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FEMALE GENDER MARGINALITY IN THE IMPERIAL ROMAN WORLD: AFFINITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND SLAVES IN THEIR SHARED STEREOTYPES AND PENETRABILITY

INHEE C. BERG (INHEE CHO)
Concordia University of Edmonton,
Department of Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Classics
7128 Ada Blvd NW, Edmonton, AB T5B 4E4, Canada
Inhee.berg@concordia.ab.ca

Abstract: *The concepts of sex and gender existed in the imperial Roman world. Although there existed a sliding scale of sex and gender, gender was largely pre-determined at the time of one's birth based on one's sexual anatomy and concurrently, gender acculturation of the male and the female began. It was a conventional notion that women were marginal compared to freeborn men by the virtue of gender. Although the Romans improved the legal independence of free women, Greco-Roman literary evidence harbors various theoretical positions regarding female social marginality and submission, which were largely associated with slaves, and also underscores the paradox that female position of authority was only meant to be negotiated with the position of subordination. This article deals with the issue of female gender marginality and enculturation of female servility in the imperial Roman world. Various Roman literary traditions link women to slaves in their shared stereotypes and evidence that women and slaves were seen to share affinity for vulnerable penetrability in the face of the male sexual and domestic violence.*

Key Words: *affinity between women and slaves, female social marginality, gender disparity, sex and gender, sexual and domestic abuse.*

1. Introduction

Gender should not be mistaken for a synonym for sex, which is oftentimes understood narrowly based on a reproductive organ. The concept of gender is a far more inclusive and yet more elusive one than that of sex (Witten 2003:217) which has constancy in comparison to the viability of gender (Oakley 1972:16). While sex determined by one's biological state is a reference to a primary property of all human bodies (Wilchins 2004:85), gender is a reference to the variable social paradigm of being male or female and the qualities relevant to masculinity

or femininity, such as expected behavioral thought templates, role prescriptions, values, and gender-specific characteristics. As Simone de Beauvoir well encapsulates, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (Beauvoir 1973:301), being female is not identical with being a woman since the perception of one's femaleness is dependent on whether one is performing roles typical of the female sex. In the same vein, Judith Butler, the scholar of a gender performative theory, opines that "gender is not a noun" but a manifestation of what one is doing, that is, what is articulated in one's performance, not an expression of what one is (33). Nonetheless, sex and gender were indiscriminately used prior to the 1970s when feminism began to spearhead and influence the dialogues relating to gender issues. Due to vigorous studies led by the circle of feminist theory scholarship since the 1970s, gender and women's studies devoted to the issues of gender identity, gender roles, and feminism flourished. As a result of these focused interdisciplinary studies, the concept of gender has been refined, particularly in dealing with one's social identification in relation to gender, the perception of gender in society, and the distinction between sex and gender.

While gendering is a socially constructed process, in most cases, including that of the imperial Roman world, cultural expectations around men and women were closely linked to their biology. Feminist biologist Lynda Birke remarks that in most societies "when a baby is born, we allocate it to one sex or the other, on the basis of what its genitals look like. We take this allocation very much for granted" (2001:310). While the aspects of gender, in other words, what things are considered masculine or feminine, may vary between disparate societies, the assignment of gender to their members in most human societies commonly transpires in two steps: first, identifying the member's physiological and biological sexual attributes consigned by nature and secondly, assigning the socially expected code of conduct and boundaries to a respective gender which has been reckoned by anatomical examination. These fundamental steps seem to have been a familiar course of action in the imperial Roman world when it came to the assignment of culturally conceived roles and boundaries to newly born members of the society. Accordingly, the Roman physician Soranus reports that when the infant was born, the midwife announced the sex of the newborn even before she inspected its condition to assess if the new born was worth rearing (*Gynaecology* 2.5).

2. Gender-Centric Imperial Roman World

Delineating how the categories of "male" and "female" were understood in the ancient world is a tricky task since the concepts of ancient gender, sex, and sexual identity are convoluted and complex given the fact that the range of interpretation of bodies were diffuse,

without a straightforward model or paradigm on which one can rely to make sense of all variegated stances (Stichele & Penner 2009:44–87). Despite the fact that the ancient world proposes a range of perspectives on women, gender, and sexuality including contrastive portrayals of women and men in both literature and art, there still seems to be a rigid gendered social order in both private and public spheres, established norms and codes to the male and female body, and applied views on marriage and adultery.

The concepts of sex and gender were meshed together and legally controlled in the imperial Roman world. Although ancient Mediterranean peoples perceived one's masculinity and femininity to be determined by key factors such as one's socio-legal status and active-passive roles (O'Brien 2014: 463), one's basic social identity was considered to be irrevocably tied to one's biological sex. A simple dichotomy of male and female served as a controlling social paradigm of the powerful. Within the Roman society's strict boundary of gender, it was impossible for one to exist outside of the male or female sex categories and retain one's social identity detached from or unrelated to conventional social expectations of gender roles (Tajfel & Turner 1986:7–24; Ashforth & Mael 1989:20–39; Terry & Hogg 1996:776–93) since gender obligation was irreversibly tied to one's sexual state affixed at birth. People in the Hellenistic cities of the Roman world were expected to display behavior according to their social class and gender largely associated to their sex (Clark & Rose 2013:46). To this end, one's biological anatomy, namely "sexed body" (Smart 1990:194–210), functioned like a roadmap to one's destiny and in this sense, gender was essentially a sex-centered category.

Although girls and boys biologically exhibit rather few differences until they reach puberty (when their respective sex hormones bring different maturation and function to their reproductive organs), in Roman patriarchal society boys and girls were distinguished by their sex and placed under austere supervision to acquire socially constructed gender-appropriate behaviors and gender-specific qualities conforming to their natal sexes. As Roman authors such as Publilius Syrus (*sententiae* 376), Seneca the Younger (*Tragedies* 11.117), and Juvenal *(Satires* 6) expressed their uneasiness about female education or educated women, it was true that emphasis was put on the education of boys with a prospect that they would become men who could inherit and continue with male social norms. Accordingly, if one was born biologically as a female, she was enforced to be socially a 'feminine'. Thereby, a socially constructed identity and a culturally conditioned self-image as a female was her due and it was not unrelated to her biological state which served as unnegotiable ground for fundamental social distinction and expected social roles different from the male. Similar to many other ancient patriarchal societies, in the imperial Roman world an individual's gender appropriation and

socialization began from one's birth without pause or much flexibility through relentless absorption and internalization of ascribed gender attributes. Gender was, therefore, a hegemonically sex-centered category in that it was initially determined by different bodily states of each sex as it was unambiguously bestowed by nature. In this light, crossing the culturally drawn lines safeguarding strict gender dichotomy was met with anxiety and antipathy.

2.1. Evidence of Female Gender Social Marginality

The Roman preference of masculinity over femininity is apparent and this indicates that the Roman society traditionally embraced gender inequality. Many of the Greco-Roman rituals and much of its literature (Hesiod, *Opera et Dies* 11.376–8; Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 4.15.3) witnessed the conventional social preference of bearing a male child. Aristophanes tells a story of women smuggling a male baby in place of their own girl (*Thesmophoriazusae* 564). In a similar vein, Ovid depicts the husband ordering his wife to abandon their infant if it is a girl (*Metamorphoses* 9.666–797), which is reminiscent of the content of a Greek papyrus letter (P. Oxy. 744) written in the 1st century BCE by Hilarion to his pregnant wife Alis, directing her in the blunt imperative: "if it is a boy, leave it alone; if it is a girl, cast it out." Roman legal endorsement of male exclusive patronage over children is another example of the Roman preference of male hegemony in that the husband exercised the authority of *paterfamilias* to determine whether an infant would be reared or exposed to die (*potestas vitae necisque*, Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 11.9.3; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* 102, 288c; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.16.36) with impunity for particular reasons such as the infant's female sex, illegitimacy, or birth defects. David Noy (1991) and Patricia Watson (1995) suggest that since for Rome the children were regarded to be the property of the husband both legally and biologically, all mothers were strangers to their children, like step-mothers, fostering the child of another.

The inequality between men and women was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world, due to their longstanding belief that nature determined the attributes of each sex (Aristotle, *Pol*. I.2, 1252a32, I.5, 1254b12–15; Theophrastus, *Oeconomica* 1344a4; Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 8.2, *Moralia* 140D; Papinianus, 31 *quaest*. D 1.5.9; Arius Didymus, *Epitome of Aristotle*, 145.5; 149.5). Women, slaves, war prisoners, and barbarians were burlesqued as being devoid of gender, that is, masculinity, which solely matters socio-politically (Patterson 1982:5–7). As masculinity was favored over femininity as the essential ingredient for social honor, the Roman social predilection of the male over the female was concretely translated into the phenomenon of men outnumbering women. Cassius Dio pointed out this imbalanced sex ratio and attributed the overall shortage of females to the barrenness among the elite classes and the declining

population of the Empire in general (*Historiae Romanae* 54.16). In his work on ancient and medieval populations, historian J. C. Russell suggested that such an abnormal sex ratio disparity can only occur when some tampering with human life was involved (1958:14). Multiple scholarly works confirmed that tampering had been committed mostly in the forms of abortion, infanticide, and exposure of unwanted and deformed children. Scholars have confirmed particularly that child exposure was widely practiced by all social classes in the Greco-Roman world (Russell 1958; Pomeroy 1975; Fox 1987).

In the imperial Roman world, being a female stereotypically meant being weak, irrational, undependable, and incompetent. Greco-Roman literary evidence brings no shortage of data revealing abundant negative attributes ascribed to the female sex and thereby reflects the common social stance toward femininity. Hence, despite recent research such as that of W. H. Foster focusing on free women as masters who exercised power from the positions of authority (Foster 2010:1–9; Billings: 164–88), women, regardless of their social status, collectively constituted the inferior sex to men and assumed the status of a subordinate group (Lerner 1986:10; Myers 2017:7;18–41). Foster, who claims that free women exercised authority as masters, even suggests that any female position of authority simultaneously negotiated with the position of subordination (2010:6–8, cf. Patterson 1982:63) and that female mastery was paradoxical in that it was necessary for the efficient running of a household, but troubling in a patriarchal society, where authority was conventionally masculine (3).

Annie Oakley's positivistic view of womanhood, as captured in her trademark song, "Anything you can do I can do better," from the Broadway production, *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), would have been unimaginable and even considered injurious to the social order. The imperial Roman history was essentially a story of male society, politics, and culture (Milnor 2011:609–622). Women were strictly prohibited from engaging in the world of politics, for instance, as a politician, a law maker, or an orator (Frier & McGinn 2004:461). Although the minority elite women were an exception to this rule, typical occupations outside the domestic sphere for ordinary, lower-class women in general were humble, informal, and concentrated to the "bazaar and service sector" (Boserup 1970:91) which includes occupations such as wet nurse, midwife, performer, pimp, or prostitute as well as domestic work such as farming, tending livestock, weaving and tailoring, selling or trading produce and handcrafted products in marketplaces. As Cicero shares the contempt of the elite class for those who worked for a living (*De Officiis* I. 151), doubtlessly many women of the lower classes labored for a living under a threefold handicap of gender, class, and work generally associated with baseness and subservience.

A further statement of Cicero was critical of Plato's vision of a communally utopian society where women were perceived as taking leading positions in the political sphere (*De Republica* 5) demonstrating the contemporary social conviction towards women at the time of Cicero, wherein women were meant to be ruled not to rule (cf. Aristotle, *Politica* 1.12). Women by gender were not deemed fit for the Senate House (*curiam*), the military (*militiam*), the magistracies (*magistratus*), nor any position with supreme command (*imperia*), which were traditionally determined as the office of men (*virorum officia*). Cicero plainly expressed that female leadership in any of these male posts should be regarded as the great misfortune of the city which may have allowed it (*quanta erit infelicitas urbis illius*; cf. an early Christian apologist, Lactantius, *Epitome* 33. 4–5; *Divinae Institutiones* 38). As scholars frequently cite the evidence of funerary inscriptions praising and commemorating women for being great woolworkers, modest, chaste, temperate, and the ones who stay at home (CIL vi. 10230, 11602, 15346; CIL viii. 647; cf. Livy, *Ab urbe condita* I.57.9), it is evident that Roman society had long been structured and operated by the dichotomy between male and female and its byproduct, a strict distinction between public and private life (Milnor 2005:30–31).

In 1951, sociologist Helen Mayer Hacker initiated systematic research into the extent to which the term 'minority group' is applicable to women and argued that women do constitute a minority group in relation to other social minority groups (1951:60–69). Her work germinated further endeavors theorizing women and gender in terms of a social group of minority status (Williams & Giles 1978:431–46; Condor 1986:97–118; Burn 1996; Milnor 2005). Hacker's comparison of women and their experiences to other minority groups, such as African Americans, Jews, and immigrants, remains valid and illuminating today. Hacker claims that women suffer from high visibility as a socially marginal group and the immutable social implications which are universally associated to the female sex (1951:65). This analysis can be applied to women in the imperial Roman world. In that society, women were habitually identified by group characteristics rather than their personal attainments. Singularity, individuality, and originality were not the descriptive concepts defining female existence. Women were conceptually categorized as the secondary sex to men and faced culturally-imposed prejudices thought to be inherent to the female sex. Most women in the imperial Roman world carried out a life of anonymity and remained in the background. Many nameless and faceless women appear and disappear unnoticed and uncelebrated. As M. I. Finley puts it, until late in Roman history, women lacked proper individual names (2002:147–149) denoting the worth of individuality or self-autonomy. They were largely disenfranchised in public discourses which were geared towards imparting meaning and changing boundaries.

Some classicists suggest that in the early imperial culture, particularly in the Augustan period, a significant scale of cultural transformation occurred and consequently opened up new spaces for femininity without compromising traditionally assumed domestic roles (Hallett 2012: 372–384; Ruggini 1989:604–19; McGinn 2002:46–93; Severy: 52–56). For example, they interpreted the Augustan legislation on marriage and adultery (*lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*) as a significant milestone for the development of female legal subjectivity in Roman society in that for the first time a woman was accountable for her actions in her private sex life, whereas prior to the establishment of the *Lex Iulia*, this responsibility was held by either her father or her husband. Likewise, Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller consider that Roman women enjoyed a remarkable legal independence which affected the dynamics between husband and wife in the Roman household in comparison to the position of women in other traditional agrarian societies (Garnsey & Saller 1987:131).

At this juncture, however, it is worth noting the overall Roman legal disposition towards women. As Richard Bauman states that womanly weakness was a particularly popular topic among the practitioners of the Roman law (1992:51), Roman law embraced numerous points underscoring the male ascendancy over females and the condition of women as inferior to that of men as being indisputable facts (Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 8.2; Papinianus, 31 *quaest*. D 1.5.9). Roman laws and conventional social beliefs were heavily slanted in favor of men and therefore, strictly speaking, the general social outlook on gender disparity seemed to be essentially similar to that of most other androcentric ancient Mediterranean societies. A substantial part of judicial literature reveals that Roman law was devoted to delimiting the status and role of women in Roman society (Gardner 1986:11–12; Treggiari 1991:15–36; Dixon 1988:74–75; Finley 2002:147–149).

For example, the Roman idea of total male guardianship (*tutela mulierum perpetua*) implies that women should be placed under perpetual (*perpetua*) male guardianship (Lefkowitz & Fant 1992:94–95) because of the alleged levity of the minds of women. Suzanne Dixon interprets that the true basis of *tutela mulierum perpetua* was to maintain male control of property in the patrilineal Roman system of inheritance and marriage (1988:75). Similarly, Antti Arjava and Leslie Dossey assert that even though Roman women enjoyed advanced civic status compared to Greek women, both the survival of male guardianship over women and the continued distinction of gender in the Roman household suggest that the liberation of women was superficial (Arjava 1996:147–48; Dossey 2008:3). Besides, even though the formality of marriage went through a noticeable make-over, the general Roman legal stance towards women as dependent beings to male legal authorities remained the same (Gaius, *Institutes* 1.48–55,

108–18, 136; Justinian, *Institutes* 1.9). Roman law in the late Empire exhibits the discomfort of the jurists dealing with female financial independence from her husband and female access to property such as land (*Codex Justinianus* or *Corpus Juris Civilis*). Although this compilation of Roman law (*Codex Justinianus*), which was established in late antiquity, should be cautiously read in order not to take it as if it were a reflection of common practice since the *Codex* delivers various debated points of law over centuries, it reasonably reflects the overall legal sentiment toward the issue held over a long period of time.

Somewhat misogynistic conventional Roman legal sentiment toward women raises the question of whether women were ever regarded as being independently fit to take part in legal actions and social legislation (Clark 1993:28). The answer to this question is most likely negative and this allows an alternative interpretation of the primary significance of the institution of the *lex Iulia*. As Augustus himself originally envisioned a legal system whose jurisdiction extended to all Roman citizens for *res publica*, the institution of the *lex Iulia* was not primarily meant to grant subjectivity and full legal control to women, but rather to fortify the Roman sanction of marriage, to revive traditional domestic values (i.e. returning to the moral customs of the Republican past) as the backbone of the state's stability, and to curb adultery, which was seen as an offense damaging the hierarchical order and the power dynamics within the *domus*. The fact that under Augustus' legislation, women earned privileges such as freedom from *tutela*, but only through producing children, should be understood in this light. Although the Augustan age indeed marked the beginning of a great cultural experiment, the focal point of the Augustan public discourse of the private sphere and the power dynamics related to that sphere was still heavily concerned with domestic feminine virtues and female subjection to patriarchal order.

3. Female Stereotypes and Affinity between Women and Slaves

In the imperial Roman world, women were vulnerable and passive recipients of collective judgments and disparaging stereotypes associated with shame and slaves. They were customarily attributed to two types of gender specific weaknesses: physical-sexual and moral-intellectual. Multiple male testimonies comprehensively cover the female deficiencies in quite straightforward, repetitive, and sweeping statements. The female dissimilarities with males and alleged imperfections were taken as the pretext for female "Otherness" in Greek and Roman cultures alike.

The Greek culture customarily linked the female sex to Pandora, a mythological woman with a frivolous mind of a puerile nature, the author of all human woes and vices in the inhabited

world (Hesiod, *Theogony* 590–91; *Opera et Dies* 53–105) and therefore, played with the opposition between masculine and feminine at the cosmic level. While the Greeks viewed Pandora as the representation of the "Otherness" of the "race of women (*genos gunaikôn*)" rather than her motherhood over humanity (Loraux 1993; Zeitlin 1996; Doherty 2001:136), the Romans had not developed their counterpart of Pandora's myth. Contrastingly, they celebrated Roman goddesses and women in Roman myths such as the story of Hersilia, the wife of Romulus (Livy, *Historia Romanae* I.13; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.45; Plutarch, *Romulus* 14–16, 19). Some classicists consider that the myth of Hersilia, who prevented an outbreak of war between the Romans and the Sabines, manifests the important role women played in linking families in Roman society and preserving familial values (Brown 1995:291–319; Miles 1995:179–219; Culham 2014:141; Barber 1955:386). Although the fact that Roman authors spoke scarcely of Pandora, and exemplified the Roman appreciation of female strengths and roles through the Roman veneration of their goddesses and the case of Hersilia, they also frequently voiced the perception of women's "Otherness" in various statements from a broad array of Latin literature which negatively typify the female sex (Hallett 1989:60–61).

Speaking of typical female stereotypes known in the imperial Roman world, a striking fact is that the two marginal groups, women and slaves, were oftentimes defined as analogous groups with common stereotypes of inequality, confinement, and relegation. For example, the writings of Roman authors such as Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Juvenal disclose that the imperial Roman society made an expedient use of the comparability between women and slaves resulting from their social liminality. Both women and slaves led paradoxical existences in the sense that they were, by definition, the complete "Other" to the established androcentric and hierarchical social orders: women in terms of gender and slaves in terms of status. The liminal existence of women and slaves caused social anxiety about their latent and subversive power by importing foreign elements accompanied with potential threats.

While some elite women were accustomed to a degree of independence and actually exercised tangible influence based on their familial social status, resources, and connections despite the fact that the convention of the day principally restricted women from involvement in public affairs, it should be noted that this publicly displayed magnanimity of women of elite rank was not politically neutral since the Roman aristocracy effectively facilitated women of the upper rank to be political agents of their clans without inducing shame on their families, and this leniency was only limited to the few. Thus, admirable feats of a few select women of the upper families in the society where female competition was integrally shunned cannot be

taken as normal specimens from which we should draw a typical conclusion surmising the life experience of the majority of women, particularly from the lower class.

Not only did conventional stereotypes of women popular in the Greco-Roman world continue but also new additions were made to the pool of stereotypes and categorical attributes evolving around women. Negative stock stereotypes applied to women should be distinguished from general social expectations for ideal womanhood. We can examine the typical characteristics for the good wife and husband often discussed in Roman discourses. For instance, the dominant theme in Roman elite male discourse on household governance is about the bad wife (Coole 1988:6–7). Traits like rationality, self-restraint, and benevolence were staple qualities required for the good husband and the same holds true for the good wife. Yet, the traits of the good wife needed to be crowned by her compliance and discrete silence in order to be fully praised while the traits of the good husband should be topped with his disciplinarian and principle-bound strengths. Reversely, the attributes of the bad wife were known as being irrational, irascible, impulsive, loud, and unrestrained, which were seen as impediments to the household hierarchy and the male-controlled domestic harmony.

Interestingly, these negative stock stereotypes attributed to women as a group are closely related to the typical faulty traits associated with the bad wife. This implies that women by virtue of gender were automatically assigned to the gamut of faulty characteristics ascribed to the bad wife. The description of the evil *domina* and other adverse stereotypes of women are dispersed randomly and expressed without much basis or logic throughout various genres of Greco-Roman literature. Nonetheless, it appears that two categories of female weakness, physical-sexual and moral-intellectual, were addressed and most frequently stereotyped in a repetitive and sweeping manner in male dominant discourses. The alleged female deficiencies compared to the superiority and perfection of the male sex were regarded as the sources precipitating potential danger to the social order. To control this latent danger, female subordination was required and the stereotypification of female attributes served as a controlling mechanism.

The following delineates each category of known stereotypes applied to women in the imperial Roman world. First, the female sex was associated with physical imperfection and sexual frivolity. As the Greeks championed by Aristotle regarded the female as a "disabled" or "imperfect" male (*De generatione animalium*1.20, 728a18; 2.3, 737a28), likewise, the Romans characterized the female en masse as the substandard sex compared to the male. Galen, a Greek physician and philosopher who distinguished himself among the Latin authors as the transmitter of the Aristotelian view of sex polarity based on the antithetical scheme of perfection and

imperfection, identified the female as the "mutilated" sex (*De usu partium* 630). Galen indicated the inherent shortcomings in the female but also attempted to conceptually justify this lack, saying that "indeed, you should not think that our Creator would purposely make half the whole race imperfect, and, as it were, mutilated, unless there was to be some great advantage in such a mutilation" (*De usu partium* 630).

Honorable *matronae* were paid their due respects, yet the Roman's low social regards for the female persisted as the backdrop for their defense of male preeminence. The statement of the censor Metellus Macedonicus (ca. 210–116 BCE) on marriage, which were preserved by the 2nd century CE Roman author Aulus Gellius, exemplifies this. Gellius reports that Metellus urged Roman men to marry based on the following rationale: "if we could live without a wife, Romans, we would all be free of troubles; but since nature has ordained that we can neither live very comfortably with them nor live at all without them (*sed quoniam ita natura tradidit, ut nec cum illis satis commode, nec sine illis uno modo vivi possit*)" (*Noctes Atticae*, 1.6.2). According to Livy, the Emperor Augustus quoted Metellus' speech in 17 BCE when he had to draw support from the Senate for his new law, *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* promoting marriage and procreation (*Periochae* 59). Augustus' reflection on the statement of the censor confirms that Metellus' speech regarding marriage might have encapsulated a popular Roman male belief that union with women through marriage is a necessary evil. Interestingly, Metellus' expression echoes the Greek notion of women reflected in Aristophanes' comedy, *Lysistrata* that "you can't live with the cursed creatures or without them" (1038–1039).

Secondly, in the imperial Roman world femininity was suspected for its assumed moral deficiency. While masculinity was believed to represent the condition of being an ideal human, femininity was regarded as the sign of moral inadequacy. Multiple Roman authors reveal women to be prone to vice, morally depraved, bibulous, superstitious, deceitful, lacking in moderation, and incompetent in self-control so that they should be unfit to govern the household. Contrastingly, the *paterfamilias*, who is supposed to be balanced in mind and judicious, is principally regarded as the one who can properly discipline the members of the household (Pultarch, *Moralia* 460C). In correlation to the suspected female shortcomings in reasoning and self-control, women were viewed as being emotionally excessive and cantankerous. Women were characterized as being naturally prone to anything excessive: excessive sexual appetite, excessive emotion, excessive in fear, words, and deceit, and excessive in wine consumption (Plutarch, *Romulus* 22.3). Speaking of female emotional excess, Aristotle relates it to female inferiority in soul. According to Aristotle, while the two parts of the soul, the rational and the emotional, are harmoniously developed in the male in that the rational division of the soul

controls the emotional faculty, in the female the rational division of the soul is less developed than the emotional part so that the emotional division of the soul dominantly controls the female being (*Politica* 1252b1). If we follow this logic that nature determines the capacity of the human soul contrarily between the male and the female, male slaves compared to free women, despite the fact that they occupy incomparably lower social status than that of woman, should have been understood as sharing the innate advantages of the masculine gender despite their lack of freedom. Consequently, the most wretched beings in this environment were female slaves who were destined by nature to be irrevocably inferior both in their gender and servile status.

Juvenal caricatures women as being largely quarrelsome in his satirically inflated statement, "there never was a case in court in which the dispute was not commenced by a woman" (*Satire* IV; cf. Valerius Maximus, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 8.3.2). Some may suggest that Juvenal's verbose and levitous generalization of women should not be taken at face value because the genre, satire, normally appropriates the use of hyperbole as a literary technique to make a strong impression of an argument on the audience-reader. However, even if we take Juvenal's hyperbolic overstatement as lightly as possible, the gist of the statement indicates that women's expression of their mind was taken as something to be frowned upon while strong-willed men full of sense and aspiration were deemed to be praiseworthy (Plutarch, *Lives, Caesar* 5.2; *Lives, Cicero* 47.2). In stark contrast to male valor in self-expression, women were expected to be reticently refined rather than be willfully vocal in expression. It seems that the Romans were mindful of the Greek historian Thucydides' proclamation that, "the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men" (*History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.46.2) which implies that women should lead their lives in discreet refinement and silence.

The Greco-Roman world exhibits the tendency of justifying the alleged frailty of female intelligence and judgment based on alleged female moral deficiency. Overall, the Greco-Roman culture regarded women as intellectually underdeveloped and thus incapable of achieving the same level of intellectual ability as men (Jeffers 1999:249–250). The male was largely deemed as more rational, competent, and self-restrained compared to the female who was regarded as irrational, incompetent, and uncontrolled (Clark 1998:124). In his defense-speech made to a jury on behalf of his friend Murena, Cicero stated that Roman ancestors had bound women to the power of male guardians (*tutores*) because of their weak judgment (*infirmitas consilii*; Cicero, *Pro Murena* xii. 27; *Pro Flacco* 30). Although it is fair to say that Cicero himself should not be considered as the originator of the formulaic stereotype of the female as having an intrinsic deficiency in judgment, he sounded in support of the legitimacy of male guardianship over women (*tutela mulierum perpetua*).

Female modesty (*pudicitia*) was deemed to be a telltale sign for female moral soundness and it was put to the test day after day by her appearance based on her choice of clothing and ornaments (Wyke:134–151). In the imperial Roman world, one's fashion functioned as an indicator of not only one's character but also of one's social and moral belongingness. For women, understated clothing preferably with little jewelry and a veil were considered ideal, as quiet clothes were believed to be the manifestation of the most valued female chastity. Although physical beauty was assumed to be an essential part to the female sex, and therefore, female adornment was not outright rejected, female adornment beyond what seemed to be moderate from the traditional male perspective was viewed to be pernicious. Excessive female embellishment was taken as a sign of manifold moral shortfalls in women such as female superficiality, female sexual deviance and deceptiveness, female unpatriotic extravagance (Tacitus, *Annales* 3.53; Seneca, *De beneficiis* 7.9.5), and most of all, serious insufficiency in modesty (Seneca, *Ad Helviam* 16.4).

Belief about female moral inferiority contributed to social anxiety about female sexual infidelity (Larson 2012:79). Women were seen as being fundamentally sensual and suffering addiction to bodily pleasure far more than men (Osiek & Pouya 2010:52). E. T. Hall explains the belief of the Mediterranean societies that men could not easily suppress the strong sexual urges that take possession of him when he is alone with a pre-menopausal woman, but women are considered even more unable to resist male advances due to their sexual instability (66–67, 144). Similarly, Suzanne Dixon says that regardless of the individuality of each woman, women were inclusively understood as being emotional, sexually inadequate, gullible, and particularly susceptible to flattery and deception (1988:87). While the female sexual drive was believed to be perilous and amoral, the male sexual drive was seen as being a symbolic demonstration of his masculinity.

The general social acceptance of vulnerability and inability of the female sex might have strengthened the male suspicion that women are incapable of controlling their insatiable sexual appetite. This might have provided the grounds on which men exercised their control over female sexuality by circumscribing appropriate female sexual behaviors exclusively to the marital context. While a man was socially permitted to have extra-marital sexual relations with slaves and prostitutes (Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 10.23.5; Plutarch, *Moralia* 140B–144F), a married woman's extra-marital sexual relations were counted as a crime (Cloke 1995:65). The practical legal view reflecting the Stoics' egalitarian stance that the same principle of sexual integrity should be applied in cases of adultery committed by both sexes (Seneca the Younger, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 94.26, 95.37, 123.10; for Musonius Rufus' view, see Kassen

1984:185–206; Engel 2000:377–391; Hill 2001:13–40) only appears in the later Empire. The Roman jurist Ulpian articulates that a husband's demand for sexual chastity (*pudicitia*) of his wife is unjust unless the husband shows himself to be equally chaste (Ulpian, *Adulteries* 2.5). However, adoption of Ulpian's opinion as the equivalent of law only comes far later in the 5th century CE.

The broad spectrum of literature of the imperial Roman world such as comedy, history, elegy, letters, and *exempla* characterize women and slaves as categorically comparable and stereotypically associated. S. R. Joshel and S. Murnaghan suggest that women and slaves were ideologically comparable and maintained distinct roles but with "each falling short of the full virtue of the free man in its own way" (1998:1). Women and slaves were often defined as analogous groups with common stereotypes of inequality, confinement, and relegation. Certainly, freeborn women were recognized as having a higher social status than that of slaves who were without social honor. Freeborn women were differentiated from slaves in the ways of address, law, and ritual on the grounds of the contrasting value between the honor of the freeborn women and the honor-less slaves (Patterson 1982:5–7; Saller 1998:85–91). The most obvious case is exemplified in upper-class households, where the elite women exercised dominance over slaves in their capacity as mistresses of the household (Foster 2010:1–9). While slaves were comprehensively sequestered from socio-political rights as the socially aborted (Patterson 1982:5–7), freeborn women were not doubted in their capacity as lawful bearers of progeny and transmitters of property. Roman law also imposed a great penalty for insults against a *matrona* (Ulpian, D 47.10.15.15). However, regardless of an unambiguous social status discrepancy existing between freeborn women and slaves, the differences between them were often smoothed out by their quintessential comparability of being fit for subordination. Women were appraised as being low in gender, being stuck somewhere in between men, the alleged supreme gender, and slaves, the genderless.

In his exposition of the origins of the state in the *Politica,* Aristotle defined the connections between master and slave, husband and wife, and father and children as three fundamental categories of the relationship between those who rule and those who are ruled in any organized society (*Politica* 1.1253b; 2.4–6). P. Allen (1997) and M. E. Wiesner (2000) count Aristotle as the most influential non-Christian source for ideas in many fields up to 17 CE, which would have had unfortunate effects for women and sex polarity in Western civilization. The relationship of husbands towards wives and fathers towards children do not seem to diverge much from the Aristotelian frame of the master-slave relationship in the imperial Roman world. The writings of Latin authors such as Livy (*Historia Romanae* 34.7.12–

13), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae* 2.25.4), and Juvenal (*Satires* 6.140) disclose that the imperial Roman society was familiar with the comparability between women and slaves which was drawn from their liminality and made an expedient use of it when characterizing women in general. Women and slaves led a paradoxical existence in the sense that both were by definition the complete "Other" in the established androcentric and hierarchical social orders of the imperial Roman world: women in terms of gender and slaves in terms of status. Women and slaves begin their journey as "the outsiders" but only end up becoming "the quasi-insiders" who provide a great deal of functional services for the establishment of a household (Parker 1998). Women were tied to their husbands by the bond of marriage and slaves to their masters by the bond of ownership, both of which falling under the category of fictive-kinship (Patterson 1982:63; Joshel 1992:43–45).

Albeit being qualitatively different from the extreme liminality of genderless and classless slaves, women were also slotted into a liminal position. In this social context, the female life means the life of liminality in that it was a social mandate for her to depart from her natal family to join her husband and to foster her husband's lineage by providing him with legitimate children. She, however, remained as an outsider since she was biologically unrelated to her husband and this fundamental fact irrevocably marked her as a stranger to her husband's family. In this way, women together with slaves were perceived as outsiders with covert threats, but also simultaneously as insiders whose roles were vital for the subsistence of the family. That women and slaves shared a paradoxically twofold existence of the outsider and the insider (Hallett 1989:59–78) caused some anxieties (Douglas 1966:41–57) concerning their latent and subversive power as foreign elements incorporated into the family. As liminal beings, both women and slaves in the Roman society constituted "intimate strangers" embodying unpredictable "foreign-elements-within" and sharing similar stereotypes and assortment of vices and shortcomings such as a lack of self-mastery, idleness, untrustworthiness, lust (gluttonous and prone to promiscuity), bestiality, drunkenness, and more.

Furthermore, it is necessary to comment on the socially assumed role of women and slaves as being "penetrated" in contrast to the implicit role of men as "penetrator" (Dover 1989; Halperin 1990; Winkler 1990; Richlin 1992). Jonathan Walters adds an insightful complexity to this discussion in his fine distinction between "males" and "men," arguing that "not all males are men, and therefore impenetrable" (1997:32). According to Walters, only *vir*, that is, a free Roman adult male, was deemed to be sexually impenetrable but able to penetrate. In fact, in ancient phallocentric society including the imperial Roman world, men or women could fulfil the passive role of being penetrated. However, custom and social stigma associated with passive

sexuality limited who might perform the penetrating role to those who are inextricable from the phallus (Parker 1998:47). Some scholars (Winkler 1990) consider the "penetrator and the penetrated" relationship to be more or less "natural," involving a more powerful individual exercising sexual power over a less powerful one such as the *praetextatus* (a pubescent male), slaves devoid of either social identity or gender, and women. This paradigm of the penetrator-penetrated, however, seemed to be intimately related to and culturally accentuated by the ancient Mediterranean gender ideology, the Roman history of slavery, and sexual violence expressed in war and rape. In these cases, women, likewise slaves, were subject to male sexual dominance which was nurtured within the broader pattern of the Roman social hierarchies. Regardless of the gender of the penetrated, the role was considered to be feminine and this passive feminine role of being penetrated was largely taken up by females (Skinner 1997:7).

The popular ancient Mediterranean androcentric gender ideology ascribes the unnegotiable roles of penetrator-penetrated to the male and the female in procreation. According to this view, the male alone engenders offspring in the creative role exclusively assigned to them while the female undertakes the compliant and unassertive role (Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 716a5, 727b 19, 729a38–730b32, 737a; *Physics* 194b16–195a5; Pliny the Elder, *Nat*. 7.15.66–67; Philo, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* 3.47; *De opificio mundi* 132; Galen, *De semine*). In a nutshell, in the heterosexual act of procreation, the male penetrator should desire the female, who is always of dominated and penetrable status. Also, the Roman penetrator-penetrated binary is inherently linked to the Roman history, which is decorated with cases of sexual exploitation and violence (Moses 1993:50). The extended Roman history of war provides us with many classic examples of sexual exploitation and violence such as slavery and rape. We know all too well how slaves, regardless of gender, were sexually exploited at the free disposal of slave masters in the Roman world (Joshel 2010; Harper 2011). War-rape as an act of intimidation by invaders against the conquered was an integral aspect of Roman military conflicts with its subjugated civilians, mainly women, girls, and, at times, boys (Tacitus II. IV, "the revolt of Civilis and the Batavi"). Scholars note that Greek, Persian, and Roman troops employed rape as an adjunct to warfare and committed mass rape of women as a punitive measure (Phang: 253–254, 267–268; Gaca 2011:77–85). Even though there is no exact word in Latin equivalent to the nuance of the modern English word "rape" or "sexual violence" (Deacy & Pierce 1997), the Roman literary tradition shows that the act of rape and sexual violence against slaves and women were widely covered under a variety of legal terms (Nguyen 2006:75–112).

The imperial Roman society venerated *machismo*. In this social milieu, a free Roman man should be ready, willing, and able to express his dominion over others, male or female, by means of sexual penetration (Williams 1978:18). Correspondingly, it was a taboo that a free Roman man allow anyone to penetrate him in any manner whatsoever as one's corporeal freedom was intimately tied to one's free and superior social status (Segal 1987:137–70; Saller 1991:153; Veyne 2002:61). This tradition upholding male execution of sexual predilection as appropriate expression of alleviated male social status hints at how sexual violence occurring between a husband and a wife within domestic walls, such as marital rape, might have been taken. While the modern Western crime of rape is defined as an assault of the person's body and a violation of self-autonomy and therefore, a husband's coerced sexual advancement on his wife will constitute the crime (Kadish & Schulhofer 2001:317; Garner 2004:1288), there appears to be silence in the Roman legal and public discourses defining a husband's forceful (i.e. unconsented) sexual advancement on his wife as sexual violence or rape. The concept of marital rape was culturally nonexistent as typical patriarchal societies defined the female key role to be that of receptor of male semen for procreation.

Although Roman law recognized rape (*raptus* or *stuprum*) as a crime implying violent theft applicable to both person and property, when it comes to violence against woman it was to an extent synonymous with abduction or sexual assault, that is the theft of a woman against the consent of her male guardian. In the case of the rape of a woman, even the harm was treated as a wrong against the male legal power over her, not herself (Gillian 1993; Gordon 2002:105). No Roman record shows that compensation was paid or expressed a view that a threat to public safety had occurred in the case of marital rape. For most of recorded history the concept of marital rape was not recognized (Brownmiller 1975:29–30) until marital rape was historically outlawed for the first time in 1978 when New York State passed a statute prohibiting forced sexual intercourse by a spouse within marriage (Kerber 1995:13; Brownmiller 1975:382). The Romans believed in wifely compliance to a husband's sexual needs, the broadly adopted cultural commandment of many societies including the imperial Roman world, which can be historically traced to about the 18th century BCE, when the Hammurabi Code ordered a wife to drown for refusing to have intercourse with her husband (Brundage 1987:10). This somewhat corresponds to what lies at the heart of the Roman interpretation of the story of the rape of the Sabine women in the new city as a process of legitimate and necessary rape for the purpose of procreation. A wife had no sexual rights over her husband regarding access to her own body except limited control over the conception of undesired offspring (Treggiari 1991:406).

Suzanne Dixon plainly notes that a Roman husband could force himself on his wife without breaking any law (1988:49).

4. Women and Slaves Vulnerable to the Penetrability of Domestic Violence

As we've seen above, the commonly assumed role by women and slaves as "being penetrated," in relation to their husbands and to their masters respectively, indicates their marginal social status because the state of being penetrated was socially counted as an indication of one's low social status associated to the lack of control, of corporeal freedom.

Authority was meant to be balanced out by obedience. It was the Roman ideal for the relations among family members that each member should conduct themselves based on honor and the positive force of honor, that is, *pietas* (Saller 1994:102–132). Male authority was expected to be exercised with affection so that the family members could respond to it with loyalty. Domestic abuse, however, which is one of the most widespread cases of gender-based violence, was a real and prevalent social phenomenon in the imperial Roman world. Domestic violence behind the door within a strongly patriarchal Roman culture is a difficult topic since the reality can be easily concealed behind cultural dogma that promotes an ideal world in which everything is in perfect order, in which household members are ascribed to obedience and duty, as is the case in numerous Latin inscriptions, especially for wives and children. Speaking of ancient Greek domestic violence and uxoricide, evolutionary psychologists M. I. Wilson and M. Daly insightfully suggest that violence against women can be understood as a systematic consequence of the evolved social organization of the human male mind (1996:2–7; 1998:199–230). This view is similar to that of R. W. Connell (2005) and T. Edwards (2006) who exclusively connected domestic violence to patriarchy. Likewise, Llewellyn-Jones considers that the form of patriarchal *machismo* of a given society should be a basis for understanding levels of violence including domestic violence (2011:241).

Male dominance was customarily demonstrated through domestic violence in societies, including the imperial Roman world, where slavery was in practice and wives and children were considered to be legally subordinate to the patriarchal hierarchy, the husband's *potestas* (*patres familiarum*, Ulpian D.1.6.4). Domestic violence against household members such as wives, children, and slaves often appeared in the forms of the beating of wife, the striking of children, and the torture and whipping of slaves (Clark 1998:109). In Roman moral discourses, domestic violence by a husband was supposed to not be tolerated as Cato the Elder characterizes a husband's beating of his wife or child as sacrilegious (Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 20.2). Plutarch evaluates the angry and violent husband to be unfit to govern weightier matters since "a man

ought to have his household well harmonized if he is going to harmonize state, forum, and friends" (*Moralia* 144C). Although these authors' disapproving statements of male domestic violence are often taken by modern scholars as a quasi-proof for the advanced Roman society of the late Republic era where the idea of wife beating was taken as a serious offense, the very statements ironically confirm that domestic violence was a known issue to the extent that these sayings obtained hearings. No evidence attests to the idea that violence against women, children, and slaves was presumed as a violation of *humanitas* or as a form of discrimination. Actually, Roman laws concerning violence involving women seem to be far less concerned with women themselves as being victims (Mitchell 2008:425). Rather, the legal focus was given to the impact of violence on the female victim's male kin even though the nature of the crimes was clearly gender-biased and sexually oriented such as rape, assault, and abduction.

Jonathan Walters states that "sexual penetration and beating, those two forms of corporeal assault, are in Roman terms structurally equivalent" (1997:39). Walters further comments that while the bodies of freeborn Roman males were ideally meant to be exempt both from being sexually penetrated and being beaten (37–42), the bodies of women and slaves were traditionally susceptible to sexual penetration and physical violence. Romulus initially established the *laws of chastisement* (ca. 753 BCE) which gave a husband ultimate rights to discipline his wife physically for various offenses in the rationale that wives are the belongings of their husbands (Sohm 1892:93). Scholars (Frier & McGinn 2004:95; Fagan 2011:487) claim that during the later period of Roman law, the husband's right of chastisement had been noticeably suppressed so that by the 1st century BCE wives could sue their husbands for monetary compensation for unjustified physical abuse and by the 4th century CE wives could pursue divorce for excessive violence (Quint. *Inst.* 7.4.11; Sen. *De ira* 3.5.4). Yet, it is uncertain how often and effectively women were able to have these new rights enforced for themselves. Together with much quoted statements of Cato the Elder (Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 20.2) and Plutarch (*Moralia* 144C) disapproving a husband's violence against his wife and children, the development of these new legal rights of women to protect themselves from violence of their husbands paradoxically evidences that spousal abuse and domestic violence were a constant social phenomenon known well in the imperial Roman world. Interestingly, Plutarch hints at the frequent occurrence of domestic violence in his *Quaestiones Romanae* (108) as he reasons why an exogamic marriage would be helpful for women since the exogamic system allows women, sisters and daughters, should they suffer their husbands' abuse, to seek help from male kin unrelated to their abusive husbands.

Although no law in the late republic allowed a Roman man to beat his wife, incidents of domestic violence were recorded by historians, inscriptions, and employed as a leitmotif by playwrights. This evidence reports domestic violence against women in general and thereby reveals that domestic violence was not a social phenomenon limited to a certain class. For instance, the epitaph for Margarita (*CIL* VI 29896 or *CLE* 1175), a lap-dog, deceased sometime in Rome in the 2nd or 3rd centuries CE is unique in that the inscription not only humanizes the pet dog but also sheds light on the reality of domestic violence or corporeal punishments which a husband might have inflicted at will upon his wife and his household members without distinction (*verbera nec niveo corpore saeva pati,* lines 5–6; cf. P. Oxy. 6. 903). Also, the records of historians like Tacitus (*Annals* 4.22.1, 4.16.6), Suetonius (*Tiberius* 53; *Caligula* 25, 33; *Nero* 34–35), Herodian of Antioch (*Roman History* 3.13.2, 3.10.8, 4.6.3), and Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists* 555) disclose that domestic abuse occurred in the families of the social elite, including abuse within the royal families committed by the emperors themselves or their surrogates. We also learn about the reality of domestic violence against women on the lower end of the social spectrum in the following select examples: Petronius' *Satyricon*, P. Oxy. VI. 903, and Augustine's childhood memories of his mother Monica and his mother's battered female friends.

Petronius' satirical novel *Satyricon* discloses habitual verbal and physical domestic violence inflicted by an angry husband upon a wife in a lower-class family. The story depicts the abuse of the husband, Trimalchio, towards his wife, Fortunata, an ex-slave. The play dramatically captures the intense and prolific verbal abuse of Trimalchio which he hurled at his wife. Trimalchio's verbal threat to beat his wife testifies to the fact that verbal and psychological abuse might have been readily employed to ensure the wife's compliance through the threat of physical violence. The Roman Egypt papyrological evidence *papyrus oxyrhynchus* VI. 903 of the 4th century CE provides insights into the study of Roman life. The papyrus is an anonymous Christian woman's legal affidavit against her husband, presenting the issue of domestic violence against females of three classes: a free woman, her female slave, and her foster-daughters. This papyrus shows that although women in Roman Egypt of the 4th century CE could resort to some legal protection from their husbands' domestic physical abuse, the extent of the protection and right to legal recourse varied greatly depending on the woman's social standing.

St. Augustine's *Confessions* provides another interesting example of domestic violence in a Roman African province. G. Clark assesses that Augustine's *Confessions* provides a comprehensive description of real domestic violence affecting the lives of women and also

reveals how violence within a household could be pervasive and relentless going beyond all distinctions of age, gender, and status (1998:109–130). In Augustine's depiction of the relationship between his parents, Patricius and Monnica, Augustine recollected his mother employing the techniques of patience, subjection, and gentleness in dealing with her irritable husband. Augustine relates that many freeborn wives bore the disfiguring marks of blows on their faces and also recounts his mother's dealing with wives complaining of their husbands' behavior. Monnica admonished their gossiping tongues and instructed them to be faithful to the marriage contract which bound them to serve their masters (*dominos*) and to respond to their agitated husbands in a placatory manner rather than defy them (*Confessions*, 9.9.19). Remarkably, Monnica's advice to the battered women bears a resemblance to the counsel of Plutarch that a sensible woman should keep silent when her husband shouts in anger but when his anger dies down, she should appease him with words (*Moralia* 143C). The commonness of the advice given by both Plutarch and Monnica to respective women facing either physical or verbal domestic violence is that women could attain some mastery of the situation by employing female attributes such as malleability and subjection to their husband's abusive authority. These figures' common advice given to battered women reasonably indicates that a husband's violence against women in the Roman world was regarded as venial and that women were considered to be responsible for men's behavior. In this society, the onus of reconciliation and maintaining domestic peace seemed to be attributed to the wife. Thereby, it was believed that the female fate was to endure domestic discord privately by bearing it in silence or by placating the male authority to remove the threat. Consequently, this explains why young girls' enculturation of pacifistic behaviors and the skills of appeasement in dealing with angry males were required at an early stage in their social development (cf. Seneca the Elder's *Controversiae* 10.3.2, 10.3.13).

5. Conclusion

It is unarguable that the ancient Mediterranean world, including the imperial Roman society, accepted female inferiority in both moral and legal terms and, consequentially, the necessity of male rule, male laws, and the supremacy of male contributions. Such a social sentiment was further augmented by the conviction that dominance is natural and inherent in the way in which things are. In the imperial Roman world, women and slaves shared much affinity on the essential level that they were utterly dependent on the male authority in their lives (Bierkan 1907:303–327). Both women and slaves, in spite of the differences existing between these two groups of people, were subject to the authority of freeborn men and

significantly lacked social, political, and legal authority compared to men (e.g. Gaius, *Institutes* 1.52, 108–9; Ulpian, D 30.16.195.2). As women and slaves were contrasting concepts against which ideal masculinity was defined and measured in the imperial Roman society (Joshel & Murnaghan 1998:12–13; Garlan 1988:19), the assumed lot of women and slaves was the total lack of self-autonomy and mastery. Even in the face of male sexual assertiveness and wide-ranging domestic violence, potentially including marital rape, women and slaves were meant to maintain their passivity within the frame of the patriarchal social establishment. Accordingly, women and slaves acted according to shared codes of conduct such as submissiveness, appeasement, and pleading, which were the skills required to cope with male hegemony.

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