years later, Nestorius was said to have stopped women from assembling with

⁸⁵⁰ Augustine, *Letters*, 29.10: *cotidianus vinulentus*, trans. NPNF.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29.10: *quod remotus sit locus ab episcopi conversatione*, trans. NPNF.

⁸⁵² Jerome, *Letters*, 66.5; Paulinus of Nola, *Letters*, 13.11.

⁸⁵³ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.32, narrates this rather satirical event in his letter to Eustochium, holding up the unnamed noblewoman as an example of false charity. It is quite a contrast to the alms provided his friend and fellow ascetic, Pammachius, whose feast was (obviously) done correctly; on this see J. Lössl, *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, (London, 2016), p. 97.

⁸⁵⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina*, 33; *Life of St Matrona*, 3-5.

⁸⁵⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Martyrs*, 60, 663-664, in P. Allen and M. Meyer, *John Chrysostom*, (London, 2002), p. 95.

⁸⁵⁶ John Chrysostom, *Homily 26 on Acts*, 3-4; Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 5.146-9.

men for nocturnal prayers, suggesting the initial prohibition had been somewhat ineffectual.⁸⁵⁷

Such concerns were replicated across the empire. As early as 305 the Council of Elvira, in Spain, ruled that women should not attend vigils in the cemeteries because of the lewd nature of the events.⁸⁵⁸ Ambrose in Milan, Augustine in North Africa, and Caesarius in Gaul all complained of the inappropriate and drunken behaviours taking place at vigils and funerary celebrations.⁸⁵⁹ Again, it was a lack of supervision, and opportunities for free movement, that were the problem, leading to concerted efforts to bring such activities within the more static and regulated environment of the church. At Nola, Paulinus lured the celebrating masses away from their outdoor festivities, and into the church proper, by commissioning attractive paintings on the walls.⁸⁶⁰ In Milan, Ambrose barred Monica, the mother of Augustine, from taking offerings to the tombs of the departed, directing her instead towards the church.⁸⁶¹ In North Africa, Augustine himself claimed to have had some success in curbing the ‘drunken revels and luxurious feasts in the cemeteries’, seeing it ‘celebrated as it should be in the Church’.⁸⁶²

While efforts were underway to bring rites into the church proper, even the presence of a bishop and deacons could not guarantee the ‘good order’ mandated by the Church Orders. While men and women had their allotted places in church, separate from one another, they were obviously not chained to the floor. Chrysostom complained of congregants roaming about the nave of Old Hagia Sophia during the service, ignoring the sermons, and talking amongst themselves.⁸⁶³ The bishop admonished his flock for the way they shoved and

⁸⁵⁷ Taft (1998), p. 73.

⁸⁵⁸ *Council of Elvira*, Canon 35, trans S. Laeuchili, *Power and Sexuality: The Emergence of Canon Law at the Synod of Elvira*, (Philadelphia, 1972), p. 130; see also Berger (2011), p. 64.

⁸⁵⁹ Ambrose, *De Helia et ieiunio*, 62, CSEL 32.2:448-49; Augustine, *Confessions* 6.2:2, CSEL 33:114-16; Caesarius, *Sermons* 55, 1-5, CCSL 103:241-44.

⁸⁶⁰ J. Elsner, *The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450*, (Oxford, 2018), p. 258.

⁸⁶¹ Paulinus of Nola, *Carmina*, 27.546-50, 580-91, trans D. E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems*, (Berkeley, 1999), p. 183.

⁸⁶² Augustine, *Letters*, 22.6; Augustine, *Sermons*, 311.5-6. While Christian authors complained about it, we should note that the custom of drinking and feasting at the site of tombs, though a cultural tradition of great antiquity, had developed as a pagan religious exercise. Like amphitheatres and the statue habit, its popularity amongst Christian writers suffered due to an ancient association with pagan ceremonial.

⁸⁶³ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, 19, 7-9. Whether congregants were supposed to be in the nave at all is questionable, as the earlier discussion about laypersons in the Constantinopolitan nave shows. Of course, it is possible that, in Chrysostom’s time, the arrangements were different to those in Justinian’s

pushed one another, fighting to get close enough to hear his words.⁸⁶⁴ He compared the tumult and confusion of Constantinople's Great Church to the market place, tavern, and barbershop.⁸⁶⁵ Of course, these raucous congregants may have all been men, as women observed the fray from the galleries (and possibly side aisles). As we shall discuss in more detail in the next chapter, the sexual composition of crowds is often omitted by our sources.

Those women who were in the church were evidently visible to those below. The decorated ladies, Chrysostom lamented, distracted not only laymen but even the male clergy, so that his church was no different to the forum or theatre.⁸⁶⁶ Exchanges between the sexes was so common that, according to the bishop, if a man was hoping to seduce a woman, he would conclude there was no better venue than a church.⁸⁶⁷ While we may detect some rhetorical exaggeration in Chrysostom's sermons, there was surely a degree of truth to them. The bishop was addressing his tirade to the very people he was accusing of misbehaviour and so, presumably, expected them to recognise their actions in his words.

In extreme cases, churches in both cities hosted not only disorder but outright violence. Basilicas, like those of Julius and Liberius in Rome, were temporarily transformed into battlefields during times of ecclesiastical conflict. In some cases, women were involved both as victims and perpetrators of such violence. Women were among those killed in the Basilica of Liberius at Rome, when supporters of Pope Damasus were said to have stormed the building and massacred those inside.⁸⁶⁸ In Constantinople, those called 'Arians' stoned the Orthodox bishop Gregory Nazianzen in the Anastasia church during the Easter Vigil of 379, with both monks and virgins participating in the outrage.⁸⁶⁹ Later, the bishop Nestorius was also stoned by revellers at a vigil after trying to prevent virgins from attending.⁸⁷⁰ Meanwhile, as noted above, Sozomen claimed that a Constantinopolitan noblewoman was raped in church by a deacon.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.6.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.3.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.3.

⁸⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Corinthians*, 1.36.5-6.

⁸⁶⁸ *Collectio Avellana*, 1.5-7.

⁸⁶⁹ Taft (1998) p. 83.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.73

⁸⁷¹ Sozomen, *Church History*, 7.16.

Such events, being thinly spread across the centuries, were exceptional. Churches were surely not typified as places of chaos and violence, as many of our sources are keen for even chaste virgins to attend. But the above examples all serve to remind us that even ordered, segregated, and static environments could break down. Furthermore, that women were involved in such violence, whether as victims or conductors, again points to them as a recognised part of the Christian community who were expected to be found in churches. Additionally, the above discussion also highlights a clear concern on the part of ecclesiastical authorities and Christian authors over the relatively disordered and less regimented cemeterial spaces beyond the walls, where freedom to roam and lack of supervision led to encounters between the sexes. To this end, we see various attempts to impose order, in terms of spatial organisation, by stationing people inside the church (even if these churches were not, themselves, universally free from disorder).

v. Christian places of healing

Churches served functions beyond hosting prayer, vigils and banquets. While churches could be sites of collective and liturgical worship, they also served as places of individual interaction with the divine. The practice of incubation, where both men and women would sleep in a church and await the intercession of saints, was particularly popular in Constantinople. These rites, seeking help from supernatural forces within one's own dreams, had a long pagan history. The cult of Asclepius, a healing divinity, was known to host sick people within the precincts of its various temples, providing space for them to sleep.⁸⁷² While incubation, both in its classical pagan and Late Antique Christian iterations, seems to have been a largely eastern phenomenon, it is unclear whether one practice grew from the other. Either way, these rites became associated with certain saints and martyrs, in the east, from the fifth century onwards. By the sixth century, they had become an

⁸⁷² This seems to have been a largely eastern tradition, with the westernmost evidence coming from Rome, although the sources do not confirm whether the god's cult there, centred upon Tiber Island, ever permitted the sick to sleep within the temple precinct. On the questionable nature of incubation at this Roman temple see G. Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come: Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World*, (Leiden, 2007), p. 206; on the suggestion this was not a popular site, see G. van der Ploeg, *The Impact of the Roman Empire on the Cult of Asclepius*, (Leiden, 2018), p. 272.

established feature of Constantinopolitan life, especially after the emperor Justinian was said to have been cured of a disease through incubation.⁸⁷³

While various saints were associated with the practice, the most popular by far were the two brothers Cosmas and Damian, and Artemios. We know of at least six churches in Constantinople dedicated to Cosmas and Damian, with the most famous being the Kosmidion, where Justinian received his miraculous cure. We do not know where any of these churches were located, although Procopius puts the Kosmidion on the Golden Horn.⁸⁷⁴ Wherever they were in the city, some sites seem to have attracted a large number of both men and women. An anonymous collection of miracle stories, focussed largely on events in Constantinople, gives us some indication of the popularity and spatial arrangements of these churches. While these texts are of unknown date, they were read by the bishop of Jerusalem, Sophronios, in 560-638, and so must have been of Late Antique provenance.⁸⁷⁵ While we might reasonably doubt the truth of otherworldly medical assistance, the texts suggest that these churches were busy, crowded places where both men and women, elite and nonelite, visited and slept.

The crowded nature of such places is apparent from the miracle stories. In one tale, a lawyer needs help from a guide to find the man he is looking for within the church of Cosmas and Damian in Constantinople, as it is too crowded to otherwise identify him.⁸⁷⁶ That space was at a premium can be further inferred from the fact that visitors are recorded sleeping both outside the church and within, in the atrium, nave, narthex, aisles, altar, crypt, baptistry, and galleries.⁸⁷⁷ Not all spaces within the church were equal, with people seeking to sleep as close to martyrial relics as possible, where the odds of saintly intercession were presumably at their best. We see a woman praying near the altar, a husband and wife sleeping somewhere in the church, and another man and woman (not married) sleeping

⁸⁷³ S. M. Oberhelmen, 'Medical Pluralism, Healing, and Dreams in Greek Culture', in S. M. Oberhelmen (ed.), *Dreams, Healing, and Medicine in Greece: From Antiquity to the Present*, (London, 2016), p. 11.

⁸⁷⁴ Procopius, *Buildings*, 1.6; Magdalino (1996), places it on the northern part of the Horn, beyond the city walls, although we cannot be certain.

⁸⁷⁵ H. V. Ehrenheim, 'Pilgrimage for dreams in Late Antiquity and early Byzantium: continuity of the pagan ritual or development within Christian miracle tradition?' *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, (2016), p. 68.

⁸⁷⁶ *Miracles of Cosmas and Damien*, 34.

⁸⁷⁷ H. Von Ehrenheim, 'Identifying Incubation Areas in Pagan and Early Christian Times', *Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens*, Vol.6 (2009), p. 259.

close to one another.⁸⁷⁸ It is unclear whether attempts were made to ensure men and women slept separately in these churches, but they certainly seem to have been in reasonably close proximity. As always, social status was key to securing the choicest spots, with the noblewoman Martha receiving private lodgings in the left portico of the *katechoumenion*, which in this church seems to have been on the ground level, thus relieving her of the need to sleep next to strangers.⁸⁷⁹

People also incubated in the cult of St Artemios, a fourth-century martyr believed to offer cures for various ailments, whose intercessions are recorded in a series of sixth- or seventh-century miracle stories. The saint's remains were housed in the church of St. John the Baptist, a three-aisled basilica in the district of Oxeia, in Constantinople. In this church, male incubants were said to sleep in the left aisle, which was specially designated for this purpose.⁸⁸⁰ They were locked in, overnight, behind a latticework, to protect them from thieves and, it has been argued, to prevent them moving freely around the church after dark. Female visitors slept in the Chapel of St. Febronia, which Cryil Mango has reconstructed as being to the right of the apse in the church, though it is not clear if they, too, were locked behind some form of barrier.⁸⁸¹ This church, like those of Cosmas and Damian, could be crowded. For instance, we hear of visiting monks unable to find a space to lay.⁸⁸² It also seems that some women occupied areas outside the chapel of Febronia, as the noblewoman Sergia apparently slept in a dormitory in the upper galleries.⁸⁸³ Again, the elite secured the best spots, as a senator was granted permission to sleep in the crypt – a privilege his actor companion was denied.⁸⁸⁴

Along with physical barriers, there also seems to have been attendants in place to protect people and ensure they kept within the appropriate spaces. As mentioned above, the presence of guides was alluded to in the churches of Cosmas and Damian, while one miracle

⁸⁷⁸ *Miracles of Cosmas and Damien*, 7, 25, 24; Von Ehrenheim (2009), p. 260.

⁸⁷⁹ *Miracles of Cosmas and Damien*, 12. In this text, the *katechoumenion* appears to be in the atrium, although in another text a man is described as descending from the *katechoumenion* where his bed was located, suggesting it referred to the upper gallery.

⁸⁸⁰ E. M. Van Opstall, *Sacred Thresholds*, (Boston, 2018), p. 122.

⁸⁸¹ Marinis (2014), p. 105. As he says here, regarding the latticework barriers, 'how this affected regular services is uncertain'.

⁸⁸² Von Ehrenheim (2009), p. 264.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁸⁸⁴ *Miracles of St. Artemios*, 17; Von Ehrenheim (2009), p. 264.

states that the church of St John the Baptist, where Artemios' relics were housed, used to have ten guards. By the time of the source, however, their number had been depleted and the church lacked the means to replace them. Theodorus, the man cured in the tale, offered to become a guard in repayment for his healing.⁸⁸⁵ While we might doubt the specifics of this account, it points to the presence of guards in certain churches. Of course, that guards were employed is hardly surprising, given that such places held martyrial relics and other valuables, but the lack of sufficient guards suggests that not all places were adequately supervised. Certainly, from the two sets of miracle stories, it seems that the churches of Cosmas and Damian may well have seen the mixing of the sexes, while the church of St John the Baptist had men and women in separate parts of the building, with barriers, locks, and guards to ensure boundaries were maintained. As such, the church of St John appears to have employed either model 3 or 4, depending on its architecture, in separating the sexes.

Christian incubation does not seem to have been anything like as popular in Rome as it was in Constantinople, and evidence for the practice in the west is patchy. However, it has been suggested that incubation, at Rome, took place in the church of Santa Maria Antiqua, in the Roman Forum. This church was not founded until the sixth century and, as Knipp points out, served 'a Greek community closely associated with the Byzantine administration residing on the Palatine'.⁸⁸⁶ As such, if incubation was practiced here, we might see it as yet another imported feature of Constantinopolitan Christianity, which became apparent in Rome from around the time of the reconquest. If incubation was practiced here, it is imagined to have taken place in the so-called 'Chapel of Physicians', built into the church, which is decorated with images of various medical saints and figures holding surgeon's boxes.⁸⁸⁷ While possible, there is no documentary evidence attesting to this, or to incubation at St Maria more generally. As such, we cannot know if incubation took place at Rome. But if it did, it seems to have been a later import, focussed upon the area around the Palatine.

Other Christian places that were associated with healing were the hospitals, hostels, hospices, and asylums that grew from imperial, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and monastic efforts.⁸⁸⁸ It is often difficult to identify precisely what function many such places fulfilled, or

⁸⁸⁵ *Miracles of St. Artemios*, 30.

⁸⁸⁶ D. Knipp, 'The Chapel of Physicians at Santa Maria Antiqua', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol.56, (2002), p. 2.

⁸⁸⁷ G. M. Rushforth, 'The church of S. Maria Antiqua', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, Vol.1, (1902), p. 67.

⁸⁸⁸ T. S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, (Baltimore, 1997), p. 5.

the extent to which they offered different services, as the specific meanings of the various terms used are not obvious. As Dey points out, in Rome *diaconiae*, *xenodochia* and *monasteria* were used interchangeably by the seventh century.⁸⁸⁹ Some seem to have been designed as refuges for weary travellers, some for the treatment of ailments, and others functioned as places where the terminally ill went to end their days. The first known hospital was founded by Leontius of Antioch, around the year 350. They quickly reached Constantinople, where patrons ranging from John Chrysostom to the empress Theodora founded them, and where the biggest and most impressive such places could be found.⁸⁹⁰ By the early medieval period, between 30 and 35 such hospitals are thought to have existed in the city.⁸⁹¹

That both women and men worked in these hospitals is clear from the textual sources, even if no archaeological remains attest to this. In the miracles of St. Artemios, he is described as making his rounds of the church as if in a *xenon*, while St. Febronia is referred to as a *hypourgos*, meaning a professional medical attendant in a hospital.⁸⁹² Gregory Nazianzen stated that the hospitals founded by Basil were staffed by, and served, men and women.⁸⁹³ That separating the sexes was a matter of course in such places can be seen from outside Constantinople. The bishop Rabula built a separate facility for women at the hospital he founded, while the emperor Justinian rebuilt a hospital in Antioch and provided separate spaces for men and women.⁸⁹⁴ As Miller states, 'church leaders had from the beginning divided hospitals into two sections, one for men and one for women'.⁸⁹⁵ This, then, would suggest number 4 of Trümper's models employed at such places. However, our sources shed no further light on the precise duties of women who worked in such places, or the experience of female patients, or how thorough segregation at these sites was.

⁸⁸⁹ H. Dey, 'Diaconiae, Xenodochia, Hospitalia, and Monasteries: "Social Security" and the Meaning of Monasticism in Early Medieval Rome', *Early Medieval Europe*, Vol.16, pp. 411-12.

⁸⁹⁰ N. Allan, 'Hospice to Hospital in the Near East: An Instance of Continuity and Change in Late Antiquity', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol.64, No.3, (1990), p. 450.

⁸⁹¹ P. Horden, 'Poverty, Charity, and the Invention of the Hospital', in S. F. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, (Oxford, 2012), pp. 25-30.

⁸⁹² T. S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, Johns Hopkins University Press, (1997), p.101

⁸⁹³ Miller, (1997), p. 61.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

While hospitals were slow to appear across the West, Rome proved to be an exception. Towards the end of the fourth century, sometime after they had emerged in Constantinople, the foundation of the first hospital in Rome is recorded by Jerome. He claims that the aforementioned Fabiola, once her penance was complete, became the first person to found a hospital there.⁸⁹⁶ Later, she worked with the senator Pammachius, founding further hospitals in Rome and Portus.⁸⁹⁷ Jerome recounts how Fabiola tended to the sick herself and, quite possibly, suggests she worked alongside male colleagues. He wrote that *quoties lavit purulentam vulnerum saniem quam alius aspicere non valebat*.⁸⁹⁸ Here, when referring to those who also worked in the hospital but could not bear to face the wounds Fabiola cleaned, Jerome only says *alius*, meaning ‘other’, rather than specifically saying ‘men’. However, *alius* is masculine, and so it is quite possible that Jerome is here saying that Fabiola dealt with the grisly business that other, male, attendants could not face. This suggests that the same patient could be seen by both female and male attendants, indicating the sex of the patient was not overly important (and that Fabiola could have tended to male patients).

vi. Conclusion

With respect to religious places, then, it seems that methods and aims of segregation were generally quite different across pagan and Christian sites. While pagan ceremonial surely involved large, mixed, outdoor crowds (to be discussed in the next chapter), at specific places of veneration we can occasionally detect the use of models 1 and 2, prohibiting access to men or women of lower social status. This was, at least in part, linked to the way in which paganism understood the relationship between individuals and the divine, with female deities associated with female occupations and, in accordance with Roman cultural norms, their temple precincts were protected from men. This is largely absent from Christian religious places, which seemed rather more intent on bringing men and women together within the same place, but keeping them apart while there by means of models 3 and 4. However, as discussed previously, it is not at all apparent how present nonelite women were in the churches of either city.

⁸⁹⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 77.6.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.10.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.6.

While their management of secular places was seemingly similar, as outlined in the previous chapter, there are notable differences with respect to churches across the two cities. In Constantinople, the function of ecclesiastical space as a stage for imperial ceremonial, and the tight control exercised over such spaces by the emperor, saw all laypersons removed from the nave (at least in Hagia Sophia) save for the emperor. At secular places, the same rules and norms seem to have governed as they did in classical times. Venues of spectacle and leisure continued to use methods of segregation that suited their specific purposes. Meanwhile, the multitude of humdrum places we rarely or never see, in which working men and women secured their livelihoods, were surely segregated along *de facto* lines of class, with elite and modest women avoiding places deemed disreputable. Meanwhile, places of aristocratic association were presumably limited to the nonelite.

Moreover, we can clearly detect at both secular and pagan places an intention to segregate women not only from men, but to keep elite and nonelite women apart also. At secular sites, this distinction was clearly made on the basis of wealth and worldly status (senatorial, equestrian, free, slave, etc). At religious sites, however, it was often more focussed on a woman's moral virtue, which was evinced by her marital status. Thus, the statue in the temple of Mater Matuta could only be approached by a woman who had married once, while similar rules were in place around the statue and temple of Fortuna Muliebris. However, at pagan sites we also see worldly social distinctions play a role in segregation. For instance, the Matralia and Matronalia festival distinguished *matronae* from slaves and poor women, while elite women apparently worshipped separately from others at the Parentalia, while the temples of Pudicitia had, allegedly, been separated into plebeian and patrician.

At Christian places, however, segregation based upon worldly status is somewhat more difficult to detect. Certainly, it seems that during incubation practices the wealthy were able to secure their own, semi-private lodgings in some churches. However, it is harder to know if segregation on the basis of wealth and worldly social esteem was carried out during more regular church attendance. It may well be that elite women were separated from others in Rome's churches, and that only elite women occupied galleries in Constantinople, but we cannot be sure. Instead, our evidence is more explicit in its suggestion that segregation between women was, as at some pagan sites, carried out on the basis of marital status or, in this case, their relationship with the church. Thus, as discussed above, we hear of

deaconesses, virgins, catechumens, and penitents occupying certain parts of the church, even if we cannot locate precisely where, within the building of a church, they were.

Clearly, then, there were real efforts across the various places of both cities to keep men and women physically separate. Some were more comprehensive than others, and our sources point to numerous occasions in which boundaries were crossed, acceptably and otherwise. As the discussion on cemeterial places in particular shows, the key to successful segregation was keeping people static and limiting mobility. Where a place was characterised by freedom of movement, opportunities for interactions between men and women, elite and nonelite, intensified. As such, it is upon this topic of movement, and those urban spaces primarily designed to facilitate such, that the next chapter will focus.

Chapter 5

Segregation in Public Spaces

Over the previous two chapters I have sought to demonstrate that segregation, along both sexual and social lines, was observed in secular and religious places. This served both practical and reputational concerns, ensuring that women engaged with public places in ways deemed acceptable and in accordance with contemporary standards of female modesty and respectability. In the present chapter, I turn my attention to the spaces that connected these various places and through which women moved in order to reach them. Attending public places (as chapter two identified many women did) obviously necessitated travel through public spaces, which were busy and populated by people of either sex and varying social status. Rules of spatial separation, requiring certain groups to stand at specific points under the supervision of others, were not (as far as we can tell) applied to the streets of Rome and Constantinople. Rather, these were environments in which people were constantly in flux, coming into close proximity with one another on a regular basis.

In this chapter I will argue that segregation in urban spaces (those sites typically characterised by movement) was far more difficult to achieve and less common than in places. In the streets, and also the spaces surrounding buildings, there was greater freedom in movement than could be found within the buildings themselves. As such, it was more difficult to ensure spatial separation of people in these settings. Cited throughout this thesis, Tuan's equating of movement with freedom, and freedom with danger, is thus apt for the present discussion. For many nonelite women, travel through the public spaces of their cities was surely a frequent occurrence, often necessitated by their occupations, and involved no segregation. Women who worked in taverns, baths, and theatres would have ventured out to both leave and return to their homes. Some women, such as prostitutes and procuresses, plied their trades and advertised in the streets, alleys, and spaces around public buildings. Meanwhile, the very poorest could be found begging across the cityscape.

For elite women, the public display of modesty and status was as important in the street as it was in church. Practical concerns for physical safety and preoccupations with reputation governed their movements through space as they did their presence in places. Thus, we see

examples of women separating themselves from outdoor crowds during imperial and religious spectacles. We also see women making use of vehicles and retinues, as elite men also did, to traverse the urban topography in a manner that not only introduced some physical distance between them and the masses, but also served to showcase their high social status to those whom they passed. However, we should be wary in assuming these measures were always highly effective, given the lack of space present in many late antique streets and the numbers of people moving through them. Furthermore, Christian discourse championed other forms of 'mobile seclusion', seeking to persuade women to abandon vehicles and numerous attendants in favour of more austere clothes, pedestrian movement, and smaller retinues, so as to avoid attracting notice. While this reduced their ability, surely, to physically separate themselves from others, our sources were clear it had the benefit of allowing elite and modest women to blend in with everyone else and escape notice.

Some of the key arguments that I will put forward are how segregation would have been difficult to manage effectively, at all times, in these environments. Moreover, nonelite women rarely experienced segregation in public spaces. I will also suggest that Constantinople saw more occasions for the gathering of large crowds in which the sexes would mix than Rome, due to the continued presence of an imperial court. On elite women and segregation in spaces, I will show how such measures were often enthusiastically taken up by women themselves, whereas in places (churches, baths, theatres, etc.) the rules requiring certain spatial arrangements were enforced upon women (and indeed men) by civic and ecclesiastical authorities. As we shall see, this is because elite women were no less desiring of publicly advertising their high social status and gendered virtues than were elite men. Finally, I will show how Christian thinking led to alternative methods of mobile segregation for respectable women, which some clearly adopted. Whether these more austere forms of elite movement led to less physical segregation is, however, unclear.

In order to make these arguments, I will begin by discussing the physical settings in which all of this was taking place; the streets of Rome and Constantinople. After demonstrating how such spaces were unsuited to segregation, I will move on to address the possibility for segregation for those women in outdoor crowds and processions. I will then move on to discuss the presence of nonelite women in the streets, focussing in particular on prostitutes and the question of whether they were 'zoned', or kept away from certain parts of the city.

Finally, I will turn my attention to elite women and the measures employed by them to seclude themselves while moving through their cities. On this last point, my focus will be on vehicles and attendants, as means of introducing physical distance between themselves and others. Although clothing played an important part in the public display of modesty and status, I am not focussing on this as it was not a means of introducing physical distance or removing oneself from view and has, already, received much attention in the scholarship.⁸⁹⁹

i. The Streets of Rome and Constantinople

When considering attempts at segregating women on the move, we should first consider the physical environments in which such movements and efforts at spatial separation were taking place. When we do, we find that for those women who moved through the streets of either city, it would have been virtually impossible to avoid coming into reasonably close contact with extra-familial men. Certainly, the multitudes of women who were economically compelled to traverse the cityscape regularly would, no doubt, encounter men on a constant basis. Even the wiliest negotiator of the crowd would be forced together with others as the traffic flowed through chokepoints; over bridges, around obstacles, and beneath gates. As such, segregation for the vast portion of the population would have been non-existent during much of the day.

Historians such as Laurence, Stambaugh, Cornell and Lomas all point to the unique living conditions of those who resided within the large cities of the ancient and late antique world.⁹⁰⁰ Among the various elements of daily life that were exclusive to such urban environments were crowds and traffic; so much so that the act of trying to manoeuvre oneself through the cityscape of Rome grew into a literary genre all its own.⁹⁰¹ Legal sources alluded to the fatal accidents that readily happened as a result of vehicular congestion, including the deaths of children, and the corresponding efforts to ease the flow of traffic

⁸⁹⁹ Wilkinson (2015) discusses clothing as a method of displaying virtue and status. See also M. Harlow and M. Nosch, (eds), *Greek and Roman Textiles and Dress: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, (Oxford, 2014); K. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman: Self-Presentation and Society*, (London, 2012); J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante, *The World of Roman Costume*, (London, 2001); B. W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, (London, 2003).

⁹⁰⁰ R. Laurence and D. J. Newsome (eds), *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii; Movement and Space*, (Oxford, 2011); J. E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City*, (Baltimore, 1988); T. J. Cornell and K. Lomas, *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, (London, 1995).

⁹⁰¹ See D. Spencer, 'IV Landscape: Time and Motion', *Greece and Rome*, Vol. 56, No.39, (2009), pp.47-61.

through the streets.⁹⁰² There was also the less than perfect condition of certain road surfaces and buildings to contend with during passage through the streets.⁹⁰³ Some were unpaved, while those that were could often be dangerously slippery, or simply coated in muck.⁹⁰⁴

Rome had expanded naturally over time, twice exceeding its own defensive circuit before the fourth century, and its roadways had not been constructed in anticipation of so much traffic. They had, instead, emerged as a result of the flow of people and the construction of housing and other buildings. Carcopino describes the layout as ‘an inorganic welter rather than a practical and efficient plan’, and says the streets ‘always smacked of their ancient origin’.⁹⁰⁵ Classical sources recount how, in places, the streets were so slender that a fellow could reach out of his window and touch the hands of those in opposing buildings.⁹⁰⁶ As Martial and Juvenal indicate, pedestrians often found themselves shuffling through crowds, making slow progress, and coming into contact with people from all social backgrounds.⁹⁰⁷ Seneca complained bitterly about the torrents of people who rushed through the streets, only to be brought to a standstill as some obstruction or other barred their way.⁹⁰⁸

It has been argued by scholars such as Carter that, while Rome represented the ‘unplanned’ city, Constantinople fell into the second category, which he calls ‘planned’, and which he defines as having ‘a discernible and formal organisation of space and by implication control by a central authority’.⁹⁰⁹ While Carter’s categorisation of the city as being ‘planned’ is perhaps a little too generous, there is no doubt that some sections of Constantinople exhibited elements of purposeful planning and imperial control.⁹¹⁰ However, the fifth-

⁹⁰² On the deaths of children in traffic accidents, see L. A. Grauman, ‘Children’s accidents in the Roman empire: the medical eye on 500 years of mishaps in injured children’, in C. Laes and V. Vuolanto (eds), *Children and Everyday Life in the Roman and Late Antique World*, (London, 2016), p. 273.

⁹⁰³ R. Laurence, ‘Traffic and land transportation in and near Rome’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2013), p. 251.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.252; on efforts to clean the streets see O. F. Robinson, *Ancient Rome: City Planning and Administration*, (London, 2003), pp. 59-62; Martial wrote often of Rome’s muddy streets, *Epigrams*, 3.36, 7.61, 10.10, 12.26.

⁹⁰⁵ J. Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, E. O. Lorimer (trans.), (London, 1941), p. 12.

⁹⁰⁶ Martial, *Epigrams*, 1.86.

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.57; Juvenal, *Satires*, 3.239-56; For Martial’s representations of Rome’s topography more generally, see L. Roman, ‘Martial and the City of Rome’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol.100, (2010), pp. 88-117.

⁹⁰⁸ Seneca, *Letters*, 1.2.8.

⁹⁰⁹ H. Carter, *An Introduction to Urban Historical Geography*, (London, 1983), p. 10.

⁹¹⁰ C. Mango, *Studies on Constantinople*, (London, 1993), pp. 117-136.

century *Notitia* lists 4388 households in the city and, as Berger admits, most of this developed outside the planned areas (the south-eastern complex and the *mese*), presumably resulting in many streets that emerged organically, in a manner not dissimilar to those in Rome.⁹¹¹

Zosimus complained of the streets in Constantinople, which he considered too narrow and riddled with obstacles. He blamed this on the fact that people were permitted to construct buildings too close together.⁹¹² Indeed, legal sources suggest that unregulated construction by private citizens resulted in smaller streets effectively closed off to the public, buildings jutting out into roadways, and upper-story balconies with wooden supports that descended directly into the street below.⁹¹³ Laws regulating the building of private property were promulgated until the end of the period.⁹¹⁴ The situation seems to have worsened in Constantinople, as the space between new buildings, as required by law, dramatically declined over the centuries; from 100ft in 326 CE, to just 10-15ft in 423 CE.⁹¹⁵ Under Justinian, after the fire of 532 CE, the emperor re-imposed the rule of 100ft, but with unknown success.⁹¹⁶

In Rome, we might imagine that such encroachment declined from the fifth century, as the city's population fell. Certainly, the laws concerned with regulating private building activity, in Rome, are concentrated in the fourth and early fifth century.⁹¹⁷ Later, by the time of Ostrogothic rule in the sixth century, we see Cassiodorus permitting and actively encouraging, on behalf of Theoderic, aristocrats to erect private dwellings and workshops in the Forum.⁹¹⁸ This surely reflects the pragmatism of Theoderic and his advisers, who sought to harness the resources of private elites to maintain public places that had fallen into

⁹¹¹ A. Berger, 'Streets and Public Places in Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, Vol.54, (2000), pp. 167-170.

⁹¹² Zosimus, *New History*, 2.25.

⁹¹³ CJ 8.10.11.

⁹¹⁴ CT 15.1.22 = CJ 8.11.6; CT 15.1.4; CT 15.1.39 = CJ 8.11.14; CT 15.1.12; CT 15.1.47 = CJ 8.11.17.

⁹¹⁵ CT 15.1.4.

⁹¹⁶ I. Baldini Lippolis, 'Private Space in Late Antique Cities: Law and Building Procedures', in L. Lavan, L. Özgenel, and A. Sarantis, *Housing in Late Antiquity - Volume 3.2: From Palaces to Shops*, (Leiden, 2007), p. 225.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.197-237.

⁹¹⁸ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 127 (4.30).

disuse and disrepair by the sixth century.⁹¹⁹ Cassiodorus was clear that when buildings had long-ceased to provide any public function, they could be placed into private hands, which would at least see them maintained.⁹²⁰ As such, we are presented with the impression that, over time, the amount of people utilising public spaces in Rome declined.

This was a very different approach to that being taken in Constantinople at around the same time, suggesting the encroachment of private buildings into public spaces in the eastern city was a more severe problem, certainly by the time we reach the sixth century, at which point Rome's population had quite dramatically declined from its fourth-century level. By the time of Justinian's reign, the two cities were very different urban centres in terms of their size and trajectories, with Constantinople arguably at the peak of its importance and wealth. Indeed, we might therefore imagine that overall urban traffic was greater in the New Rome than the Old by the close of our period. However, for the fourth and early fifth centuries, we can see how the situation across the two cities was rather more similar.

As such, for much of Late Antiquity it appears that both Rome and Constantinople were cities that, away from their busy and porticoed thoroughfares, were riddled with narrow streets, often steep and poorly paved, with obstacles a not uncommon feature.⁹²¹ As such, we should imagine that it was reasonably difficult to conduct movement at a significant distance from others, either because the minor streets were too narrow and cluttered to allow this, or because the major streets were often so busy and occupied that the intervening space was simply unavailable. Furthermore, it would surely mean that aristocrats seeking to travel in expansive retinues, within mule-drawn litters or carriages, were constrained in the routes they could take through the urban topography, as many streets would be incompatible with such transportation (see chapter two for the discussion of Olympias' movements in Constantinople). Therefore, the efficiency of mobile seclusion was surely limited.

⁹¹⁹ C. La Rocca, 'An Arena of Abuses and Competing Powers: Rome in Cassiodorus's *Variae*', in R. Balzaretti, J. Barrow, and P. Skinner (eds), *Italy and Early Medieval Europe: Papers for Chris Wickham*, (Oxford, 2018), p. 209.

⁹²⁰ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 94 (3.29).

⁹²¹ Berger (2000), p. 163.

ii. Women in crowds

Any efforts at avoiding men in the streets of Rome and Constantinople must have been rendered especially futile during the various city-wide events, both regular and otherwise, that took place in these urban centres. As discussed, women are often ignored in representations of crowds and, where they are explicitly referenced, it often served the rhetorical purpose of indicating to the audience that the *whole* urban populace had turned out to witness an event. As outlined in previous chapters, there was a desire for both men and women to be physically present at certain key occasions. However, this generated a particular tension; late antique men, Christian or otherwise, wanted both men and women in attendance at particular moments, while also wanting elite women to maintain expected standards of modesty and propriety. This could be, in some circumstances, avoided by the separation of elite women from the rest of a crowd, wherein those women left mixing with men were of lower social status and thus of lesser, or no, concern.

That both men and women, rich and poor, observed such events is clear. Eusebius provides us with a description of Constantine's entry into Rome, after the victory over his rival Maxentius. We are told that the 'whole Roman populace' came to watch his arrival, including 'men, women, and children', some of whom were clearly from the wealthier echelons, given the 'countless multitudes of servants' in their midst.⁹²² Ammianus provides a similar picture for Julian's entry into Constantinople, where those of all ages and both sexes flooded out of the city to see him, while Pacatus' speech to Theodosius, in Rome, likewise points to huge crowds assembled to witness an imperial *adventus*.⁹²³ Even in the case of Constantius' visit to Rome, which Ammianus is keen to play down (by pointing out that it was sprung upon an urban populace that apparently did not wish to see it), it is acknowledged that the occasion drew large crowds.⁹²⁴

Despite the rhetorical nature of such representations, as discussed previously, I see no reason to doubt the assertion that large crowds gathered upon the event that an emperor,

⁹²² Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 1.39: ἄνδρες ἅμα γυναῖξι καὶ παισὶ καὶ οἰκετῶν μυρίοις, trans. Friedhelm Winkelmann (ed.), *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 1, 2nd edn., (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 7), (Berlin, 1991).

⁹²³ Ammianus Marcellinus, 22.2.4; Pacatus, *Panegyric*, 21.1-3.

⁹²⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.10.6.

with his magnificent retinue, entered either city. That both men and women were present in the crowds was surely also a reflection of real practice. After all, such descriptions, when they appear in panegyrics, were aimed at an audience with a relatively immediate memory of the event, meaning complete fabrications were unlikely.⁹²⁵ Indeed, it was important that those in reception of the panegyric recognised the events as described. As Gillet explains, while the modern reader cannot see the audience that received the piece, this audience did not ‘just passively witness the message of the panegyric; it must actively acknowledge it as true’.⁹²⁶ However, the social makeup of the crowd, as opposed to its sexual composition, is often unclear.

The appearance of significant individuals in public could also quickly draw mixed crowds of both men and women. Again, where the sex of the crowd is alluded to, its social composition (whether nonelite or otherwise) is often omitted. For instance, the assembly that followed Daniel the Stylite’s entry into Constantinople seems to have been a mixture of both men and women, with one woman (of unknown status) forcing her way to the front of the mob in order to receive blessings from the famous ascetic.⁹²⁷ This crowd was so dense that people – including Daniel himself – were at serious risk of being crushed to death.⁹²⁸ Similarly, when Arcadius went to visit a chapel within the city, Socrates recounts that so many people crowded to see the emperor, and followed him on his way back from the chapel, that a building collapsed.⁹²⁹ In each case, we do not know the social position of those involved.

Men and women also surrounded the Great Church, and the streets nearby, in order to catch sight of the bishop John Chrysostom upon the occasion of his exile.⁹³⁰ In each of these cases, the presence of men and women together in crowds did not, it seems, merit any condemnation or concern. In these given examples, the crowds are described as being tightly packed together and disordered, suggesting all sexes were included in the fray.

⁹²⁵ S. MacCormack, ‘Latin prose panegyrics’, in T. A. Dorey (ed.), *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II*, (London, 1975), pp. 158-159; On this also see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West*, (Cambridge, 1986).

⁹²⁶ A. Gillet, ‘Epic Panegyric and Political Communication in the Fifth-Century West’, in L. Grigg and G. Kelly (eds), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, Oxford University Press, (Oxford, 2012) p. 284.

⁹²⁷ *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, 79.

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁹²⁹ Socrates, *Church History*, 6.23.

⁹³⁰ Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 10.

However, whether we are discussing the poor masses, or both elite and nonelite, is unclear. Indeed, in the case of Daniel's entry into the city, the noblewoman who eventually approaches him does so inside a church, rather than in the crowd.⁹³¹ Meanwhile, the elite women present during Chrysostom's exist - his deaconesses - are likewise found within the church and not outside in the crowds.⁹³² The presence of elite women in such spontaneous crowds is, therefore, questionable.

However, there is no reason to suspect that the general population arranged themselves *en masse* into separate groups of men and women, or according to their various social stations, during such spontaneous events. The frantic nature of the surging crowds often described in the sources leads one to suspect that no organisation was apparent, especially as people hurriedly coalesced in order to catch sight of this or that. Such a mix of people could be presented positively. Prudentius wrote of how 'the majestic city disgorges her Romans in a stream; with equal ardour patricians and plebeian host are jumbled together shoulder to shoulder, for the faith banishes distinctions of birth'.⁹³³ This touches upon the tendency in late antique Christian literature, as mentioned in chapter one, to frame crowds in a unifying, Christian context.

Other occasions that drew crowds were the many games that were held in each city. With the attendance of so many people, an apparently frequent consumption of alcohol, and the presence of rival circus factions, there came sporadic violence and unrest.⁹³⁴ Here, it is difficult to unpick the reality from rhetoric. When Dio Chrysostom spoke of the outrageous behaviour of certain Alexandrian crowds, gathered on the occasion of games, he pointed to the fact that even women participated in the violence.⁹³⁵ In such cases it is hard to gauge the degree of exaggeration (or lack thereof). No doubt some women took part in violence alongside men. Procopius was outraged that women joined the thuggish members of the

⁹³¹ *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, 82.

⁹³² Palladius, *Dialogue on Life of John Chrysostom*, 10.

⁹³³ Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom*, 11.199-202: *Urbs augusta suos vomit effunditque Quirites, una et patricos abitione pari confundit plebeia falanx umbonibus aequis discrimen procerum praecipitante fide*, trans. LCL.

⁹³⁴ On the representation of crowds at the games, see Lim, R., 'In the "temple of laughter": Visual and literary representations of spectators at Roman games', *Studies In The History Of Art*, (1999), Vol.56, pp. 343-362.

⁹³⁵ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 42.32.

Blue and Green factions in accosting people in the streets of Constantinople.⁹³⁶ In these cases, we might suppose that the women involved were not from among the elite.

However, despite the numerous instances of urban rioting and chaotic crowds in either city, women rarely appear in crowds. As discussed in chapter two, late antique authors, like those before them, tended towards gender neutral terms when describing urban crowds. Even where we might think to find women, such as among the friends and neighbours of the prefect Lampadius, when they threw tiles from their roofs to protect his property from the angry commons who sought to burn it down, we cannot see them.⁹³⁷ Earlier sources, right back to Homer, are clear that women tended to be the ones who threw roof tiles when forced to engage in urban violence.⁹³⁸ In Late Antiquity, we hear of tile-throwing women who apparently drove the Byzantine general Narses out of Alexandria.⁹³⁹ For those throwing tiles in the works of Ammianus, however, we hear only of *vicini et familiae*.⁹⁴⁰

Other depictions of crowds appear in panegyrics, such as that delivered upon the sixth consulship of Honorius, in Rome. The poet Claudian spoke of ‘one huge crowd’ that ‘filled all the slope between the Palatine hill and the Milvian bridge’; a significant distance that indicates the huge numbers involved.⁹⁴¹ Presumably, the ordering and segregation of such masses would have been difficult to organise, given the presence of so many in relatively confined spaces. As alluded to above, both Rome and Constantinople were criss-crossed by innumerable narrow streets. Even the *Mese*, Constantinople’s biggest thoroughfare, was only 25 metres wide.⁹⁴² Therefore, it is hard to imagine any widespread or effective spatial organisation, along sexual or social lines. If elite women thus wished to be at a distance from other women and men, they likely needed to remove themselves from the crowds altogether.

⁹³⁶ Procopius, *Persian Wars*, 1.24.6.

⁹³⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.3.9.

⁹³⁸ W. D. Penrose, *Postcolonial Amazons: Female Masculinity and Courage in Ancient Greek and Sanskrit Literature*, (Oxford, 2016), p. 27.

⁹³⁹ B. William, ‘Roof tiles and urban violence in the ancient world’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, Vol.37, No.1, (1996), p. 68.

⁹⁴⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, 27.3.9.

⁹⁴¹ Claudian, *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius, 585-590: omne Palatino quod pons a colle recedit Mulvius et quantum licuit consurgere tectis*.

⁹⁴² M. M. Mango, ‘The Porticoed Street at Constantinople in the Fourth Century’, in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, (Leiden, 2001), p. 46.

In these panegyrics, which were principally designed to praise the honorand, we see how the need for modest and elite women to spectate the event could be balanced against their needs to showcase modesty. Certain women, particularly those of substantial means, could indeed remove themselves from crowds. In the same panegyric, Claudian claimed that ‘the ground seethed with men, the lofty buildings were aglow with mothers’.⁹⁴³ Likewise, in a panegyric delivered on the occasion of Stilicho’s consulship, he spoke of ‘how the roads cannot be seen for the people, the roofs for the matrons’.⁹⁴⁴ Here, we see the crowds in ideal terms, with people organised in the way Claudian’s audience would most like to see them. In this idealised arrangement, it is typically *matronae* who are separated from the crowds, not women in general. As referenced above, we should assume such a panegyric reflected, to a certain degree, the actual event.

Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, watching such events unfold from one’s rooftop made perfect sense, in that not only would it provide a better view for the onlooker, but it allowed respectable women to witness urban spectacles without needing to step beyond the bounds of the *domus* or mingle with the masses in the streets. Furthermore, that Claudian’s description referenced noticing women on the rooftops means they could be seen by others, allowing them to publicly advertise their modest location within the event to cohabitants of the city. Now, whether every building had a rooftop that could, safely, accommodate members of the household is unknown. In addition, just because our panegyrists did not reference the presence of elite women in the crowds below does not mean none were ever there. Nevertheless, we are presented with clear indications that some respectable women could, and did, be separate from crowds at civic events.

As whereabouts of ordinary women were not typically of interest, they could be excluded from representations of crowds. Another idealised depiction of a Constantinopolitan crowd can be seen in the late antique Trier Ivory (see Figure 11). The scene it portrays appears to be an *adventus*, or the transportation of relics, into the imperial capital. The spectating crowds can be seen on the ground, looking out from upper-story balconies, and climbing

⁹⁴³ Claudian, *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius, 585-590: undare videres ima viris, altas effulgere matribus aedes*, trans. LCL. The reference to ‘mothers’ is surely to underline their elite status.

⁹⁴⁴ Claudian, *On the Consulship of Stilicho, 3.63-4: nonne vides et plebe vias et tecta latere matribus?*, trans. LCL.

atop the roof of a church. However, all the figures portrayed in this image appear to be male, with the sole exception of the empress, who appears standing at the entrance to the church.⁹⁴⁵ We are again presented with evidence that, in material representations, the empress defied rules applied to ordinary women; where they are entirely absent from the image, she occupies a central role within it. Similar idealised depictions of all-male crowds can, as discussed previously, be seen on the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

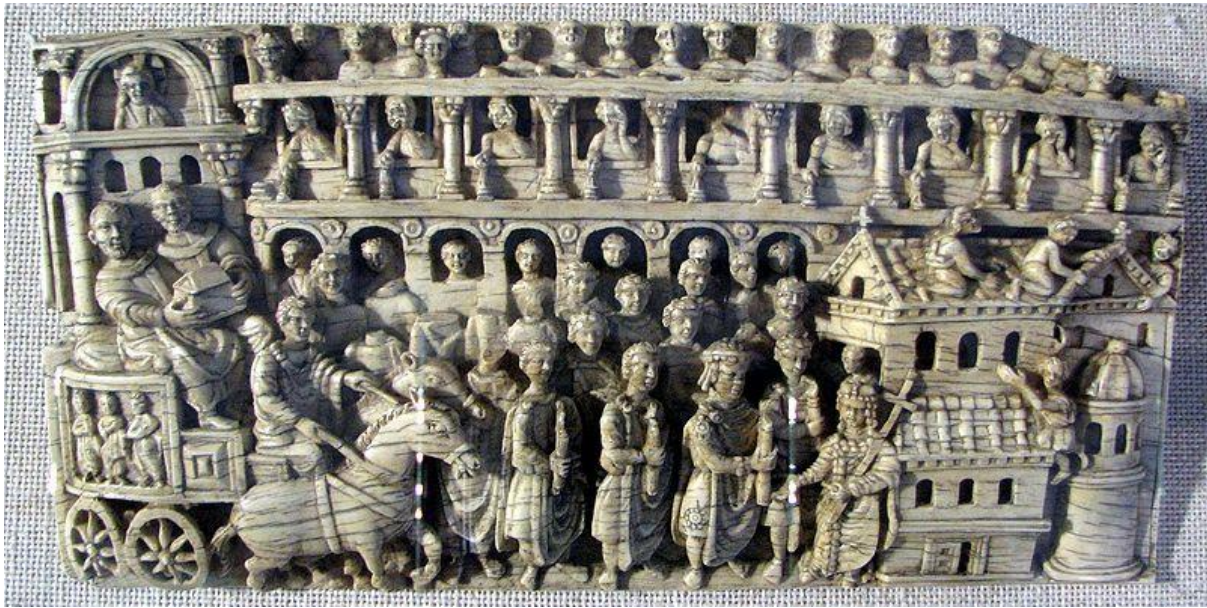


Figure 11 – The Trier Adventus Ivory.⁹⁴⁶

People of all sexes are also referenced as attending special events such as the weddings and funerals of important aristocrats and members of the imperial family. Again, we can see that some form of segregation on the basis of sex and status could feature in these events. For example, the men and women who attended the wedding of the young Constantius in 336 (possibly in Constantinople), and who were entertained by the emperor Constantine at the event, were those of the elite. Meanwhile, we can assume the ordinary people of Constantinople were kept at some distance. Furthermore, we are told that the men and

⁹⁴⁵ Holum (1989), p.107; The precise dating and empress in question have been debated, though some believe it depicts Pulcheria; K. G. Holum and G. Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory, Adventus Ceremonial, and the Relics of St. Stephen', *Dumbarton Oak Papers*, Vol.33, (1979), pp. 115-33. The figures spectating from the balconies were unlikely to be ordinary onlookers responding reactively to a spectacle, but rather people who were part of the ceremony, as the setting appears to be in the imperial complex. Therefore, that these evidently important men dominate the image, with the empress appearing as the only woman, is perhaps not too surprising.

⁹⁴⁶ This Wikipedia and Wikimedia Commons image is from the user Chris 73 and is freely available at [//commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elfenbeintafel_mit_Reliquienprozession,_Konstantinopel,_5._Jahrhundert.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elfenbeintafel_mit_Reliquienprozession,_Konstantinopel,_5._Jahrhundert.jpg) under the creative commons cc-by-sa 3.0 license.

women who attended the wedding were stationed separately from one another, suggesting further segregation based on sex.⁹⁴⁷

In giving her speech to those at her husband's funeral, described in chapter two, the Roman noblewoman Paulina must have been in reasonably close proximity to, we assume, both men and women.⁹⁴⁸ Elite individuals, in particular, were involved in funerary processions. Achantia, the wife of the prefect Maternus Cynegius, attended the funeral of her husband, in Constantinople, in 388 CE. His body was laid to rest in the Church of the Holy Apostles for a short time, before his wife departed with the body, on foot, in a procession out of the city and towards Spain, where her husband had been born.⁹⁴⁹ Funerary processions could also involve the hiring of professional wailers and mourners, who were often female. We hear of this, from Chrysostom, in Constantinople. However, as Sarah Bond has indicated, we have no evidence of female funerary workers in Rome or Italy.⁹⁵⁰

Religious veneration, too, brought crowds together. A number of celebrations in both cities must have led to the assembly of people. The festivals of Magna Mater, for instance, involved popular processions across Rome. The rites of the *parentalia*, as discussed in chapter two, saw the urban populace exiting the city on their way to suburban shrines, which were also popular places of worship throughout Late Antiquity on account of the various *martyria* that appeared there. While we are not given spatial arrangements for such festivals, we do hear of men and women cavorting together on the banks of the Tiber in rites to Anna Paremma, coming into contact with one another during the *Lupercalia*, and are told of women and prostitutes running about the Circus Maximus during the notoriously boisterous *Floralia*.⁹⁵¹ Again, we might assume elite women could remove themselves from certain crowds, as John Lydus suggests noblewomen did during the *Parentalia*.⁹⁵²

Mixed crowds also came together, of their own accord, to celebrate Christian festivals and martyrs. The mixed crowds of Prudentius were apparently streaming out of the city to visit

⁹⁴⁷ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 4.49.

⁹⁴⁸ As mentioned previously, while Paulina was no doubt present for the speech, she may not have delivered the words herself.

⁹⁴⁹ PLRE, vol.1, (Maternus Cynegius 3), p. 235.

⁹⁵⁰ S. Bond, *Trade and Taboo : Disreputable Professions in the Roman Mediterranean*, (Michigan, 2016), p. 82.

⁹⁵¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.523; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.12.6; John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 4.49; Martial, *Epigrams*, 1.3; Seneca, *Letters*, 96; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 1.20.

⁹⁵² John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 2.29.

the shrine of Hippolytus, while jostling waves of people would make their way to various churches and shrines.⁹⁵³ Festivals would sometimes happen on the same day, filling the thoroughfares with worshippers hurrying from one place to the next. Prudentius wrote of how, at one time, the ‘people of Romulus go pouring through the streets two separate ways, for the same day is busy with two festivals’.⁹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, other Christian activities must have seen elite women come into close proximity with non-familial men, such as during the dispensation of alms to beggars that, as discussed previously, some distributed and managed personally.

We can assume, in both Rome and Constantinople, that such self-assembled, naturally occurring crowds were rarely well-organised. There was, therefore, both freedom and danger in those spaces approaching, and surrounding, places of worship. Jerome warned Laeta that young virgins should not visit shrines or churches without supervision, because they might be approached by young men.⁹⁵⁵ The spaces outside and around churches, shrines, and pilgrimage sites could be busy and crowded, especially during festivals or noteworthy events.⁹⁵⁶ For instance, Chrysostom remarked how many people had flooded towards the Great Church when they had found out that the unpopular consul and eunuch, Eutropius, had taken refuge there.⁹⁵⁷

Evidently then, though women were often overlooked in the representation of crowds, we are told of their presence at certain events, in both positive and negative contexts. While it seems that nonelite women were likely often jumbled together with men amidst the fray, there are indications that elite women could sometimes separate themselves from the masses. However, we should be wary of assuming this was always the case, as it is in the interest of our sources to portray crowds, particularly in the case of panegyrics and positive representations, as segregated along the lines of what was considered proper and ideal. Nevertheless, real concerns for modesty were surely reflected in the practices of at least

⁹⁵³ Prudentius, *Crowns of Martyrdom*, 11.199-202.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.57-58: *Aspice, per bifidas plebs Romula funditur plateas, lux in duobus fervet una festis*, trans. LCL.

⁹⁵⁵ Jerome, *Letters*, 107.9.

⁹⁵⁶ On the hectic nature of such spaces, including the selling of soap outside a church in Asia Minor, see S. Bangert, ‘The Archaeology of Pilgrimage: Abu Mina and Beyond’, in D. M. Gwynn and S. Bangert (eds), *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*, (Leiden, 2010), p. 295.

⁹⁵⁷ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Eutropius*, 1.3.

some elite women, who would not wish to be associated with the crowds, or whose husbands and fathers would not permit it.

iii. Organised crowds and processions

Not all urban crowds in Late Antiquity were reactionary or haphazard in their assembly and composition. Planned processions (some ecclesiastical and others imperial) took place in both cities. As outlined in chapter two, Constantinople clearly outcompeted Rome by a wide margin in this respect. Processions were a regular feature of life in the eastern city and it is clear that women were present at a number of these. As with the poetry of Prudentius, mentioned above, the processions (and descriptions of them) were intended to portray a coherent Christian community, and thus women were granted a role to play as recognised members of that community.

As evidenced in chapter one, Chrysostom was unambiguous that female participation was accepted, expected, and without concern in these circumstances. During the procession to the martyr church of St Thomas, in which the saint's relics were transported by the populace, the bishop, and the empress, Chrysostom explicitly points out not only the presence of women, but even of those modest virgins who would not normally venture outdoors.⁹⁵⁸ Here, the tendency to not single out individuals among a crowd, as discussed above, is abandoned. The bishop wanted to showcase how *all* the faithful had turned out to welcome the arrival of holy relics into the city. Despite this, information on the precise spatial arrangement of the event is not forthcoming.

We can, however, make some basic assumptions. The *mese* was no wider than 25m, while the descriptions of both ecclesiastical and imperial processions in Constantinople are keen to emphasise the tremendous number of participants. Surely, keeping such a procession carefully segregated, while maintaining a coherent moving whole, would have been difficult. Furthermore, as discussed above, sources suggest buildings were constantly intruding into public space. As such, we should not automatically assume that even the *mese* maintained a constant width, at least not in practice. Finally, alongside these difficulties, we must

⁹⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, *That People Should Come Together Frequently*, (PG 63, 461-468), cited in K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, (California, 1989), p. 57.

confront the fact that nowhere in the sources is it suggested that such segregation was enforced, or even desired, during these events in Constantinople (even if we might suppose elite virgins were somewhat separate from the crowds of ordinary citizens).

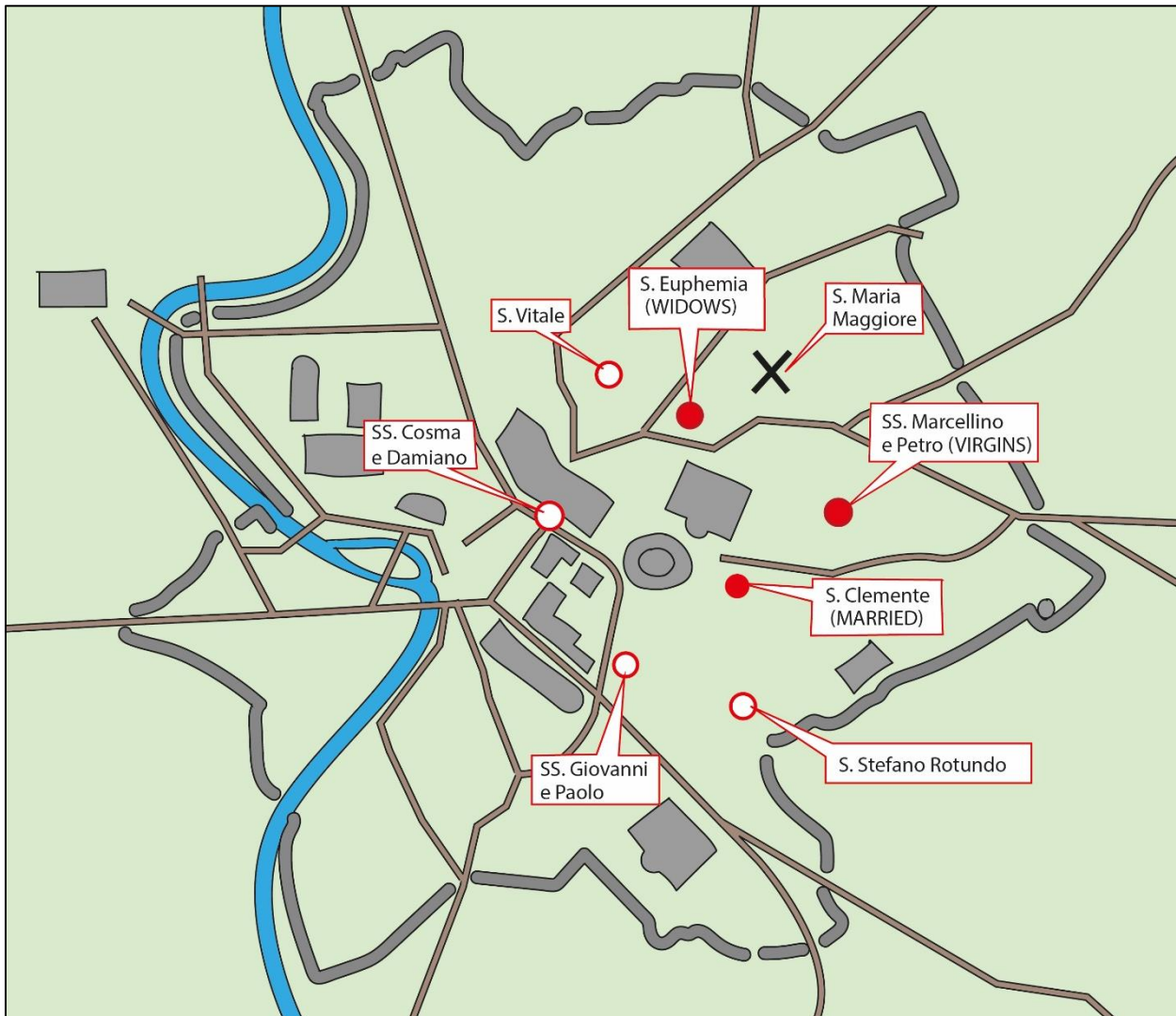


Figure 12 – Gregory's *laetania septiformis* in 590 CE.

There were, however, in Rome two definite occasions where segregation was actively employed upon moving crowds. Under the pontificate of Gregory, in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, the Christian community was organised into various social groups on the occasion of large, penitential processions. The *Laetaniae Septiformes*, extraordinary and in response to a devastating famine, saw the Christian community separated into seven different groups, each setting out from a different church (see Figure 12). The seven groups were: clergy, monks, nuns, children, laymen, widows, and married women – each accompanied by priests of the different ecclesiastical regions. Here, women were not only

separated from other men, but from other women on the basis of their relationship to the church and their marital status. Virgins were distinguished from widows, and widows from wives.

While this separation might, initially, seem at odds with the message of community cohesion, the procession concluded with all groups converging at the basilica of S Maria Maggiore. The three groups of women set out from SS. Marcellino e Pietro (virgins), S. Eufemia (widows), and S. Clemente (married women).⁹⁵⁹ It is striking that these represent three of the closest churches to S Maria Maggiore, along some of the main roadways, while the male groups were travelling from as far as S. Stefano Rotondo, over twice the difference when compared to the journey undertaken by the nuns. It is also crucial to note that, in each case, they were supervised by the clergymen of the corresponding ecclesiastical region. This procession, then, ensured relative segregation of women from other members of the community, but saw them in the company of priests. Furthermore, it is unclear to what extent the women, on the procession, would have been removed from other pedestrian traffic in the streets (if indeed not *all* persons in the city were involved).

Several years later, the Pope initiated the same programme (see Figure 13), but with different starting points assigned to the groups, in response to another, this time unspecified, disaster. This time, the churches from which they departed were further away, for all groups. Despite this, widows and virgins, leaving from S. Vitale and SS. Cosma e Damiano respectively, departed from the two churches closest to S. Maria Maggiore, which again served as the endpoint. The married women, however, were now departing from S. Stefano Rotondo, which was as removed as many of the others from which men departed, such as the clergymen who left S. Giovanni in Laterano.⁹⁶⁰ This is surely reflective of the fact that virgins and widows were deemed of superior modesty, and greater need of protection, than married (and therefore more 'worldly') women.

⁹⁵⁹ M. M. Andrews, 'The Laetaniae Septiformes of Gregory I, S. Maria Maggiore and Early Marian Cult in Rome', in I. Ostenberg, S. Malmberg, J. Bjørnebye (eds), *The Moving City; Processions, Passages and Promenades in Ancient Rome*, (London, 2015), p. 155.

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155; J. Latham, 'The Making of a Papal Rome: Gregory I and the letania septiformis', in A. Cain and N. Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, (2009), p. 296.

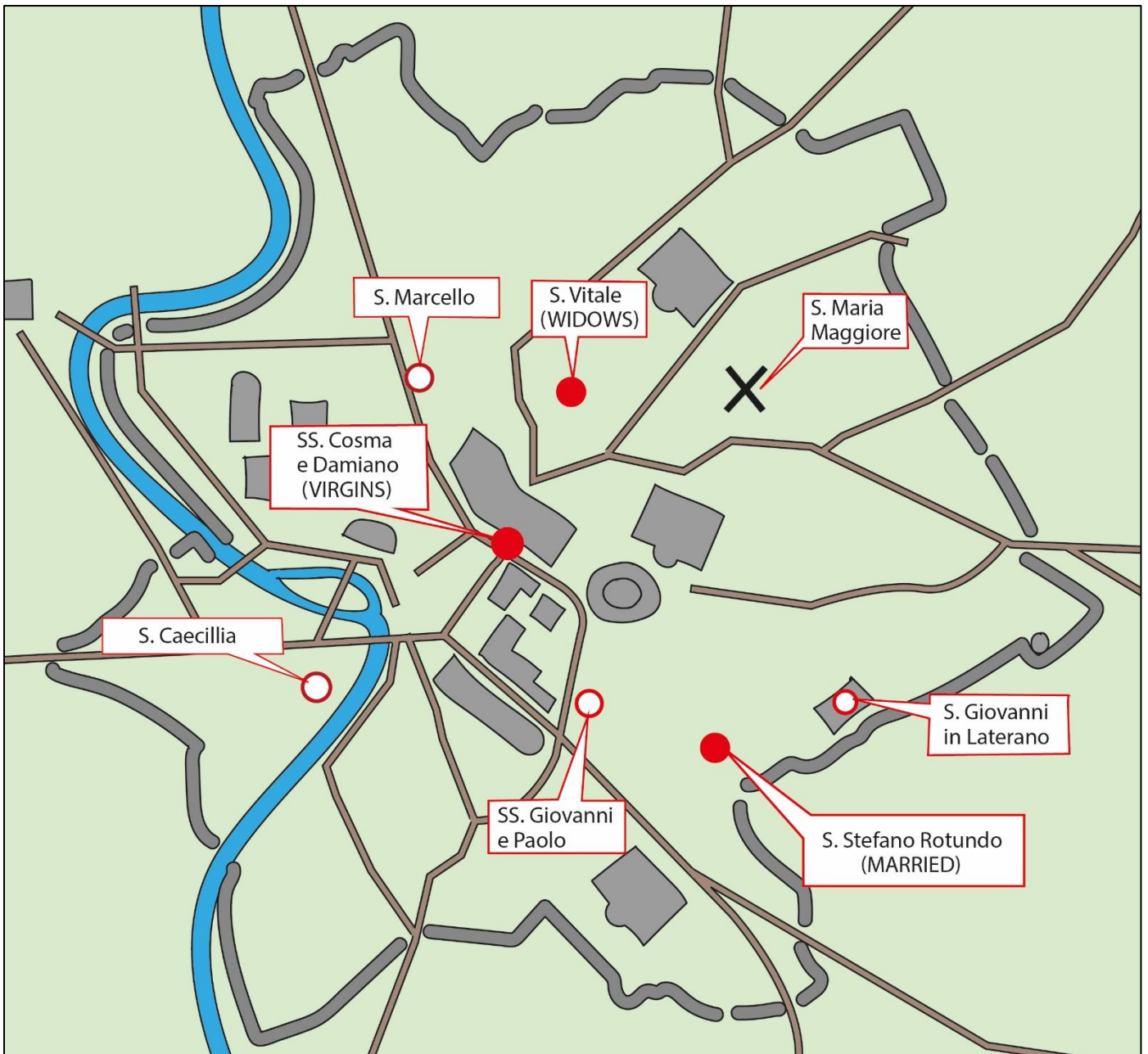


Figure 13 – Gregory's *laetania septiformis* in 603 CE.

In each case, the women were separated from men, moving in the company of their own, towards a church within which they would have been separated from men once more (as evidenced in chapter four). It is difficult to extrapolate, from this, whether the Roman church had different attitudes towards female involvement in processions, alongside men, than the church in Constantinople. These two processions were exceptional, not regular (although they could have been reflective of more regular practices that the sources do not convey). Furthermore, it is perfectly possible that the church in Constantinople did not do this because it was impractical, rather than unwanted. As discussed, the geography and

urban plan of Rome, with its numerous large churches, allowed for processions of this nature. Constantinople, in contrast, had only one main processional route and did not, until much later in the period, equip itself with an array of impressive churches at points across the cityscape. Therefore, it might well have been the case that there was simply more scope for segregating largescale processions in Rome than Constantinople.

iv. Nonelite women in the streets

At this point, we should reiterate the distinction between elite and nonelite women, and the expectations around their movement. As discussed in the previous two chapters, movements and behaviour that were considered unacceptable for elite women seem to have been quietly tolerated in those of a somewhat less salubrious social standing, who were therefore not held to the same requirements. The overwhelming majority of women could not afford to be permanently at leisure, and the various means by which they secured their livelihoods often entailed venturing into public spaces and interacting, or at least coming into close contact with, extra-familial men.

The various occupations held by women, as outlined in chapter two, often necessitated close contact with men in the outdoor spaces of their cities. The dancing girls in the streets as portrayed by Ammianus, and the vegetable sellers in the market-places as described by Chrysostom, surely came into regular contact with members of the opposite sex.⁹⁶¹

Presumably such women had to move through the streets in order to sell their wares, reach their places of work, and return home. Even where a profession seems like it might principally involve contact between women, such as that of midwife, the work involved necessitated travel. In the tale of Eunapius, as referenced previously, the midwife (who also worked in a wine shop) had to exit into the street in order to reach the woman in labour.⁹⁶² However, as alluded to in chapter two, such work is often overlooked by our elite sources. It is therefore difficult to discuss in precise terms its spatial elements.

⁹⁶¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.19; John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 12.5.

⁹⁶² Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, 387; although we might imagine that ordinary, non-elite midwives served women in the local area, rather than traversing the entire city in performance of their duties.

One profession that does receive considerable attention in the sources, as an occupation that raised questions of sexual ethics and female modesty, was that of prostitution.⁹⁶³ I shall now focus on this particular profession, as it is sufficiently discussed in the literary material. While the nature of the work meant those women involved must have come into contact with extrafamilial men, there is the question of whether officials could, or did, attempt to zone spaces of their cities. Furthermore, here questions arise about the extent to which space and movement, as outlined by Tuan, are associated with freedom. Prostitutes might have appeared in public spaces more than, say, elite widows. But to what extent were these women *choosing* where to ply their trade? Of course, the daily lives of prostitutes and the logistics of brothel management are not elucidated in the Roman sources, but Constantinopolitan legal texts aimed at curbing the cruelty of pimps suggests many prostitutes were managed through coercion and had their movements tightly controlled.⁹⁶⁴

To begin with, there has been an assumption on the part of some scholars, such as Wallace-Hadrill and Laurence, that from the classical period onwards the Romans enacted a policy of moral zoning within their urban topographies, seeking to keep the less salubrious enterprises away from areas of higher moral value, such as temples, *fora*, and palaces.⁹⁶⁵ Other arguments, such as that of Harper, have highlighted Christian distaste for prostitution and subsequent efforts to reform and curb it from the mid-fifth century onwards.⁹⁶⁶ Finally, there are the arguments of those such as Brundage that Constantinople, beginning with Constantine, effectively saw the zoning and creation of an officially demarcated 'red-light district', in which prostitution could be contained and prevented from contaminating the rest of the new, Christian city.⁹⁶⁷

To my mind, none of these arguments are tremendously convincing. It seems to me that, while the evidence suggests there were more efforts to curb the practice in Constantinople than in Rome, it continued largely unabated in both cities until at least the mid-sixth century, when efforts to prevent it in the eastern capital were significantly undertaken by Justinian

⁹⁶³ I have omitted discussion of beggars here as their precise locations in Constantinople and Rome, other than outside certain churches and homes, is unclear. Moreover, this has been discussed in chapter two pp. 127-129.

⁹⁶⁴ Procopius, *Buildings*, 1.9.4-5; Justinian, *Novels*, 14; McGinn, (1998), p. 70.

⁹⁶⁵ Wallace-Hadrill (1995), p. 32; Laurence (2007), p. 26.

⁹⁶⁶ Harper (2014), p. 221.

⁹⁶⁷ J. A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, (Chicago, 1987), p. 105.

and Theodora; an effort perhaps fuelled by the influential empress' own experience of poverty and prostitution. Even at this late juncture, however, there is nothing to suggest the authorities would have, or could have, been successful. For instance, if identifying brothels from generic poor housing was difficult, then keeping track of the 'free roaming' prostitutes, and identifying them from the general populace, must have been vastly more challenging.

McGinn's arguments that prostitution was not zoned are certainly supported by the sources for Rome, which place prostitutes in almost every part of the urban landscape, including public spaces around temples, baths, and even outside the Senate House.⁹⁶⁸ Alongside the prostitutes who could be found at such points, there were also a variety of places wherein they might work, thus removed from the streets. McGinn argues that brothels tended to be built in areas of poor housing, blending in with the surrounding structures, as well as being incorporated into other constructions, such as the single-bed rooms (*cellae meretriciae*) attached to taverns.⁹⁶⁹ Ammianus is clear that, in Rome, men would meet their favourite courtesans at the baths.⁹⁷⁰ As such, we might imagine the sale of sex to have been reasonably ubiquitous in the late antique city, with a mix of brothels and street prostitution (as is the case in many modern cities).

The fourth-century regionary catalogues list 46 brothels in Rome, but the only information on any location is the recording of *lupanaria* in the area of the Caelian Hill, near the site of St Stefano Rotundo.⁹⁷¹ However, if brothels were as commonplace as McGinn argues, then why are only 46 listed? The answer, I would suggest, depends entirely upon the purpose of the regionary catalogues. If, as has been argued, the *Notitia* and the *Curiosum* were administrative lists, serving some purpose within the Urban Prefect's office, then we might imagine this as an attempt to keep track of various brothels.⁹⁷² If such enterprise was subject to taxation, which it was, then somebody within the state apparatus must have needed to know how many such establishments existed and where they operated. McGinn has

⁹⁶⁸ McGinn (1998), p. 13.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 15.

⁹⁷⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, 28.4.9.

⁹⁷¹ *The Notitia, Curiosum, and Appendices*, in H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, Vol.2, Part 2, (Berlin, 1871), pp. 539-574.

⁹⁷² For the various theories put forward, and the problems with each of them, see Hermansen, G. 'The Population of Imperial Rome: The Regionaries.' *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, Vol 27, No.1, (1978), pp.129-68.

suggested that the 46 brothels listed in the catalogues could have simply referred to the very large ‘purpose-built brothels’, as opposed to smaller establishments or other places where sex was available, such as in taverns.⁹⁷³ If, however, the lists were intended for use as a ‘guidebook’ to the city of Rome, or an advertisement of its wonders, then the inclusion of brothels would suggest a rather relaxed attitude towards the sale of sex within Rome.⁹⁷⁴

As alluded to already, prostitutes were not necessarily confined to the brothel. Free-roaming prostitutes would go wherever demand dictated. To this end, the sources are clear that parts of the Circus Maximus and Domitian Amphitheatre were, in Late Antiquity, popular hubs of solicitation for the crowds heading towards the games and races.⁹⁷⁵ Chrysostom noted that prostitutes in Constantinople would stand in the street outside their houses.⁹⁷⁶ Brothels also employed female ‘procurers’, to approach men along the main thoroughfares and then lead them through the alleyways towards the brothel.⁹⁷⁷ At Constantinople, Chrysostom referenced a drunken old procuress being dragged into the Forum for punishment.⁹⁷⁸ There also seems to have been an assumption on the part of Roman men, reflected both in their law and discourse, that nonelite women who worked in the ‘service industry’, whether they were hairdressers, dancers, bakers, or barmaids, also sold sex.⁹⁷⁹ It is impossible to unpick the truth from the invective here, but the precarious nature of lower class employment and income could, no doubt, temporarily force some women into prostitution.

Clearly, then, such women were coming into regular contact with men and, in the case of free-roaming street prostitutes, were traversing the city and engaging with public spaces. However, we should be careful not to equate such extensive movement with freedom. Firstly, the classical sources point to a range of experiences for prostitutes. Juvenal wrote of those prostitutes who were dismissed by their pimp after a night’s work, free to go home when their ‘shift’ had ended.⁹⁸⁰ Seneca, meanwhile, spoke of those prostitutes who were effectively

⁹⁷³ McGinn (2004), p. 220.

⁹⁷⁴ N. Purcell, ‘The City of Rome’, in R. Jenkyns (ed.), *The Legacy of Rome: A New Appraisal*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 425; G. Hermansen, ‘The Population of Imperial Rome: The Regionaries’, *Historia*, Vol.17, No.1, (1978), p. 135.

⁹⁷⁵ G. S. Aldrete, *Daily Life in the Roman City: Rome, Pompeii and Ostia*, (London, 2004), p. 117.

⁹⁷⁶ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7.

⁹⁷⁷ Plaut. *Most.* 1.3.41-45; see also M. Petrova, ‘Single as a Lena’, in S. R. Huebner and C. Laes, *The Single Life in the Roman and Later Roman World*, (Cambridge, 2019), p. 169.

⁹⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 31.4.

⁹⁷⁹ McGinn (2004), p. 28.

⁹⁸⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 6.127.

imprisoned within the brothel and required special permission to leave, which was rarely ever granted.⁹⁸¹ Indeed, the control over slave prostitutes seems to have been particularly tight, with their movements often confined to the brothel.

However, we might imagine prostitutes in Constantinople to have been more restricted in their movements than in Rome and engagements with men outside the brothel, forced to practice in the shadier spaces of the city. Where we have evidence in Rome of prostitutes in key public places, the evidence for Constantinople points in the other direction. This does not, of course, mean that prostitutes did not loiter around the hippodrome during busy periods, or attempt to lure men away from the porticoed *mese* and towards the brothels secreted amongst the ramshackle buildings in the city's narrow, winding passageways. Indeed, Chrysostom suggests they stood outside their houses to advertise themselves to passers-by.⁹⁸² However, the evidence does suggest that the presence of prostitutes in public, coming into deliberate contact with men, would have been less obvious in Constantinople, if not necessarily less prevalent.

For instance, in Constantinople multiple sources provide evidence of imperial attempts to manage prostitution. I would argue that one can detect, in the eastern city, a hostility to prostitution that does not emerge in the sources for Rome. For instance, that the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* lists no brothels, compared to the catalogues for Rome which list 46, is not evidence of zero prostitution, because the literary and legal texts are clear that prostitution existed within the city. Unlike the Roman regionaries, the Constantinopolitan catalogue is reasonably clear in its purpose: it is a panegyric of the city.⁹⁸³ The aim of the document, by its own admission, is to advertise the splendour of a true Christian and imperial capital. As such, we can surmise that the compilers of the document made an active decision not to include the city's brothels, suggesting an official distaste for the practice.

Certainly, Christian thinkers were no fans of prostitution, which was far removed from the idealised state of chastity to which both men and women ought to aspire. Christianity did bring some change in the related discourse and, to a limited extent, the practice. The idea of

⁹⁸¹ Seneca, *Controversiae*, 1.2.

⁹⁸² John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7.

⁹⁸³ J. Matthews, 'The *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*', in Grig and Kelly (2012), pp. 81-86.

coerced sin emerged within Christian thought, with both theologians and hagiographies drawing on the problem of Christian women being forced, through slavery or punishment, into a life of sinful prostitution.⁹⁸⁴ This concern was reflected in a law of Constantius II, who forbade the practice of forcing Christian slaves into prostitution.⁹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, some action was taken against the use of prostitution as a punishment, in Rome, by Theodosius in 385 CE.⁹⁸⁶ However, as McGinn catalogues, the actions were few and far between, and often more concerned with targeting pimps than at actually ending, or curbing, the practice itself.⁹⁸⁷

And yet, for the most part, the profession seems to have been tolerated, and ignored, in Rome. In North Africa, meanwhile, Augustine suggested that prostitution was a necessary evil. Take away the prostitutes, he explained, 'and you will throw everything into confusion through lusts'.⁹⁸⁸ Not only this, but the imperial government, under Christian emperors, continued to tax brothels in Late Antiquity. The revenue from this was so substantial that, after vying to end the practice, the urban prefect of Constantinople, Florentinus, donated his own properties to the imperial coffers in an attempt to make up the shortfall.⁹⁸⁹ However, it is true that the hostility seen in Constantinople towards prostitution was not reflected in pre-Christian cities. I think this can be explained not just by the Christian character of the city, but also by the centralised power of the imperial court and its authority over the city, which meant it clearly felt able to exercise such control (or attempt to) over Constantinopolitan practices.

I would contend that McGinn is a little too dismissive of imperial attempts to manage the situation in the New Rome. The measures undertaken in Constantinople seem to have fallen into two categories: attempts to zone prostitution within the city, and efforts to eradicate the practice altogether. For instance, one text states that Constantine moved the city's prostitutes into the Zeugma district, which he decorated with a statue of Aphrodite – presumably to signal the district's newly lustful purpose.⁹⁹⁰ This, however, seems unlikely. Later sources suggest the practice was, as always, spread throughout the city, including

⁹⁸⁴ On this discussion see Harper (2004), pp. 220-222.

⁹⁸⁵ *CT* 15.8.1.

⁹⁸⁶ Socrates, *Church History*, 5.18.

⁹⁸⁷ McGinn (2004), p. 67.

⁹⁸⁸ Augustine, *On Order*, 2.12.

⁹⁸⁹ *Nov. Theod.* 15.1; *CT* 15.8.2.

⁹⁹⁰ *Patria Const.* 2.65.

hundreds of prostitutes that could be found in markets near the imperial palace, and the Zeugma district is never mentioned again in relation to prostitution.⁹⁹¹ Not only this, but it appears at odds with the emperor's rather pragmatic approach to the industry. As McGinn explains, it reads like another frightfully transparent attempt to portray the emperor as 'more Christian than he actually was.'⁹⁹²

There is also some evidence that prostitution was targeted for abolition under Theodosius, as preserved in the law codes.⁹⁹³ Meanwhile, Malalas records that Theodosius had prostitutes housed in special lodgings, near the carriage house of the urban prefect.⁹⁹⁴ Later, we have the reference of Chrysostom that suggests procuresses were liable to face public punishment.⁹⁹⁵ It is under Justinian, however, where we see the most concrete evidence of efforts to curb the practice. We are told that prostitution was outlawed throughout Constantinople. A series of measures were enacted; prostitutes were transferred to a convent across the Golden Horn, while pimps were driven out of the city.⁹⁹⁶ The intention seems to have been to remove prostitution entirely, rather than zone it. However, we might imagine any such laws simply served to push the practice further into the shadows. Writing in the late sixth century, after Justinian's laws were passed, Evagrius Scholasticus locates prostitution in the obscure parts of the city.⁹⁹⁷

As such, it seems that the possible zoning of prostitution was more apparent in Constantinople than Rome. In the former, we begin with alleged attempts during the Constantinian and Theodosian dynasties to regulate the spatial dynamics of the practice, keeping it confined to certain parts of the city. The evidence is suspect, given the desire of our authors to present the city and its emperors in a pious fashion, but the repeated references to such efforts, not seen in Rome, suggests there was at least a hostility to the practice that is not evident in the western city. By the time of Justinian, this hostility seems to have increased, with attempts made to remove prostitution from Constantinople

⁹⁹¹ J. A. Evans, *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian*, (Austin, 2003), p. 31; See also Chrysostom's assertion that prostitutes plied their trade outside their homes, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 15.7.

⁹⁹² McGinn (2004), p. 93.

⁹⁹³ *Nov. Theod.* 15.1; *CT* 15.8.2.

⁹⁹⁴ John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 13.39.

⁹⁹⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Acts*, 31.4.

⁹⁹⁶ Procopius, *Secret History*, 17.5-6; *Buildings*, 1.9.1; John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 18.24.

⁹⁹⁷ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Church History*, 3.3; See also A. K. Strong, *Prostitutes and Matrons in the Roman World*, (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 197-200.

entirely. While it is highly unlikely this could have ever been successful, it is reasonable to suppose that such efforts did, at least, succeed in moving both prostitutes and brothels to the less public and prestigious streets and areas of the urban topography.

v. Elite women in the streets

While poor women had no reputation (in Roman eyes) worth protecting, the elite were another matter. Their movements through and presence in the streets of Rome and Constantinople, where they could be viewed by others, had to be characterised by modesty. Furthermore, these spaces were characterised as sites of potential danger for respectable women, populated as they were with all manner of people, and thus segregation also served the practical purpose of providing a degree of protection. Considering the environment in which such movements were taking place – the size and nature of many of the streets as discussed earlier in the chapter – we should appreciate that any intervening distance between elite women and people in the streets was surely never too extensive. Crucially, as referenced in the introduction to this chapter, we see a notable difference between segregation within *space* as compared to *place*. We can also observe different views on how modest movement was best achieved, which were intensified by the arrival of a prominent Christian discourse.

Firstly, the difference between segregation of space as compared to place can be understood in terms of who was primarily responsible for enforcing such practices. Where segregation occurred at *places*, we can often see this being imposed upon people through the rules that governed those places, directed by civic or ecclesiastical authorities. For example, women who wished to visit the baths had to abide by stipulations that meant they could not bathe alongside men (although possibly not in certain baths). Women who attended churches, theatres, or made use of pagan temples were required, as were men, to occupy certain locations as per the rules in force at those places. Conversely, as I will go on to demonstrate, segregation of elite women within *spaces*, typically managed through the employment of vehicles and attendants, seems to have been eagerly adopted by elite women themselves, who were as keen to publicly display their high status and moral virtues as were elite men.

Secondly, while Romans had always reached different conclusions on the precise limits of what constituted acceptable female public display and appropriate movement, late antique

sources evince a greater divergence of opinion on the matter.⁹⁹⁸ Christian discourse brought with it a desire to see women move modestly through urban environments in a more austere manner, eschewing the vehicles and attendants that had long been associated with aristocratic travel. Alongside removing their jewels and finery, some Christian authors thought women should travel on foot, in demure clothing and with small retinues, so as not to attract the attention of others – especially men.⁹⁹⁹ Rather than spatially separating themselves from the surrounding crowds by litters, carriages, and attendants, they believed women best moved modestly when they did so in a manner that left them unnoticed by others. Of course, quite how many women took up their recommendations is unknown, but clearly some did (and some did not).

Modesty in motion: vehicles and attendants

Evidently, elite women were not only in possession of reputations that needed guarding against suspicion, but they also owned the means to ensure some protections were in place while navigating the crowds and streets of their cities. To this end, they made use of vehicles and employed attendants to accompany them on their travels. These instruments of ‘mobile seclusion’ served a dual purpose; firstly, they ensured distance from the people around them as they moved through the streets, placing physical barriers between themselves and others. Chaperones and litters could both remove a woman from view and prevent access to her. Secondly, they served as props in the elite female performance of modesty and display of status, much as standing upon rooftops during busy events might have achieved, ensuring that onlookers recognised the lofty societal positions and modest conduct of the elite they encountered.

From the days of the Republic, the relationship between aristocratic women and vehicles had been a source of concern for the elite male authors of the Roman world. This anxiety, in particular, seems to have stemmed from the use of vehicles within cities and, especially, Rome. The sources tell us that Republican women of note were, at one time, permitted to ride through the streets of Rome in carriages, as a mark of honour.¹⁰⁰⁰ However, the textual

⁹⁹⁸ On women’s walking see T. M. O’Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture*, (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 22-28.

⁹⁹⁹ On this see N. Adkin, ‘The Teaching of the Fathers Concerning Footwear and Gait’, *Latomus: Revue d’Etudes Latines*, Vol.42, No.4, (1983), pp. 885-86.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Livy, *Roman History*, 34.1.3.

sources also betray the discomfort this aroused in certain men, who clearly felt that placing women in control of such vehicles within the boundaries of the city was inappropriate. Ancient authors almost universally represented women as abusing this privilege, often with terrible consequences.¹⁰⁰¹ The combination of an unpredictable, feminine constitution with large, heavy carriages in a crowded environment could only ever produce chaotic outcomes. The fact that men permitted such travel in the first instance, then, is also an indication of how elite men could use the public appearances of their wives to showcase their own status.

Aside from these 'practical' concerns, there were long-standing questions over the appropriateness of allowing women to travel in such an eye-catching fashion. Again, we see the tension between public display of status and demure modesty. The Romans obviously struggled to agree on precisely where the boundaries lay, as the laws appear to have changed continuously throughout the classical and late antique periods. Towards the end of the Republic, women in Rome were prohibited from riding in carriages, with exceptions made only for empresses, Vestals, and roles in certain religious festivals.¹⁰⁰² Caesar extended this ban to all wheeled traffic during daylight hours.¹⁰⁰³ Domitian is said to have banned immoral women, such as adulteresses and prostitutes, from riding in litters within the city, while Hadrian, Severus Alexander, Aurelian, and Julian are all quoted as having tried to regulate the type of vehicles used within Rome and, in the case of Julian, Constantinople.¹⁰⁰⁴

The ever-shifting situation as depicted in the literary sources, along with a lack of archaeological evidence, makes the situation in Late Antiquity rather unclear. It is impossible to quantify the number of vehicles used by women, the frequency of their use, or the extent to which any of this had changed over time. What is apparent, however, is that elite women in both Rome and Constantinople employed vehicles as a means of displaying

¹⁰⁰¹ R. Laurence, 'Traffic and land transportation in and near Rome', in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2013), p. 16.

¹⁰⁰² Livy, *Roman History*, 34.1.3; O. Kiefer, *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome*, G. Highet and H. Highet (trans), (London, 2000), p. 62.

¹⁰⁰³ Suetonius, *Caesar*, 43; Livy, *Roman History*, 34.1.3.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Suetonius, *Domitian*, 8.3; On Domitian's ban see T. A. McGinn, 'Feminae Probrosae and the Litter', *The Classical Journal*, Vol.93, No.3, (1998), pp. 241-50; J. J Gardener, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, (Bloomington, 1991), p. 179.

their status and as a mechanism for spatial separation from others. Furthermore, the ancient and late antique discourse do offer some insights into these practices and the ways in which they might have changed. However, before discussing this in more detail it is important to consider the vehicles themselves, as women in Rome and Constantinople had access to – and made use of – various modes of transportation. These vehicles offered different levels of distance and seclusion from the reach and view of others.

The authors of Late Antiquity used a number of different words to refer to the vehicles employed within the city. For example, what English translators have recorded as ‘carriage’, Ammianus calls both *carrucha* and *vehiculum*.¹⁰⁰⁵ While the first of these words refers specifically to a travelling carriage, the second is a much more general term and might not hold precisely the same meaning. Meanwhile, the most common word found, for instance, in the sermons of Chrysostom is βασιτέριον (*basterna* / litter). Nevertheless, we can discern from the literary sources that there were three main types of vehicle employed by women, although there were various formations for each of these. Firstly, we have the carriage/coach (*carpentum* or *carrucha*), which would have been the largest vehicle available to aristocratic women. It was usually four-wheeled, and pulled by at least two horses or mules, but sometimes as many as four. Not only was this the biggest, but it was also the most prestigious method of transport available to elites of either sex.

Secondly there was the litter, of which there existed various manifestations. Some litters (*lectica*) were little more than a pillow and mattress, upon which the aristocrat would lay, while slaves or hired attendants carried them via poles which ran underneath the body of the vehicle.¹⁰⁰⁶ Some were open to the elements, while others were covered from above with oxen skin (*lectica aperta*), often with curtains that hung down and which could be closed.¹⁰⁰⁷ Others were not carried by slaves at all, but by a pair of mules (*basterna*), and these were almost always covered. Thirdly, there were the smaller carriages (*pilentum*), which were specifically associated with female transportation.¹⁰⁰⁸ These were smaller than the large coaches, typically consisting of two wheels, and were often elaborately decorated,

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.9, 16.6.16-17, 29.6.6

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 1.488; Horace, *Satires*, 1.2.98; R. Laurence, ‘Traffic and land transportation in and near Rome’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*, (Cambridge, 2013), p. 250.

¹⁰⁰⁷ O’Sullivan (2011), p. 72.

¹⁰⁰⁸ C. Anthon, *A Manual of Roman Antiquities*, (London, 1862), p. 396.

softly cushioned, and open on both sides of the vehicle, so that the person within was visible to those on her left and right.

While not always clear in the sources, the distinctions between these different vehicles do matter, as some offered more seclusion than others. It stands to reason that the wooden doors of a large, four-wheeled coach represented a somewhat more impassable barrier than a gossamer curtain, or no curtain at all. Furthermore, the different vehicles had different associations attached to them, and would have elicited different responses from the spectating urban population. In Late Antiquity, the four-wheeled carriage was most closely associated with members of the imperial household or senior administrative officials, although it was not necessarily limited to these groups alone. In Rome, Ammianus tells us that the urban prefect travelled in a carriage, as did the bishop. Later, in the sixth-century, Cassiodorus tells us that consuls, praetorian prefects, and the prefect of the grain supply were all provided with coaches in Rome.¹⁰⁰⁹

While it is difficult to know for certain, the sources suggest that the use of such vehicles within the cities themselves was subject to certain regulations. When Cassiodorus wrote to the *Vicarius* of Rome, he explained that that he was permitted to ride a carriage like one of the highest dignitaries.¹⁰¹⁰ By associating the use of this vehicle with the highest office-holders, Cassiodorus was clearly suggesting that only a limited number of individuals were permitted to travel in this way. As women were excluded from all official civic positions, such carriages must have been frequently beyond their reach (with the obvious exception of imperial women). Regarding the emperor Julian, we can see that the emperor made a point of allowing certain persons to make temporary use of public carriages when on official business in Constantinople. However, there were clear limitations placed upon this.¹⁰¹¹

Despite the relationship between carriages and office-holders, sources suggest that, in Rome, these vehicles were not used exclusively by this group. Ammianus complained of aristocrats who raced through the streets in unusually high coaches, taking enormous pride in their ostentatious transportation.¹⁰¹² He spoke of women who rode around the city with armies of

¹⁰⁰⁹ Cassiodorus, *Variae*, 6.3, 6.8, 6.20.

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.15.

¹⁰¹¹ Socrates, *Church History*, 3.1.

¹⁰¹² Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.9, 16.6.16.

attendants, all marching in mock procession before the carriage of their mistress.¹⁰¹³ In addition, we are told by the *Historia Augusta* that emperors, up until the end of the third century, widely distributed carriages as gifts (to both men *and* women) in Rome and that, during the reign of Aurelian, commoners were permitted to ride ornate coaches within the city as they pleased.¹⁰¹⁴ This is presented in the source not as benevolent or generous imperial largesse, but reckless and improper behaviour. Thus, we are to assume the author, and his intended audience, did not approve.

Of course, the accuracy of such statements made within the *Historia Augusta* is questionable, but the literary sources do tentatively suggest that, in Rome, there was more scope for non-imperial elites, including women, to make use of carriages. Meanwhile, given the concern over vehicles it seems unlikely that, as alleged, commoners were granted the right to ride silver carriages through the city's streets. Rather, this could have been a deliberate exaggeration by the late antique author, who had noticed a wider demographic making use of coaches in his own time. If there was greater freedom in Rome over the use of carriages among the wealthy, then we might imagine this was down to the absence of an emperor and imperial court, which dominated such forms of representation and had the means to enforce their will. Secondly, we might also suppose that the geography of Rome was better suited to carriages racing through the streets, as the city was in possession of a more expansive road network, and more major paved thoroughfares, than Constantinople.

The smaller carriage, known as the *pilentum*, seems to have fallen out of general use during the late antique period. This cushioned carriage had always been associated with womanly use and was not considered a suitable mode of transport for men. In his invective against Eutropius, the aforementioned palace eunuch of Constantinople, Claudian urged his audience to shun the effeminate ways of his patron's political rival, as he pleaded with them to 'follow the consul's chair, not the woman's car (*pilentum*)'.¹⁰¹⁵ The reference was clearly an attack on Eutropius' perceived lack of masculinity. The poet's reference to the *pilentum* also suggests that the vehicle was not unknown to his audience. Similarly, the late antique author of the

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.6.17.

¹⁰¹⁴ HA, *Aurelian*, 46.1.

¹⁰¹⁵ Claudian, *Against Eutropius*, 1.506-7: *verso iam discite more curules, non matrum pilenta sequi*, trans. LCL.

Historia Augusta highlights the manliness of the eastern queen Zenobia by stating that ‘often she rode a horse’ and ‘made use of a carriage’, but ‘rarely of a woman’s coach (*pilentum*)’.¹⁰¹⁶

It is unclear why this vehicle seems to fall from use. I would suggest a combination of its inadequacy at secluding its occupant from view, combined with its religious associations, saw it fall from favour. After all, it was still being used by the Vestals in the fourth century, as Prudentius attests to. The Christian poet wrote disapprovingly of the ‘cushioned car’ that would convey the virgin priestess through the streets of Rome, exposing her before everyone in the streets.¹⁰¹⁷ In fact, modern scholarship often ties this vehicle to the Vestal priestesses. The vehicle does not seem to have received much, if any, use in Constantinople. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that, in an increasingly Christian climate, the *pilentum* was abandoned because of its impracticality and pagan ceremonial associations.

The litter, which includes the *basterna*, seems to have been the vehicle most commonly employed by aristocratic women across the Roman world. Both *lectica* and *basterna* elevated women above the surrounding crowds and could allow for the closing of curtains to remove them from view. However, the *basterna* was clearly the more imposing of the two, with the seating held aloft by two mules driven by a *basternarius*, seemingly always with the capacity for shielding the woman from sight. In Rome, the sources suggest a mix of slave-powered and mule-driven vehicles were in use for women. For example, we hear of both Christian and ‘worldly’ women using the *basterna* within Rome.¹⁰¹⁸ Meanwhile, the regional catalogues for Rome attest to the presence of a *castra lecticariorum* within the city, where people could hire litters and litter-bearers to convey them around the streets.¹⁰¹⁹

At Constantinople, Chrysostom criticised the members of his congregation for their gaudy exhibition of riches, with a particular focus on the public displays of women. In Antioch, the issue of women making use of litters, and specifically the *basterna*, was a recurrent feature in his sermons. Similarly at Constantinople, he complained of women who adorned their mules in gold, criticised those who entered public spaces borne atop mules, and ridiculed

¹⁰¹⁶ HA, *The Thirty Pretenders*, 30.7.

¹⁰¹⁷ Prudentius, *Against Symmachus*, 2.1088-90: *pilento residiens*, trans. LCL.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, 14.6.16; Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16.

¹⁰¹⁹ *The Notitia, Curiosum, and Appendices*, in H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, Vol.2, Part 2, (Berlin, 1871), pp. 539-574.

people who tended to the care of their mules while neglecting their own spiritual health.¹⁰²⁰ He recognised and accepted that both men and women were borne on litters, and that his congregation kept mules as well as servants for the purpose of travelling.¹⁰²¹ However, it is clear he also understood mules and litters to be a signifier of great wealth, especially when decorated, and thus used them to shame his audience. Indeed, he thought it madness that people would not deign to house the destitute, but would set aside part of their property for the storage of litters (βαστερνίους).¹⁰²²

Closed litters, as used by late antique noblewomen and empresses, could clearly obscure the person within from view.¹⁰²³ Our late antique sources also suggest litters could be effective at shielding the occupant inside entirely. For instance, the emperor Numerian was said to have been dead within his closed litter, which he had originally taken to due to ill health, for days without discovery.¹⁰²⁴ Zosimus also reports a story in which the statesman Rufus has an opponent beaten to death and then hid his body within a closed litter, so people would not know he was dead.¹⁰²⁵ Similarly, Socrates reports that the emperor Gratian was slain by a soldier hidden within a covered litter born on mules, in which the emperor had expected to find his wife, until the assassin sprang forth.¹⁰²⁶ It also seems reasonable to suppose that a litter carried by several mules, with a rider at the front, was a more imposing vehicle than a couch or chair carried by pole-bearing slaves.

On the question of who was responsible for this segregation, while decisions on who could stand where in churches and amphitheatres were presumably taken by men, sources suggest many women themselves wanted to travel in vehicles, even against the wishes of some male onlookers. Ammianus thought women used such vehicles to make a spectacle of their movements.¹⁰²⁷ Jerome believed women should not travel in ‘capacious litters’, which he accused widows of using to advertise themselves to prospective husbands.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians*, 7.5; *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.10.

¹⁰²¹ *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 34.5.

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*, *Homilies on Acts*, 45.4.

¹⁰²³ Ammianus Marcellinus references noblewomen in closed litters 14.6.16; John of Ephesus references the Byzantine empress Anastasia travelling within Constantinople inside a closed litter, *Church History*, 3.3.

¹⁰²⁴ HA, *Carus, Carinus and Numerian*, 12.1.

¹⁰²⁵ Zosimus, *New History*, 5.2.

¹⁰²⁶ Socrates, *Church History*, 3.1.

¹⁰²⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.6.16.

¹⁰²⁸ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16.

Chrysostom likewise complained of women who entered public spaces atop mules, attracting the attention of those around them.¹⁰²⁹ In fact, women's fondness for such modes of travel was longstanding. In 195 BC, the *Lex Oppia* forbade women from riding in animal-drawn vehicles within Rome (as well as limiting their displays of wealth) and the city's matrons responded with public demonstrations and occupation of the Capitol, prompting its repeal.¹⁰³⁰ Moreover, the *Historia Augusta's* recounting of the so-called 'women's senate' stated that those involved thought vehicles highly important. Amongst other forms of public display, the matrons therein discussed:

'Who might ride in a chariot, on a horse, on a pack-animal, or on an ass, who might drive in a carriage drawn by mules or in one drawn by oxen, who might be carried in a litter, and whether the litter might be made of leather, or of bone, or covered with ivory or with silver.'¹⁰³¹

In much of this, litters are criticised in the same way as fine clothes, jewellery, and cosmetics. They are ostentatious and attract male attention. However, just as not all clothes were overly decorative, some vehicles were clearly accepted. That an empress travelled in Constantinople within a carriage or a closed litter was unremarkable.¹⁰³² Nevertheless, it is clear that the preference within much Christian dialogue was for pedestrian movements. Jerome considered dirty feet and worn footwear to be signs of virtue.¹⁰³³ Chrysostom remarked that boots were made to be soiled and, if people could not bear to see them muddied, they ought to wear them on their head.¹⁰³⁴ Ambrose likened the woman on a litter to the gaudy floats at civic processions, while Palladius lauded women who walked on foot instead of in litters, never making concessions to the flesh.¹⁰³⁵

For these Christian authors, the way to move modestly through an urban environment was to make efforts not to be eye-catching. Chrysostom was clear that fancy litters and signs of wealth attracted lots of attention, with people pushing through crowds to catch a glimpse of a noblewoman. As discussed in the first chapter, even being looked at could be viewed as

¹⁰²⁹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.10.

¹⁰³⁰ Livy, *Roman History*, 34.4-7.

¹⁰³¹ HA, *Elagabalus*, 4.3: *quae carpento mulari, quae boum, quae sella veheretur, et utrum pellicia an ossea an eborata an argentata*, trans. LCL.

¹⁰³² Sozomen, *Church History*, 8.13; John of Ephesus, *Church History*, 3.3.

¹⁰³³ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.27.

¹⁰³⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, 49.7.

¹⁰³⁵ Ambrose, *On Virginity*, 1.10; Palladius, *Lausiac History*, 55.2.

damaging to both bearers and receivers of the looks exchanged between men and women. Thus, the surest defence of one's modesty was to avoid being looked at entirely. As Ammianus noted, some women did this by travelling in 'closed litters', but the Christian authors clearly preferred vehicles be disregarded entirely. Jerome praised the aristocratic virgin, Asella, for the way in which she moved through Rome on foot, quickly and unnoticed, taking pleasure from the fact she was never recognised.¹⁰³⁶ Chrysostom similarly noted how women who moved modestly through public spaces on foot, in plain clothing, were never looked at by those around them.¹⁰³⁷

We cannot know how many women, in response to such discourse, chose to set aside their vehicles and traverse the urban topography on foot. The complaints of our authors make it apparent that some women, in either city, did not heed their advice. Conversely, some women most evidently did. The noblewoman Sylvania once reprimanded the bishop Jovinus for his softness by stating that 'never in my travels have I rested on a bed or used a litter'.¹⁰³⁸ The Projecta Casket, which shows the eponymous Christian noblewoman travelling to the baths in Rome, clearly depicted her making the journey on foot. Of course, other aspects of her movement were obviously elite, not least because she was in the company of attendants who were, we believe, carrying all manner of luxurious objects, perhaps including the ornate silver casket itself. And yet, amidst these obvious elements of finery and means of display, Projecta herself is seen walking through the city on foot. It is possible that this was merely an idealised image, but if indeed the casket was taken on such journeys, we might suppose it sought to depict them as they happened.

Despite a preference for modest movements, even our sterner Christian observers acknowledged that elite and respectable women needed some form of accompaniment through the city. After all, there was little point in taking steps to preserve one's modesty in motion if you were simultaneously making yourself physically accessible to extramarital men in the streets. To achieve this protection, even without vehicles, elite women often travelled with retinues and attendants. Such people could protect the woman from those around her (and manoeuvre any vehicle she elected to use). Classical sources state how, when a woman

¹⁰³⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 24.4.

¹⁰³⁷ John Chrysostom, *On Virginity and Against Remarriage*, 66.2.31-42.

¹⁰³⁸ Palladius, *Lausiaca History*, 55.2.

was attended by her retinue, any would-be troublemakers were dissuaded from approaching.¹⁰³⁹ Valerius Maximus indicates that elite women's use of retinues was so customary that, even in dire circumstances, they would not travel without them. According to Valerius, the elite woman Sulpicia disguised herself as a slave so as to clandestinely visit her husband, and even here took with her several male and female attendants.¹⁰⁴⁰ Such measures were designed to ensure aristocratic women could be physically separated from those around them, especially when used in conjunction with litters or carriages.

Like vehicles, women's retinues could be considered overly ostentatious by late antique writers, whether pagan or Christian. Ammianus mocked those women who were proceeded by a multitude of eunuchs, likening them to generals marching an army through Rome's streets.¹⁰⁴¹ Jerome chastised wealthy women and widows who were attended by a host of eunuchs, whether in the streets or at religious places, like the unnamed noblewoman who distributed coins in St Peter's in the company of her eunuchs.¹⁰⁴² Meanwhile, Chrysostom remarked that those women who ventured into public spaces with large retinues, like those atop mules, were courting the attention of all those around them. The bishop went on to say that respectable women should not be known about town because of the number of servants they had in their train, going so far as to claim that those who prided themselves on travelling with many slaves were, in fact, inferior to those slaves.¹⁰⁴³

The remonstrations of our sources were not wholly effective in changing behaviour. Evidently, not all agreed with their deeply critical characterisation of large retinues. Jerome acknowledged that the women he criticised were considered by others to be respectable and virtuous.¹⁰⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Chrysostom recognised that some in his congregation were unhappy with his recommendations that women should only venture outdoors with no more than two servants, repeating back to them their belief that for a noblewoman to travel in public with so few servants was a source of shame. Rather, he countered, the shame was in having too many.¹⁰⁴⁵ Again, the consequence of travelling with such an expansive

¹⁰³⁹ Horace, *Satires*, 1.2.98.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 6.7.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.6.17.

¹⁰⁴² Jerome, *Letters*, 22.16, 22.32, 54.13.

¹⁰⁴³ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.10.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.19.

¹⁰⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Hebrews*, 28.10.

entourage was that people would know someone of importance was involved and would thus seek to catch sight of them. Thus, we have confirmation that such retinues, in addition to providing physical protection, efficiently displayed a woman's high status.

To add to the concerns of male onlookers, some women employed attendants who were problematic by virtue of their maleness and, it seems, good looks. In various letters Jerome warns against including handsome footmen and dandified stewards in one's entourage, citing how elite women tended to faun over certain men in their service.¹⁰⁴⁶ Meanwhile, it was also possible for women to surround themselves with inappropriate members of their own sex. Female singers and flute players were to be avoided, as were young women who took excessive pride in their dress and appearance, or who laughed too freely.¹⁰⁴⁷ As far as virgins and widows were concerned, the dangers of associating too closely with worldly women was that their bad habits, and love of luxury, would ultimately corrupt.

From these sources, it seems that many elite women chose to move through public space with elaborate retinues. This surely made segregation in the streets somewhat easier; if a woman truly was surrounded by many eunuchs or footmen, then she must have been separated to a considerable degree from those around her. Presumably, the women who employed such methods, such as the widows referenced in Jerome's letters, thought this was compatible with elite female modesty, even if some people did not. However, there were different and more limited forms of retinues that were considered acceptable by Christian writers, and socially conservative male onlookers more generally. At a minimum, these retinues seem to have consisted principally of women.

Jerome stated that those who accompanied a woman should be women who were pale from fasting and aged in years.¹⁰⁴⁸ Certainly, this preference for an aristocratic woman to surround herself with other modest women stretched back centuries. Like Jerome, Seneca had thought women should keep in their company ladies whose age and chastity meant even shameless men would be forced to respect them.¹⁰⁴⁹ For married women, such retinues also reflected upon their husbands, who had some influence over the matter. In a

¹⁰⁴⁶ Jerome, *Letters*, 79.8.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.5, 54.13, 107.9.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.7.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Seneca, *Controversiae*, 2.7.3.

scene from Plautus' play, *The Merchant*, the character Demipho will not allow his wife to be seen with her new maid because she is too attractive, thus provoking the nods and winks of men. Instead, he vows to replace her with an older woman.¹⁰⁵⁰ Meanwhile, in his panegyric to the emperor Trajan, the younger Pliny praised the ruler for the modest nature of his wife's retinue, as he had shaped her behaviour.¹⁰⁵¹

It seems, therefore, that there were some variations within the ways elite women chose to segregate themselves from those around them while moving through public spaces. Some evidently opted for large, ostentatious vehicles and retinues that served the additional function of loudly displaying their wealth and status to those they passed, and the grumblings of our sources suggest this was often successful. Others, it seems, concurred with various commentators, and felt that their modesty was best proved through a more restrained form of movement, theoretically intended to avoid attracting attention. While preferences for demure female chaperones had existed for centuries, it is in the Christian texts that we see this most strongly advocated. This is, in part, because such sources were often directed at women deemed most at risk: virgins and widows. But it is, surely, also due to the particularly Christian distaste for ostentatious elite display.

vi. Conclusion

It seems, then, that while numerous places were clearly subject to segregation, based on sex and status, the streets and spaces of Rome and Constantinople were a different matter. The confined nature of many thoroughfares, the busy crowds that moved through them, and the lack of any attempts to keep people apart by external authorities in the streets resulted in an environment in which it was impossible for people to keep great distances between them. For nonelite women, then, traversing the urban landscape surely involved frequent, close contact with extrafamilial men. Not only this, but the nature of their lives meant they had less scope for domestic seclusion and the avoidance of such spaces than their elite counterparts.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Plautus, *The Merchant*, Act 1

¹⁰⁵¹ Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 83.

However, elite women were also to be found in the streets, as we know they had a variety of reasons to visit public places. In order to protect themselves and display modesty, they could employ vehicles and attendants to introduce some degree of space between themselves and extrafamilial men. Unlike at places, such methods of segregation in spaces seem to have been eagerly adopted by elite women themselves, as forms of elite representation and practical protection from others. Of course, the nature of the streets surely limited where certain vehicles could go, the routes used to reach certain places, and the degree to which they could maintain distance from others while moving through the city. It also seems that Christian discourse introduced variance in how such movement could be conducted modestly, seeing some women discard vehicles and large retinues for more austere forms of movement.

Moreover, at Constantinople we see more cause for the gathering of large, mixed crowds, as the city played host to more ecclesiastical processions and imperial spectacles than Rome (though this city was not bereft of either). Therefore, we can imagine there was more cause for people to come into contact with one another, in crowds, in the streets and spaces of the city. We also see evidence that, while men and women were included in the crowds together, elite women were again the category singled out for separation, as they could remove themselves from crowds at certain events. Regarding the nonelite, Constantinople is also where we see greater attempts at zoning and regulating the spaces frequented by prostitutes, as evidence suggests a hostility to the practice not seen in Rome.

Conclusion

Returning to the ideal woman with whom this thesis began, she continued to reside principally within the domestic setting in Late Antiquity, as she had in preceding centuries. The modest comportment of the young Fannia Sebotis, who never wished to visit a public place without her husband, was still considered exemplary female behaviour nearly five hundred years after her death. For all the important developments discussed across the five chapters of this dissertation, elite male attitudes towards women in public were marked more by continuity than change. Similarly, the gap between discourse and real practice remained in effect. While Fannia Sebotis eschewed public places, the material record of the Colosseum indicates that many elite women watched spectacles in the company of other such women. Meanwhile, Projecta's visits to the baths, wherein she was likewise separated from men, are etched in silver. So too did women embark on less acceptable ventures beyond the *domus*, if we are to believe the gossip and invective passed down to us. In addition to all of this, women found new ways to perform public actions, in public settings, as Christianity opened up new routes for them to engage with their city in ways even the strictest observers could find acceptable. All of this, of course, is without even mentioning the overlooked nonelite, who were outside the home regularly for many reasons.

This thesis, then, has moved from discussing the discourse around women and urban settings, to looking at how this relationship functioned in practice. It has then analysed measures of segregation that were employed, across both Rome and Constantinople, in secular and religious places. In the last chapter, it considered how women moved through the spaces of their cities while, also, attempting to introduce distance between themselves and others. It will now conclude with an overview of the findings, presenting for the final time its overarching arguments, before then looking specifically at the research questions, as set out in the introduction, and the answers that have been produced in response to each. This conclusion will then move on to assess how this research fits in with existing scholarship, its original and unique contributions, and its significance in the wider fields of late antique social and gender history. Finally, it will identify possible opportunities for future inquiry, questions that have arisen in the course of my research, and how this thesis and its conclusions can help towards future scholarship.

Regarding our idealised woman, it is now clear that even she left the home and ventured into public settings for a variety of reasons. Despite this, the ancient and enduring understanding that respectable women were best suited to domestic environments meant that measures were enacted to ensure her presence at sites beyond the home was compatible with expectations of female modesty. Thus, we see sincere efforts, undertaken across a range of urban settings, to introduce

some degree of separation between these women and those with whom proximity would engender reputational harm. At public places, from amphitheatres to churches, we see how attending women were required to abide by stipulations that ensured the spatial organisation of persons along both sexual and social lines. In public spaces, namely the streets of Rome and Constantinople, segregation was surely less successful. Here, we see women themselves willingly adopting methods of separating and distinguishing themselves from those around them, as a means of displaying their status. Throughout all of this, we witness a tendency towards continuity in civic or secular settings, but notable change in religious discourse and engagement with public arenas, as Christianity gradually replaced pagan cult worship as the dominant religion of the Late Roman world.

At the same time, nonelite women continued to be largely ignored and marginalised by elite male discourse, as had always been the case, though they were surely an ever-present sight across the urban landscape. Segregation in Christian settings continued to prioritise protecting those who were deemed to be in possession of modesty that might be lost, just as it did in civic places. Thus, in Late Antiquity as in the classical period, nonelite women's experience of segregation was principally as the excluded party, alongside men, save for when they served modest women directly as members of their household and retinue. While Christianity opened up new routes through which elite women could engage with public places in ways deemed acceptable to elite men, the ordinary women of Rome and Constantinople continued to frequent public environments, as they always had, in the conduct of their daily lives and occupations. However, Christian thinking did request that elite women seek to distinguish themselves less from the nonelite in their movements through the streets and between places, and an unknowable proportion of such women clearly responded by indeed reducing the size of their retinues, eschewing vehicles for pedestrian travel, and wearing less obviously expensive clothing and ornamentation. Others, meanwhile, did not.

Looking broadly at segregation, we see a large degree of similarity between both Rome and Constantinople, despite considerable intervening distance and their unique religious, political, and topographical makeups. The same types of civic and religious places witnessed attempts at segregation, seeking to protect and exclude the same sorts of women, while elite female movement through the streets was conducted in an equivalent manner. Textual sources betray the same idealisations of female domesticity and a similar, flexible use of women and public settings as a rhetorical device. This is unsurprising, as even though scholars such as Dossey have identified some differences in the way women were treated between east and west, they acknowledge there seems to have been little difference in their attitudes towards seeing women in public (at least between

Rome and Constantinople).¹⁰⁵² Regarding segregation, we do see variations of practice, if not necessarily intent and reasoning. Constantinople seems more prone to host largescale events, both civic and religious, that necessitated the gathering together of mixed crowds. It was also in this city where women could hold the office of deaconess, necessitating the fulfilment of public duties, denied to those in the west. The *fora* of Constantinople also appear to have avoided the more masculine associations apparent in Rome, included more tightly as they were in the city's armature. And yet, the New Rome also seems to have been more rigorous in its physical separation of men and women in churches than the Old. Many of these differences I have attributed to Constantinople's role as an imperial city.

All five chapters have addressed how religious change impacted upon the relationship between women and their urban landscapes, with the overarching message that Christianity elicited new routes into public spaces and places for elite women. In contrast, traditional Greco-Roman paganism offered no more such routes in Late Antiquity than it had in the classical era. In fact, our evidence suggests that paganism as practiced in fourth-century Rome offered women fewer opportunities for movements away from the home, unsupervised by men, as it once had. Indeed, a number of festivals that promoted such movements seem to have fallen from use, with women instead involved in those rites that typically saw them act as part of, and within, the familial unit. In Rome, paganism clearly grew from a tradition that recognised and placed intense value upon (an admittedly limited number of) sacred, gendered places. In terms of the various possible models of segregation, pagan places often favoured excluding one sex entirely from sacred precincts, whereas Christian religious sites exhibited a tendency to house both men and women in the same building, albeit in separate areas that were, sometimes, arrived at through individual entrances. This was because Christian places of veneration sought to include both sexes, each as recognised members of the community, even if they did not in practice permit the attendance of persons of all social standing.

Having summarised the argument put forward across this dissertation, I now turn to address the specific research questions as identified in the introduction. Appraising these in the order in which they were presented, the first chapter demonstrated that late antique authors continued to idealise female domesticity in a manner similar to their classical forebears, with pagan authors and material representations showing the same, limited acknowledgement that there existed acceptable reasons for women to engage with public settings. Through a comparison of textual sources, and a careful analysis of works by two case studies (John Chrysostom and Jerome), I set out how Christian

¹⁰⁵² Dossey, (2008), pp. 31-32.

discourse deviated from what had come before. By analysing the works of two particularly vocal promoters of female domestic seclusion, I showed how even these thinkers recognised there were numerous legitimate reasons for elite women to leave the *domus* and perform public actions in the same places as men. While the women addressed by such sources were, as ever, an elite minority, these sources were novel in the way that not only were women tolerated in certain public settings, but also in how they actively encouraged women to fulfil duties which took them beyond the home and into view of others. The chapter also showcased how, in Constantinople especially, the late antique empress and her relationship to public environments was represented, in material culture, in ways that differed markedly from other women.

The second chapter then sought to assess why, in real practice, women might leave the home. In so doing, it demonstrated that women could venture through public spaces, into places, for both acceptable and improper reasons. It identified how women could engage with a wide array of public settings, through both formal and informal means, and again adopted a case study approach. Looking at select individuals (Paulina, Lolliana, and Olympias), I was able to examine how pagan priestesses in Rome, and Christian deaconesses in Constantinople, might have made extensive movements across their urban landscapes, while acknowledging this seems to have been far more apparent for the deaconess. An examination of pagan festivals then demonstrated that late antique paganism, in Rome, seems to have offered fewer opportunities for female movement than its classical iteration had, and how by contrast Christian activities presented, as indicated in chapter one, more opportunities for female engagement with public spaces and places. It also recognised that, for nonelite women, it was the daily activities and occupations that surely meant they were frequently found outside the home and present at a wide range of places and spaces.

Chapters three and four then addressed the question of segregation at secular and religious places. Here, I demonstrated that a range of models were in use to separate men and women, and that in secular settings there seems to have been a great deal of continuity between the classical and late antique periods. Again, the methodology in chapter three involved focussing in particular on two case studies, the Roman Forum and Forum of Constantine, which allowed me to identify how, in Constantinople, the urban *fora* seemed to have been more permitting of female presence, as they were incorporated into the main thoroughfare and were thus involved in movement through the city. In chapter four, on religious places, it was revealed that there were different strategies in place across the two cities, with women situated in galleries in Constantinopolitan churches, whereas they could be found on the ground floor, in segregated church naves in the west. Pagan places were shown to adopt different methods of segregation than Christian, with the former preferring exclusively gendered places, while the latter sought to separate persons within the same setting.

Crucially, we also see how segregation was equally as concerned with separating elite women from nonelite women as it was with keeping them from men. I argued that change in practices of segregation were most obvious in religious places, whereas civic sites seem to have witnessed more continuity from earlier periods.

The final chapter presented the argument that it was in areas characterised by movement (spaces) that segregation was most difficult. Here, the question of who was responsible for segregation was addressed, showing that women themselves adopted means of separation, which was not necessarily the case in places. It considered the physical environment in which movement was taking place, to better understand how effective segregation might have been. In looking at this, it concluded that such measures must have been of limited success, as even the use of vehicles and chaperones must have struggled to introduce any significant space between elite women and others passing through the streets. It also assessed the question of women in crowds, noting that elite women could separate themselves from the masses at varied occasions, and that Constantinople was, it seems, more frequently host to such crowds than Rome. Moreover, it analysed efforts to regulate the practice of prostitution and to keep prostitutes themselves away from certain parts of the city. In this, it recognised that Constantinople seems to have been rather more active than Rome, where there seems to have been tacit toleration of prostitutes in the streets and public spaces of the city.

Across the chapters, and as alluded to above, the answers to these research questions combine to present a picture wherein segregation was a fact of life for elite women seeking to engage with public places and spaces. Nonelite women, meanwhile, encountered segregation more along social than sexual lines, being kept away from those with high status and modesty, and possibly lumped together with men at various places. Different models were employed across various sites, though the most common was to keep the sexes and different social groups separate while in the same places, so as to allow for the whole urban community to present at both civic spectacles and religious rites. However, these methods were not wholly effective at all times, and movement through urban space was highly likely to have involved close proximity between even elite women and extrafamilial men. Christianity is showed to have presented elite women in particular with a range of new routes beyond the home that were considered acceptable. Between the cities, we cannot say overall if one was more greatly segregated than the other, as each employed different practices in various aspects of women's engagements with public places.

In presenting the arguments listed above, and answering the research questions, this thesis has sought to make several unique contributions to the existing field of study, building on a number of

important works. It has taken, in particular, the scholarship of Kate Wilkinson on women and the need to publicly display modesty, and appraised how this was reflected in attempts to physically separate elite women from not just men, but also nonelite women in public settings where they were in view of others.¹⁰⁵³ When looking at this segregation, it has broadened out the work of scholars such as Boatwright, Murer, and Trümper by seeking to understand the nature of gendered spaces, in Rome and Constantinople across a broad range of urban environments, rather than focussing on a singular site.¹⁰⁵⁴ It is by doing this, taking a wider view, that I have been able to make original contributions, such as how civic places saw a continuity of practice in segregation as compared to religious places, and how pagan places had employed different models of segregation to Christian.

On this point, I have also sought to address the issue recognised by Clark, that much work on Roman women, especially in urban settings, was focussed on the classical period.¹⁰⁵⁵ Therefore, while this thesis has been principally concerned with late antique developments, it has bridged the gap between this period and earlier centuries by comparing post-Constantinian practices with what had come before, frequently bringing in classical sources to understand where we see something new, or where what we see represents continued practice. In so doing, I have again been able to make new arguments, for example, about how the calendar of pagan festivals in fourth-century Rome no longer included a raft of spring and summertime observances that involved female movement away from their households. Similarly, I noted how late antique pagan authors continued to discuss women and urban space in classicizing ways, whereas Christian discourse represented a new development in terms of its preparedness to positively represent women taking action in public settings.

Regarding scholarship on urban space and human experience of such, I have sought to bring in the work of historians such as Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill to gain an appreciation of the physical environments in which movements, and attempts at segregation in urban space, were taking place.¹⁰⁵⁶ I have then addressed the question of female actions and travel within this physical environment. Informed by social geographers such as Tuan, this has led me to argue that segregation, while workable in many places, was far more difficult to achieve in spaces that were characterised by movement, largely on account of the conditions of the ancient and late antique streets and roadways.¹⁰⁵⁷ Again, in looking at classical sources concerning women, vehicles, and

¹⁰⁵³ Wilkinson (2015).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Boatwright (2011); Murer (2020); Trümper (2012).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Clark (1993), p. 1.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Laurence (2013); Wallace-Hadrill (1995).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Tuan (1977).

attendants, and considering Wilkinson's demonstration of how women were keen displayers of status and virtue, it has become apparent that in urban spaces, as opposed to places, methods of segregation and displaying status were readily adopted by elite women themselves.

Having addressed all of these research questions in the context of a comparative analysis between Rome and Constantinople, I have sought also to add to the existing scholarship that seeks to understand the links, similarities, and differences between these two cities.¹⁰⁵⁸ By offering a comparison of these cities in terms of women's experience of movement and use of both urban places and spaces, I have been able to identify aspects that were unique and also those which appear to be more common practice across the wider Roman world. For instance, we see how in Constantinople the practice of incubation, where people stayed in churches overnight in the hope of intercession by saints, was much more common than in Rome. Indeed, this analysis allows for another original contribution, which is the recognition that our sources suggest that, in the New Rome, there were concerted efforts to spatially contain prostitution and, later, to eradicate it altogether from Constantinople's streets, which were not replicated in Rome.

All of this, then, can be seen as contributing towards the larger, still unanswered question, as posed in the title of Smith's article, 'Did Women Have a Transformation of the Roman World?'.¹⁰⁵⁹ By looking at developments between the classical and late antique, between east and west, and between Christian and pagan, we gain an appreciation for how women's relationship with public spaces and places changed between the fourth and seventh centuries. As demonstrated, women made use of a variety of such public sites and left the home for a variety of reasons. Therefore, the places they were permitted to attend, the reception their movements engendered in elite men, the rules that governed where they could and could not be situated, the people they were separated from, and the accepted ways of displaying modesty while travelling, must have surely shaped their daily lives and experiences of urban living. Therefore, understanding how these operated, and the extent to which they changed in Late Antiquity, goes some way to helping us perceive how women might have been affected by the great narratives of transformation that we construct. As demonstrated, it would seem that, if the tale of Late Antiquity was told through the prism of the daily lives of women, then things did not change overmuch, overall, except for some measures regarding elite women (especially when we prioritise religious sources, which we are presented with in greater numbers than sources interested in daily activities).

¹⁰⁵⁸ Grigg and Kelly (2012); Krautheimer (1983); Melville-Jones (2014); Van Dam (2010).

¹⁰⁵⁹ J. M. H. Smith, 'Did Women Have a Transformation of the Roman World?', *Gender & History*, Vol.12, No.3, (2000), pp. 552-571.

In conducting this research, I have identified a number of areas that would, in my view, benefit from future study. For instance, while I have sought to bring in classical sources to benefit my own work, I have been limited in the degree to which I can consult such material, owing to considerations of space and the obvious fact that my focus throughout the dissertation has been on Late Antiquity. As such, a more in-depth comparison of late antique pagan practice with its classical iterations, in the context of female involvement and opportunities to leave the home, would perhaps yield some interesting results. Naturally, in focussing on Rome and Constantinople, and in light of the latter's fourth-century foundation, my work on pagan practice was focussed exclusively on the city of Rome. A more wide-ranging study of festivals, across a broader chronological and geographical range, would enable us to better understand whether later Roman paganism did, overall, witness a reduction in festive outlets for female involvement and movement beyond the home. This could then feed into larger discussions around how, in the later Roman world, centralising power led to householders turning inwards and the elevation of the family as the principal social unit.

Similarly, in having focussed on the two cities in question, there are numerous opportunities to inquire as to whether my various findings apply to other major cities of Late Antiquity, such as Antioch and Alexandria. For instance, one could seek to comprehensively compare John Chrysostom's sermons, those in Antioch and Constantinople, on a variety of issues relating to women and urban movement. Questions could be asked around the problematic nature of *fora*, which Chrysostom (as far as I can tell) portrays as far more unsuitable and dangerous in Antioch than he does in Constantinople. This would provide yet further insight into the concept of Constantinople as a Christian capital, and the degree to which it was free from pagan influence, as our sources would clearly wish us to believe. Moreover, broadening out the geographical scope of the inquiry would allow for a case study examination of other individuals, such as Hypatia of Alexandria, and their relationships with public settings.

Another question that could be explored, which I briefly touch upon in the first chapter, is the concept of excessive seclusion and problematic occupation of domestic and/or private spaces. In looking at how classical and late antique authors discussed the relationship between women and urban spaces, I noted how there was no truly 'safe space' for women to occupy, as they could be criticised not only for leaving the home and appearing in public places and spaces, but also for excessive domestic seclusion. This would similarly draw upon Wilkinson's work, that despite an idealisation of domesticity it was also important for elite women to be seen publicly. For instance, as noted in chapter one, presence in private spaces opened women up to the accusation of exercising undue influence away from the oversight and scrutiny of others. This, therefore, might lead us to

reassess the notion that a 'safe place' for ancient or late antique women was the private setting of the home.

For these questions and more, the research conducted throughout this thesis should provide some useful information and context on the relationship between women and urban spaces, their experiences of moving through and being present in such, and the changes brought to bear on this by the late antique dominance of Christianity. It likewise provides a new context in which both Rome and Constantinople are analysed against one another, as well as an exploration of how classical and late antique attitudes towards women, urban space, and expectations of modesty compared. It also offers an appraisal of the roles afforded to women, in Rome, through fourth-century pagan cult practice. Moreover, in looking at all of this, both with respect to elite and nonelite women across two major cities, and over the span of almost three hundred years, it seeks to offer yet a little more understanding of the daily lives and experiences of women in Late Antiquity.

Appendix

Table 1

<p align="center">Pagan Priestesses from Rome. Republican period to fourth-century CE. Information taken from Rüpke, J., <i>Fasti Sacerdotum: A Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499</i>, (Oxford, 2008).</p>					
Name of Person	Evidence	Date	Overview	Further notes	Sources
*** P. f. Galatea T***	Inscription	2nd century AD	<i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis	Association of the name with the relief showing a sacerdos of Isis in front of an altar might identify her with such a function	SIRIS 453, Mora 3.172
***V	Inscription	2nd of 4th c - after 383	<i>Sacerdos maxima Matris deum magnae</i>	On 5 April 383 she dedicated an altar to the dei omnipotentes and Attis, after having received the taurobolium and cribolium	CCCA 3.231 = CIL 6.502 = ILS 4150, PLRE 1 (p.1002)
Aelia Antigona	Inscription	2nd/3rd century AD	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum magnae Idaeae</i>	She erected a funerary monument for her husband Epulonius Felicissimus and their male and female freedpersons	CCCA 3.360 = CIL 6.2259
Aelia Nice	Inscription	2nd/3rd century AD	<i>Sacerdos Bonae Deae</i>	Of the Antonine-Severan period is known from only the funerary monument she erected for herself and her alumnae	CIL 6.2236
Aelia Recepta	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Tympanistria</i> in the cult of <i>Mater deum magnae Idaeae</i>		CIL 6.2264 = ILS 4165 = CCCA 3.52
Aelia Semna	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Sacerdos Veneris</i>	From her gravestone	CIL 6.2272
Alexandria	Inscription	2nd/3rd century AD	<i>Pastophorus</i> of Isis and <i>sacerdos</i> of Liber (Bacchus/Dionysus)	Sarcophagus	CIL 6.32458 = IGUR 1150 = IGRRP

					1.187 = SIRIS 433
Babullia Varilla	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis	Funerary altar, set up by her husband, shows a priestess with a sistrum in her right hand and a situla in her left	<i>CIL</i> 6.13454 = SIRIS 446
Bacchis	Inscription	1st half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Archibassara</i> in the Dionysian family <i>thiasos</i> of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s -- Lucian mentions importance of dancing in mysteries - see Bremmer 2015	IGUR 160.IB27
Bassaris	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Archibassara</i> in the Dionysian family <i>thiasos</i> of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IB28
Caecinia Lolliana	Inscription	Second quarter of 4th c - after 390	<i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis		<i>CIL</i> 6.512 = ILS 4154 = SIRIS 447, PLRE 1, Lolliana
Calena	Inscription	Aprox 2nd half of 1st c	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum</i>	Flavian period - erected a funerary monument to her son, Calenus	AE 1991.157
Calliphana	Textual	Aprox 96 BC	<i>Sacerdos Cereris publica</i>	Called to Rome from Velia, received Roman citizenship	<i>Cic. Balb.</i> 55; Val. Max. 1.1.11-20
Calliste	Inscription	1st half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Liknaphoros</i> in the Dionysian family <i>thiasos</i> of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IB12

Camilliana	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Phallophorus</i> in the Dionysian family <i>thiasos</i> of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IB16
Cantinea M. f. Procla	Inscription	Flavian period	<i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis	A woman with a situla and possibly a sistrum is depicted on the funerary altar by her husband	<i>CIL</i> 6.34776 = SIRIS 448
Casponia P. f. Maxima	Inscription	Late Republic	<i>Sacerdos Cereris publica</i>	Funerary inscription emphasises Sicilian origin	<i>CIL</i> 6.32443 = 6.2181 = ILS 3343
Claudia Acropolis	Inscription	1st century	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum</i>	Set up a gravestone for herself and her husband	CCCA 3.291 = <i>CIL</i> 6.2260
Cornelia Cethegilla	Inscription	1st half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Dadouchos</i> in the Dionysian family <i>thiasos</i> of the Pomei and Gavii	Highest-ranking sacral office there. Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IA4
Cornelia Mo***	Inscription	End of 1st/1st half of 2nd c	<i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis, <i>bubasticia</i>		<i>CIL</i> 6.32464 = 6.3880 = SIRIS 422
Critonia Q. I. Philema	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Popa de insula</i>	A freedwoman, who was a priest in her insula, which was owned by a freedman. Most <i>popa</i> are invariably men, but this is the only one known to us by name, and it's a woman. She set up a gravestone for herself, her husband, and her freedpersons	<i>CIL</i> 6.9824

Deina Kallikoros	Inscription	1st half of second c	<i>Hierophant of Dionysius (Liber) at a sacellum of the god</i>		IGUR 157 = IG 14.977a
Doris Asinii Galli	Inscription	1st c BC - 1st c AD	<i>Aeditua</i> at a temple of Diana	Serva	CIL 6.2209 = ILS 5002
Ephesia	Inscription	1st half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Kistaphoros</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IA27
Fabia Aconia Paulina C. f.	Inscription	2nd quarter of 4th c - probably 387	<i>Hierophantia</i> of Hecate, and <i>graecosacranea Cereris</i> (holder of an unknown function in the Ceres cult). An initiate at Eleusis - Iacchus, Ceres, Cora; Lerna - Liber, Ceres, Cora; and Aegina - Hecate	Recipient of <i>taurobolium</i> at Rome. Erected a statue to the Vestal Virgin Coelia Concordia, to that her for having erected a statue to her husband	CIL 6.1780 = CIL 6.31930 = ILS 1260 = SIRIS 450 = CCCA 3.295
Fannia C(aiae) l. Asia	Inscription	Imperial period (probably 2nd c)	<i>Vicomagister of the vicus a foro Esquilino</i>	<i>Liberta</i> . In a college that comprised two women and two men	CIL 6.2223 = ILS 6076a
Fannia C(aiae) l. Syra	Inscription	Imperial period (probably 2nd c)	<i>Vicomagister of the vicus a foro Esquilino</i>	<i>Liberta</i> . In a college that comprised two women and two men	CIL 6.2223 = ILS 6076a
Favonia M. f.	Inscription	Late Republic	<i>Sacerdos Cereris publica</i>		CIL 1.974 = 6.2182 = ILS 3342 = ILLRP 61
Flavia Faustilla	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Sacerdos of Isis</i>	Fem pleb. Representation of a woman with a <i>sistrum</i> and <i>situla</i> on their common gravestone - either one, or both, were <i>sacerdos</i>	CIL 6.18442 = SIRIS 452
Flavia Primitiva	Inscription	end of 2nd c - mid 3rd c	<i>Cultrix deae Phariaes</i> - may have been		CIL 6.17985a = CLE 856 = SIRIS 451

			<i>sacerdos</i> of Isis or Isiaca		
Flavia Taeleta	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Sacerdos of Isis</i>	Fem pleb. Representation of a woman with a <i>sistrum</i> and <i>situla</i> on their common gravestone - either one, or both, were <i>sacerdos</i>	<i>CIL</i> 6.18442 = SIRIS 452
Galena	Inscription	Aprox 1st c	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum</i>	Her son erected a funerary monument to her	<i>CIL</i> 6.2261 = CCCA 3.276
Hateria C***	Inscription	Imperial Period	<i>Sacerdos Ditis Patris</i>	Portrayed as a woman with covered head, a capsule in her left hand and right hand outstretched	<i>CIL</i> 6.2243
Iulia Narcissi l. Egloge	Inscription	Aprox 1st half of 1st c	Wife of a <i>sacerdos speculariariorum domus Palatinarum</i> and <i>decurio</i> of that college	Freedwoman. Honoured with the decurionate, probably also with the priesthood and a statue. On the assumption of office, she (like her husband) paid 10,000 <i>sestercii</i> probably for 'games' into the collegial treasury, and gave the higher-ranking officers a 'fee'; for the erection of a statue she expressed her gratitude with a double fee	<i>CIL</i> 6.9044
Iustina	Inscription	Imperial Period	<i>Narthechofora</i> in the cult of Bacchus	This may have been a lowly rank. Gravestone erected by son	<i>CIL</i> 6.2255
Laberia Felicia	Inscription	Mid 2nd c	<i>Sacerdos maxima Matris deum magnae Idaeae</i>	Honorific inscription in grey marble	CCCA 3.258 = <i>CIL</i> 6.2257 = ILS 4160

Livia Briseis	Inscription	1st c BC - 1st c AD	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum magnae Idaeae</i>	<i>Liberta Augusti.</i> With her colleague (no. 2577) she erected a statue to the goddess on the Palatine	CCCA 3.10 = CIL 6.496
Lollia Urbana (?)	Inscription	Imperial Period	<i>Aeditua and ministra</i>	Perhaps of a sacral establishment (temple/college)	CIL 6.2213
Maliola (1)	Inscription	1st half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Sacerdos</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IA14
Maliola (2)	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Sacerdos</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IA15
Manlia L. f. Fadilla	Inscription	2nd/3rd century AD	<i>Regina sacrorum</i>		ILS 4941 = CIL 6.2123
Marcia L. I. Salvia	Inscription	Earlier imperial period	<i>Melanephora</i> of Isis	Described along with others	CIL 6.24627-8 = ILS 4420-1 = SIRIS 426-7
Milonia Caesonia	Textual	41 AD	<i>Sacerdos Iovis Latiaris</i>	In the cult established by Caligula, with himself and Claudius	Dio Chrys. 59.28.5-6
Nice	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Liknaphoros</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IB14
Ostoria Successa	Inscription	2nd half of 1st / beginning of 2nd c	<i>Sacerdos Bubastium</i>	May have been <i>Sacerdos</i> of Isis	CIL 6.2249 = ILS 4407 = SIRIS 423

Pompeia Agrippinilla	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Sacerdos</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii, which was probably founded by her father	At the beginning of the 160s the family <i>thiasos</i> honoured her, probably with a statue	IGUR 160.1
Pomponia Paetina	Inscription	4th quarter of 2nd c	Wife of <i>flamen Dialis</i>	On the basis of modern understanding of sacral law, she should be titled <i>flaminicia Dialis</i> , even if such is missing from inscription	<i>CIL</i> 6.2144 = ILS 4927
Publicia (1)	Textual	1st half of 2nd c BC	<i>Flaminicia Martialis</i>	Unclear what duties, if any, were	RE Publilius 16 / 26
Publicia (2)	Textual	1st c BC	<i>Flaminicia Martialis</i>	Unclear what duties, if any, were	Macr. Sat. 3.13.11
Sabina	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Kistaphoros</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IA26
Serapias	Inscription	2nd half of 3rd c - after 319	<i>Sacerdos</i> (but also possibly only <i>sacrata</i> , 'initiate') of Magna Mater and Proserpina	She dedicated an altar on 19 April 319	CCCA 3.235 = <i>CIL</i> 6.508 = ILS 4146
Sophe	Inscription	2nd / 3rd c	<i>Sacerdos Matris deum</i>	She restored by her own means a building belonging to the Dendrophori	<i>CIL</i> 6.29725
Sulpicia	Textual	2nd half of 3rd c BC	Selected at behest of the <i>libri Sibyllini</i>	She dedicated a statue to Venus Verticordia	Val. Max. 8.15.12; Plin. HN. 7.120
Sympherosa	Inscription	2nd half of second c - after beginning of 160s	<i>Archibastra</i> in the Dionysian family thiasos of the Pomei and Gavii	Participated in honouring the eldest hierieia Agrippinilla (no. 2746) at the beginning of the 160s	IGUR 160.IB26
Terentia Amiliata	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Sacerdos Bonae Deae Petroniae</i>	A funeral monument, as	<i>CIL</i> 6.2237

				patron of one Terentia Th***	
Tyche	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Magistra</i> of Bona Dea		<i>CIL</i> 6.2238
Usia Prima	Inscription	1st c BC	<i>Sacerdos Isidis</i>	Large format gravestone, probably of parents. She is portrayed with <i>sistrum</i> and <i>patera</i> as priestess of Isis	<i>CIL</i> 6.2246 = SIRIS 437
Valeria	Textual	5th c BC	<i>Sacerdos Fortunae Muliebris</i>	It is said that she was awarded her office for her role in the liberation of Rome from Coriolanus	RE Valerius 385
Veturia Semna	Inscription	Imperial period	<i>Magistra</i> of Bona Dea	Funeral monument erected as <i>patrona</i> by one Terentia Th***	<i>CIL</i> 6.2239
Volumnia	Inscription	2nd half of 4 th c	<i>Isiaca</i>	Her metrical funerary inscription calls her <i>Isiaca</i> , which probably denotes a higher function rather than a simple devotee	<i>CIL</i> 6.36589 = SIRIS 450a

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