

LIEN FOUBERT : **Crowded and emptied houses as status markers of aristocratic women in Rome: the literary commonplace of the *domus frequentata***

In Republican and imperial Rome, the house was seen as a *locus* of public life and a symbol of the status of its male residents. The influential position of elite women turned the houses that they owned, or the residential space with which they were associated the most, into appealing elements of literary discourse. Central to all the anecdotes discussed in this contribution is the idea that a woman who gathers people around her might, at some point, become a political force to be reckoned with. Modern scholarship has often characterized the Julio-Claudian period as a period of trial and error. The portrayals of Julio-Claudian women illustrate this most clearly: whereas state-regulated media, such as imperial coins or senatorial decrees, show that these women were given a visible role in public life and were consequently considered as influential members of society, they were never recognized as formal players in the struggle for power. Describing their residence and its visitors enabled ancient writers to point this out. The women whose *domus frequentata* is discussed in this contribution are: Verres' mistress Chelidon, Clodia Metelli, Cornelia, Octavia, Livia, Agrippina the Elder, Messalina, and Agrippina the Younger.

Mots-clés :

Julio-Claudian women – Literary discourse – Domestic space – Late Republican elite women