VENUS RESTRAINED
The Regulation of Rome’s women in the Second Punic War

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B.A. (Hons.), B. Med.Sc.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy
Mars dubius nec certa Venus

Mars is doubtful and Venus is not certain

Ov. Am. 1.9.29.
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Abstract

In war, women tend to suffer great harm, yet war also presents women with opportunities. The focus of this study is how Rome’s women experienced this harm and opportunity in the Second Punic War (218 – 201 BCE), where harm was the state’s regulation of élite women, and opportunity was their collaboration with that regulation to their advantage.

This study establishes that the Roman state regulated élite women between 216 – 207 BCE with eight measures that targeted their social and economic independence. It reassesses the primary evidence for these acts of regulation, with reference to the work of Pomeroy, Evans and Hänninen. The argument of this study is that this regulation occurred after Cannae (216 BCE) and persisted past 207 BCE, pace Bauman. It will be shown that this process of regulation was motivated by the state’s desire to acquire assets and establish public order.

This study further explores the ways in which élite Roman women collaborated in this regulation via religious rites c. 215 and in 204 BCE that promoted sexual virtue. It reassesses the primary evidence for these rites, and outlines the prominence of status and sexual virtue within them. Drawing on the work of Pomeroy, Hänninen, Schultz, and Langlands, the second core argument of this study is that these rites offered élite women an opportunity for status competition, and that they functioned as protective rites. It will be demonstrated that élite women used these rites to improve their status and participate in the religious protection of the state.

Rome’s women were regulated throughout the Second Punic War, and some élite women collaborated with that regulation for their own benefit. Such pragmatism during wartime has a modern descendent in the collaboration of some British suffragettes with the state in World War I. In both cases Venus (restrained) transformed harm into opportunity.
Thesis Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Signature:

Date:
Acknowledgements

*Amicus [...] est tamquam alter idem* (Cic. *Amic.* 81).

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Han Baltussen and Dr. Jacqueline Clarke, my research supervisors, for their patience, guidance and encouragement throughout my candidature. Your incisive critiques and your kindness will be remembered.

I would like to particularly thank my dear friends Dr. Stephanie Hester and Dr. Anna Foka, who provided and continue to provide constant inspiration, encouragement and advice.

I want to thank my father, Dr. Michael Webb, for his thoughtful encouragement and advice, and the rest of my family for their love. You have always been a constant inspiration and source of support.

I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful feedback provided by Mr. Kyle Conrau-Lewis and Mr. Chris De L’isle. I am humbled by your generosity and keen insight.

I wish to remember Mr. David Hester, friend and inspiration, who has passed this life. Your intellect, wit and singing voice have inspired generations of students.

I want to thank my colleagues and residents at Lincoln College. It has been an absolute pleasure to learn and grow with you.

Finally, I want to thank Timothy, partner in my labours: *te amo.*
Texts, Abbreviations, and Notes

Texts

The primary sources listed below are quoted within this study. This study draws heavily on Livy and Plautus, and uses the Oxford Classical Texts editions of Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita* and Plautus’ *Comoediae*.

Latin


Watts, N. (editor and translator) *Cicero Orations: Pro Archia, Post Reditum in Senatu, Post Reditum ad Quirites, De Domo Sua, De Haruspicum Responsis*,

Winterbottom, M. (editor and translator) *The Elder Seneca Declamations, Volume 1.*

Winterbottom, M. (editor and translator) *The Elder Seneca Declamations, Volume 2.*

**Greek**


**Abbreviations**

aed. = Aedile.

*AJA* = American Journal of Archaeology.

*AJPh* = The American Journal of Philology.

*ANRW* = Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.

BCE = Before the Common Era.

c. = Circa.

CE = Common Era.

cens. = Censor.

*ChHist* = Church History.


cos. = Consul.

cur. = Curule.

dict. = Dictator.

Festus p. x L = Lindsay, W. (editor) *Sexti Pompei Festi De verborum significatu quae*

ibid. = ibidem.

JR = The Journal of Religion.

JRH = Journal of Religious History.


pr. = Praetor.

p.max. = Pontifex Maximus.

REL = Revue des études latines.

s.a. = sub anno.

s.v. = sub uerbo.


tr. pl. = Plebeian Tribune.

viz. = uidelicet.

**Notes**

1. Primary source abbreviations are taken from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

2. For quotes in Latin, this study uses u over v.