THE BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL REACTION OF THE ROMANS TO INFANT MORTALITY

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I declare that this thesis, which is approximately 99,873 words in length, has been composed by myself and is my own work.

Margaret King
Abstract

This thesis examines the behavioural and emotional response of the Romans, at both the societal and individual level, to the death of a child in infancy during the period c.200 BC–AD 235. Part A discusses the extent to which Roman parents were indifferent to the welfare of infant children. Variations in parental concern and treatment are accepted, but an examination of the evidence shows that the attitudinal and behavioural patterns of the Romans were in general child-oriented. Part B explores the specific theme of the response to the loss of a child in infancy within the context of the popular view that the Romans were unaffected by infant death. The study of infant burial practices, funerary rites and afterlife beliefs reveals that at the societal level there was no expectation that Roman parents should be thorough in the treatment of infants in death. However, the archaeological evidence demonstrates that a number of parents were burying their infants in the same manner as adults and older children. The principal hypothesis of this thesis that Roman parents could have grieved emotionally for the loss of an infant is complicated by difficulties in the literary and epigraphic sources. These problems are recognised and it is acknowledged that large numbers of infant deaths could have passed by unattended. But a considerate analysis of the source material, combined with current theories of attachment and bereavement, suggests that expressions of grief recorded in literature and on tombstones could have been a genuine reflection of the feelings of the bereaved individual.
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To Carol
with love
always
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INTRODUCTION

As historians of the Roman family move increasingly in the direction of mentalité, "the study of the values, beliefs, emotions and passions of individuals and groups" (Stone 1980:55), greater consideration has been given to affective relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children.

As regards the parent-child relationship in the Roman period, one of the most popular theories is that the Romans were indifferent to the death of a child in the infant and early childhood years (0-4 years). Historians believe that, because of the appallingly high infant mortality in preindustrial populations, parents were required to maintain a physical and emotional distance from their young children in order to protect themselves from the psychological trauma of repeated exposure to the loss of children in infancy.

This thesis challenges this assumption by looking at the ancient sources for the Romans' interest in young children, and by examining reactions to the death of infants through the evidence of burial practice, consolatory literature and funerary epigraphy. From a discussion of the behavioural and emotional response of the Romans, at both the societal and individual level, this conclusion will be reached: Roman society as a whole accepted that infants would be grieved for, and some parents express their grief more intensely than was considered "normal" for children so young. As to the sincerity of this sorrow, it is established that those parents who have recorded their pain were genuinely upset at the death of their child in infancy.

This thesis is, therefore, primarily concerned with the issue of emotion. In view of the current debate among historians as to the genuineness of the grief recorded by the Romans in consolatory literature and on tombstones, greater emphasis has been placed on the emotional reaction of individuals, as opposed to the response of society as a whole, to infant death. With regard to the Romans' emotional response to infant death, two views predominate in analyses of the feelings recorded in ancient sources: parents in the past grieved very differently from their modern counterparts; conversely, their experience of grief for the loss of a young
child would have much in common with the emotion felt by parents in the late twentieth century.

Unlike psychologists who currently study bereavement, historians cannot interview their subjects in order to analyse their feelings. As a result, any interpretation of emotional responses recorded by peoples in the past is inevitably coloured by the subjective tendencies of researchers, who cannot prevent their own cultural biases from exerting an influence, either positive or negative, on their judgement. Analysis of grief at the death of a child is especially problematical in that it deals with a very particular moment in time when emotions are especially heightened and may be a distortion of actual feelings towards the child in life.

In view of these difficulties, a comprehensive study of the response of the Romans to the loss of a child in infancy requires that these reactions must be assessed within the wider context of behaviours and attitudes towards small children prior to death. Part A of this thesis is designed to meet these requirements. Over the course of three chapters the issue of parental indifference is discussed with reference to specific behaviours and attitudes which have traditionally been taken as illustrative of a lack of concern among the Romans for the welfare and survival of young children. From these responses scholars have further postulated that the Romans were unmoved by the death of children in infancy.

Chapter One questions the view, particularly popular with Classical historians, that during the late Republican/early Imperial period there emerged a concept of childhood. The use of the literary evidence to trace both a progressive development over the course of Roman history from a failure to perceive the infant as an individual to a recognition of the young child, and the concomitant growing tendency for the expression of love and tenderness towards infants are seen as misrepresentations of the source material. The whole notion of a positive evolution in attitudes towards small children is regarded as simplistic in view of the variety of attitudes towards infants to be found in the literature. However, it is clear that cases of indifference to the special qualities of infants were in the minority; the predominant reactions among the literary elite towards young children were value, love and tenderness.

Chapters Two and Three are concerned with the behavioural manifestations of the indifference theory, and examine, through the literary evidence, the extent to which the practices of infanticide,
exposure, childcare and medical treatment can justifiably be regarded as indicative of parental cruelty or neglect. The argument offered is that in some instances parental treatment of infants will have been negligent, or even harmful, but in the majority of cases these behaviours will be seen as evidence for parental care.

The conclusion that Part A expects to reach is that the attitudinal and behavioural patterns of the Romans were in general child-orientated. The positive findings of Part A will be used to provide fundamental support to the hypothesis advanced in Part B that the loss of an infant could be a matter of concern, and a painful experience, for many Romans.

Part B explores the specific theme of the response to infant death within the context of the popular view that the Romans were in general unaffected by infant death. The subdivision of behavioural and attitudinal responses used in Part A is again adopted as the framework. Chapters Four and Five are both designed to facilitate discussion of mortuary rituals and emotional reactions in the four subsequent chapters. In view of the difficulties involved in analysing the emotions of a society temporally and culturally distant from the late twentieth century, a comparative approach, now an established technique in family history, has been adopted and Chapter Five provides a summary of results produced by recent research into the anthropology of the funerary ritual and the psychology of grief. These findings are used as a basis for interpreting, and drawing conclusions from, the Roman material. Chapter Four uses the estimations of demographic historians and ancient literary and epigraphic evidence to establish the pattern of infant mortality, and, through an examination of possible causes of the high infant death rate, aims to understand the reasoning behind the theory that Roman parents were unconcerned at infant death.

Chapters Six and Seven deal with the responses of the Romans to infant death at the societal level; this analysis of behavioural responses is subsumed under the general term of “mourning”. The central question of whether a unique form of burial, that is less detailed than that given to older age groups, was accorded to Roman infants is discussed by means of an investigation into the alleged peculiarities of infant burial practices (nocturnal burial, inhumation and cremation, location and form), funerary rites and afterlife beliefs. An examination of literary and archaeological sources, particularly funerary monuments dedicated to young children, is used to demonstrate that, although there was no expectation at the societal
level that the Romans should be thorough in their treatment of infant deaths, the extant evidence proves that a number of parents were burying their infants in the same manner and location as other members of society. From these findings it is argued that loss of an infant could occasion displays of public mourning and funerary ritual on the part of parents.

Chapters Eight and Nine, which form the crux of this thesis, focus upon "grief" - the emotional response of the Romans as individuals to the death of an infant. The discussion embraces reactions among upper and lower classes, drawing on literary and epigraphical material respectively. Here the difficulty involved in reconstructing the inner feelings of peoples in a past society becomes a fundamental issue.

The literary sources consist of consolationes, letters of consolation written to those who have lost a child, and individual responses outside this genre. The evidence is discussed within a series of themes and cases of sorrow expressed for children beyond the early childhood years are considered for the purposes of comparison and contrast. For similar reasons, funerary inscriptions of children aged 10-14 years have been included in the survey of infant epitaphs in Chapter Nine. The tombstones are also examined within a number of themes, but, with the exception of the verse epitaphs, the approach adopted to the evidence is primarily statistical.

At the outset it is accepted that there is no conclusive answer to the question of whether the written expression of grief is a reflection of the individual's actual sentiments or an amalgam of various literary motifs, influenced only by custom and convention. However, the analysis of emotional reactions in both chapters is based upon the premise that conventionality in expression is not incompatible with sincerity of emotion.

In Chapter Eight a review of the literature reveals that laments for adolescent and adult children are greater in number and tend to be more detailed than those for infants, and from the survey of funerary inscriptions in CIL6, it is clear that infant deaths are substantially under-recorded on tombstones in view of the estimated high infant mortality rate. The literature and verse epitaphs also demonstrate, however, that the expression of grief for infants and older children can be remarkably similar in the anguish with which they are recounted. The study of non-verse inscriptions reveals some surprising results which contradict the
popular belief that Roman parents were unmoved by infant death.

As stated, the conclusion that this thesis expects to reach is that the Romans, both as a society and as individuals, did grieve over the deaths of very young children. However, in view of the difficulties involved in evaluating the evidence, the fundamental question of whether the Romans genuinely grieved at the death of a child in infancy cannot be answered conclusively. Yet, a considerate analysis of the source material is expected to highlight feelings of loss that the historian in the late twentieth century can empathise with.

With regard to the scope of this thesis and the terms that are used throughout, the following points must be explained: the definition of *infans*; timescale; geographical parameters. The format used for translations and notes is also outlined.

According to Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* 1.5; 1.15), the term *infans* denotes the period from birth to age seven, when formal education would begin. However, like its English equivalent, the Latin word *infans* can be used in a generic sense of any small child. In this thesis, in order to formulate a structure for investigation, “infant” is applied throughout to children aged 0-4 years - the first two age categories (“infant” and “early childhood”) recognised in demographic studies. Four years is adopted as the upper age limit, since by this age children are less dependent on constant adult care and supervision.

The period covered by this thesis is essentially the Classical era of Roman history, c.200 BC-AD 235 (Sailer 1994:4); some material, outwith these dates, has been included where relevant. Although some information in Chapters One to Three concerns Roman (and even non-Roman) communities, the term “Roman” is taken throughout to refer to the City of Rome, the focus of this study. Such a narrow sphere of inquiry inevitably ignores any urban-rural or provincial distinctions in parent-child relations; however, it was felt that the scope of this thesis would not permit such a detailed diversity of approach.

All literary sources are given in translation only: translations of Latin sources are my own (for the text, see relevant Oxford editions); Greek sources have been quoted from the Loeb editions. Inscriptions in the main text of the thesis are given in Latin; translations of these are provided in *Appendix 5*, where they appear in numerical order, according to *CIL 6*, and
not in the order in which they appear in the main text. Both the Latin text and translation of verse epitaphs are given in Appendix 4; in the main body of the thesis extracts from these verse epitaphs are given in the Latin.

Throughout all notes are inserted at the end of each chapter.
PART A

THE FAMILIAL AND SOCIETAL POSITION OF THE INFANT IN ROME
CHAPTER ONE

CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN: ATTITUDES

In the course of the second half of the twentieth century, some of the most dynamic historical research has been concerned with social history, in particular the history of the family\(^1\). Not only historians, but also sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and demographers have become fascinated with a wide variety of such topics as marriage, love, gender relations, status of the child, parent-child relationship.

This new emphasis on social history has also reached the field of Classics. Within the last decade, as a result of a number of ground-breaking works, the study of the Roman family has developed into a significant, and popular, area of research. At the forefront of this movement are authors such as Manson (1983), Néraudau (1984), Rawson et al. (1986; 1991), Bradley (1986; 1991), Dixon (1988; 1992), and Wiedemann (1989).

In this thesis only two, distinct but related, aspects of the wide range of topics now discussed by historians of the Roman family will be considered: attitudes towards children and childhood and the theory of parental indifference to their children in antiquity. The aim is to demonstrate that in general the young child was loved and valued as an individual (Chapter 1), and that the treatment of infants in Roman society was intended to be beneficial to the child (Chapters 2 & 3). On the basis of these positive conclusions as regards attitudes and behavioural patterns the hypothesis will be advanced that the death of a child in infancy could occasion grief on the part of Roman parents.

One of the central tenets of Early Modern historians such as Ariès (1960), Shorter (1976) and Stone (1977) is that parent-child relations underwent a dramatic change over the course of time. In the period 1680-1850 there was a steady chronological and evolutionary progression from a non-child-loving to a child-loving society characteristic of the late twentieth century. In the past there was no concept of childhood - young children were not loved, but valued only for their potential as adults; there was no appreciation of a child’s qualities. Gradually, however, the modern nuclear
family, cut off from the outside world, emerged, and the status of children progressively improved until the child became the most important concern of the family and society.

In agreement with this idea of the development of an awareness of and tenderness for children, especially the very young, students of the Roman family, such as Manson (1983), Néraudau (1984), Dixon (1988; 1992), Wiedemann (1989) and Evans (1991) have also emphasised that at Rome a concept of childhood gradually evolved in the late Republican/early Imperial period, whereby the young child emerged as a distinct and valued individual. This chapter will argue that there was no such radical transformation over the course of Roman history, and will show that, while a variety of parental attitudes to infants is suggested by the evidence, the prevalent response among the Romans in the period under discussion was an appreciation of the individual qualities of infants and a sentimental love for them as young children.

The Transformation Theory

In all accounts of the positive change in Roman attitudes towards the young child the work of Manson (1978; 1983) continues to be a major influence. His general thesis is that towards the end of the Republican period young children came to be recognised as individuals in their own right and to be treated with tenderness; this process of evolution climaxed early in the first century AD. In support of this progression, Manson (1978:264-273; 1983:150-153) argues for the evolution of a more specialised and affective vocabulary for children and childhood in the literary sources, which he believes reflects a similar development in attitudes at the societal level.

The lack of linguistic idioms used to describe the young child in the extant sources from the end of the third century BC and throughout the second century BC is, in Manson's view, indicative of Roman society's failure to perceive the infant as an individual. The vocabulary of childhood is vague and fluctuates: newborns are described with reference to their status as nurslings (lactens) or to their tiny size (parvus), but in most case the words puer or puella are used of any child irrespective of age. But by the end of the first century BC, although the vocabulary of early childhood is still imprecise, affectionate equivalents and derivations of
these words have appeared and are to be found with increasing frequency in the literary sources: *alumnus* replaces *lactens*, while the diminutive *parvolus* takes over from *parvus*. More importantly, by the first century AD authors such as Ovid (*Met. 2.561, 642; 7.54, 126*) use the more specific terms *infans* and *infantia* of young children, rather than the vague, general *puer/puella*. When Quintilian is writing in the AD 90s *infantia* is applied to the period from birth to age seven, when formal education would begin (*Inst. Or. 1.5; 1.15*). According to Manson (1983:153), this evolution in the terms for the small child indicates that “its image took on substance and became personalized and individualized during the last half century of the Republic”.

In addition to this progressive emergence of the young child as a unique personality as revealed through the development of a more precise vocabulary, Manson (1983:153-154) also traces in the literary sources a growing tendency for the expression of love and tenderness towards young children. Again, a semantic approach is adopted to highlight this transformation in parent-child relations. For example, the various forms of the *cura-curare* word group appear 190 times in Plautus; but only in three cases in relation to children, and in none of these is any affection apparent (*Truc. 878; Cas. 44; Trin. 197*). By Virgil’s time, *cura* has come to be linked to affectionate concern for the child (*Aen. 1.646, 677-678; 3.341*), and instead of the Plautine sense of “preoccupation”, *cura* in the late first century BC can signify “tender care”. Similar developments in the *diligere-diligentia* word group and in the adjectives *suavis*, *mellito* and *dulcis* confirm “the idea that family sentiments were expressed in Latin literature at the same moment when this same literature was beginning to sketch the outlines and image of the small child” (Manson 1983:154).

All classical historians who argue for a change in Roman perceptions of children repeat without reservation Manson’s theory of the development of a more precise and affective vocabulary. Common sense alone might dismiss as too simplistic this generally-accepted theory of a progression in both awareness of and expression of tender feelings for young children. However, the difficulty of this hypothesis of change is evident from the fact that the scholars themselves, although unanimous as to the nature of these changes, cannot agree on the origins and timescale of the transformation in parent-child relations.

As regards origins, both Manson and Dixon are rather vague in the
explanations they offer. Manson argues that the influence of Greek literature, particularly Alexandrianism, upon the “new poets” (Catullus, Horace and Virgil) explains the increasing presence of small children in Roman texts. This literary awareness and prominence contributes to changes in the perception of young children at large. Dixon (1992:23) only remarks that “the ideology and practice of Roman families changed slowly within ancient times, perhaps in response to external factors such as imperial legislation and Christianity, but sometimes for reasons which are not clear”. By contrast, Néraudau and Evans are both able to provide specific causes for the growth in appreciation of the individuality of infants and in emotional intensity between parents and children. In Néraudau’s opinion, this change was brought about by a gradual dissolution of patria potestas from the second century BC and the consequent emergence of moderate, affectionate fathers (1984:160-169). According to Evans, the root of this development lies in Rome’s foreign wars of conquest and expansion (1991:196) and the influx of Greek slaves, who passed on to their upper class nurslings their own value for and love of children.

This lack of consensus suggests that the concept of childhood and affective relations between parents and childhood are not simply a process of evolution.

Manson’s application of semantic analysis to Latin literature is in itself questionable. The plays of Plautus and Terence, and fragments of other early authors are taken as representative of the use of Latin in the period before Cicero, and from these sources Manson concludes that in all literature, and in society at large, of the third and second centuries BC no concept of childhood existed. Yet, it is hardly a scholarly approach to make such assertions by comparing the scanty literary evidence of the third and second centuries BC with the abundance and variety of sources extant from the first century BC onwards or by comparing Comedy and Satiric fragments with the personal correspondence of Cicero, and then to conclude from these comparisons that the sentimental interest in young children must have originated in the first century BC. The discrepancy between third century BC and first century BC source material undermines any attempt to establish the theory of “the emergence of the small child” in the late Republic.

In second century BC Latin the other stages of childhood, not only infancy, were not delineated by a single word; puer/puella were applicable for all age groups. In the English language itself the terms for early
childhood are by no means precise. Our word "baby" most commonly refers to a newborn or a very young child, but when does a child cease to be a "baby"? No definite age is specified. Moreover, as the multitude of synonyms for "baby" shows, the term "baby" is not restricted to an infant. The Oxford English Dictionary (2nd edit.) defines "baby" also as "a girl; a girlfriend; a young woman: often as a form of address. Slang (chiefly U.S.)" and "the youngest most junior of a family, group of persons, team, etc". The words "infant", "infancy"; "child", "childhood" are similarly diverse in meaning. Just as the Latin infans/infantia do not refer only to the young child, so too these terms have a broad range of meanings in English. Yet, it would be unthinkable even to suggest that this lack of precise definition indicates a failure to appreciate the individuality of small children.

Influenced enormously by the approach of Ariès (1960) to the history of childhood, Manson and his adherents believe that significant periods or events in history must have had profound consequences for the community concerned, parent-child relations being only one of innumerable areas to be affected. The major changes instituted by the transition from Republic to Principate must have, in his opinion, been paralleled by important changes in the perception of children in Roman society. However, a number of ancient historians do adopt a more flexible approach to parent-child relations in Rome than Manson and their Early Modern counterparts. Dixon, for example, although she favours the idea of the emergence of a greater sentimental interest in young children in the late Republican era, avoids the extremism of a steady development from lack of concern to awareness of, and affection for, small children; she is fully aware that in any society parental reactions are never uniform:

History is not a matter of social evolution: that is, there is not a linear development within which children gradually and progressively improve their position or the family moves towards a more "civilised" or isolated mode. Such developments can take place and then change again.

Dixon 1992:18-19

The sources themselves do not in fact suggest that the history of childhood at Rome evolved in a simplistic, linear manner. In the third and second centuries BC, when, according to Manson's thesis, there was no awareness of and tenderness for children, numerous examples of loving parents can be found in the plays of Plautus and Terence (Saller 1994:5-7). Both the fathers in Poenulus (64-69) and Menaechmi (31-36) died of broken
hearts for their sons who had been kidnapped. Diminutives such as minutulus (Poen. 26) and parvulus (Poen. 1105; Rud. 39) are used of young children in Plautus. In Terence's Adelphi 35ff, Micio worries about his brother's son, whom he has adopted as his own. He imagines that the missing boy might have caught a cold, or fallen somewhere, or broken a limb. That all mothers will help out their sons in times of trouble is regarded as commonplace, and sons are described as the "delight" of their parents (Heaut. 987; 991-992). In the second century BC, in response to the woman who brags about her valuable jewellery, Cornelia exclaims as her children return from school, “these are my jewels” (Valerius Maximus 4.4 Pr.).

Just as Manson’s thesis ignores all continuities in parent-child relations from the third century BC to the first century AD, so no allowances are made for variation in attitudes in the period when it is claimed that children were recognised and loved for their own qualities. As evidence for a more negative attitude towards children in the Imperial periods, it is clear that some parents continued to see their children as a form of investment in their future security; other Romans were reluctant to rear any children and childrearing was regarded as a burden.

According to traditional Roman sentiment, children were successors not only of the family name and property, but also of the state, city and human race. Plautus captures the essence of this value system in a metaphor drawn from architecture:

Parents are the builders of children: they lay the foundations of their children; they raise them up, assiduously devise a firm basis for them, and do not spare any means to make them useful as both citizens and men, nor do they count the expense involved in this endeavour as expense.

Plautus, Mostellaria 120-125

Children were seen by Roman couples as an investment in future security, and marriage was centred around this principle, both at the State and individual level.

Yet this view of children persisted into the period when Manson alleges that there was an enlightened attitude towards children. Augustus, in his speech of encouragement to the Equites to marry and have children (Dio 56.2.1ff), and Musonius Rufus (frag. 15), a Stoic philosopher of the first
century AD, both stress that children were valued primarily as societal and familial successors. Latin marriage contracts incorporated the clause that the marriage was being entered into "for the purpose of creating children" (Sanders 1938:116). Failure to produce children within a marriage was legally recognised as grounds for divorce. 

At the individual level, the parent-child relationship was practical and reciprocal: in return for the duty their parents had performed in bringing them up, children were expected to provide support for their parents in old age, and also to ensure that their parents were properly commemorated at death.

The exploitative attitude of parents towards children is evident in all social sectors. Among the elite young men would be required to enhance, or at least preserve, the family name, honour and social standing by advancing through the stages of the cursus honorum as well maintaining the family estate, cult and tradition. Ambitious mothers, such as Agrippina, the mother of Nero, could seek political power through their sons (Cicero, ad Fam. 2.13.2; 3.10.9; Seneca, de Matr. Helv. 18.5). Daughters of senators and equites would honour their family by exhibiting social and practical skills, such as spinning, through a good marriage within their own social class, and by bearing children who would, in turn, bring further glory and honour (Pliny, Ep. 4.19; Plutarch, Tib. Gracc. 1, 8). Cicero's role in directing the lives of his children illustrates these concerns in practice: he had discussed with both Atticus and others candidates for the third marriage of Tullia (ad Att. 54.1; 61.10; ad Fam. 8.6; ad Att. 6.6.1), and he sent young Marcus abroad to study as a means of enhancing his own social standing (ad Att. 15.20).

Although parents of lower social status had no such wealth or reputation to bequeath, there persisted the idea of reciprocal obligation between parents and children, and of children as an economic investment in the future. In order to supplement their income, lower class parents might put their children to work from the earliest age possible. This labour could take the form of either an apprenticeship, whereby a particular skill would be learned, such as shoemaker or smith, or unskilled work on the farm - tending animals, pruning vineyards, etc. Amongst slaves, children would be set to work by owners eager to profit from their potential sources of revenue.
Children of every social class in antiquity were, therefore, valued as a form of security in the future and parents were greatly concerned with the integration of their child into society. Yet, it must be conceded, in view of the examples of parental affection to be quoted below, that this view of children can co-exist with an appreciation of the child's individual qualities.

Avoidance of parenthood

In further contradiction to Manson's thesis, the literary evidence suggests that in the late Republican and Imperial periods when there was, according to Manson, great interest among the Romans in the young child, there seems to have been some reluctance to raise children - at least among the upper classes.

From the second century BC at least (Hopkins 1983:69ff), there was a significant reduction in fertility among the Roman elite: the nuclear family tended to include no more than two or three children. Although loss of life during the years of civil war had decimated many families, for others childlessness seems to have been a deliberate decision - the troubles associated with child-rearing become an almost proverbial complaint in literary sources, and children were often seen as a burden. In the Augustan period, an age of alleged decline in morality, Propertius, who refused to provide sons as soldiers and preferred the love of his mistress Cynthia to the name of father (2.7.13-14, 19-20), was not alone in failing to adhere to the responsibilities of procreation advocated by the Princeps.

Various measures taken by the State in an attempt to induce, or even force, the procreation of children also point to this reluctance. Augustus' programme of moral reform was the most concentrated effort by the State to persuade the Roman elite to produce children. Three laws were instituted: the lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus, passed in 18 BC in conjunction with the lex Iulia de adulteriis coercedis and supplemented by the lex Papia Poppaea of AD 9. A system of rewards and penalties was established as an incentive: for example, unmarried men over 25 years and unmarried women between 20 and 50 years were penalised: they could not receive legacies and their freedom to make wills was restricted. As an
incentive to marry and have children, the *ius trium liberorum* was granted to parents who produced three legitimate children (Parkin 1992:115ff). Persons with the required number of children were exempt from remarrying after divorce or the death of a spouse. Fathers who qualified were first choice when governorships were being allocated to ex-magistrates; mothers were permitted to administer their own property and acquired exemption from *tutela*.

Augustus' efforts to promote an increase in the birth rate were largely unsuccessful, although some, like Hortalus (Suetonius, *Tib.* 47) and Asinius Rufus (Pliny, *Ep.* 4.15.3), did adhere to Imperial prescriptions to rear children. Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.25) notes that "childlessness remained prevalent"; and, according to the Elder Pliny (*NH* 14.25), *orbitas* occupied the place of the highest *auctoritas* or *potentia*. The privileges of the *ius trium liberorum* were bestowed upon those without the required number of children, such as the Empress Livia and Octavia (Dio 55.2; 49.38.1) and then upon the childless, as in the cases of Pliny and Suetonius (*Ep.* 10.2; 10.95.1) and Martial (*Epigr.* 3.95.5ff; 9.97.5ff). Many schemes were devised by the childless to circumvent the provisions of the laws, yet still acquire the benefits: fictitious acts of adoption, betrothal to infant girls, etc. (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.19; Dio 54.16.7). Only in AD 320 did Constantine abolish most of the penalties for celibacy and childlessness (*C.Th.* 8.10); and in 410 the remaining restrictions on inheritance between spouses who had fewer than three children were removed (*C.J.* 8.5.7.2). Many upper class Romans, it seems, were reluctant to raise children.

Similarly, at lower social levels families were generally small, and various measures were instituted in order to encourage parenthood. A male Latin marrying a Roman/Latin woman obtained citizenship for himself, his wife (if she were a Latin and not already a Roman citizen), and a child who had reached one year old (*anniculi probatio*; Gaius, *Instit.* 1.179). The *ius trium liberorum* was also granted to freedwomen who produced four children after manumission.

From the evidence presented above it would be difficult not to conclude that there was some reluctance from the late Republic onwards among the Roman population to raise children. However, for many couples there was no option of whether to have children or not. Natural sterility appears to have been a common problem, as is suggested by the number of examples.
in the literature and the many references to causes of and remedies for infertility: Turia and the wives of Spurius Carvilius Rufus, Sulla and Nero are a case in point. Many women seem to have suffered miscarriages. Four years after she married Pompey, Caesar's daughter, Julia, miscarried, and later died in childbirth (Plutarch, Caes. 23.5-7); Cicero's daughter, Tullia, who also died in childbirth (Plutarch, Cic. 41.7), had three miscarriages. Pliny's third wife, Calpurnia, lost the baby she was carrying as she did not realise that she was pregnant (Ep. 8.10; 8.11). The numerous prescriptions given by the Elder Pliny on how to prevent miscarriage imply the relative frequency of this problem in antiquity.

Yet, the literary sources also state that many Romans were deliberately avoiding the State's prescription to rear children. How can such an attitude exist in a society which placed great emphasis on the perpetuation of familial *fama*, *gloria* et *dignitas*, on children as the source of future security; and at a time when Manson claims that young children were being increasingly recognised as individuals and being treated with greater tenderness?

Ancient authors tend to attribute fairly selfish motives to those who remained childless (Juvenal, Sat. 6.602-605); but it is more likely that the majority of couples who chose to avoid having children altogether or to limit the size of their families did so for various socioeconomic reasons, and not because of a genuine dislike for children. Some Romans simply would not have the financial means to raise several, or even any, children. In the texts it is often said that poor people had great difficulties in raising children. Socioeconomic factors also determined the number of children in upper class families. According to Plutarch, the two children whom Cato's daughter had borne were enough because "by bearing more she should burden and impoverish a husband who does not want them" (Cato min. 25.2-3).

Therefore, deliberate restrictions of family size, at both upper and lower class levels, should not be equated in all cases with a general dislike of children; rather, family limitation in Rome, as now, demonstrates a singular concern by parents to ensure the economic and social security of their children already born.

Although neither the traditional view of children as successors of the
family nor deliberate avoidance of parenthood can be used in contradiction of Manson’s thesis, more overtly negative attitudes towards children appear in the literature of the Imperial period. Juvenal, in his tirade against women (Sat. 6), lists a number of mothers who appear to lack all maternal feeling: Eppia, a senator’s wife, abandons “her tearful children” in order to elope to Egypt with her lover (185ff); women of the elite have abortions so as to retain their figure and delude their husbands with spurious children (592ff); others, such as Pontia, the daughter of Petronius, actually kill their own children (640). According to Suetonius (Claud. 3.2), both his mother, Antonia, and his grandmother, Livia, were contemptuous towards Claudius for no other reason than that he was physically handicapped. However, it is clear that mothers or fathers who lack parental sentiments are quoted most often in the literary sources as exceptional, and are greatly outnumbered by cases of parents who are loving and attentive, or even overly so (Seneca, de Const. Sap. 11.2; Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1.2.6-7).

The purpose of the above review, in which the theory of the development of a concept of childhood and of a growth in affection for young children has been outlined, was not to claim that attitudes to children never changed in the whole of the Roman period. Such a dogmatic approach would be as misguided as that adopted by those historians who argue for a dramatic transformation in parent-child relations. Throughout this section the aim has been, rather, to emphasise that the idea of a steady evolution from indifference towards an affectionate bond between parents and children in Roman society is both simplistic and fallacious. To assume that there was a period when parents had no sentimental attachment to their children merely because no literature exists as proof, or because the extant literary evidence does not mention it, is unreasonable. The pattern of an increasing prominence of the small child that seems to emerge from Latin literature is product of the chance survival of different genres - the more personal genres, such as letters and satire, inevitably lend themselves to greater emphasis on more domestic concerns than do history, rhetoric, philosophy or epic. In Rome, as in many societies, some parents may have failed to appreciate the childish qualities of their sons or daughters or may not have formed any emotional ties to them; but the evidence suggests that the majority of Romans, as is the case in other cultures, were aware of the individuality of their young children and treated them with love and devotion.

However, in spite of this insistence upon an awareness of the diversity of
parental attitudes to children, the crucial point here, as far as concerns the reactions shown by parents to the death of a child in infancy to be discussed below, is that various literary sources clearly demonstrate that the Romans did appreciate the individuality of small children and were affectionate towards their young sons and daughters. The literature indicates that this appreciation and affection certainly did exist from the late Republic onwards, and while there is no comparable evidence to show that this attitude was also prevalent in earlier times, the careful burial of infants by Romans in the preurban period and numerous affectionate references to children in the plays of Plautus and Terence would suggest that prior to the late Republic there were parents who did value and care for their young children.

The repeated emphasis on the natural love of a parent for a child in moralistic and philosophical texts could be taken to mean that there were many in Roman society who felt no such affection for their children (Bradley 1991:117-118). However, the remarks of Cicero and Plutarch, which are quoted below, are designed to promote the Stoic belief in the power of Nature in contrast to the Epicurean view, and need not imply that both authors were responding to an attitude towards children that was prevalent in Roman society. In his philosophical treatise, de Finibus, Cicero returns on several occasions to the theme of a parent’s innate love:

Moreover, in the opinion of the Stoics it is essential to understand that nature has caused children to be loved by their parents, and from this origin of parental affection has developed the communal society of the human race which we adhere to . . . as it is clear that by nature we shrink from pain, so it is evident that we are impelled by nature herself to love those to whom we have given birth.

Cicero, de Fin. 3.62

According to Plutarch, at birth the human infant is such a loathsome creature - “so imperfect, so helpless, so naked, so shapeless, so foul . . . defiled with blood and covered with filth and resembling more one just slain than one just born” - that only a mother, whose affection is innate, could love (de Amore Prolis 496)26.

That parental affection was the norm among the Romans is further implied by generalisations on overindulgent behaviour towards children. Both Seneca and Quintilian remark upon the tendency of Roman parents to spoil their young children:
For children strike their parents' face, and the infant disorders and tears at his mother's hair and dribbles all over her, or exposes to the gaze of her family parts that ought to be covered, and does not refrain from words that are quite obscene. An yet we do not consider any of these things as abuse. Why is that? because it is impossible to disparage the one who does them.

Seneca, de Constantia Sapientis 11.2

If only we did not ruin our children's character ourselves! We weaken them immediately in their infancy with our indulgence. That soft upbringing, which we call tender love, breaks all the strength of mind and body . . . We are delighted if they say anything rather unrestrained, and words which would not be permissible from even Alexandrian favourites are greeted with laughter and a kiss.

Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1.2.6-7 27

Many of the examples of appreciation of and affection towards young children are well-known: Lucretius' touching picture of the young man who has died and whose sweet children will no longer run to be picked up by him and kiss their father (de Re. Nat. 3.894-896)28. Also the father who rocks his sleeping infant son in his arms (Catullus, 17.12-13), or the mother who leans over the cradle awaiting her baby's first smile (Virgil, Ec. 4.60-63). Catullus' tender description of the infant Torquatus in his mother's arms (61.209-213) is echoed later by Tibullus:

Then his wife will present him with offspring, and the child will grasp his father's ears and steal kisses; nor will his grandfather weary of watching over his little grandson, nor, though he be an old man, will he tire of speaking in lisps and stammers with the boy.

Tibullus 2.5.91-94 29

Almost two hundred years later, Fronto in his correspondence to Marcus Aurelius shows a similar awareness of the charming characteristics of infant children. He refers to himself as kissing the hands and feet of the Emperor's little daughter, Faustina (Haines, Loeb 1, p.208), and lovingly describes Marcus' twin sons as follows:

I have seen your chicks - the most pleasurable sight I shall see as long as I live - so like you in appearance that nothing could be more alike than this likeness . . . they have a healthy enough colour and a strong cry . . . their little voices were so sweet, so charming to hear.

Haines, Loeb 2, pp.118-120 30
Statius too shows an understanding of infants in his portrayal of his own adopted son. At *Silvae* 5.5.79ff, he mentions how he taught his little son to speak, comforted him, lifted him up to kiss and lulled him to sleep in his arms.

A number of authors are attentive to the behaviour of babies. Lucretius (*de Re. Nat.* 5.222-230) comments on the helplessness of newborns and their need to be comforted by rattles and the fawning, broken baby-talk of nurses; and how their inability to speak forces them to point at things (5.1030-1032). Cicero observes that babies in cradles are unable to keep still (*de Fin.* 5.55); and Pliny notes that babies first smile at six weeks old and take time to walk, speak and eat solid food (*NH* 7.1.2-4). Cicero's letters reveal both tenderness and anxiety for his own children and those of others, such as his nephew, Quintus, and Atticus' little daughter, Attica. He claims that his only moments of happiness are spent with his "wife, little daughter and darling Cicero" (*ad Att.* 1.18.1), and expresses concern for children playing near a crumbling wall (*ad Att.* 2.4.7). To this list can be added many other instances: for example, Cato helping his wife at his son's bathtime (Plutarch, *Cato mai.* 20); Virro giving three boys little green jackets, nuts and pennies (Juvenal, *Sat.* 5.143-144); little Erotion, whom Martial imagines playing and chattering in the Underworld (*Epigr.* 5.34); parents watching the Emperor's procession, with their infant children on their shoulders (Pliny, *Pan.* 26.1-2), an image reproduced on Trajan's Arch at Beneventum; or Claudius cradling the infant Britannicus in his arms, and displaying him to the soldiers or to the people (Suetonius, *Claud.* 27). A similar display of parental affection and appreciation of children's qualities is evident from the numerous examples to be found in the literary sources, which are discussed in Chapter 3, of the concern shown by parents when any of their children are ill.

**Conclusion**

From this discussion of theories on the emergence of the young Roman child as a distinct and valued personality it can be concluded that, while ancient authors do express greater awareness of and affection for little children over the course of time, it does not necessarily follow that this literary development reflects a parallel transformation at the social level. Indeed it has been suggested here that such sentiments may always have
existed in the community at large, but gradually became more defined through literature. Roman attitudes to children at the societal level may have changed in response to a variety of such external factors as war, famine, peace, prosperity, etc., but it is unlikely that these changes were a simplistic process of evolution from negative to positive and were caused by a single, major event in history. Important changes at the political or military level need not necessarily have a profound and lasting effect on attitudes towards children. In the context of Roman childhood, it seems more prudent to adopt the conclusion of Golden (1992:12) that “changes in ideas and emotions are rarely very great”, particularly in classical antiquity. In agreement with Wilson (1984) and Johanssen (1987) on the Early Modern period, Golden advocates an approach to childhood at Rome that is midway between continuity and change (1992:13).

Among the Romans two perceptions in particular of children predominate: children as successors of the family and of the State, and a preoccupation with the young child’s endearing qualities, but these two attitudes are by no means incompatible, and literature shows that both were coexistent. Therefore, it is important to recognise that in the Roman period no single attitude exists in isolation towards children. Scope for individual variation from what seems to be the typical response must always be allowed. However, throughout Roman history the prevalent attitude towards young children would seem to be affection and appreciation of the child's individuality.
CHAPTER ONE: NOTES


2. Veyne (1978), in his article on the family and love in the Imperial period was the first to apply to Roman society the theory, advocated principally by Ariès in reference to the Early Modern family, of a growth in emotional expression between individuals.

3. For the use of these terms in reference to affection for children, see Lucretius, *de Rer. Nat.* 3.894-896; Catullus, 61.212-216; Horace, *Epod.* 2.39-40. Similar expressions are found in the funerary inscriptions of the freed and servile classes, most commonly in the superlative form: *CIL* 6 4864; 7303; 10548; 12800; 20040; 23287.


5. *Longman Synonym Dictionary* lists the following alternatives for the noun "baby":

   infant, newborn, neonate, *it. bambino*, *Fr. enfant*, papoose, *Scot & N.Eng.* barn; suckling, nurseries, weanling; foundling, changling; young child, toddler, tot, tiny tot, *U.S. Inf.* tad, preschooler; Disparaging. (cf an adult) juvenile, adolescent.

6. For example, *infans* as an adjective meaning "not capable of speech", "not eloquent"; Cicero, *ad Quin. Fr.* 3.4; *pro Cluen.* 18.51; *Brut.* 26.101.

7. The definitions "infant", "infancy", "child", "childhood" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed.) illustrate that the English terms for early childhood are as flexible as their Latin equivalents. The substantive synonyms for the two groups of words above, given in the *Longman Synonym Dictionary*, are similarly extensive in range.

8. At *Miles Gloriosus* 703-704, Plautus claims that the elite are to be commended for rearing children "as a memorial".


10. According to legend, the first divorce in Roman history - that of Spurius Carvilius Ruga in 253 BC - was granted on the grounds that his wife had not borne any children (Aulus Gellius, *NA* 4.3.2; cf 17.21.44). Sulla divorced his third wife Cloelia for her infertility (Plutarch, *Sulla* 6.11); and Nero cited Octavia's alleged sterility among his reasons for divorcing her (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.63). In the lengthy inscription, known as the *Laudatio Turiae* (*CIL* 6 1527; *ILS* 8393), the unnamed woman begs her husband to divorce her because of her failure to have children.

11. *CIL* 6 19914; 22066; 27866; 28644; Cicero, *pro Mur.* 27; *ad Att.* 176.2: it is wicked to refuse to maintain one's parents. Bereft of her son, Marcia complains that she has no one to protect her, no one to defend her from contempt (Seneca, *Cons. ad Marc.* 19.2). Cf Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 7.6.5; *Dig.* 25.3.5.1-2.

12. For a detailed discussion of child labour, see Bradley (1991:chap.5); Wiedemann (1989:chap.5).

Roman society, see Dixon (1992:119-123).
16. Dixon (1988:72-73, 89). Such women were granted freedom from the provisions of the lex Voconia, which limited the right of female inheritance.
17. Dixon (1988:90-91): the ius was granted to all Vestal Virgins for honorific reasons, since they had always enjoyed full financial autonomy and exemption from the lex Voconia.
18. A system of informers was established to ensure that the laws were acted upon (Tacitus, Ann. 3.28.4-6; Suetonius, Nero 10.1).
19. For infant mortality as a factor determining numbers of children, see Chapter 5.
20. The alimentary programme, whereby donations were made to children in the form of cash or grain doles in various Italian towns, has also been assumed by scholars to be evidence for a reluctance among the lower classes to raise children (see n.14 for references to studies of the alimentary programme and other donative schemes. See also, in the ancient sources, Dio 51.21.3; 68.5; Pliny, Ep. 1.8.10; 4.13.4; Pan. 27.3; SHA, M. Aur. 7.8; 26.6; Ant. Pius 8.1; Alex. 57.7; Dig. 34.1.14.1; CIL5 10222; CIL9 1445; CIL10 5056; ILS 6278). However, since the minimum age for qualification was fixed at three years by Hadrian (Dig. 34.1.14.1), this scheme was clearly designed to help parents support those children already born rather than being a concentrated effort to induce them to have more. Slave women were also rewarded for the production of children (Varro, RR 2.1.26; 2.10.6-9; Columella, RD 1.8.19).
21. Parkin (1992:115). See Pliny, NH 14.22.117; 16.46.110; 16.95.251; 19.44.14; 27.17.34; 27.55.80; 28.27.97; 30.44.130; Plutarch, Rom. 21.5. Ovid, Fasti 2.425-426, describes how during the Lupercalia young married women were traditionally struck with leather thongs in order to promote fertility. For specific cases of infertility, see n.10.
22. The various fantastical remedies, drawn from folklore by Pliny, include hyaena's hair in gazelle leather (28.27.98); the ash of porcupines or hedgehogs and little worms found in grass (30.43.123-5). Causes of miscarriage are also given: fern (27.55.80); stepping over a viper or amphibusena (30.43.128) or a raven's egg (30.44.130); snake's slough (30.44.129); beaver or beaver oil (32.46.133).
23. Cf Appian, de Bell. Civ. 1.1.10; Seneca, Pan. Trai. 26.5; Aulus Gellius, NA 2.3.20; Ps-Quintilian, Declam. min. 306 p.204; Plutarch, de am. prolis 497E; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 9.51.6. Eyben (1980:1-80, n.245) has an extensive list of similar references.
24. Socioeconomic determinants of family size are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, pp.44-45.
25. See Chapters 6, p.134, and 7, p.166, on infant burial.
26. See also Cicero, de Fin. 1.23; 4.17; 5.65 for the idea of parental love as being innate. At pro Rosc. Am. 53, Cicero talks of a father's "natural feelings" and "deep love" for his son, and in a letter to Atticus he expresses his delight over Atticus' recognition that parental love for children is
natural (ad Art. 7.2.4).
27. Seneca, de Provid. 2.5, contrasts fathers' stern treatment of children
with the overindulgence of mothers.
28. For the reverse of the situation in Lucretius, see Propertius, 4.11.73-80,
where the deceased Cornelia appeals to her husband to look after their
children.
29. Similar depictions of infants prattling, being cradled or kissed are to be
found at Seneca, Cons, ad matr. Helv. 18.5; Martial, Epigr. 5.34; Jerome, Ep.
128.1.
The young Gaius was cherished by the troops of his father,
Germanicus

(Suetonius, Calig. 9).

30. Fronto description of his little
for the boy and an appreciation of

grandson reveals a comparable fondness
his infant qualities:

Everyday quarrels and disputes occur between that Victorinus
or Fronto of ours and myself.
Although you never ask any
reward of anyone for any deed or speech, that Fronto prattles
no word more easily nor more frequently than this 'Give'.
In
response I do as much as I can to hand over to him sheets of
paper or writing tablets, things which I want him to desire.
However, he does show some signs even of his grandfather's
qualities. He is very keen on grapes; indeed this was the first
food that he swallowed down, and for whole days virtually he
did not stop licking a grape with his tongue or kissing it with
his lips and rolling it round with his gums and playing with it.
He is also very fond of little birds; he delights in the chicks of
hens, doves and sparrows. I have often heard from those who
were my tutors and masters that from my earliest infancy I
was possessed by a zeal for such things.
Haines, Loeb 2, p. 172
31. See Cicero, ad Att. 6.1.22; 6.2.10; 6.4.3; 6.5.4
16.11.8 (44 BC).

25

(50 BC); and 16.3.4; 16.6.4;


CHAPTER TWO

CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN: PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE I:
INFANTICIDE AND EXPOSURE

The purpose of the preceding chapter was to outline the principal arguments raised in studies of childhood in Roman society. As already noted, progress in this area has been greatly influenced by the works of Ariès, Shorter et al.; and a number of the issues currently debated by classical historians find their origins in the Early Modern historical tradition.

In the study of children and childhood in the Early Modern period, the theory of parental indifference has become one of the predominant issues. Historians have attempted to prove, or indeed disprove, that the period 1680-1850 witnessed a transformation in parental treatment of children from neglect or indifference to the level of care and concern evident in societies in the twentieth century West. Although classical scholars have enthusiastically adopted the idea of the emergence of a concept of childhood and a growth in sentiment in parent-child relations, there has been no comparable attempt to trace a simultaneous shift in behavioural patterns. However, a number of historians do raise the question of parental indifference to the welfare of young children in Roman society.

This theory of parental indifference - here taken to mean "a lack of concern or care" on the part of parents to the extent that the child's life is endangered - will be discussed within the context of the following topics, all of which have, to varying degrees, been taken as illustrative of indifference or even neglect by Romans: exposure and infanticide; childcare practices; medical treatment. The aim is to demonstrate that each of these gauges of behaviour should be seen more correctly as evidence of parental care and concern for their infant children, and not as a sign of indifference or neglect. As further proof of this concern, a number of superstitious practices and belief will be discussed.

Infanticide and exposure

Historians who believe in an element of parental indifference, or
neglect, among the Romans towards their young children will cite the practices of infanticide and exposure as the most conclusive proof of this lack of concern. The aim of this chapter is to argue that infanticide and exposure should not be regarded as a shocking example of extreme parental cruelty in Roman society, but as the safest means of family planning in a prescientific community where contraception was largely ineffectual and abortion endangered the life of the pregnant woman.

At the outset, it is imperative to clarify that exposure and infanticide are two distinct practices; they have been treated together here because of the close connection, real or perceived, between them in ancient sources and modern studies. According to Collins English Dictionary, "infanticide" is "the killing of an infant; the practice of killing newborn infants still prevalent in some primitive tribes". Boswell (1984:13) defines "abandonment", as he prefers to call exposure, as the "voluntary and permanent relinquishing of control over children by natal parents or guardians, whether by leaving them somewhere, selling them, or legally consigning care and control to some other person". This difference has to be emphasised because ancient authors often discuss infanticide and exposure in the same context; and as a result historians and demographers frequently conflate these two practices.

Only recently have authors such as Boswell (1984:13) and Patterson (1985:104) highlighted the obvious difference - parents chose exposure in preference to infanticide because the child would have some chance of survival, however slight, and it absolved them of guilt in having killed their own child. Direct infanticide offered no such hope or absolution. Many exposed children must have died, even if this had not been the parents' intention; and, consequently, the end result would have been the same as more overt methods of infanticide. However, it will be shown that infanticide was not regularly practised in Roman society, even though some anthropological studies have demonstrated that infanticide, described as "the most widely used method of population control during much of human history", dates back as far as the Upper Paleolithic period.

No other aspect of Roman social history seems to have provoked such a contentious, and lasting, debate among scholars as exposure and infanticide. This controversy is principally due to the fact that both practices are relatively rare in our own culture, and are, therefore,
extremely controversial. Until recently modern studies tended to be centred around the problem of the hypothetical rate of infanticide in Graeco-Roman antiquity. In the last decade several scholars have stressed the futility of both this debate about theoretically possible levels of infanticide and the question of whether females were disposed of more often than males.

Since statistical data for the practice of both infanticide and exposure in the ancient world is non-existent, the only hypothesis offered here as regards demographic details is that infanticide, the deliberate killing of one's own child, was extremely rare; but the abandonment of unwanted children was by and large a socially recognised practice, though nothing can be adduced about the frequency of exposure from this theory.

The principal aim is to test this hypothesis with reference to the ancient evidence for infanticide and exposure, and by an analysis of motives to demonstrate that the preferred practice of exposure is indicative of neither the callousness of Roman parents nor the low value placed on the life of the newborn in general; but should be recognised as a legitimate means of family limitation.

Infanticide

(i) the literary evidence

According to the ancient evidence those infants most liable to be killed outright would be the physically deformed. Dionysius of Halicarnassus quotes the following decree which has come to be known as the "Law of Romulus":

In the first place he (Romulus) made it compulsory upon all the inhabitants of the state that they should rear every male child, and of the females the firstborn, and should kill none of their offspring less than three years of age, except in the case of a child deformed or unnatural from its very birth.

Dion. Hal. 2.15

Cicero (de Leg. 3.8.19) refers to one of the ordinances of the Twelve Tables which directs that "extremely deformed children" be killed. Seneca (de Ira
1.15.2), in order to corroborate his theory that "it is not anger, but reason that separates the useless from the sound", says "we destroy unnatural offspring; we also drown children who are born crippled and abnormal". That drowning was the usual method of disposing of such infants is further suggested by a few references to the elimination of monstrous births; in antiquity these were considered to be a forewarning of disaster. On three occasions Livy describes the alarm caused by the birth of hermaphrodites in various Italian towns. On the instruction of Etruscan soothsayers these prodigies were entombed alive in a chest, which was then dumped in the sea.

According to several historians (Etienne 1977:131; Rawson 1990:15; Dixon 1991:15), the Romans were concerned only with the welfare of the healthy child. Such an assumption is based essentially upon the advice given to midwives by Soranus in his section "how to recognise the newborn that is worth rearing" - a lengthy list of criteria, which includes "crying with vigour at birth", "being perfect in all parts" and ends "by conditions contrary to those mentioned, the infant not worth rearing is recognised" (Gyn. 2.10). Any infants, it is argued, which did not meet these criteria listed by Soranus would be disposed of, either by exposure or, more likely, by infanticide. The latter option was preferable because weak or deformed infants had very little chance of survival (no one would pick up and rear such children if they were exposed), and killing was less cruel than leaving the infant to suffer a prolonged and agonising death from cold and starvation (Eyben 1980-1:75).

On the basis of these literary references modern scholars have argued that in Roman society deformed infants were habitually destroyed (Wiedemann 1989:35-36). However, the very nature of the above source material leaves this theory open to various criticisms.

In reference to the legal texts, Pomeroy (1975:164) might describe the "Law of Romulus" as an indication of official policy, but its historicity is disputed: it is based on no known source, was written some seven centuries after the alleged event, and is nowhere corroborated in the law code of the classical period (Boswell 1988:59). Eyben (1980-1:26) believes that if the "Law of Romulus" was ever authentic, it was "no longer valid in the classical era". Harris (1994:5) claims that the law is valueless as evidence for practices in archaic Rome, and is suspicious of the strong Greek associations to be found in Dionysius' text. Dionysius in fact contradicts
himself, for at 9.22 he says that ancient law forced the Romans to rear all their children. Neither of Dionysius' claims can, therefore, be taken as a valid reflection of social custom.

As for the ordinances of the Twelve Tables, it should be stressed that these belong to the archaic period of Roman history (451-450 BC). Therefore, they are limited in their value as evidence for practices in later times. Other legal evidence proves that, in the historical period at least, deformed infants were not routinely killed outright: according to Dig. 50.16.35, it seems that such children counted towards qualification for the ius trium liberorum, and they were still regarded as liberi in the eyes of the law (Dig. 1.5.14).

Seneca's claim that crippled (or weak) and abnormal children were drowned at birth cannot be supported by any single instance from Republican and Imperial history. Although this might be a "conspiracy of silence" - in Roman society there could have been some shame attached to the direct killing of a deformed child; however, it might be that such deaths were so routine that they were not regarded as exceptional and worthy of comment. In contrast, Seneca elsewhere (Epist. Mor. 66.21-27) implies that Roman parents were not always so eager to dispose of such children, for he asks "who judges his children so unfairly as to love a healthy son more than a sick one...?". He goes on to say that "parents' love inclines more towards those of their children for whom they feel pity". Horace's list of affectionate nicknames given by fathers to sons with physical defects (Sat. 1.3.4f) further weakens the authority of Seneca's assertion that the crippled and abnormal were drowned at birth. Suetonius (Claud. 3.2) describes how the imperial family shunned the enfeebled Claudius, keeping him out of public view. However, it is not known to what extent the rest of the populace shared the attitude of Claudius' family towards those with some physical, or mental, deformity, and whether a strong element of shame was attached to handicap. At any rate, it is important to note that Claudius was allowed to live and not destroyed at birth.

The three monstrous births described by Livy all belong to the third century BC; no instances from the central period of Roman history (c.200 BC-AD 235) are recorded. Later sources suggest that not all monstrosities were drowned at sea, as they may have been in earlier, more superstitious times. Ammianus Marcellinus (19.12.19-20), writing in the fourth century.
AD, describes how, at Antioch, an infant was born with "two faces, two sets of teeth, a beard, four eyes and two extremely small ears". "Portents of this kind", he claims, "often come forth, as indicators of the outcome of various events; but since they are not expiated in public, as they were in ancient times, they pass by unheard of and unknown".

Physically deformed children appear to have been used for display purposes, as freaks. Dio (54.9) mentions a child without shoulders or arms from India, who could use his feet for stretching a bow, shooting missiles and holding a trumpet. Suetonius (Domit. 4.2) describes a little boy with an unusually small head, who kept the Emperor company at gladiatorial shows. Such children also seem to have been put to work as beggars. The Elder Seneca describes this practice in a detailed debate at Contr. 10.4; but in this instance abandoned children, otherwise healthy, have been cruelly maimed by their rescuers in order to elicit more money from passers-by.

Finally, Soranus' advice on "how to recognise the newborn that is worth rearing" cannot be taken as proof that Roman parents habitually disposed of any children who did not meet these requirements. It is debatable just how often such thorough examinations would be carried out by midwives, and it is extremely unlikely that parents would refuse to rear a child solely on the basis of the judgement of an outsider.

Ultimately the decision to rear a child rested with the individual, that is the father, not society or the state, although the latter might influence the former. Even if infanticide of the physically deformed was relatively common, allowances for individual variation must be made, as the literary evidence demonstrates. Whether such children were reared or not would have depended upon the severity of the defect and, more importantly, upon how much that child was wanted by his or her own family. The death of a child previously may have influenced a couple in making such decisions.

Recent studies have shown that infanticide is still being practised by several peoples to avoid having too many children. Ancient authors do refer to parents - mostly the poor, but sometimes also the rich - deliberately restricting the number of their children; but this is in the context of abortion or exposure, never deliberate infanticide. In theory, illegitimate children would be more likely to be victims of direct infanticide than legitimate sons and daughters. From the Augustan era at least, illegitimate children were a liability as far as the law was concerned,
since they did not count towards the *ius trium liberorum*, awarded to parents with three legitimate children. Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.598-600, describes the social embarrassment caused by such a child. But the sources do not refer to any instance of a child being killed simply because he or she was illegitimate.

According to one anthropological study, 14 of the 35 societies under investigation killed one of twin children at birth (Daly & Nilson 1984:492). With reference to Roman society, no evidence exists to suggest that infanticide was practised in the case of twins. The infrequency with which twins are mentioned in literary sources could mean that parents who did not wish to raise two infants simultaneously, chose to kill the weaker one; but exposure seems a much more likely alternative. However, in most cases where only one twin survived, the other had probably died from natural causes. Pliny, *NH* 7.4.36, remarks that usually only one child of a same-sex twin birth survives; if the twins are of different sex, it is even more rare for both to live.

According to historians, newborn females are another high risk category as probable victims of infanticide. In support of female infanticide in the historical period is a single statement made by an historian writing some two hundred years after the event he describes. According to Dio (54.16.2), in 18 BC Augustus allowed any citizen, except senators, to marry freedwomen, "because among the nobility there were far more males than females" (or "because the freeborn population contained far more males than females"). The validity of Dio's claim is rarely questioned, yet why does no other source mention this gender imbalance in connection with Augustus' programme of reform? Did Dio use as his source records of alimentary distributions or imperial largesse, where boys generally received more than girls? Did he consult census and tax returns? But females were commonly omitted from such documents (Parkin 1992:21). Rawson (1986a:18; 49, n.51) suggests that the idea of an imbalance in the sexes among the upper classes, for which "there is no clear evidence", may be Dio's "own guess to support his interpretation of Augustus' marriage laws". In Dio's own day there may have been a large number of bachelors, especially if some aristocrats believed that being married and having children was a disadvantage. This observation could have misled him into thinking that there were more males than females.

Perhaps, there were periods when the sex ratio among the Roman elite
fluctuated (Parkin 1992:103ff), but it is impossible to ascertain whether this imbalance, if it ever existed in the Augustan era, was as marked as Dio would have us believe. Yet scholars, such as Brunt (1971:138, 153) and Oziendel (1987:87), have not only accepted Dio's claim, but have even asserted that the main reason for this imbalance was the prevalence of female infanticide. Other explanations have recently been offered - the higher mortality among women of child-bearing years; the higher status of men due to their acquisition of greater wealth (Engels 1984:393); the better care of male children; the more continuous exposure of women to disease (Patterson 1985:121) - however, there is no other evidence to imply that the sex ratio was as skewed as Dio maintains; even more hazardous is to see the existence of female infanticide in Dio's statement.

The same historians also highlight various instances in the sources which seem to imply that in antiquity sons were more valued than daughters; from such cases it has been surmised that the Romans must have practised female infanticide. Most examples come from literary fiction: Apuleius (Met. 10.23) tells the story of a man who instructed his wife that "if she gave birth to a child of the inferior sex, the girl was to be killed at once". Similarly, Ovid (Met. 9.609-684, 704-706) describes how Ligidus ordered his wife Telethusa to kill their child if it was female. An identical story is to be found in Terence (Heaut. 614f), where Sostrata explains to Chremes how she gave their newborn daughter to an old woman from Corinth instead of killing her as instructed. However, because of the fictitious nature and Greek origin of each, they cannot be accepted as an accurate reflection of Roman social practice; literary borrowing is a more likely explanation. At any rate, in none of these three instances is the baby girl actually killed, since the mother takes steps to ensure that the child is raised in secret.

No legal text, apart from the spurious "Law of Romulus" (p.28), according to which only the first born females had to be raised, makes any special mention of females in the context of exposure or infanticide. No historical source contains any recorded instance of parents killing their offspring principally because the child was female. In the famous letter of Hilarion, written in Egypt in first century BC, a husband working away from home writes to his wife: "I beg you and entreat you to take care of the child and, if I receive my pay soon, I will send it up to you. If you have the baby before I return, if it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it" (Lefkowitz and Fant 1982:187). However, this is an isolated instance, and belongs to Egyptian, not Roman, society. The outcome is unknown; but perhaps Hilarion's wife,
if she did have a girl, took the same steps as her fictional counterparts.

The exposure or abduction of a girl, never a boy, is often central to the plot of Roman comedies\textsuperscript{20}; such as Plautus, \textit{Casina} 41f and \textit{Cistellaria} 120f, and six plays of Terence, most notably \textit{Heaut.} 627f. Again, none of the girls is actually killed, but exposed or abducted years before the action of the play, and at the end a romantic recognition scene invariably features in the plot, in which the girl is recovered by her parents and her citizen status confirmed.

However, the motif of the exposed girl is more likely to be "a stock dramatic device" (La Rue Van Hook 1920:140) than a mirror of the prevalence of the exposure of female infants in society at large. A practice, particularly one as emotive as exposure, does not have to be common before society can understand it (Patterson 1985:108). Abandonment of newborns is relatively uncommon in our own society\textsuperscript{21}, but modern readers can still follow the plots of these comedies. There are historical cases of females not being acknowledged: Vespasian's wife was rejected by her father (Suetonius, \textit{Vesp.} 3), and Claudius refused to acknowledge the daughter of Urgulanilla (Suetonius, \textit{Claud.} 27), although this was because of disputed paternity rather than because the child was female. Yet, although the possibility cannot be ruled out there is no significant evidence to suggest that females were killed or exposed more than males\textsuperscript{22}.

Other sources refer to the exposure, not infanticide, of boys. In fact in legal texts, it is the exposure of boys that is referred to more often (Quintilian, \textit{Inst. Or.} 7.1.1-17; \textit{Declam. min.} 278, 306, 338, 358, 372, 376). Suetonius mentions two factual instances: M. Antonius Grippho, whose pupils included Cicero (\textit{Gramm.} 7), and G. Melissus, who became a librarian under Augustus (\textit{Gramm.} 21). Seneca (\textit{Contr.} 9.3; cf 10.4)) describes a case in which a father tries to reclaim one of the twin sons he had abandoned. Ovid (\textit{Heroides} 11.83f) tells of Aeolus' decision to expose the son of his daughter Canace: "And already he had ordered his little grandson to be given to the dogs and the birds, to be abandoned in some lonely spot".

However, the ancient sources suggest that there was some degree of son preference in antiquity. The biased sex-ratio in tombstone inscriptions indicates that sons could be valued more than daughters\textsuperscript{23}. According to Cicero (\textit{pro Cluentio} 33), Gnaeus Magius bequeathed his wife a large sum of
money, which she would receive only if she bore a boy; if a girl was born, she was to receive nothing. In Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a father defends his daughter against the charge that she had substituted a stillborn child on the grounds that if a woman could choose the sex of her child, she would take a male ("the better sex") rather than a female (Dion. Hal. 11.34.2). Statius composes a poem for his friend Julius Menocrates on the birth of his third child in which he exclaims: "Congratulations too, that your offspring has been increased more often by the strength of males" (Silvae 4.8.25-26).

The imperial practice of awarding benefactions to children would seem to corroborate this theory of male preference. Suetonius (Aug. 41.2) recalls how Augustus was in the habit of distributing largesse to young boys. According to Pliny (Panegyr. 26-28.3), Trajan added 5000 boys as recipients of the grain dole at Rome. The alimentary scheme established in various Italian towns from the late first century AD reveals a similar bias for males over females. The Table of Veleia (CIL11 1147) records subsidies received by 264 boys, but only 36 girls. This monetary grant was distributed at the monthly rate of 16 sesterces for legitimate boys, 12 sesterces for legitimate girls and illegitimate boys, 10 sesterces for illegitimate girls. Boys were eligible for longer than girls - the maximum age, fixed by Hadrian, was 18 years for boys, 14 years for girls (Dig. 34.1.14.1). These differences could reflect the earlier age at which girls married, although the accepted view now seems to be that marriage in late teens was typical of most girls in the lower classes (Shaw 1987:43), who were the beneficiaries of the alimentary scheme. However, since boys received larger subsidies than girls and it is unlikely that there was more than one grant per family, parents would enrol their sons in preference to their daughters. The earlier suggestion that the different rates points to a higher rate of exposure among girls has been dismissed, but it is clear that the imperial system of benefactions was biased in favour of boys. The establishment of separate funds for girls - the Puellae Faustinianae (SHA, Ant. Pius 8.1; M.Aur. 7.8, 26.6), instituted by the emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius in the second century AD - implies that females had previously been at a disadvantage as regards state benefactions.

However, Appius Claudius Pulcher, consul in 79 BC, was not alone in raising more than one daughter, and many prominent figures, such as Julius Caesar and Augustus, had no sons at all. Latin literature is replete with examples of mothers and fathers who dearly loved their daughters,
such as Cicero and Atticus (Cicero, *ad Att*. 1.2.4;1.18.1;5.19.2). Cicero, in his second oration against Verres, appeals to the love felt by the fathers in his audience for their daughters:

And I am in no doubt that, just as this matter seems severe and disgraceful to me, to whom my daughter is particularly dear, so it seems to each one of you, who are moved by a similar feeling and tenderness for your daughters. For what has Nature wanted to be more delightful to us, what to be more dear? What is more worthy to spend all our care and tender love upon?

Cicero, *in Verr*. 2.1.44.112

At Juvenal, *Sat*. 10.289ff, mothers pray equally for their sons and daughters to be beautiful. Rawson (1986a:18) is correct to claim that there was "parity of esteem for sons and daughters in most respects".

Therefore, there are grounds for arguing in favour of the existence of a certain degree of son-preference in Roman society, but it is not possible to conclude from the evidence that this preference manifested itself in female infanticide, or even exposure.

The ancient evidence seems to imply that typical victims of infanticide were the physically deformed and females; but the moralists, both Jewish and Christian, claim that pagans were in the habit of killing, either by strangulation or drowning, healthy children:

Some of them (sc. pagan parents) do the deed with their own hands, with monstrous cruelty and barbarity they stifle and throttle the first breath which the infants draw or throw them into a river or into the depths of the sea, after attaching some heavy substance to make them sink more quickly under its weight.

Philo, *de Spec. Leg*. 3.114

The similarity between Philo's accounts and those of Tertullian, *Apol*. 9.6 and Minucius Felix, *Oct*. 30.1 might suggest that strangulation and drowning were regularly practised by Roman parents to get rid of unwanted children. Furthermore, Christian humanitarianism could be highlighting a pagan custom, largely ignored by earlier authors through shame, indifference or failure to appreciate the right of every human being to life, a concept which does not seem to have been widespread in preChristian Rome (Etienne 1976:133-144).
However, all such passages should be treated with caution, at least. The similarity is rather suspect - the accounts are very reminiscent of the treatment of prodigious births in Livy and Seneca, and seem to be influenced more by literary tradition than reality. Infanticide could have been practised more often in North Africa, the birthplace of several moralists (Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Augustine), than in Roman society, and so these authors might be describing a custom of their own country. The moralists have probably exploited the possibility that abandoned children might die to claim that pagans actually killed their own children (Boswell 1984:13). These diatribes doubtless contain a considerable element of exaggeration, since they were written to defend Christians against accusations of child sacrifice by charging pagans with more horrific crimes.

(ii) the archaeological evidence

The discovery of a large proportion of infant burials at several ancient cemetery sites has been interpreted by scholars such as Burn (1953) and Harris (1980:1) as proof of the extensive practice of infanticide. Certain examples recur with an almost predictable regularity: 233 infant burials out of a total of 570 at Gela in Sicily; the skeletons of 175 newborns or foetuses found together with those of 100 dogs, 1 adult and 1 child in a single well on the Athenian Acropolis, dated to the first century BC; the skeletons of 97 mostly newborn babies uncovered in one area of a Romano-British "homestead" in Buckinghamshire; the cluster of newborn bodies in a cemetery of first century BC at Owslebury, Hants.

Such collections of skeletal remains reflect a common practice in antiquity of burying those who died very young less ceremoniously than adults; such a simple form of burial is not unexpected in a society with an estimated infant mortality rate of 250-300 deaths per 1000 live births. These are the only certain assumptions that can be made from these skeletal collections. It is impossible to say whether these children were killed deliberately, or whether they died naturally, due to any one, or a combination, of various factors: inadequate childcare practices shared by the whole community; lack of medical knowledge and facilities; outbreak of some disease, especially cholera or typhus. The difficulty involved in the accurate dating of skeletal remains cautions against assuming that all the infant burials in any one site belong to the same period in time. To argue
in favour of "mass" infanticide, it is essential to know the social and economic background of the inhabitants of each site (Scott 1992:86).

The strongest arguments for the practice of infanticide to any significant degree are based upon the legal evidence. *Patria potestas* included the right of life and death over children of all ages, a right which fathers did not lose until the time of Constantine in AD 318, and even then this probably did not apply to a newborn infant whom a father refused to acknowledge (Eyben 1980-1:27). As Dixon (1988:27) notes, all known cases in which a father exercised this right are "oddities" and are used as exemplars of paternal severity, such as Manlius Torquatus, consul in 304 BC, who ordered his adult son's death. There is no recorded instance of an infant's death being ordered, although it could be that the killing of an infant was much less controversial than that of an adult child, and, therefore, not worth mentioning as exceptional.

Perhaps, the most significant point in favour of infanticide is the fact that until the late fourth century AD it was not an illegal act. However, it does not necessarily follow that until AD 374, when Valentinian, Valens and Gratian decreed that infanticide was a capital offence, parents habitually killed their unwanted infants because they could do so with impunity. This decree more likely reflects the influence of Christian humanitarianism, with its concern for all forms of life, upon Christian emperors rather than a response to the widespread practice of infanticide.

**Conclusion**

Theoretically, infanticide could have been commonly practised in Roman society. However, those ancient sources which refer to infanticide are too few in number, and of debatable validity, to allow any firm conclusions to be reached as to its prevalence in society at large. Roman evidence (i.e. specifically pagan) mentions the practice only in connection with the physically deformed. Since such children would often have had very limited chances of survival, direct killing may originally have been considered more humane; but again there is no reliable proof that this was the accepted practice in the case of deformed infants. In fact, the absence of infanticide from sources where we might expect to find it - such as in connection with Augustus' attempts to promote the production of children
(Dio 56.1ff), or in Juvenal's *Satires* where he lambasts every social vice of his contemporaries, including abortion, exposure and substitution - suggests that overt infanticide was something of a rarity.

From the above it should not be surmised that infanticide never occurred in ancient Rome: many instances could have been passed off as stillbirths or natural deaths, especially when the rate of infant mortality was so high; but cases of direct infanticide must have been relatively rare. In the modern, industrialised West where many forms of welfare assistance are available to assist with the rearing of children, cases of infanticide continue to appear; but these are uncommon instances, and reports of abandoned babies are more frequent. This was probably also the case in ancient Rome, although the rates of infanticide and exposure will certainly have been higher. Langer (1973-4:356), in his historical survey of infanticide, is surely correct to claim "infanticide by out-and-out violence of various kinds was probably always exceptional". Parents are unlikely to have chosen to kill unwanted children when exposure was also an available option, and greatly to be preferred in both a moral and emotional sense. Exposure gave an infant a theoretical chance of survival, hope of a life perhaps better than the parents could provide; and was psychologically less damaging for the parents, since they would not have to deal with the guilt of having intentionally killed their own child.

**Exposure**

On the basis of the extant evidence it was concluded that in Roman society direct infanticide was rarely practised. In this section these are the main aims: first, to show that for the Romans exposure was the preferred method of disposing of unwanted babies after birth; secondly, to analyse the motives behind exposure; and finally, to demonstrate that abandonment is not indicative of parental indifference to infants nor of the low esteem in which infant life was held in antiquity, but should be seen more correctly as a means of family limitation. Much of the ancient evidence, and modern debate, has already been considered above in the context of infanticide; therefore, this section will be less detailed in its examination of source material that deals exclusively with exposure.
As in the case of infanticide, social historians and demographers have failed to reach any agreement as to the extent to which exposure may have been practised, and whether it was a culturally acceptable means of restricting family size. Boswell (1988:135), who has produced the most extensive study of abandonment among the Romans also concludes that exposure was widespread: he uses source references to postulate a rate of 20-40% of urban children abandoned during the first three centuries AD, and suggests that it was "a familiar part of Roman life, affecting every class of person..." Other scholars are more cautious in their assessment of the ancient literature. Golden (1981:317) warns that "it is hazardous to set the extent of any social practice by reference to scattered casual remarks in the literary sources"; while Engels (1984:393) argues that the only inference that can legitimately be made from the literature is that the practice of exposure existed; nothing can be said as to its frequency.

Parents may, however, have sold rather than exposed their unwanted children. A number of laws suggest that the selling of children into slavery could have been common in Roman society. Several laws focus upon the efforts of parents to reclaim their children: in AD 329 Constantine decreed that parents who wished to recover the child they sold would have either to reimburse the buyer or replace the child with another (Cod. Just. 4.43.2).

The sale of infant children at least is unlikely to have been a common occurrence. According to Patterson (1985:122), few infants would have been bought since "a child must be somewhat grown to be worth something to a potential owner". For an owner slave children would be of no use, in a profit-making sense, until at least five years old when they could begin to perform little household chores or undertake light labour. Infants being sold by impoverished parents are likely to have been sickly and undernourished, and so even more vulnerable to the naturally high risks of mortality. More likely, slave owners would resort to the practice of rescuing foundlings, who even if they were physically weak, were free of charge and could then be put to wet-nurses. If parents could not easily dispose of their infant children by sale, direct exposure would have to be resorted to. Some parents might, however, have given unwanted infants to owners for free so that the child could have a chance of survival.

The simple fact that exposure is mentioned more often, and in a greater
variety of sources, than infanticide could reasonably be taken to imply that for those who decided to go through with full pregnancy rather than abortion abandonment was preferable to direct killing. Numerous examples have already been noted; many are of little value as evidence for the frequency or acceptability of exposure in the Republican and Imperial eras; for example, in Roman Comedy the abandonment of a girl is a stock dramatic device. Yet, on the basis of other sources, a case can be made for arguing that exposure was not simply a literary fiction.

In the wet-nursing contracts between slave owner and nurse from Roman Egypt the child is often a foundling (Lefkowitz and Fant 1982:270-272). The legal texts contain numerous references to exposure: much of this material has already been dealt with; but it is important to note that exposure was not regarded by the law as a crime until the late fourth century (Cod. Just. 8.51.2 Pr). The law, however, still permitted *patroni* and *domini* the right to expose, although they could not take any action to recover the children.

Scholars who believe in the theory of widespread exposure point out that ancient authors remark upon the peculiarity of other nations not to resort to this practice. Tacitus (Germ. 19.5) notes that among the Germans it was regarded as "an abomination to limit the number of their children, to make away with any of the later children"; the Jews had a similar custom (Hist. 5.5). Diodorus Siculus (1.80.3) reports that the Egyptians were required to raise all the children born to them. Moralistic censure could also be taken as proof that the Romans exposed unwanted children. The religious moralists in particular condemn abandonment:

Others take them to be exposed in some desert place, hoping, they themselves say, that they might be saved, but leaving them in actual truth to suffer the most distressing fate. For all the beasts that feed on flesh visit the spot and feast unhindered on the infants, a fine banquet provided by their sole guardians, those who above all others should keep them safe, their fathers and mothers. Carnivorous birds, too come flying down and gobble up the fragments, that is if they have not discovered them earlier, for, if they have, they get ready to fight the beasts of the field for the whole carcass. But suppose some passing travellers, stirred by humane feeling, take pity and compassion on the castaways and in consequence raise them up, give them food and drink, and do not shrink from paying all the other attentions which they need, what do we think of such highly charitable actions? Do we not consider that those who brought them into the world
stand condemned when strangers play the part of parents and parents do not behave with even the kindness of strangers?


However, as was observed in the case of infanticide, the graphic accounts of the Jewish and Christian authors have no doubt been exaggerated for effect. Their censure is partly a product of their religion's humanitarianism, and partly an attempt to refute pagan accusations of child sacrifice.

Finally, few pagan writers - Stoic philosophers, such as Musonius Rufus (frag.15), being the most notable exception - actually criticise the practice of exposure, and while caution must be exercised in drawing generalised conclusions from individual silences, this absence of censure could be suggestive of society's acceptance, or at least recognition, of exposure as a means of restricting family size.

Exposure seems, therefore, to have been commonly practised at Rome and to have been the preferred method of family limitation, at least among the lower classes for whom access to medical knowledge about the most effective contraceptives was limited and abortion was too great a risk. Should the popularity of this practice be interpreted as evidence of parental indifference to and neglect of young children?

This inference might be valid if parents exposed their child in such a manner and location as to lead to death or practised exposure in full conviction of the likelihood that their child would die. The gruesome death of abandoned infants envisaged by Jewish and Christian moralists was shared by some pagan authors. Seneca, *Contr.* 10.4.21, claims that exposed infants were prey to wild beasts, snakes, the bitter cold and starvation. Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declam. Min.* 278, describes the exposed being torn apart by beasts or carried off by birds; and elsewhere (*Declam. Min.* 306) states that "it is rare that exposed children live". Probably such descriptions owe much to literary convention and were derived originally from myths such as that of Oedipus or Ion. The risks to life from hunger and cold would, however, be real enough, particularly for infants already in poor health.

Yet, with the exception of the moralists and orators, the ancient evidence does not imply that death was the usual fate of the exposed child, although the question of morality should not be ignored. If the frequency of exposure did touch the conscience of some, then it would have been
preferable to believe that most abandoned children would be rescued even if this was not in fact the actuality. However, in the sources, both pagan and Christian, the overwhelming impression is that such children would be picked up and reared as slaves, or prostitutes (Suetonius, *de Gramm.* 21; Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declam. Min.* 278; Tertullian, *Apol.* 9.18; Minucius Felix, *Octaves* 31.4). In the action prior to the plots of several Roman Comedies abandoned children are reared as prostitutes. Chremes rebukes his wife Sostrata for giving away, instead of killing, their child because she "might have been turned to prostitution or sold in public" (Terence, *Heaut.* 639-641) 47. However, in the case of Christian authors, this preoccupation is a reflection of Christianity's fear and condemnation of incest more than proof that most abandoned children were employed as prostitutes (Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1.27). Moreover, it is questionable whether brothel keepers would in fact rear abandoned infants in the hope of financial return some eleven or twelve years later.

The survival of some exposed children, however, was guaranteed. Those rescued could be reared as the finder's own child (Seneca, *Contr.* 9.3; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 15.9; *Cod. Theod.* 5.9.1), usually as an *alumnus* 48. Legal sources testify to the close relationship that could exist between *alumni* and foster-parents: *alumni* could not be used as pledges (*Dig.* 20.1.6, 8) 49; and inscriptions also reveal a warmth of affection. However, in none of these cases can it be proved that the *alumni* referred to were foundlings. According to analyses of the epigraphic evidence, older children were more likely to be reared as *alumni* than infants 50; this preference could be a reflection of the greater risk of mortality among the very young. Many abandoned infants might not have been so fortuitously rescued.

Substitution, the practice of passing off a foundling child as one's own, is often mentioned in ancient sources, particularly in Comedy 51. Juvenal, in his tirade against women, attacks the wealthy for their reluctance to bear children and condemns them for picking up abandoned children at *spurci lacus*, which they pass off as their own (Satires, 6.602-609). The examples recorded in Comedy and Satire may be fictitious; but midwives and wet-nurses were often suspected of being involved in acts of substitution 52; and the existence of several laws regulating this practice confirms that it did happen (*Dig.* 3.2.15; 48.10.19.1; *Cod. Just.* 9.22.1). According to Ulpian (*Dig.* 25.4.1.13), "it is in the public interest that children not be substituted, to preserve the dignity of orders and families". Such cases do not, however,
provide any clues as to the frequency of substitution.

Recovery of abandoned children by their parents at a later date illustrates that some children did survive exposure; but outside the fiction of Roman Comedy, only a very small percentage of abandoned children must have been reclaimed by their parents. The law instituted by Constantine in AD 331, in which the right of the finder to the child is acknowledged, shows that some parents did take legal action to recover their abandoned child. Disputes between natural and foster-parents over children do appear often in rhetorical writings (Seneca, Contr. 9.3; 10.4; Pseudo-Quintilian, Declam. Min. 278; 306; 338; 358; 372; 376); however, these are topics of debate selected for their illustration of a variety of legal complexities and cannot be taken as proof that abandoned children were commonly recovered. If some Romans did question the ethics of exposure, then the idea of recovering the abandoned child in the future could have eased their conscience, or might indeed have made exposure more acceptable.

Therefore, abandoned infants could be substituted or reared by passersby as their own child, or brought up as slaves or prostitutes; death was not the only, or indeed the most likely, option. However, there is no possibility of quantifying the rates of survival or death on the basis of the ancient evidence. Consequently, a more fruitful approach to the question of whether exposure should be regarded as indicative of parental neglect will be to examine the factors which motivated parents to abandon their children.

Several motives applicable to exposure have already been discussed in connection with infanticide, such as the birth of girls - although, in this instance it was concluded that there was no credible evidence to suggest that females were killed more than males. Illegitimacy could have figured prominently among motives for abandonment. But, as Rawson (1986b: 178) points out, there is no secure proof that illegitimate children were abandoned more frequently than legitimate. At Veleia illegitimate boys received financial assistance at the same monthly rate as legitimate girls (i.e. 12 sesterces, illegitimate girls were given 10 sesterces; CIL9 1455). Therefore, in Roman society illegitimacy may not have been a social stigma.

Poverty is often mentioned in the sources as a motive for exposure. In
his section "Should Every Child that is Born be Raised?" Musonius Rufus dismisses the plea of poverty as an excuse for not rearing many children by stressing that even birds manage to find food for all their young (frag. 15). An edict of Constantine, issued in AD 329, which defines the rights of parents and masters of children who have been sold or abandoned, begins "if overcome by dire poverty or need anyone should sell an infant son or daughter for nourishment . . . " (Cod. Just. 4.43.2)\(^55\).

Both Boswell (1988:103-104) and Patterson (1985:117) query lack of financial means as an instigating factor for abandonment; but neither takes into account that there were no orphanages or foundling homes where the children of the poor could be reared. Rome did not even have a consistent scheme of "welfare assistance"\(^56\). Parents were dependent upon sporadic donatives from Emperors or private individuals prior to the establishment of the alimentary programme in the second century AD; but this scheme does not seem to have spread to all parts of Italy, so it is uncertain how many did in fact benefit. Not until AD 315 and 322 did Imperial edicts order public authorities to give immediate aid in the form of food and clothing to anyone who claimed to be financially unable to raise a newborn child (Cod. Theod. 11.27.1).

Although the wealthy had the resources to raise more children than the poor, they too seem to have restricted the size of their families for economic reasons: "in order that those earlier born may inherit greater wealth" (Musonius Rufus, Frag. 15)\(^57\). The law of intestacy stated that if a father left no will all sons and daughters inherited equally (Dig. 5.2.1). In cases where the father did not die intestate, although the sources do suggest that children were treated differently, there was an expectation that inheritances would be apportioned fairly to sons and daughters. More children meant, therefore, dividing familial property into small portions; and since in Roman society a political career of any sort depended upon wealth, sons who received only a fraction of their parents' fortune would not only be less prosperous but also less influential in the public sphere\(^58\). Every daughter reared would have to be provided with a dowry, although the prospect of this outlay some fifteen years in the future may not have caused parents of the propertied classes to abandon infant daughters\(^59\).

In addition to individual economic constraints, parents also seem to have been unwilling to rear children in times of social disturbance (Cicero, ad
References to the positive effects of periods of tranquillity and stability upon fertility suggest that social malaise could influence a couple's decision to raise children. Under a good ruler Seneca notes that people "are keen to bring up sons, and the sterility imposed by public ills is relaxed" (de Clem. 1.13.5). Wars, epidemics and famines have a similarly restrictive effect upon fertility.

The most common reasons given for child abandonment are connected with socioeconomic circumstances. Both the rich and the poor sought to preserve their positions and to ensure that the children whom they did decide to rear might live in security. Therefore, to interpret exposure as lack of parental sentiment or indifference to children indicates a failure to look at the circumstances and the context in which such a practice occurred. Exposure should be recognised for what the ancients saw as its primary function: a means of restricting family size during times of social or economic distress, either at the individual or at the societal level. The fact that some parents at least made provision for the survival of their abandoned children by leaving them in public places, however slight the chances might be, would suggest that they did not choose exposure from reasons of indifference or neglect; attempts to recover at a later date imply a similar concern.

Even if parents were aware that most abandoned infants would die, they need not have acted from indifference or cruelty. For many Romans the act of abandonment would be rationalised by the hope that their own infant would be one of the lucky few to be picked up by a passerby who could provide a more secure future than they themselves. The unwarranted assertion made by Cameron (1932: 46) that such parents "were untroubled by moral or theological scruples" fails to consider the emotional trauma experienced by many parents faced with the prospect of having to abandon an infant whom they could not afford to rear. Seneca, Contr. 9.3, refers to a father who exposed his twin sons while "weeping and trembling". Similarly, Ligidus and Telethusa are extremely distraught at the prospect of having to get rid of their child, if it is a girl (Ovid, Met. 9.609-684, 704-706).

Studies of primitive cultures where infanticide/exposure is practised commonly and without any social disapproval have shown that lack of parental sentiment is not a primary motivating factor. Anthropologists define infanticide/exposure as "an act of reproductive management that
increases total survivorship of offspring"⁶⁴; and several have observed the reluctance with which some parents abandon their child (Scrimshaw 1977: 443; 453). Research has shown that societies which do tolerate exposure and/or infanticide as a means of fertility control are more attached to and take greater care of the children that they do decide to rear⁶⁵. Even in Britain today cases of abandonment, and less commonly direct infanticide, are reported from time to time, especially in connection with social and economic distress⁶⁶. In these current instances of abandonment the public is generally sympathetic to the plight of the parent(s), and one of the principal concerns of social workers is with the psychological state of the mother and father, and their socioeconomic background; the question of affective relations is not the only, or indeed the main, consideration. Historians of the Roman family should adopt a similar approach to exposure in antiquity, and leave aside unacceptable notions of indifference.

Conclusion

For Roman couples there were essentially four forms of family planning - contraception, abortion, infanticide and exposure⁶⁷. Scholars disagree over which of these was the most popular; although it is probably true that in general contraception and abortion were practised by the rich, while the poor chose exposure more often⁶⁸. The upper classes had the financial means to purchase the most effective contraceptives⁶⁹ and to consult the most skilled abortionists⁷⁰; for the lower classes carrying an unwanted child to full term and then exposure must have been safer than abortion: "under poor medical conditions, induced abortion carries with it higher risks than pregnancy and childbirth of maternal mortality and subsequent infertility due to infections" (Scrimshaw 1977: 455). But, perhaps for the majority of all Roman couples the steps taken to limit family size would have been similar to those adopted in most Western societies today: contraceptives first, then more "drastic" methods of birth control (Den Boer 1973: 44-45).

While some couples will have restricted their family for trivial or selfish reasons, for the majority of Romans, both rich and poor, the prime motivating factors were their current social and economic position, and a concern to secure their own future and that of their children. Methods of
family planning adopted by Roman couples should not, therefore, be interpreted as indicative of parental indifference to children, nor of the low value placed on infant life. As Dixon (1988:23) summarises, deliberate restriction of family size in any society "is associated with strong attachment to children and a serious view of the parental role", and "in modern countries, extensive contraception and abortion go hand in hand with unprecedented emphasis on the welfare of the individual child". In view of the numerous instances of affection towards the very young quoted in Chapters One and Three, exposure, and other methods of family planning adopted by the Romans, should be seen in a similar light.
CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

1. Contrast Garnsey (1991). DeMause (1974) traces a progression in treatment of children over the course of history, but in his opinion, infanticide was the characteristic behaviour of Antiquity towards its young children.


3. On contraception, see Hopkins (1965-6); Eyben (1980-1: 8ff); McLaren (1990: 54ff); Riddle (1991); Riddle, et al. (1994).

4. On abortion, see Brunt (1971: 153); Dickison (1973); Watts (1973); Eyben (1980-1: 52ff).


6. Cf Pseudo-Quintilian, Declam. min. 306: "it is rare that exposed children live". See Eyben (1980-1:19). Kertzer (1991:17) notes that mortality rates of 80-90% in the first year of life are recorded all over Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like Fuchs (1991:13), he believes that the proportion of deaths among infants in antiquity must have been similar.

7. See Scrimshaw (1978:386-387) for references.

8. In response to earlier articles such as those of La Rue Van Hook (1920), Cameron (1932), and Pomeroy (1975), an attempt was made by Engels (1980) to disprove their theory that a fifth of all female births were routinely killed per annum. According to Engels (1980:119), "the rate of infanticide almost certainly never exceeded more than a few percent of female births in any era".

   Most subsequent studies of infanticide have been refutations of Engels' theory. Golden (1981:319, 321) argues, with reference to Athenian society, that female infanticide was in fact widespread - the possible rate being "10% or more". Harris (1982:115) also claims that "an average of 10% of all infants were fatally exposed or otherwise killed". See Engels (1984) for reply.

9. Patterson (1985:107) describes these arguments as "simplistic and blind-sighted" on the grounds that the significance of infanticide lies not in how extensively it was practised, but in its perception as a potential fate of newborns. Boswell (1988:45ff) intentionally omits any detailed demographic analysis in view of the scanty statistical data available from antiquity. "Statistics", however convincingly presented in modern studies, are based upon the individual demographer's interpretation of ancient sources - the majority non-numerical - and comparative evidence from various premodern and primitive cultures.

10. The estimations of the rate of abandonment made by Boswell (1988:35) are given on p.40 and in n.41.

11. Livy 11.4 (209 BC); 27.37 (207 BC); 31.12.6-8 (200 BC).

12. Other scholars also question the validity of the law: Gardner (1986:156) claims that the assertion of the law that only the first born female need be reared "cannot be taken as evidence for historical practice". Garnsey (1988:65) notes the semi-legendary context in which Dionysius discusses this law.

13. See Cicero, de Natura Deorum 1.28.78-9; Suetonius, Claud. 3.2, on the Emperor's deformity.

14. Pliny, NH 11.113.272 tells of a child with another pair of eyes at the back of his head who was reared by the Egyptians. According to Harris (1994:12), it was impractical to drown physically handicapped children; therefore, 49
they would be destroyed at birth by the midwife.

15. Piers (1978:15) mentions how in Barrios, a small South American country, when families had been forced to flee their little villages in the Andes for the city, parents often crippled their children to improve their chances as beggars.

16. Aulus Gellius, NA 2.23; Musonius Rufus, frag.15; Plutarch, de am. prolis 3. See p.44.

17. Illegitimate children received less financial assistance at Veleia (CIL9 1455), although it is significant that illegitimate boys were given the same amount as legitimate girls. No source specifically mentions benefits being awarded to illegitimate children in the city of Rome.

18. Parkin (1992:98). Faustina, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, gave birth to twins sons in AD 149: Antoninus died in infancy; the other, Caracalla was the only child of thirteen to survive to adulthood. In antiquity the birth of twins was a sign of good fortune; see Tacitus, Ann. 2.84, on the twin sons born to Tiberius' son Drusus in AD 19, one of whom died soon after.

19. See Chapter 1, p.15ff on the avoidance of parenthood.

20. Murray (1943:50-1) provides the most detailed account of abandonment as a theme, first of Greek Tragedy, and then of New Comedy. In Sophocles' and Euripides' plays boys are frequently exposed: twin sons in both Tyro and Hypsipyle (Sophocles), and in Antiope and Melanipppe (Euripides).

21. Nevertheless, even in contemporary Britain at times there are spates of babies being abandoned. Over the Christmas period, 1992-1993, two young boys playing golf at Kilton Forrest, near Worksop, Notts, found a baby boy on the frozen ground, half covered with a towel. A one year old girl was found in a telephone box in Western Road, Southally, in freezing temperatures. The child was well cared for and left with a change of clothing. Although, it later transpired that the girl had been kidnapped in September, at the time police were considering the possibility that she had been abandoned by her Asian mother because she was a girl. A newborn boy, thought to have been killed by his alleged father, was found dead in the village of Leonard Stanely, Gloucestershire.

These three incidents all occurred within a few days of each other: Tues. 29 Dec. 1992, Thurs. 31 Dec. 1992, and Fri. 1 Jan 1993.

22. In his study of child abandonment in nineteenth century Italy, Kertzer (1991:10) found that there was "near gender parity" in both institutionalised abandonment and in requests for the restoration of abandoned children.

23. See Chapter 9 on the male-to-female bias in numbers of funerary monuments.

24. At Suetonius, Aug. 46, however, Augustus is described as making donations of 1000 sesterces each to parents of the lower classes with legitimate sons or daughters.

25. Even private donations make a similar distinction: Coelia Marcina established a fund in the second century AD at Taracina, from which monthly allotments were made to 100 children at the rate of 20 sesterces for boys and 16 sesterces for girls (ILS 6278). For references to the alimentary scheme in the ancient sources, see Chapter 1, n.20 and in modern studies, see Chapter 1, n.14 (p.24).

26. Garmey (1988:67). Woolf (1990:207-8) believes that the alimentary rates simply "reflect the greater status of men as opposed to women, and of legitimate children as opposed to bastards". The difference made between males and females in monetary grants might be a reflection of a belief that males, who would eventually have a more active social role than females, needed more nourishment. See Aristotle, HA 9.608a, where it is said that females need less food than males (see Xenophon, Lac. Const. 1.3).

27. The recipients may all have been female because these funds were established in honour of the wives of the respective emperors and the
exclusively feminine connection may have been considered more appropriate. A similar fund was founded at Ostia by the daughter of G. Fabius Agrippus in honour of her mother (CIL 14.450).


29. The suggestions made by the Christian moralists that pagans used unwanted children as sacrificial victims are not substantiated. Tertullian (Apol. 9), Minucius Felix (Oct. 9.5) and Augustine (de Civ. 7.19) include vivid descriptions of the legendary custom among the Carthaginians of offering newborns in sacrifice to Saturn/Kronos. There is no evidence that such a practice ever existed at Rome, despite the contention made by DeMause (1974:87-8).


33. For other historical cases of fathers exercising the *ius vitae necisque* against adult sons, see Saller (1986:18-19).

34. Prior to the fourth century law which criminalised infanticide, the moralists had described infanticidal parents as violating the "laws"; but these are more likely to be the "laws of nature", as perceived by the Stoics and, later, the Church Fathers, than any specific decrees of Roman law. Cf Philo, *de Spec. Leg.* 3.20.118-9: "... The holy law detests them and has pronounced them worthy of punishment"; Tertullian, *ad Nat.* 1.15.

35. *Cod. Theod.* 9.14.1: "If a man or a woman commit the crime of killing a child, it will be a capital offence". There is some ambiguity; the law could refer to direct killing or to the possibility that exposed children, whom parents were unwilling to rear, might very well die; or maybe both infanticide and exposure are meant.

36. Philo, *de Spec. Leg.* 3.20.118-9: "And therefore infanticide is undoubtedly murder...".

37. Cf Scrimshaw (1978:386), where M. Harris describes infanticide as "the most widely used method of population control during much of human history".

38. In the week 13th-20th February 1993, a 2 year old boy was murdered after wandering away from his mother; a 3 year old boy was almost snatched from his own garden; and a nurse was charged with the murder of 6 children. In this week the Home Office published the following statistics:

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<td>1991</td>
<td>73</td>
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*The Independent*, Wed. 17th Feb. 1993
On the abandonment of babies in Britain, see n.21.


40. Stone (1977:474-5) quotes Jonas Hanway in 1766: "it is much less difficult to the human heart and the dictates of self-preservation to drop a child than to kill it". For the opposite view, see Eyben (1980:1-75) who states that "those who killed a newborn often did so to spare the child the even worse fate of exposure (long and agonising death struggle or survival in inhuman conditions".

41. Boswell’s estimated rate makes no allowance for class distinctions in the practice of abandonment. For speculations on the rate of abandonment in Rome, see Bennett (1922-23:351); Radin (1924-25:343); Harris (1980:123-124); Parkin (1992:97).

42. Cod. Just. 4.43.1; 4.10.12; 7.16.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.27; Gaius, Institutes 1.132, 4.79. However, the only historically attested example of anything resembling the sale of a child is in 326 BC when an adolescent son was enslaved because of a debt owed by his father (Valerius Maximus 6.1.9; Livy 8.28; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 16.9).

43. For the view that the sale of infants was uncommon, see Boswell (1984:16); Harris (1980:123; 1994:19, 21).

44. Dionysius of Halicarnassus 9.5.1.6; Garnsey (1992:65); poorly nourished mothers are likely to have had sickly and underweight babies.

45. Eyben (1980-81:13) suggests that exposure, as one of the more controversial, and more easily recognisable, methods of family planning, received greater attention in the ancient sources than contraception and abortion; see Parkin (1992:97).

46. The Christian moralists make similar accusations; cf Tertullian, Apol. 9.17; Minucius Felix, Oct. 30.2.

47. Chremes’ fear that his daughter, whom his wife Sostrata had given away and not killed at birth, might have become a prostitute stems from a sense of shame (Terence, Heauton. 639-641).


They were foundlings i.e. children exposed soon after birth by their parents but rescued and fostered by strangers

The relationship between finder and foundling is usually perceived as similar to that between master and slave. However, the epigraphic evidence shows the relationship to be more akin to that between parent and child. According to Rawson (1986:173), the inscriptions reveal that an alumnus is usually a young person in a quasi-familial relationship with an older person. They are sometimes of free status, sometimes slave.

49. A testator in the second century AD entrusts the administration of the legacy he has left for his infant alumnus to a friend whom he instructs to treat the alumnus with patris affectus (Dig. 33.1.214). Dig. 34.2.18.1: a husband informs his wife in his will to pass on the bequest made by them to their alumnus (Dig. 31.88.6; 34.1.15).

50. Rawson (1986b: 179; 199, n.31: "Only six alumni are recorded (i.e. on inscriptions) younger than one year. This probably reflects a lack of recognition of the identity of infants, but this very outlook and the high risk of infant mortality probably deterred the taking up of infants as alumni".

51. Plautus, Cist. 123-151; Terence, Andria 720-770. Diodorus 20.14 refers to the legendary custom among the Carthaginian nobles of substituting for sacrifice to Kronos their own sons with infants they had purchased or
found.
52. See Rose (1986:91) on the role of midwives in "baby-planting" and "fake deliveries" in the Early Modern period.
53. Historians of child abandonment have become embroiled in an unsolvable debate over the survival prospects of exposed infants in Roman society. Those who argue for a large survival rate include Boswell (1988:429); Garmsey (1987:138); Tilly (1991:3-5). Many scholars believe that the majority of infants abandoned by the Romans would have died: Eyben (1980-1:19); Patterson (1985:121-122); Harris (1994:8); Fuchs (1991:12); Kertzer (1991:17-18).
54. For illegitimacy as a reason for exposure, see Syme (1960); Brunt (1971:150); Kertzer (1991:15); Harris (1994:11-12). Brunt (1971:50-151) claims that the small number of references to illegitimate children in the literary sources could well be an indication of widespread abandonment of infants born from irregular unions.
55. Translation by Boswell (1988:70). See also Appian, de Bello Civile 1.1.10; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 9.51.6; Aulus Gellius, NA 2.23.20 and 21; Pseudo-Quintilian, Decl. Min. 306; Plutarch, de am. prolis 5. Eyben (1980-1:80, n.245) lists ancient sources which mention poverty as a motive for limiting numbers of children.
56. Boswell (1988:104) does mention that Trajan's allowance system assisted the poor in bringing up their children, but in the sources the willingness of such parents to rear children is related more to the favourable social climate than to the promise of financial remuneration (Pliny Panegyr. 27).
57. Cf Plutarch, Cato min. 25.2-3; Augustine, Serm. 57.2.2. Polybius 36.71.5, makes a similar claim in reference to second century BC Greece.
58. Hopkins (1983:76); on p.79 is quoted Martial's comment on the fortune of Equites (400,000 sesterces was the minimum required for qualification) as evidence that the cost of political competition led to limitation of family size: "Divide 400, go on divide a fig; do you think that two brothers can sit on one horse?" (Epigr. 5.38).
59. Saller (1984a:205) argues that Roman dowries were not as large as Greek: "dowries usually did not play a very large part either in aristocrats' strategies for financial success or in their financial ruin". However, the literary evidence shows that some dowries did in fact consist of large monetary sums: Scipio Africanus gave his daughters 1.2 million sesterces as a dowry (Polybius 31.27). Cicero had enormous difficulty in providing a dowry for Tullia's third marriage (ad Att. 11.2-3). Hopkins (1983:77) surmises that it must have been "a significant sum".
60. Cf Pliny, Panegyr. 27: the "Emperor's wrath" probably alludes to the reign of Domitian; Seneca, Contr. 2.5.2.
61. Cf Pliny, Ep. 10.2.2-3, on his own eagerness to have children in Trajan's reign, a time "when my happiness need know no fear". In the document known as the Laudatio Turiae, the husband reminds his wife: "when the world returned to peace and the Republic was restored, then we enjoyed tranquil and [happy] times. We wanted children . . ." (CIL6 1527 ii 25-26/ILS 8393).
62. Jowett (1986:351) describes the demographic consequences of the famine conditions in China, 1960-61, when the food grain output in 1960 declined by 51.5 million tons in comparison to 1957. Over the four years there were 25-30 million more deaths and 30-35 million fewer births than might have been expected in normal conditions. See Bairagi (1988:307) on the 1974-75 famine in Bangladesh. According to some sources, superstition could also prompt parents to abandon their children: Suetonius, Aug. 94.3, reports the dubious tale of how a portent that Rome would be ruled by a king caused the Senate to pass and all but enforce a decree that all male children were to be exposed. See also Suetonius, Calig. 5; Zosimus, Hist. 2.1.2; Dio 61.1.2.
63. Such events do not belong only to Comedy (Plautus, Cist. 631ff: the girl is exposed in the Hippodrome). Infants seem to have been left commonly on temple steps, at fountains, even rubbish-heaps. Whether there was a special place - the Columna Lactaria in the Forum Holitorium (Paul ex. Fest. 88) - where unwanted infants could be left and picked up is less certain, but not improbable in view of the organised system of abandonment that developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kertzer, et al. 1991).


65. Scrimshaw (1978:61); Scott (1992:84)

66. See notes 21 and 38. Rose (1986:187) similarly connects cruel treatment of children with socioeconomic pressures: "In Britain in the 1980s it is no accident that the number of parental assaults on young children has increased as the level of unemployment has risen. When pressures increase, the young and the helpless become ready victims and we must not delude ourselves that our instincts are anything but elementally animal whatever religious and ethical ideas we aspire to".

67. The practice of passive infanticide in the form of deliberate or unconscious neglect (see especially Scrimshaw 1978; 1984) does not seem to have been familiar to Roman authors (see n.26).

68. Hopkins (1965-6: 127); Dickison (1973: 163); Eyben (1980-1: 77). Several ancients authors claim that abortion was practised by the rich, while the poor exposed their children: Juvenal, Sat. 6.592-593; Ambrose, Hex. V.18.58. However, neither practice would have been exclusive to one social group. Dig. 48.19.38.5 refers to the penalty of forced labour in mines imposed upon commoners who administered abortifacients; the more prominent were to be sentenced to exile on an island and forfeiture of part of their fortune. Such a distinction suggests that abortion was practised by the lower classes. Dio Chrysostom 15.8, mentions slave women practising abortion to avoid "being compelled to raise children in addition to their own enduring slavery".

69. The accepted scholarly opinion - that ancient contraceptives were ineffective - is now changing through the work of Riddle (1991; 1994), who has studied the contraceptive effects of several plants familiar to the Romans. In Riddle's view, the "abundant testimony" in ancient literary sources to plant substances such as pomegranate, juniper and rue suggests that oral contraceptives were the principal determinant of the demographic pattern at Rome, and not infanticide, which was not a very common practice, as the paucity of evidence implies (1991:30-31).

70. However, it is by no means certain that abortion was practised commonly by the upper classes. In view of ancient hygiene standards, and lack of skill and knowledge in obstetrics, full pregnancy and childbirth might have been safer. See Watts (1973:100), for the reverse of this theory; Brunt (1971:153) believes that abortion was preferable to carrying a baby to full term because of the dangers to the mother in childbirth. Abortion in antiquity could indeed be fatal. Domitian's niece, Julia, died as a result of a forced abortion (Pliny, Ep. 4.11.6; Juvenal, Sat. 2.29-33; Suetonius, Domit. 22); and under Caracalla in the third century AD the death penalty was administered to those who prescribed abortifacients, if the woman died (Dig. 48.19.38.5).
CHAPTER THREE

CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN: PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE II: CHILDCARE

This chapter continues the discussion of parental indifference among the Romans to the welfare of their young children. The two principal topics are the childcare practices adopted by the Romans and the extent to which parents sought medical treatment whenever any of their infant children were ill. In addition, a number of superstitious beliefs and practices are offered as further evidence that there was not a generic disregard of infants among the Romans; parents seem to have been attentive to their young children's needs.

Childcare Practices

In studies of the Early Modern family numerous features of childcare have been interpreted as "culpable negligence" (Stone 1977:69) by parents: lack of attention by the mother in the first critical weeks; premature weaning; filthy swaddling; the widespread resort to wet-nurses. Of ancient childcare practices, one aspect in particular has been highlighted by historians, such as Bradley (1986; 1991), as symptomatic of parental disregard for young children - the use of wet-nurses.

According to the literary ideal, the young child of the Roman elite was reared in sinu matris (Tacitus, Dial. 28.1); but upper class mothers were not, it seems, in the habit of attending to the physical needs of their young children - at least this appears to be the case when Tacitus writes his Dialogues and Germania in the late first century AD. In the first work, in AD 74 the orator Vipstanus Messalla condemns the upper class practice of children being "brought up in the tiny little room of a hired nurse" (Tacitus, Dial. 28.1). The emphasis placed by Tacitus on the prevalence of maternal nursing, and the absence of wet-nurses, among German tribes implies that breastfeeding by mothers was not the norm in Roman society (Germ. 20.1). Similarly, Juvenal's claim that poor women were obliged to nurse their own children (Sat. 6.592-593) also suggests that, by the late first century AD, maternal nursing was not widely practised among the elite and...
Infant children were more likely to be entrusted to a wet-nurse for feeding and general day-to-day care.

The fundamental question to be asked is: if wet-nursing was so widespread in Roman society, is it legitimate to interpret this practice as illustrative of an extensive disregard among the elite for their young children? Also, is wet-nursing detrimental to the parent-child relationship? The discussion below will deal only with the issue of indifference, and will not consider the quality of nursing in antiquity².

Among historians of the Roman family, the severest criticism of this form of childcare is made by Bradley (1986:216ff; 1991:28-29). According to Bradley, the practice of delegating childcare was, at the individual level, detrimental to the parent-child relationship and was, therefore, symptomatic of a generic parental indifference towards infants. In agreement with the theories of Shorter (1976:177-188) and Stone (1977:106-107; 420-443) on the Early Modern family, Bradley believes that the practice of wet-nursing is "connected in some way to the very common reality of premature child death". Among parents there was a general lack of concern for newborn infants and an avoidance of emotional commitment until their children had reached two or three years; from that age their survival to adolescence and adulthood could be more certain. In order to protect themselves psychologically against the very real possibility that their infant child might die, parents delegated to wet-nurses the various physical chores associated with early infant care, such as breastfeeding and bathing. But even if a child passed the critical early years, parents continued to employ the services of child-minders. Wet-nurses might become nannies after the child had been weaned, often operating in conjunction with male nutritores and paedagogi. Such child-minding figures effectively functioned as parents, providing physical care, supervision, moral protection and education³.

Bradley’s theory that child-minding was detrimental to the parent-child relationship is supported by the extensive criticism of wet-nursing to be found in the ancient sources. The philosopher Favorinus, when he discovers that a mother has decided to employ wet-nurses to spare her weakened daughter the additional strain of breastfeeding, tries to persuade the family that the girl herself should nurse the child. Although Favorinus spoke of the critical damage caused by lack of mother-infant interaction in the mid second century AD, his comments continue to be echoed by modern
And besides this, who can neglect or disparage this observation too, that those women who abandon their children and remove them from themselves and give them to others to nurse, sever or at least weaken and undermine that bond and union of mind and love, by which nature joins parents to their children? For when an infant is removed from its mother's sight and is given to another, that strength of maternal affection is gradually and little by little quenched and every cry of a most impatient anxiety falls silent, and a child relegated to another to nurse is forgotten almost as if it had been lost by death. Also the feelings that the child himself has of affection, love and familiarity are directed solely towards that woman by whom it is nursed, and then, as is usual in the case of those who are exposed, it does not experience any feeling or longing for the mother who bore it. Therefore when the beginnings of natural love have been erased and destroyed, and however much children brought up in this way seem to love their father and mother, that love is generally not natural, but polite and assumed.

Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1.21-23

Seneca too, in the first century AD, assumed that parents who employed wet-nurses could not be closely attached to their infants. In a letter to his friend Marullus on the death of his little son, Seneca reproves him for his excessive grief over a child who was better known to his nurse than to his father (Ep. Mor. 99.14). Quintilian’s claim that his five year old son loved his father more than his nurses (Inst. Or. 6 pr. 8) could be taken to mean that it was not uncommon for infants to be attached more to their nurses than to their parents.

Bradley (1986:215, 221; 1991:28ff, 56ff) does concede that wet-nursing will in some cases have been a reflection of parental concern that their child receive the best possible care, while in others parents will have employed the services of a wet-nurse because they were unwilling to become so emotionally attached to a child whose chances of life were so precarious. Bradley (1991:29) concludes that the question of whether wet-nursing is symptomatic of parental indifference is "inappropriate"; more importantly, the very existence of wet-nurses suggests physical, and probably emotional, distancing between parent and child.

While Bradley is correct to dismiss this idea of indifference, that is those parents who resorted to wet-nurses felt no love or concern for their newborn children, nevertheless the question appears repeatedly in
connection with wet-nurses, and since it has important implications for the whole subject of parent-child relations, it must be commented upon here.

The theory that wet-nurses provided parents with a form of emotional immunity against the possibility of their child dying in infancy is particularly relevant to the question of whether Roman parents grieved at the loss of their young children. Such a notion of psychological protection implies that parents only became involved, physically and emotionally, with their children when they had passed the "critical" age and their survival was more assured. Yet, this implication is left unchallenged, and scholars do not seem to query its obvious flaws: when does this "critical" period of life end and when does it become "safe" to start loving a child? In a society with a generally high mortality rate at all age groups, is any age "safe"? This aspect of the indifference theory is dependent upon an unproven, but assumed, connection between mortality rates and sentiment. According to this line of reasoning, emotion is governed by demographic patterns, and the individual can adapt his own psychology to correspond to the current mortality trend. Therefore, in societies with a high infant mortality rate, parents will direct little emotion towards their young children; by contrast, in populations where death in infancy is rare, there is a high degree of emotional investment by parents in small children. However, such a theory is undermined by definite evidence of interest in and attachment to small children to be found in Latin literature (see Chapter 1) and in anthropological studies of Third World communities with high infant mortality rates.

Anthropological and sociobiological research has shown that the primary concern of the majority of parents is to ensure the survival, protection and nurture of their young children, although the methods used to achieve this end will obviously vary enormously. LeVine gives a more specific summary of universal parental goals:

In populations with high infant mortality rates, parents will have the physical survival and health of the child as their overriding conscious concern, particularly in the early years, and child-rearing customs will reflect this priority.

LeVine 1977:21

Since the Romans were also members of a society with a high infant mortality rate, they too are likely to have had the same goal as those in cultures with a similar death rate among the very young, namely the physical survival and health of their child in the earliest years, and their
culturally approved methods of child-rearing will be demonstrative of this concern. In this context the practice of wet-nursing should be considered.

Bradley's observation that wet-nursing entailed physical, and probably emotional, separation of the child from his or her parents is more difficult to disprove than notions of indifference.

The very use of wet-nurses and other child-minders shows that, for Roman parents, there was no continuous contact with their small children comparable to that in the late twentieth century West. Therefore, the physical separation, in matters of day-to-day care, is clear; this does not, however, mean that there could be no opportunity for a strong, affectionate bond to develop between parents and children. As Dixon (1988:126) notes, it is only within the last century that infants have come under the care of a "single, constant attendant"; in much of the world it is customary to delegate infant care. In any case, exclusively maternal care of infants was not required of the women of the Roman elite; it was taken for granted that others would be involved. Tacitus, who criticises the use of slaves as childcarers in his own day, shows that even in the glorious past the devoted mother was not solely responsible for early childcare; rather she relied upon "some older relative", who was experienced and proficient in bringing up children (Dial. 28.4-5). However, Tacitus never suggests that the mother was emotionally detached from her infant children because she did not perform herself the mundane chores of early childhood care7.

In contrast to Bradley's negative view of childminders, Dixon (1988:126-127) believes that childcarers would have supplemented rather than replaced the parental relationship with the child8, and adds that "there is really no evidence to support the idea that wet-nursing and the relegation of childcare to servants interfered with the development of relationships between Roman children and their parents" (1988:129). Dixon sees the relationship between a young child and a mother in ancient Rome as being more like that of a father's in our own society (1988:135); but, it must be added, such a relationship need not be devoid of intimacy. Seneca, in reference to the differences between maternal and parental love for children, says that mothers "want to cherish them in their lap, to keep them in the shade, want them never to be sad, never to weep, never to work" (de Provid. 2.5). Mothers are commonly portrayed in literature as
praying for their children (Ovid, Fasti 559; Juvenal, Sat. 10.289ff).

The findings produced by recent studies of mother-infant attachment can be used to demonstrate that maternal, and indeed paternal, affection for infant children can develop in spite of the presence of other caregivers (Chapter 4, pp.90-91). Attachment is, according to this research, conditioned partly by environment\(^9\); in human beings, more than all other animal species, maternal behaviour requires learning. However, the role of genetic factors must be acknowledged. According to one study,

The tendency to form attachments must be rooted in the physical make-up of the individual, inhering perhaps mainly in his/her nervous system. Therefore we must expect the proneness to parent-to-infant bonding to be in some measure built into all of us.

Sluckin, et al. 1983:73

Even in non-relatives holding and seeing a newborn baby can evoke tender feelings and the urge to provide protective care. If a mother, even if her child is in the care of a wet-nurse, allows herself to become acquainted with her infant (its sound, smell, etc) and responds to the signals of crying, smiling, sucking, following and clinging, then these stimuli will stir, and strengthen, maternal affection over the first few weeks and months of the baby’s life. In the case of mothers employing the services of a child-minder, such feelings may develop more slowly than in mothers who care exclusively for their newborns themselves, but they will develop if the mother herself is willing to interact with her infant by cradling and playing with him or her. As Sluckin et al. (1983:90) have shown, there are no critical periods for the formation of the mother-infant bond; therefore, for mothers who entrusted wet-nurses with the daily care of their infants, this attachment would have in many cases developed in a manner similar to that of the parental bond in the West today.

The Roman moralists believed that mothers who used wet-nurses could not be emotionally attached to their children (Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1), but parents themselves who employed the services of a wet-nurse do not seem to believe that it will damage their relationship with their child\(^10\). Roman parents do not seem to have "boarded out" their infants to wet-nurses in the country\(^11\), as in eighteenth and nineteenth century France, where parental contact and observation was minimal\(^12\). The fact that there is no recorded instance in Roman literature of the death of a child in the care of
a wet-nurse further suggests that upper class parents at least supervised those in charge of their children. Soranus (Gyn. 2.19) refers to nurses who, when drunk, fall onto infants “in a dangerous way”, or who, in a fit of temper, sometimes drop babies; but in neither case is the possibility of death even hinted at. The inscriptive evidence for *nutrices* compiled and analysed by Bradley (1986:14-19; 1991:203-214) demonstrates that the majority of wet-nurses caring for upper class children were part of the *familia*, either as freedwomen or slaves already available within the household. If there was no suitable slave or freed slave available, then a wet-nurse could be hired. In some cases these women may have taken the child into their own home, but more usually they would have been brought into the child’s home for the period of breastfeeding and weaning.

Conscientious parents will, therefore, have been able to supervise more strictly the nurse’s daily care of their child, and will have had greater control over her own lifestyle, i.e. ensuring that she did not do anything that might have a harmful effect on the infant. Servile nurses of upper class children could have shared the values of those whom they served with respect to the ethics of child-rearing; it was in their own interests to look after their nurslings properly. Apart from the physical aspect of breastfeeding, mothers, and indeed fathers, were probably in close contact with their young children. Suetonius (Tib. 6.1) recalls how in the flight from Naples during the civil war the infant Tiberius was passed from his nurse’s breast to his mother’s arms in an effort to hush his cries. The numerous examples, quoted in Chapter One, from the literature of the elite - the social class most censured for its use of wet-nurses - of the close, affectionate bond between parents and children demonstrate that wet-nurses as a rule did not have an adverse effect upon the parent-child relationship.

Although the use of wet-nurses was widespread among the elite, it is clear that not all mothers of the upper classes resorted to childcarers. Cato’s wife, Licinia, breastfed her own son and her slave’s children (Plutarch, Cato mai. 20.3). In Roman art, particularly on sarcophagi, images of mothers feeding their babies are a common motif, which suggests the reality of maternal feeding was not unknown. Historians who associate wet-nursing with parental indifference do not consider that some mothers had no option other than to engage a wet-nurse, if they were
physically or emotionally incapable of feeding their child themselves. Plutarch's wife seems to have had some sort of breast surgery after nursing one of her own children (Cons. ad ux. 5). The mother whom Favorinus criticises (Aulus Gellius, NA 21.1) is forced to use a wet-nurse because of her own weakened state after delivery. In other instances, the mother may not have been acting as a free agent: the decision to engage a wet-nurse could be an unwilling response from a sense of obligation to adhere to socially prescribed practices or to pressure from relatives. The element of compulsion is clear in this letter from Egypt, dated to the second half of the third century AD:

I hear that you have forced her to breastfeed. If you wish, let the baby have a wet-nurse. I do not want my daughter to breastfeed.

Lefkowitz and Fant 1982:188

Husbands could also force their wives to employ a wet-nurse, if they wished them to conceive again more quickly (Plutarch, de Lib. Educ. 3; Soranus, Gyn. 2.18)\(^1\). A wet-nurse might have been essential for the survival of the infant, if the mother had died in childbirth or shortly afterward\(^2\). Pliny (Ep. 4.2.1) mentions the daughters of Helvidius, both of whom died in childbirth, each leaving a daughter. After the death of Quintilian's young wife, his sons were brought up by a variety of attendants (Inst. Or. 6. pr. 8).

**Conclusion**

Several historians of the Roman family, impressed by the statistics of demographers and studies of the family in other preindustrial societies, have mistakenly assumed that wet-nursing demonstrates parental indifference to and neglect of infants among the Romans. But these scholars have judged Roman methods of childcare by their own cultural perceptions of “good” parenting. Upper class Romans did rely heavily on wet-nurses and others for the day-to-day care of their children; but this division of care is a reflection of the more communal aspect of household life in the society to which they belonged.

Roman parents could have damaged their relationship with their infant child by simply allowing another individual to take care of their son or daughter, even though they might have believed that they were acting in
the child's best interests by engaging a wet-nurse. However, as argued from comparative evidence, the presence of a childcarer need not have an adverse effect on the parent-child relationship, if parents themselves are willing to become acquainted with and interact with their child. It is improper to consider Roman childcare in terms of indifference or neglect: wet-nursing may have been considered by Roman society to be the best solution to the problem of ensuring infant health and survival in a high infant mortality population. Paradoxically, wet-nurses are mentioned most often at a time when literature and art is replete with tender portrayals of young children. In view of this apparent inconsistency, it must be concluded that wet-nursing was perceived by Roman society as the best form of infant care. As Sluckin et al. (1983:90) state, "mothers who do what they and the community to which they belong believe is right for the child are the best mothers". Wet-nursing in Rome should, then, be seen as indicative of parental concern rather than neglect.

Ancient medicine

As an additional facet of the indifference and neglect thesis, historians claim that the failure of ancient medical authorities to deal comprehensively with infant illness is indicative of antiquity's lack of concern not only with the sick child, but also with children in general. In order to test the validity of this popular assumption several points must be discussed: the ancient medical tradition; the place of infantile illnesses in medical texts; the reactions of adults to a sick child in non-medical sources. From the following discussion, it will become clear that, in contrast to an attitude of indifference, the majority of Roman parents were most anxious whenever any of their children fell ill.

Traditionally Roman medicine - "a series of recipes" (Scarborough 1969:65), as exemplified most obviously by the Elder Pliny's Natural History - was largely the province of the paterfamilias, who attended to the ailments of his own household using magical chants, and various herbal and animal potions. In the post-Hannibalic period professional physicians became much more common with the influx of foreign, especially Greek, slaves into Rome; but among the more superstitious and less educated sections of society these folklore remedies persisted (Scarborough
Access to professional medical help was restricted to those who could afford to pay the high fees demanded by doctors. But even among the wealthy, there seems to have been a general distrust, or at least scepticism, of practising physicians. Prescriptions issued were frequently loathsome concoctions and recommended drugs suspect; often a return to good health was more to do with luck than any medical aid.

Roman medicine, however, cannot be wholly criticised. Some physicians did have high professional and ethical standards. Scarborough claims that Roman medicine was "superb in its rational treatment of many ills," and has much to say in praise of the technical accomplishments of the Romans in surgery.

However, here two questions in particular must be asked: would parents turn to doctors, or even traditional remedies, if their infant children were ill? And were doctors even interested in attempting to cure sick infants in a society with such a high rate of mortality among the under-fives?

Etienne surmises, on the basis of the elementary and succinct information in the medical texts, that ancient physicians had little regard for child pathology and no real concern for the sick child; their primary aim was with the development of the healthy child. Some doctors, most notably Hippocrates and Galen, do discuss child pathology in detail; others are often content to give procedures to be avoided in the case of infant diseases or ailments; others again prescribe foul products or magical formulae. Many physicians, such as Orbasius, mention only hygiene and dietetics. Etienne concludes that infant health was probably left to midwives and doctors were rarely involved.

The medical literature does, however, provide fairly extensive lists of ailments to which newborns and infants were prone: throat infection, vomiting, coughing, inflammation of the navel, fluid in the ears, teething, tonsillitis, displacement of the cervical vertebrae, stones, round worms, warts, itching, psoriasis and flux of the bowels. In some cases only the
disorders themselves are given without methods of prevention or cure\textsuperscript{27}, but Soranus (Gyn. 2.32.3) also includes a variety of remedies. Soranus' advice is practical and sensible, in that he rejects harmful products and procedures, such as the use of brine and urine for itching.

Etienne's (1977:151-152) main complaint is that ancient physicians on the whole deal with minor complaints, and, on the rare occasions that specific diseases are mentioned, nothing is said of therapeutics. Yet, this omission need not be indicative of the Roman physician's disregard for the sick infant. Such an oversight must be discussed within the wider context of ancient medicine. The ancient physician had little understanding of the role of viruses and bacteria in the transmission of diseases\textsuperscript{28}; therefore, his limited resources and knowledge would have been relatively inadequate against the most deadly viruses. His failure to deal satisfactorily with infant infections should not be censured, particularly since the treatment of adult ailments could be equally ineffective: ancient doctors knew as much of paediatrics as of ancient medicine in general\textsuperscript{29}.

Rome had none of the medical and technological advantages (health education, immunisation, health centres, hospitals, skilled practitioners in diverse branches of medicine, etc.) that are widely and readily available in industrialised countries of late twentieth century. Against this background the Roman physician's treatment of infantile diseases must be considered.

Infant health, particularly newborns, is likely to have been the province of midwives (Etienne 1977:153). At later stages infants would be tended in illnesses by wet-nurses or, among those who could not afford to employ a wet-nurse, by the mothers themselves. There is no difficulty in imagining an experienced wet-nurse knowing how to treat common infant ailments, or daughters acquiring a similar knowledge from their own mothers or from female friends. Such a network of information would inevitably be largely excluded from the medical writings of male physicians, not for reasons of lack of concern for infant health, but because such matters were being attended to by others (Riddle, et al 1994:32).

The ancient physician's disregard for the ill child has been extended by Etienne (1977:153) to society as a whole. But this idea of widespread indifference to sick children is refuted by the anxiety shown by parents towards those of their children who were unwell.
The evidence from the literary classes reflects this parental worry over unwell children. Seneca (Ep. Mor. 74.2) notes that fathers become anxious when their children are ill, and will not care more for a healthy son than a sick one. The love of parents "inclines more towards those of their children for whom they feel pity" (Ep. Mor. 66.26-27). Cicero's distress deepens as Tullia's condition worsens (ad Att. 9.6), and Arria faithfully attends the sick bed of her son (and husband too; Pliny, Ep. 3.16), but in each of these cases, the anxiety is for an older child, not an infant.

However, the literary evidence reveals that the age of the child did not necessarily affect the intensity of parental concern, and adults seem to be equally worried when a young child was ill. Ovid, Fasti 4.505ff, tells of how Ceres visits a little cottage, where "the whole household was immersed in grief" over the illness of an infant son. At the request of his tutor, Marcus Aurelius continually informs Fronto of the ill-health and recovery of his own little children, Faustina and Antoninus (Haines, Loeb 2, p. 39;202)30. The Empress Faustina the Younger hurried to attend her little daughter, even though the illness did not seem to be serious (Haines 2, p.316). The correspondence of earlier letter writers, Cicero and Pliny, confirms that this anxiety over a young child's ill-health is not unique to Marcus Aurelius and Fronto. Cicero's concern over the ill-health of Atticus' daughter can be charted over seven letters31. Specific historical instances might be comparatively few, but the extant literature suggests that the majority of parents in question were extremely concerned whenever any of their children were ill; moreover, this anxiety was not affected by the age of the child.

However, the upper classes had the leisure and the finance to ensure that their unwell children were properly attended to. The poor, engaged in daily employment and unable to afford any sort of medical assistance may have been more resigned to the fate of a seriously ill child32.

The persistence of superstitious beliefs, such as the conviction that ill-health came from the gods and was a sign of divine wrath, might suggest that the lower classes were more inclined to accept the inevitable fate of an ill child. Although there was not any widespread conviction that a child's illness was a punishment for parental sins33, parents often attributed their young child's sickness to the workings of some unseen force34. Such sentiments seem to lie behind the frequent expression that young children
perished as a result of "some malignant influence" or having been "stolen by the Fates" - a popular lament on infant epitaphs. One of the traditional characters of literary fiction is the child-stealing witch or sorceress who sacrifices newborns to use their vital organs and bones in spells. But these beliefs should be seen as a reflection of the inexplicability of the premature death of a child rather than as a resignation to the fate of a ill child.

From the value they placed on children as an investment in future security (Chapter 1) and from their expressions of grief on tombstones (Chapter 9), it seems likely that lower class parents in general were anxious when any of their children were ill. Therefore, their reactions to their children's illnesses might not have been significantly different from the worries of their aristocratic counterparts recorded in the literary sources. Degree of parental concern could have varied according to class, and would have certainly varied within any one class; however, the central tenet of sociobiological and evolutionary theory (Pollock 1983:36-37;43), that the primary concern of parents in high infant mortality populations is with the survival and protection of their children implies parental anxiety at the ill-health of a child. As regards Roman parents in particular, the chants and signs, the use of amulets, the multitude of deities that protected every stage of infancy and childhood all suggest that the lower classes, more ready to believe in the efficacy of such superstitions than the more educated members of society, were not indifferent to the welfare of their sick infants. Some parents may have adopted such an attitude, whether unconsciously or deliberately, towards unwanted children (Scrimshaw 1978:388ff; Johanssen 1987:355-356), but there is nothing to suggest that this indifference was a generic response to the illnesses of young children.

Amulets were traditionally given to newborns to ward off evil and to provide protection against disease, and are to be explained in terms of parental superstition and concern for their newborns. Throughout his Natural History Pliny mentions a great variety of strange, and mostly repulsive, amulets designed to protect against infant ailments: "... An amulet of goat dung in cloth restrains restless infants, especially girls" (NH 28.257-259). However, Pliny himself is sceptical of the efficacy of such amulets (NH 30.137).

The most common amulets worn by young children would be the bulla
and the crepundia. The crepundia consisted of tiny statues of protective gods and goddesses, animals, masks, shells, dice, little bells, tiny shields and armour, cutlery and crockery; they functioned both as a protective amulet and as a rattle⁴⁰. More popular would be the bulla, an amulet or locket containing an amulet, probably worn only by boys - the wearing of the bulla by girls is unlikely to have been "an established custom" (Wilson 1938:132)⁴⁰ - until they donned the toga virilis at the age of sixteen. There were two main types of bulla: the golden bulla worn by upper class boys⁴¹, and the leather bulla - "merely a knot in a leather thong", according to Courtney on Juvenal, Sat. 5.164-5 - worn by the sons of lower class citizens (Pliny, NH 33.10). Traditionally, when boys assumed the white toga of manhood they dedicated their bulla to the household Lares⁴².

In addition to amulets, parents who were anxious for the safety of their young children could invoke a whole host of protective deities. Augustine, in his mocking account of the wide and varied powers assigned by pagans to Jupiter (de Civitate Dei 4.11), reveals that according to Roman belief, the entire period from the moment of conception to marriage was under close divine protection. The goddesses who protected infants include Levana, who presided over the “raising” ceremony, Paventia, who kept fear from infants and Cunina, who guarded cradles⁴³.

Chants and signs, another form of ritual protection, were also designed to keep evil away from vulnerable infants, as Persius illustrates:

See how a grandmother or an aunt who, in fear of the gods, takes the child out of his cradle, and skilled at warding off the evil eye, first she uses her middle finger to purify his forehead and wet lips with lustral saliva; then she rocks the skinny little hope in her arms and with a suppliant prayer sends him into the estate of a Licinius or into the grand home of a Crassus...

Persius, Satires 2.31-36 ⁴⁴

Nurses would spit three times at their charges if a stranger arrived or if the sleeping baby was looked upon (Pliny, NH 28.7).

The superstitious beliefs of the Romans in the protective power of amulets, in divinities of birth and of infancy, and chants and signs are typical of prescientific societies, where medical knowledge is likely to be limited and infant illness and death frequent. However, the conventions
and folk traditions emphasise the genuine anxiety on the part of parents for the survival and future welfare of their young children.

The complex series of rites of purification performed at the birth of a child - the dies lustricus ceremony, during which the child was formally recognised as a member of the family, purified and given a name - further suggests that it is unreasonable to discuss the parental attitudes of the Romans towards the young in terms of indifference, or even neglect. Superstition and custom would undoubtedly have been the most important factors in the continuation of this ceremony; but tradition is not incompatible with parental concern for the survival and future prospects of the newborn. A birth was an occasion for celebration that involved not only family members, but also friends. Favorinus decides to visit a pupil's wife who has just given birth to a son in order to pass on his congratulations to the father (Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1). Statius, offended because Menocrates did not tell him immediately of the birth of his third child, claims that his friend should have written to him at once with instructions to "heap the altar with festal flames and entwine my lyre and wreath my portals, and bring out a cask sooted with Alban smoke and mark the day with song" (Silvae 4.8.34-44).

Augustine uses exaggeration to mock the complexity of deities that, according to pagan Roman beliefs, protected the unborn and newly born child (de Civ. Dei 4.11; 6.9.2). However, beneath this scorn of Augustine it is possible to detect an anxiety on the part of Roman parents for the survival of their newborn children; such a reaction is only natural in a society where few families would not have experienced the death of an infant.

Conclusion

According to several historians, the defects in paediatrics in the medical literature imply that the Romans were not attentive to the welfare of the sick infant; this failing is another illustration of antiquity's indifference to infant children. Yet, a large number of infant ailments are to be found in the medical texts as a whole; some authors also include methods of prevention or cure. Treatment of infant maladies is, however, likely to have been the concern of female doctors, midwives, wet-nurses and mothers in general. A combination of, on the one hand, direct testimonies
by individual authors and, on the other, of numerous superstitious practices and beliefs suggests that parents of all classes were anxious whenever any of their young children were ill. Notions of a generic indifference among the Romans to the welfare of unhealthy infant children must, therefore, be dismissed.
CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

1. The practice of swaddling, seldom considered in detail, has also been regarded as indicative of parental indifference. See Langer (1973-74:364, n.16); DeMause (1974:37); Shorter (1976:196-198); Stone (1977:162-163); Bradley (1986:219); Garnsey (1991:57). For a more positive view, see Golden (1990:17) on swaddling in Classical Athens; Brazelton (1977:155) on the Mayan Indians of Mexico; Mead (1954:400). For swaddling in ancient literature, see Soranus, Gyn. 2.14; Pliny, NH 7.1.3; Galen, Hygiene 1.8.

2. The quality of wet-nurses is criticised at Cicero, Brut. 218; Tacitus, Dial. 28; Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1.1.4-5; Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1.17; Soranus, Gyn. 2.19; Cod. Theod. 9.24.1.1. Favourable comments are made at Plutarch, de Lib. Educ. 3; Soranus, Gyn. 2.18; Suetonius Nero 50; Domit. 17.3. Nurses would adopt a special tone when lulling infants to sleep, tell them stories or fables, sing lullabies (Lucretius, de Re. Nat. 5.230; Persius, Sat. 3.18; Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1.1.32; 2.9.2), and were disappointed when their little charges grew up (Fronto, Haines Loeb 2, p.124). Nurses are also commonly represented as praying for wealth, fame, etc., for their nurslings (Horace, Epist. 1.4.8-11; Persius, Sat. 2.31-39; Seneca, Ep. Mor. 60.1; Juvenal, Sat. 14.205-209). Dixon (1988:162) lists 22 inscriptions dedicated by a nutritrix and 40 dedicated to a nutritrix from CIL6. Bradley (1986:202) looks at 69 epitaphs from CIL6 which mention nutritrix.

3. Both Bradley (1986:22; 19991:27) and Joshel (1986:12-14) believe that the affectionate terms used of their nurslings by Roman nurses were simply a show of devotion to their (former) masters on the part of the nurses in order to secure their own and their family's protection. According to Plutarch (de Lib. Educ. 3), the childminder's affection, which Bradley argues replaced that of parents', is "insincere and forced, since they love for pay".

4. The practice of wet-nursing among the servile classes is also examined by Bradley (1986:211-213; 1991:14ff), but he does not consider the use of wet-nurses at this social level to be symptomatic of parental indifference. Slave mothers had no say in the feeding of their own child; for owners concerned with potential profit, it was far more productive for the children of female slaves to be nursed by as few women as possible. The mothers, parted from their infants, would be able to return to work more quickly, and become pregnant again sooner, if they did not feed their children themselves (the contraceptive effect of breastfeeding was known in antiquity: Plutarch, de Lib. Educ. 3; Soranus, Gyn. 2.18). However, Bradley does not take into account the psychological effects of separation from her newborn on the mother. On slave-breeding, see K. Bradley (1978), "The age at time of sale of female slaves", Arethusa,11, 243-252; K. Bradley (1979), "Response" (to Dalby's article), Arethusa, 12, 259-263; K. Bradley (1984), "Slaves and masters in the Roman Empire: a study in social control", Collection Latomus, vol. 85; A. Dalby (1979), "On female slaves in Roman Egypt", Arethusa, 12, 255-259.

5. Bradley's treatment of shared childcare at social levels between those of the upper and servile classes is much more favourable (1991:chap.4). From a study of inscriptions referring to mammae and tateae ("foster-parents" is taken to be the usual meaning), he concludes that these women and men, who are associated with mostly young, but not infant, children (Dixon 1988:146) of the same social status as themselves, are "child-minders", and sees their role as similar in many ways to that of nutritrices, nutritores, etc. Bradley believes that, since mammae and tateae are of similar social status to the children, they complemented, rather than replaced, the biological parents and acted in harmony with them; and relieved parents for part of the time from childcare duties to enable them to work. Bradley does not
consider the diversity of relationships at this level to be detrimental to the parent-child bond, nor does he rule out the possibility that the parent-child link "was the most significant social bond" (1991:93).


7. Other authors confirm that in the upper classes those entrusted with the care of infants were not always the social inferiors of their charges; relatives too were involved in early childcare: aunts, particularly the maternal aunt (matratera), seem to have played a large part in caring for their sibling's children. Nero was reared in the house of his aunt, Domitia Lepida, after the death of his father and then the exile of his mother (Suetonius, Nero 6.3). Persius (Sat. 2.31-39) describes the matratera cradling her infant nephew and praying for his future; cf Apuleius, Met. 5.14; Ausonius, Parentalia 2.3; 6.1. The importance of the maternal aunt as an affectionate mother-figure can also be seen in her role in the Matralia (Plutarch, Camillus 5.2; de Frat. Amor. 21), the festival of the Mater Matuta held on June 11 (Ovid, Fasti 6.473ff), when women "embrace their nephews and their nieces in preference to their own children" (Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 17).

8. Dixon (1988:127; 153; 160): the term "mother-substitute" more accurately describes relatives of the same social status (aunts, grandmothers, stepmothers) who replaced a dead or absent mother. Saller (1994:96) is also critical of the standard assumption that childminders weakened the parent-child tie.

9. Sluckin et al. (1983:41). For other influences, particularly exposure learning and conditioning, see pp.73-75, 77-80.

10. See the letter from Egypt, second half of third century AD, quoted on p.62. The grief displayed by parents of the elite, the class most likely to employ wet-nurses, at the death of an infant shows that the parent-child relationship was not irrevocably damaged by these childminders (see Chapter 8 on expressions of grief by the upper class).

11. Plautus, Mil. Glor. 698, could be alluding to slave infants being sent to wet-nurses. Slave infants, separated from their mothers, would be nursed in a different household. Two wet-nursing contracts from Alexandria, (13 BC), translated by Lefkowitz and Fant (1982:270-272), refer to the "boarding out" of slave children; although in each case the children are foundlings and are being sent to the city, not the country. Favorinus describes infants being "sent away" to nurses; the use of the verb amandare implies physical distance between parents and children (Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1.23). Seneca (Contr. 4.6) mentions a father who sent his sons to the country to be brought up.

12. See especially Sussman (1975:320): "at home in the country the wet-nurse was free of any medical or administrative surveillance whatsoever, free to take another child from another source, to wean the baby prematurely, to substitute a foundling for a wealthy infant who died". The statistics given by Shorter (1976:181) for infant mortality in eighteenth century Rouen illustrate the effects of the presence and absence of parental supervision of young children: the mortality rates for infants staying with their mothers was 19%; for legitimate infants sent to rural wet-nurses (subsidised by the city) it was 38%; among foundlings sent to rural nurses around Rouen the death rate was 90%.

13. For the hiring of wet-nurses, see also Gardner (1986:214ff).

14. Tacitus (Dial. 28.4), in describing the contemporary practice of children being reared "in the tiny little room of a hired nurse", could mean that the nurse would have her own room in the household of the family that hired her. However, since Tacitus remarks (Dial. 29.1) that "now a newborn infant is assigned to some little Greek maid, helped by one or two men, usually the most worthless of all the slaves...", the implication could be that hired nurses would care for their charges in their own homes. Tacitus
seems, therefore, to be making specific differences between the hired nurse and the Greek slave nurse in the house.

15. In the wet-nursing contracts and receipts for wages from Roman Egypt the period of employment extends from a minimum of six months to a maximum of three years, with two years being the most common (Bradley 1980:321-322).

16. See Plutarch, Cato mai. 20.3, on Cato's and his wife's involvement in the bathing and feeding of their infant son.

17. Tombstones were erected in honour of lower class women who had breastfed their own children (GHI6 6323; 19128).

18. For a discussion of the importance of the contraceptive effect of lactation, see Parkin (1992:129-132), where it is suggested that non-maternal breastfeeding would result in a significant increase in fertility.

19. Caesar's daughter Julia and Cicero's daughter Tullia both died in childbirth (Plutarch, Caes. 23.5.7; Cicero 41.7), as did Caligula's wife Junia (Suetonius, Calig. 12). See Dixon (1988:30-32) for additional references.


21. Horace, Sat. 2.3.288-295. PGM XCI x1-3: "God is the one who heals every cure"; Celsus, in the prooemium to De Medicina, refutes this claim. Cf the terracotta anatomical ex-votos to healing deities (Jackson 1988:159ff).

22. Manilius Cornutus, ex-praetor and legate of Aquitania, paid 200,000 sesterces for the treatment of a disease that left disfiguring scars (Pliny, NH 25.3.4).

23. See also Martial, Epigr.1.4.8; 6.31; 9.96. On several occasions Horace mentions suspect or incompetent doctors (Sat. 1.2.1; Epist. 1.16.24; 2.1.114). Some physicians were praised for their attentiveness and competence; Pliny, Ép. 1.22; 7.1; 8.1; 10.5; Seneca, de Ben. 6.16.4-5.

24. Pliny, NH 34.25.108, claims that doctors frequented suspect drug dealers to purchase ingredients for their prescriptions; cf NH 24.1.4-5; 25.6.16. Only 20% of prescribed drugs would have a positively beneficial effect; the success of drugs was largely accidental, since so few doctors understood how they worked (Jackson 1988:79-80).

25. Scarborough (1969:82, 135; 128): "the best of Roman doctors performed well, even with the limitations imposed upon them in the classical ideal". See Jackson (1988:60-64) on the accomplishments of Galen.

26. See also Rawson (1990:15).

27. Celsus (2.1.18) notes the problems associated with teething - ulcerations of the gums, slight fevers, spasms, diarrhoea - but says nothing of how to deal with them. He claims that diarrhoea can be fatal in the under-10s (2.8.30), but no preventive measure is given. Detailed advice is provided for the treatment of epilepsy (2.8.11), mouth ulcers (6.11.3-6), and hernias (7.20.1).

28. Jones (1990:41-42): Until the work of Pasteur and Koch in the 1870s and 1880s there was "no appreciation of the existence of germs, their manner of reproduction and transmission, and their specificity in causing disease". Effective medical therapy, acting directly on the infective micro-organism, was delayed until the introduction of chemotherapeutic agents, particularly sulphonamides and antibiotics, from the 1930s.

29. However, in his section on pestilence as a fever (3.7.1a-c), Celsus advises that in general when children are ill they ought not to be given the same treatment as adults.

30. See also Haines, Loeb 2, pp.18,42. Faustina died in infancy (Dessau ii, 8803); Antoninus, born 31 August AD 161, died four years later. Marcus Aurelius and his wife Faustina lost two of their children at four and seven years, and five at less than three years (Neraudau 1984:374).

31. Cicero, ad Att. 12.6, 12.14, 12.23, 12.33, 13.12, 13.13, 13.51. Cicero is also
worried about the illness of his nephew Quintus (ad Quint. Fr. 2.9.1; 3.6.2). Cicero never mentions the infant illnesses of his own children, Tullia and Marcus, born in 75 BC and 65 BC respectively; but all of Cicero's correspondence dates to the period after the childhood of Tullia, and the bulk to after 58 BC (the earliest surviving letter to Atticus was written in 68 BC; of the letters to his friends, the earliest is a letter to Pompey in 62 BC). The omission of any reference to the ill-health of his infant children is not, therefore, significant.

32. This notion of a class distinction in attitudes towards, and treatment of, young children is to be found in histories of the Early Modern family (Stone 1977:471). Wiedemann (1989:30-31) claims that the sentimental interest in young children is to be found only among the Roman elite, who, unlike "peasants", did not need children for economic security.

33. Some parents in antiquity did, however, believe themselves to be responsible for their child's death, because they had offended a higher power in some way (Statius, Silvae 5.5.3-8; Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 pr 3-4). So many parents seem to have reproached themselves for the deaths of their children that Plutarch can state "not being to blame for one's unhappy state . . . surpasses all others as a remedy for the cure of grief" (Apoll. 114.25). In only one epitaph dedicated to children aged 0-4 years does a parent express any feelings of guilt: CIL 15160 a mother, who commemorates her twelve year old son and her two year old daughter, describes herself as "wicked" (sceferata). The idea that a child's ill-health was divine retribution for parental sins is commonly found among Early Modern diarists (Stone 1977:209ff), and was noted by Bowlby (1969:118) as the initial response of many parents when told that their child was terminally ill.

34. Frequently among Early Modern Christian diarists, parents often consider the illnesses of their children to be "God's will" (Pollock 1983:135-6).

35. See Chapter 9, p.229.


37. Scobie (1983:83), suggests that child-stealing witches and similar demons "provided parents with a mythical scapegoat which was recognised by other members of society".

38. See also Pliny, NH 32.137. Further examples of loathsome amulets are given at NH 30.135-139, such as a viper's brain to ease the pain of teething and grubs to be used when a child is choking.

39. Schmidt (1971:18). The Townley Collection, British Museum, possesses a sculpture of an infant asleep; across his chest is a band of crepundia. See the entry on crepundia in Daremberg and Saglio, Dictionnaire des antiquités, vol. 1 part 2, p.1561.

40. Isidorus, Etym. 29.31.11, says that males wore the bulla, while females had necklaces and chains. Gjerstad (1956:90; 108) records the discovery of bullas in the graves of female infants on the archaic site of the Forum Romanum. At Plautus, Rudens 1171, Palaestra mentions the golden bulla given by her father on the day she was born.

41. Festus, Pauli Exc. 26: the golden bulla of upper class boys was a custom inherited from the Etruscans in the regal period; cf Juvenal, Sat. 5. 164-5. At the funeral of Julius Caesar women dedicated the bullas and toga praetextas of their children (Suetonius, Jul. 84). See also Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 101.

42. Persius, Sat. 5.30-31. When they reached maturity, girls offered their dolls to Venus (Persius, Sat. 2.70).

43. For other deities who protected infants, see Augustine, de Civ. Dei 4.8; 7.2; Pliny, NH 28.7; Ovid, Fasti 6.107-165.

44. Nurses too are commonly associated with such prayers; see n.2.

46. Although Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 102, 288C, and Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.16.36, refer to girls being named on the ninth day after birth, there are no references to the dies lustricus being conducted for females. Children mentioned in connection with the "raising" ceremony are all male; and it is for the birth of a son that Favorinus (Aulus Gellius, NA 12.1) and Statius (Silvae 4.8) congratulate their friends. Belmont (1973:77) claims that fathers never performed the raising ceremony for girls; but Neraudau (1984:272), on the basis of Plautus, Amph. 501, concludes that girls were "raised" like boys because they too had to be integrated into the family unit.
The framework for the study of childhood in Roman society has been defined by two principal subjects: the concept of childhood and the indifference theory. This pattern was established by historians of the Early Modern family, who have approached their subject from one of three angles: dramatic change over the course of time; continuity in parent-child relations throughout history; a balance between change and continuity over time in parent-child relations. This last approach, which is adopted throughout this thesis, also recognises the diversity of parental attitudes towards and treatment of children that will have existed at any one time and in any one society.

Historians of childhood in the Roman period have likewise adopted one of these three approaches to parent-child relations. Most scholars do not see a simplistic transition from a non-child loving to child-loving society as advocated by several historians of the Early Modern family, nor do they assert that the Romans were universally affectionate towards and appreciative of their young children.

Yet, in spite of this pragmatism, many historians do attempt to trace a marked change in attitudes towards children in the Roman period. Opinions vary as to the origins, timescale and nature of these changes, but the general consensus among scholars, such as Manson, Néraudau, Dixon and Evans, seems to be that the late Republican/early Imperial era witnessed a significant transformation in the parent-child relationship. The concept of the child as an adult in miniature gave way to a recognition of the child as an individual with a distinctive personality; the perception of the child as an investment in future economic and social security was replaced by a close relationship based on altruistic affection. Classical scholars have enthusiastically adopted from their Early Modern counterparts the idea of an emergence of a concept of childhood and a growth in sentiment in parent-child relations, but there has been no comparable attempt to trace a simultaneous shift in behavioural patterns from cruelty and abuse to childcare practices designed to foster the parent-infant bond and maximise the child’s chances of survival.

In order to support their theory of the emergence of a concept of childhood, historians usually apply the technique of semantic analysis to
ancient literature. The variety of non-specific linguistic idioms used to describe the young child - and the lack of a single word equivalent to the modern, English term “baby” - in extant sources from the end of the third century BC and throughout the second century BC is said to be indicative of Roman society’s failure to perceive the infant as an individual. The theory continues that by the first century AD, a more specialised and affective vocabulary for children and childhood had developed in the literature, and this linguistic evolution reflects a similar progression in attitudes at the societal level. In addition to this steady emergence of the young child as a unique personality, as revealed through the development of a more precise and affectionate vocabulary to describe infancy and early childhood, scholars also use the semantic approach to trace in the literary sources a growing tendency for the expression of love and tenderness towards young children. Again, this shift in meaning in various word-groups is believed to parallel a simultaneous transformation in parent-child relations.

An examination of the ancient literary sources themselves does not, however, suggest that childhood evolved in such a simplistic, linear manner throughout the course of Roman history, as is claimed by the adherents of this view. In the third and second centuries BC when, according to the semantic argument, there was no awareness of and tenderness for children, numerous examples of loving parents can be found in the plays of Plautus and Terence. Similarly, in the Imperial period when the evolution in parent-child relations was fully developed, it is clear that some parents continued to see their children as a form of investment in their own future security, or to treat their children contemptuously or brutally.

The variety of parental attitudes towards children to be found in the literary sources also negates any notion of a linear evolution in parent-child relations. The extent to which the Romans as a society valued their infant children would not have remained entirely unaltered throughout Republican and Imperial times and the prevailing attitude would have changed in response to such external factors as war, famine, peace, prosperity, etc. The reactions of individuals to their infant sons and daughters will have varied from outright neglect to altruistic love, depending on the degree of parental attachment. Yet, it is erroneous to assume that these changes were a simplistic and continual process of evolution from negative to positive. Historians should acknowledge this diversity of parental attitudes in Roman society, and refrain from the compulsion to analyse childhood in terms of a “history” with critical
periods and causes, simply because major changes were occurring simultaneously at the political or military level. Therefore, there was no single attitude towards children in any period of Roman history, but in view of the extant evidence it is clear that cases of indifference to the special qualities of the child and an absence of affection were in the minority, and the predominant reaction of the Romans towards their young children was one of value, love and tenderness.

The second facet of the Roman childhood to preoccupy historical studies centres upon the theory of parental indifference to the very young. As in the Early Modern period, this indifference is attributed by some historians to the high infant mortality - for Rome the rate has been estimated at 250-300 per 1000 live births in the first year of life. As a psychological barrier to the experience of the repeated loss of children in infancy, parents remained uninvolved, physically and emotionally, with their small children. Scholars habitually claim that wet-nurses, inadequate or non-existent medical treatment, infanticide and exposure are all indicative of the indifference or even neglect shown by Roman parents towards their young children. But in each of these cases historians have applied their perceptions of what constitutes "good" parenting in their own culture to an analysis of Roman treatment of children. The study of societies past requires of the researcher the difficult task of laying aside his own standards of "cultural norms", and then examining the behaviour of the people under investigation within the context of the beliefs and values of that particular society. Therefore, wet-nursing should be seen as the socially prescribed method of maximising most effectively a newborn's chances of survival. Medical treatment of infant ailments may have been defective by standards of the late twentieth century industrialised West, but the ancient doctor's knowledge of paediatrics was no more limited than that of medicine in general; according to the literary sources, parents were concerned whenever any of their children were ill. The practices of infanticide and exposure are highlighted by historians as the most conclusive proof of indifference among Roman parents to their young children. Infanticide does not seem to have been commonly practised at Rome; exposure was the preferred method of disposing of an unwanted child after birth. However, for the Romans exposure was not a shocking and blatant manifestation of parental cruelty in its extreme, but a recognised, and popular, means of family limitation in a prescientific society where many contraceptives were ineffectual and abortion carried considerable risks to the life of the pregnant woman.
At all periods in Roman history and in all classes, some parents will have resorted to wet-nurses, failed to attend to their children in illness, or exposed them at birth because they were indifferent and felt no real love for their child. However, the abundant testimony in the literature of parental concern for the welfare of their children; the open expressions of love; the importance attached to the birth of children and to their survival, as revealed by traditional ceremonies and numerous superstitious beliefs; the emphasis on parental cruelty as exceptional - all these considerations collectively imply that the Romans were in general a child-loving society. Therefore, historians who have assumed that the Romans were indifferent to their infants have allowed themselves to be misled by a few oddities of negative behaviour and by different methods of childrearing. As a result, the multitude of evidence to the contrary - examples of love and tenderness towards young children - is not given due consideration because too often historians are unwilling to accept constancy in emotional response between past and present societies. Such a failure tends to occur when cultural practices are different and also because, in general, historical writing tends to focus on the unusual more than the familiar.

The conclusion that the predominant attitude to young children among the Romans was an awareness of their individuality and an appreciation of their childish qualities combined with tenderness and a concern for their survival, health and welfare has important implications for the discussion in the second part of this thesis of reactions to the death of a child in infancy. The importance of the child in both society and the family, the love and care for young children evident in the literary sources suggest, by implication, that the loss of an infant could be a painful experience for many Romans, and these parents would show their affection in their grief for their deceased child.
PART B

THE DEATH OF AN INFANT: MOURNING AND GRIEF
CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE FUNERARY RITUAL AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GRIEF

In the second part of this thesis the principal theme of this study will be explored in detail: the reactions shown by the Romans to the death of a child in infancy. This chapter on the anthropology of the funerary ritual and the psychology of grief is designed as background to the response to infant death in Roman society and deals with two subjects: in the first section anthropological theories of the role of culture in mourning are discussed; in the second scientific discoveries of biological continuities in the emotional response of grief and theories of grief as a systematic process are outlined. In order to avoid confusion, 'mourning' will be taken to mean specifically the manner in which any culture as a whole displays its emotions when death occurs, and will be "considered to represent the conventional behaviour as determined by the mores and customs of society" (Averill 1988:721); 'grief', by contrast, will be used to describe the emotional response of sorrow as experienced by the individual when confronted with personal bereavement. In addition, a section has been devoted specifically to a review of recent studies on the impact of infant death.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, while mourning is culturally determined and grief biologically determined, there is no rigid dichotomy between the societal expression and the individual experience of sorrow. In contrast to the anthropological and psychological viewpoints, societal behaviour cannot be separated easily from the response of the individual, and in non-primitive societies public displays of emotion are prompted primarily by inner feelings, not by societal stipulations - this relationship between mourning and grief will be observed in the Roman response to infant death.

The intention is that the results produced by a variety of studies, both anthropological and psychological, will assist the interpretation of the Roman material, particularly with regard to the question of the sincerity of grief, in view of the constant features observable in the grieving process.1
The theory that the experience of grief adheres to a set pattern in all human societies, even though modes of expression can vary considerably across cultures, will be used to suggest that the Romans could have felt the same sense of loss as their modern counterparts in the late twentieth century West, and that the grief recorded by Roman parents at the death of an infant could have been genuine.

The discussion of the Roman evidence (Chapters 6-9) is, as in the first part, subdivided into behaviour and attitudes: "behaviour" deals with the response of the Romans as a society to infant death, as indicated by the funerary rites performed for infants ("mourning"); "attitudes" considers the emotions experienced by individuals ("grief"), as recorded in the literary sources and in funerary inscriptions. Again, the issue of indifference forms the crux of the inquiry. In this instance, the aim is to question the validity of the notion that perfunctory burial rites and absence, or limited expression, of grief indicate a generic apathy among the Romans to the death of a child in infancy. Greater importance has been attached to the reactions of individuals than to the attitudes of society, and the conclusions reached that it was acceptable in Roman society to mourn publicly for young children and many parents did grieve over the deaths of their infants are designed to support the theory advanced in Chapters Eight and Nine that the expressions of grief recorded by individual parents in literature and on tombstones could have been genuine reflections of inner sorrow.

Mourning: the expression of grief

One of the strongest arguments advanced by anthropologists and their adherents in the field of history (termed the "cultural relativists" by Hopkins 1983:221) against the theory of continuities in human emotions - in this case that of grief as a response to the death of an individual - is the fact that the expression of grief varies widely from culture to culture, and indeed from individual to individual within any one society. In view of this diversity, some historians believe that peoples in the past cannot have experienced the same inner feelings of sorrow as their modern counterparts in the late twentieth century West.

According to anthropologists, considerable varieties of behaviour may be required of the individual during bereavement, which are, in some
respects, relatively unconnected with the actual feelings of sorrow. Huntington and Metcalf (1979:42-44) are particularly insistent that cross-cultural differences in funerary rites undermine the notion of universality of emotion; moreover, rituals are not simply an expression of, but actually mould, feelings. For example, among the Andamanese and the Bara of Madagascar (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:24-27), ceremonial weeping is the norm - such ritual wailing is not an expression of genuine sentiment, but "a positive emotion of social bonding" which creates in the mourner the appropriate reaction. Intense torment, anger and violence are typical of the funerary rituals of the Warramunga, native Australians, where mourners physically injure themselves and others. In contrast, the Nyakyusa of Tanzania must dance and flirt at funerals; while the Javanese must remain calm and undemonstrative, since crying is believed to hinder the deceased on his journey into the next life (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:34-39).

However, in spite of this diversity, a brief look at the mourning and mortuary rituals of a number of cultures reveals a surprising degree of similarity. Malinowski (1948:48-49) notes that the proceedings generally include the washing, anointing and adorning of the body; public displays of grief and wailing; the disposal of the corpse (either by inhumation, exposure or cremation); and ritual purification. In all this, religion, even although the beliefs are enormously different from culture to culture, plays a powerful role, for its essential purpose is to provide a means of dealing with death (Blauner 1966:393). This uniformity suggests, in contrast to the anthropological theory, that there could be a universal emotional reaction to death.

In his seminal anthropological study, The Rites of Passage, in which the entire life of an individual is analysed in terms of a series of three passages, Van Gennep (Morris 1992:9-10) observed that funerary rituals comprised a three-stage rite of passage for the deceased and the mourners: "the rite of separation", when death separates the deceased from life and the family from normality; "the rite of transition", a liminal phase when the deceased is "betwixt and between" the world of the living and the world of the dead, and also the period of mourning when the relatives, because they are polluted by death, are prohibited from all social activity; "the rite of incorporation", when the deceased is united with the world of the dead mourners are reintegrated into society. Hertz (1960) also perceived a tripartite structure to funerary rites: the process of ritual at death is determined by three 'participants' - the corpse, the soul and the mourners,
and the condition of each one parallels that of the other in all three stages of Van Gennep's rite of passage; for example, the corpse is separated from the living, the soul is separated from the body and the mourners are separated from normality.

Psychologists too have traced a pattern in funeral rites. According to Bowlby (1980:127-128), all funerals have three functions: the first is to help the bereaved, for example by providing an opportunity for the public expression of grief; secondly, a funeral allows other members of the community to take public note of the loss; thirdly, it provides an occasion for the complex interchange of goods and services between members and groups. In addition, Bowlby suggests that there are three certain specific, almost universal, types of response and belief through which "a culture channels psychological responses of individuals and in some degree ritualises them" (1980:128-132):

1. the belief that, despite bodily death, the person not only lives but continues his/her relationship with the living, at least for a time.
2. anyone bereaved is expected to feel angry with whoever is held responsible for the death.
3. usually a time is prescribed when mourning should end.

In the funerary rituals of many cultures a distinction is frequently made between the mourning and the burials of adults and that of very young children. Hertz (1960:76) argues that since the function of a funeral is in part a means of re-establishing the social order when a vacuum has been created by the demise of an individual, "the death of . . . a child will go almost unnoticed; it will arouse no emotion, occasion no ritual". Hertz continues:

Indeed since children have not yet entered the visible society, there is no reason to exclude them from it slowly and painfully. As they have not really been separated from the world of spirits, they return there directly, without any sacred energies needing to be called upon, and without a period of painful transition appearing necessary. The death of a newborn child is, at most, an infra-social event; since society has not yet given anything of itself to the child, it is not affected by its disappearance and remains indifferent.

Hertz 1960:84^2

Numerous anthropological studies reveal ample proof that in primitive
and premodern societies infants often constitute a special category of the dead. Frazer (1913:161) notes that among the Unmatjera and Kaitish tribes of Central Australia wooden troughs containing the bodies of children are placed on the branches of trees in the belief that before very long the spirit of the dead child may come back again and enter into the body of a woman - in all probability that of its former mother. The natives of the island of Ron or Run (New Guinea) place the bodies of children in baskets which are then hung on the branches of tall trees in the hope that the two forest spirits - Narwur and Hmiger, who kill little children so that they may be with them - will take the deceased child and spare his/her little brothers and sisters. Among several peoples the bodies of adults are cremated, but those of very young children buried - and often at much less expense and care. In India the invariable practice is to burn the bodies of men and women, but bury the bodies of children who have died under age two. Similarly, the Bhotias of the Himalayas bury all children who have not yet obtained their permanent teeth, but cremate all other people.

Anthropologists, such as Hertz (1960:84) and Blauner (1966:380-381), attribute these limited burial rites to the marginal status of children within the societies in question. But in a number of cultures, for example the Unmatjera and Kaitish tribes already mentioned, burial practices exclusive to infants are indicative not of society's indifference but of a belief in the doctrine of rebirth. The Dayak of Kurai similarly place the bodies of infants, especially if premature, in trees in the hope that the soul may be reincarnated, perhaps in the womb of the same woman (Hertz 1960:151). The belief in rebirth - as well as in the relative harmlessness of the spirits of the very young - clearly underlies the custom observed by some peoples of burying infants within or near the house. For example, among the Kois or Koyis of the Godovari district of Siberia if a child dies within a month of its birth it is buried near the house - other corpses are usually burned (Bendann 1930:206).

In general, then, it seems that the limited burial practices afforded to infants in some primitive cultures can be attributed to at least one of these factors: the marginal status of the very young, the fact that society is not greatly affected by such deaths, and a belief in rebirth. This failure to accord full adult burial rites to infants illustrates the theme of this section, namely that ritual reactions to death are determined by society. As anthropologists have observed, the correlation between social status and
funerary grandeur in very different cultures indicates "a cohesive social structure where individuality is subordinate to that of the wider social group" (Gittings 1984:90). Parents in such societies are, therefore, under no obligation to mourn their deceased infant.

However, the critical point is that while the demands of society can exert some influence on the emotions of its members in primitive cultures where the idea of community predominates and social structure is much more cohesive, in other, more individualistic societies, such as contemporary Britain, social dictates do not have this control over the inner feelings of its members. In such societies institutionalised mourning does not exist; bereavement is not a community event, but a personal and private loss. Death is excluded as much as possible from the world of the living, and the form of the mourning ritual is determined essentially by the grief experienced by the individual. Although, it must be recognised that cultural expectations still have a role to play in defining the form of the funeral rite: the cars, the wearing of black, the coffin, the service at the graveside or in the crematorium, the headstone or funerary urn, etc.

Modern Britain does not insist on a special, restricted funerary rite for infants: according to a survey of "cot death" in England and Wales, in 1981 all parents paid for either burial or cremation, with the majority choosing a funeral service (Golding et al. 1985:162). In Early Modern England, which had an infant mortality rate as high as that in ancient Rome and, therefore, a society where parents are supposed to have been unaffected by infant death, "the burial ceremonies for these babies were still decently observed" (Gittings 1984:82). In both cases, the funerary ritual seems to have been an expression of parental sorrow. Yet, in all communities, it cannot be assumed that individual parents did not experience intense grief at the death of an infant simply because their sorrow was not displayed publicly, or their mourning and sense of loss was not shared by society at large.

Blauner's remark, admittedly used of funerals in modern society, incorporates the essence of this idea:

when death becomes less disruptive to the society, its prospects and consequences become more serious for the individual.

Blauner 1966:389

Therefore, according to anthropologists, in primitive societies mourning behaviour is culturally prescribed and a set ritual must be performed
depending on the age and social status of the deceased; the diversity in mourning across cultures suggests that there is no constancy in human emotion. Although, it is difficult to determine from the public manifestation of sorrow the true emotions of the individual participants, the common elements in all funerary rituals would suggest that there was some universal experience of grief. In the context of infant death, the socially acceptable practice in some primitive cultures of a less detailed ritual and less careful form of burial would imply that the loss of such young children did not have an impact on society as a whole, but individual parents could have experienced intense sorrow that did not find public expression. The anthropological theory that mourning is culturally determined and not a reflection of the inner feelings of the participants might apply to primitive cultures with a strong sense of community, but does not accurately reflect more complex societies where the individual predominates and the form of the public ritual, though defined by cultural expectations, is essentially an expression of personal emotions.

The emotional experience of grief

In contrast to the emphasis placed by anthropologists on the role of culture in determining the public response to death and the variations in funerary rites across and within cultures, psychologists argue that behind this diversity of expression there is much constancy in the human experience of sorrow and that grief is biologically determined. This dichotomy has arisen essentially because anthropologists are interested in social groups, while psychologists are concerned with individuals. Historians who favour the psychological interpretation of the emotions of peoples in the past have been termed the "ethnological humanists" by Hopkins (1983:224). Advocates of this view cite the findings of recent research that grief has a biological basis and generally develops in accordance with a set pattern. Therefore, as regards the death of an infant, although funerary rites of other cultures may differ considerably from current British customs and although at the societal level the death of an infant may have prompted responses different from those at the individual level, historians who support the psychological viewpoint assume that the inner sorrow experienced by individual parents in the past is similar to that of parents in our own society who have lost a child in infancy.
According to evolutionary and ethnological theory, grief is "a stereotyped set of psychological and physiological reactions of biological origin" (Averill 1988:721), and in spite of the variation in the expression of grief across cultures, the actual grief reaction itself remains relatively unaltered\(^8\). All humans in all cultures experience grief, even though their methods of expression vary considerably.

However, studies in the field of bereavement have revealed that even within the limits determined by biological constraints, individual responses to death can differ widely. From his studies of widows and parents who have lost children, Bowlby (1980:172), one of the most prominent researchers of the psychological components of grief, surmised that individual variation in the course of grief was attributable to five factors; of these the last is the most important:

1. the identity and the role of the person lost
2. the age and the sex of the person bereaved
3. the causes and the circumstances of the loss
4. the social and psychological circumstances affecting the bereaved about the time of and after the loss
5. the personality of the bereaved, with special reference to his capacities for making loving relationships and for responding to stressful situations\(^9\)

In spite of this diversity of individual response, the similarity of certain aspects of the grief reaction has enabled a recognisable pattern to be traced. As a result, grief is now acknowledged as being "a definite syndrome with psychological and somatic symptomatology"\(^10\), and a universal human experience. Of great importance in the recognition of grief as a syndrome has been Lindemann's paper, in which five pathognomic characteristics of grief are recognised:

1. somatic or bodily distress of some type
2. preoccupation with the image of the deceased
3. guilt relating to the deceased or circumstances of the death

4. hostile reactions

5. the inability to function as before the loss

According to the thesis of G. Engel, grief is a psychological process of healing akin to the physiological healing process.

The discoveries of Lindemann and Engel have been confirmed and extended by other eminent scholars of bereavement behaviour, most notably Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1970). In spite of obvious differences between the studies of these scholars, for example in personal opinion and in category of subjects investigated, the generally accepted theory is that the development of the grief reaction typically falls into three stages:

1. a period of shock and disbelief: this comprises two phases, one of numbing, the other of yearning and searching for the lost object

2. a period of intense despair and despondency: reactions include
   a) intense mental anguish
   b) anger, guilt and self-reproach, anxiety
   c) preoccupation with thoughts of the deceased
   d) apathy, withdrawal or, more rarely, compulsive overactivity
   e) inability to concentrate on daily activities or to initiate new ones
   f) somatic complaints, such as loss of weight, anorexia, disturbance of sleep patterns

3. a period of recovery and reorganisation

Grief is, therefore, a syndrome comprising a number of psychological and physiological symptoms; and the behaviour of the bereaved follows a strikingly similar pattern. However, the extent to which these symptoms are manifested will, of course, vary from individual to individual.
As mentioned, according to psychologists, grief is fundamentally a biological phenomenon; the emotional reaction to loss, consequently, remains fairly unchanged across cultures. Although the validity of this theory is somewhat weakened by the fact that the vast majority of the relevant evidence comes from studies conducted in Europe and North America, its adherents use evidence for the occurrence of grief-like reactions in certain animal species as strong support for the notion that grief is a function of biological determinants and, therefore, "pancultural" (Averill 1988:727). According to theories of sociobiology - "the systematic study of the biological basis of all social behaviour"13 - individual organisms behave so as to maximise their inclusive fitness by propagating as many of their genes as possible into the next generation. Since individuals are concerned with the survival and reproductive success of those with whom they share their genes in common, the obvious implication is that the death of an offspring is, from a biological perspective, one of the most costly events possible. In fact, one of the most biologically significant occasions for grief is the dissolution of the mother-infant relationship.

Studies of the behavioural patterns of animals which form "individualised groups" (i.e. those species held together by personal bonds; Averill 1988:731) have shown that their grief reactions have much in common with those of humans. Many of the symptoms of human grief noted above have been observed in subhuman primates (apes and monkeys). The death of an infant typically results in an unwillingness to relinquish the deceased. Carpenter14 described two Rhesus Monkey mothers who carried their dead babies until only their skins remained. More generally, the reactions of apes and monkeys to the death of an infant or to the loss of a mate include

a) restlessness and/or apathy

b) withdrawal

c) aggression directed towards the self and others

d) loss of appetite and sexual interest

e) inability to form new relationships

90
All these responses are experienced by humans who have suffered a similar bereavement.

Infant death: modern perspectives

In the previous section an outline was given of the theories of grief as a biologically determined emotion that developed in accordance with a recognisable pattern and, in consequence, it was established that grief is a universal human response to bereavement. These theories provide an essential basis for understanding the impact on humans of the death of an infant. In such instances society tends to dismiss the extent of the loss in view of the child's very young age. As a result of this disapproval of prolonged displays of open mourning, parents who have lost an infant are compelled to suppress their sorrow in public to a greater degree than if their child had been somewhat older. This section is designed to demonstrate that an absence of public mourning is not synonymous with lack of personal grief, and that, although the bonds of attachment between parent and infant are relatively recent, the death of even the youngest child can occasion intense sorrow.

Attachment: parent-infant bonding

A proper understanding of the nature and significance of grief demands a certain familiarity at least with the concept of attachment. Only then can the impact of loss and the behaviour occasioned by loss be fully comprehended. Since the primary concern here is with responses to infant death, only parent- (or, more specifically, mother-) to-infant bonding will be the focus of attention.

Research into attachment and bonding was originally dominated by the work of John Bowlby. His findings and conclusions illustrate the tendency in human beings to make strong affectional bonds with others and the strong emotional reaction that occurs when those bonds are threatened or broken. Bowlby's thesis is that these attachments come from a need for security and safety; they develop early in life, are usually directed towards a few specific individuals, and tend to endure throughout a large part of the life-cycle.
As a result of the strong affectional bond which can develop between individuals, situations which endanger this bond will produce very specific reactions; the stronger the bond and the more threatening the circumstances, the more extreme, and indeed varied, the reaction. For example, studies have shown that animals, when separated from their mate, will exhibit behavioural patterns comparable to those observed in humans who have experienced a similar loss - withdrawal, apathy, despair; in other words, grief. The disruption of the mother-infant relationship through the death of a child is considered to be one of the most significant occasions for the display of extreme grief reactions in both animals and humans.

Loss of a child in infancy

According to Gorer (1965:106), who interviewed eighty bereaved individuals in 1963, "the most devastating and long-lasting of all griefs" is for the loss of a grown child; "in such cases it seems to be literally true . . . that the parents never get over it". Gorer speculates that there are two possible reasons for this: firstly, it is regarded as "against the order of nature" for a child to predecease his/her parents; secondly, the death of a child can destroy a parent's self-image. Gorer, however, surmised that the death of infants or young children caused less emotional trauma.

Other studies seem to confirm Gorer's findings, limited though they are. According to Bowlby (1980:163) parents are more prone to chronic mourning at the death of a child in early adolescence. Raphael (1984:247), who records the responses of parents to the deaths of children of various ages, concludes that death in the period after infancy takes on a new meaning - "the child in these years is known and related to as a real person. The family unit is established in its own particular system. There will be many shared pasts to be lost as well as hoped-for futures".

Subsequent research has, however, established that the age of the child at death is not a major factor in determining the emotional impact upon parents (Sanders 1989:163), rather, the intensity of the affectionate bond between parent and child will influence the pattern of grief (Klaus and Kennell 1982:260). In their sociobiological investigation of the grief experienced by 263 bereaved parents and their immediate families, Littlefield and Rushton (1986) predicted that older children would be grieved for more intensely than younger children: because older children have generally had more time and energy invested in them than younger
ones, their demise should represent a greater loss. Results showed that this hypothetical correlation between parental grief intensity and age of child was not of any significance.

As a result of investigations specifically concerned with infant death, the view now generally accepted is that the loss of even the youngest child can be as painful as that of an older child in the modern western world. Kohner and Henley’s study of stillborn and neonatal deaths found that

The death of a baby, whether at birth or in the weeks or months immediately afterwards, is no less of a death than any other. It is no less significant, no less important, no less heartbreaking than the death of an older child or an adult. It is certainly different, but it is not a lesser event.

The loss of a baby is the loss of a person. . . . A baby’s death is also the death of a person who would have been. It means the ending of dreams and hopes and plans, the loss of a future. Even a baby lost in the earliest stages of pregnancy may have this significance for the parents. Kohner and Henley 1991:9

Many parents find that others do not acknowledge the importance and significance of their baby’s death, and do not understand their need to grieve, but expect them quickly "to get over it". But Kohner and Henley emphatically condemn the assumption that length and intensity of grief is proportionate to age:

There is no scale of suffering which means that parents suffer more or differently depending on the point at which their baby dies. And there is no rule which says that the death of a baby who had a chance of life is more or less distressing than the death of a baby who had never lived. Kohner and Henley 1991:63

Therefore, in Kohner and Henley's view, loss and grief cannot, and should not, be categorised according to the age of the deceased. For all parents, the death of a child, no matter the age, is "untimely" (Raphael 1984:281; Sanders 1989:164). As Raphael (1984:229) explains, "a child is many things: a part of the self, and of the loved partner; a representation of the generations past; the genes of the forebears; the hope of the future; a source of love, pleasure, even narcissistic delight". Studies of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, such as that conducted by Golding et al. (1985), have also shown that the death of a very young child can have a devastating effect upon
parents.

Bowlby (1980:122-123), who interviewed the parents of infants who were stillborn or died early, found that despite the bond between parent and child being of such recent growth, the overall patterns of response were little different to those observed in widows. The dominant reactions include

1. numbing
2. somatic distress
3. yearning
4. anger
5. irritability and depression
6. preoccupation with thoughts of the deceased

Feelings of guilt - one of the strongest reactions to the death of a young child - should be added to Bowlby's list. Prominent among the grief reaction of all parents who have lost a dearly loved son or daughter is the tendency to idealise the child (Bowlby 1980:163):

The parental memories of him or her are of a perfect, beautiful, brilliant individual against whom all others pale in comparison. The child's real nature is lost. This is a way in which the parent tries to hold onto the child despite his death.

Raphael 1984:271

The intensity of parental bereavement will, however, also be affected by the factors that determine the grief reaction in general, and there will always remain considerable latitude for individual variation in response.

The differences in grief intensity are observable particularly between mothers and fathers. Studies of bereaved parents indicate that in general the anguish of mothers at the death of an infant is longer and more acute than that of fathers. For example, Cornwell et al. found that the average time of return to normal function among parents who had lost a child through "cot death" was 3.6 months for the father and 10.3 months for the mother. The results of one study reported by Sanders (1989:177) shows that the grief of mothers did not ease off until five years after the
child's death, while for fathers two years marked the period of abatement. Raphael (1984:250) notes that intense maternal grief for a neonate can last between six months and one year, but fathers go through the grieving process much more quickly.

In addition to differences in duration, the grief of mothers and fathers can also be different in nature (Sanders 1989:171-172; Littlewood, et al 1991). Fathers tend to occupy themselves with work as a means of dealing with their loss and were reluctant to talk about their dead child; many grieve in private and in silence. Mothers, by contrast, normally became inactive, depressed and preoccupied with thinking and talking about their child; they need to grieve more openly. In general, fathers cope better with and adapt more quickly to their loss than do mothers.

Since mothers are much more intensely involved with their child right from the moment of conception to birth, and then through such bonding factors as breastfeeding, their more acute sorrow is not unexpected. But differences in grief intensity can also be explained in terms of the differences in roles that society imposes upon men and women19. As Sanders observes:

Men are socialized to be strong, controlling, self-sufficient, family protectors. These factors work against the open expression of emotions, thereby inhibiting the grief response. Loss of control over the death itself strips the father of his ego and sense of self, leaving him angry, guilty, and with a strong sense of personal failure. A mother is socialized to a different role. She is expected to be the nurturer, the caregiver, the hub of the family, communicating with each one and helping them to communicate with each other. She is used to carrying the emotional burden of the family. For the most part, women have been socialized to believe that it is their place to create the family circle. When a child dies, the circle is broken. Grief freezes her into a shell, and she cannot function in the prescribed role as she once did.

Sanders 1989:171-172

The particular attachment between mother and infant partly explains the intensity of maternal grief at the death of a very young child; but this maintenance of stoic composure by fathers should not be misinterpreted as a lack of feeling. The grief reaction of mothers and fathers may be different, but fathers too can find the death of young child a painful experience, as one of Kohner and Henely's case studies demonstrates:

Fathers are just as upset as mothers when a baby dies. They
get involved, they feel the baby growing in its mother's stomach, feel it kicking. It is their child too. Yet men are supposed to be able to get on with things. We aren't supposed to sit at our desks and cry. Other men may come up and say "if you need to talk, I'm here", but they don't mean it. Men don't like listening to other men's problems.

Kohner and Henely 1991:81

Societal expectations mean that many fathers may never fully come to terms with the loss of a baby; their grief reaction is controlled by cultural pressures to a much greater extent than mothers. In contrast to the behaviour considered acceptable for fathers, society recognises that mothers will give free expression to their innate feelings.

At this point it seems prudent to respond to one obvious objection: how can the experiences of late twentieth century parents possibly mirror those of their counterparts in Republican and Imperial Rome?

In the modern, industrialised West the death of a child is a rare tragedy that befalls only a very unfortunate few. Sudden Infant Death is one of the commonest causes of death in the early months and in the first year of life. At the time of Bluglass' study in 1981 post-perinatal mortality in the UK was 6 per 1000 live births, that is over 3500 deaths per annum in England and Wales; of these, more than half (2000) are "cot deaths". These figures are hardly comparable with the rate of infant mortality hypothesised by demographic historians for the Roman period: c.250-300 per 1000 live births in the first year of life. The question of whether the Romans could have experienced genuine grief when their children died in infancy is discussed at length in the following chapters. For the present, the predicted conclusion, on the basis of the attachment theory and the biological theory of grief, as outlined above, is that the emotional experiences of the Romans could not have been greatly different from those of their twentieth century counterparts, even though their cultural expression of grief and demographic patterns were very different. In ancient Rome, as in premodern Europe and late twentieth century Britain, some infants will be mourned more, or less, intensely than others. In addition, the similarity between the comments of late twentieth century parents and those of parents in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries, for which the infant mortality rate has also been estimated at approximately 25% in the first year of life (Shorter 1976:203) further support the notion that the national rate of infant mortality has no significant effect upon the
responses of individuals to the death of a young child\textsuperscript{22}. In complex societies, such as ancient Rome, even though infant deaths might be marked by a simple funerary ritual at the societal level, the value of the child and the depth of attachment will determine the extent to which parents grieve for the loss of an infant son or daughter.

Conclusion

The central argument of this section has been that in spite of the varieties in bereavement behaviour ("mourning") both across and within cultures, individual human response ("grief") remains relatively unchanged. Anthropologists have argued that rituals create sentiment; or, at least, funerary rites and emotion are so subtly intertwined that it is practically impossible to discover the genuine feelings behind the public display. Yet, the ethnological and evolutionary theory that grief is of biological origin allows the researcher at least to attempt to probe and analyse the emotions of bereaved individuals, and to argue in favour of considerable continuity of sentiment over time and culture.

In the context of infant death, the perfunctory burial rites and absence of overt displays of grief to be found in numerous cultures would suggest that the loss of a young child was not an occasion for sorrow. However, within the bounds of culturally prescribed rituals there is considerable latitude for expression of the inner emotions of the individual. The biological basis of attachment and grief implies that for individual parents the death of an infant can be an occasion for intense sorrow, even though this personal anguish might not be mirrored in public expression. The extent to which the private, emotional experience of grief is reflected in public will be greater in those societies where the sense of community does not override the idea of individuality. In such societies, however, a simple funerary rite for infants should not be assumed to be an exact mirror of the actual feelings of the bereaved parents.
CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

1. See Stearns and Stearns (1985) on emotions, emotional standards and their place in history. Their article provides the historian with critical background information on the interpretation of the emotions of past societies and their members.


3. For these and other examples of different adult/child burial rituals, see Frazer (1913:162ff); Bloch and Parry (1982:64); Hertz (1960:84;151); Ucko (1969:270-271); Bendann(1930:204-206). Greek practices are discussed in Chapters 6 & 7 on Roman funerary rituals.

4. See previous quote from Hertz. Blauner (1966:380-381) adds that high infant mortality also accounts for this lack of ritual recognition of the very young. Humphreys and King (1980:3) discuss, and dismiss, the popular notion that the high infant mortality rate that characterised "predemographic transition" societies affected parents' emotional response to the death of very young children.

5. The question of whether infant burial within the family home was practised in ancient Rome will be discussed in Chapter 6.

6. In several primitive cultures children are not fully regarded as human beings, and consequently, members of society, until they have reached a certain age. Scrimshaw (1984:441) gives various examples, including Andean Indian groups, where a child may not be acknowledged as a permanent family member until he or she has survived the first year.

7. Bloch and Parry (1982:45): among the Bolivian Laymat, in general, there is no mourning beyond family when a child dies.

8. Bowlby (1980:126) states:

   The emotional responses of the bereaved among other peoples resemble, in broad outline, and often in great detail, those familiar to us in the West. Social custom differs enormously. Human response stays the same.

9. Averill (1988:721) includes other factors, such as "the availability of a substitute object as a replacement for the loss".


16. Sluckin et al. (1983). The authors do, however, acknowledge that "the tendency to form attachments must be rooted in the physical make-up of the individual, inhering perhaps mainly in her/his nervous system" (p.173); and so, maternal care is in part genetically influenced.

17. A similar distinction between mothers and fathers emerges from an examination of responses to the death of a child in ancient literature (see Chapter 8, p.184ff) and Early Modern diaries (see Appendix I).
19. For a biological explanation of the differences in maternal and paternal grief intensity, see Littlefield and Rushton (1986:798).
20. Shorter (1976:34) comments "In the modern world infant death is a rare phenomenon... The loss of a child is an almost unheard of catastrophe, and one that usually happens to somebody else whom we know only distantly".
21. Demographic impressions of the infant mortality rate in ancient Rome are discussed in greater detail in the Chapter 5.
22. For a selection of the reactions recorded by parents in the Early Modern period to infant death, see *Appendix 1*. 
CHAPTER FIVE

DEMOGRAPHY: THE RATE OF INFANT MORTALITY AT ROME

As a preliminary to the discussion of the extent to which loss of a child in infancy affected Roman parents, it should be explained why some historians have assumed\(^1\) that the Romans, at both the cultural and individual level, displayed at most a limited reaction to infant death. Here it will be established that Rome can be classed as a "high infant mortality society". In Part A it was observed that this high proportion of infant deaths was not principally due to factors within the control of parents (infanticide, exposure, wet-nurses, failure to tend in illness); therefore, several other causes will be offered in explanation of the frequency of infant mortality.

*The Demographic Argument*

According to Frier (1982:213), three classes of data are required for a reliable demographic assessment of any population: statistics on mortality, fertility and migration. Antiquity cannot provide systematic birth and death registrations nor accurate census figures; such essential information is virtually absent (Parkin 1992). The demographic data which does exist is so insubstantial and controversial that any calculations of the rate of infant mortality are based largely upon the educated guesswork of scholars.

In the Roman period deaths could be officially recorded in registers kept in the Temple of Libitina, the goddess of funerals (Horace, *Sat.* 2.6.18-19), although this was not a legal requirement, and since registration required a fee, the record will have been far from complete (Parkin 1992:38). Only in exceptional circumstances, it seems, were the Romans interested in the recording of deaths, since the only extant mortality figures are those to be found in literary accounts of plagues (Suetonius, *Nero* 39; Dio 73.14). These numbers given by ancient historians are, however, exaggerations (Hopkins 1983:209, n.9), and say nothing about the rate of mortality in ordinary circumstances.

Notwithstanding the lack of direct evidence, students of ancient
demography have attempted to reconstruct mortality rates by using a wide variety of sources: tombstone inscriptions; Egyptian census documents; the Ulpiianic Life Table (Dig. 35.2.68 pr.), based upon figures for the 5% inheritance tax; skeletal remains. Parkin (1992:chap. one) considers each of these forms of evidence and outlines the difficulties that they entail as a source of statistical information.

These sources are especially problematical as evidence for infant mortality. The inherent biases of the epigraphic material are discussed in Chapter Nine; here it is sufficient to say that infants are seriously underrepresented in tombstone inscriptions. The other material examined by Parkin is equally unhelpful: the Egyptian census figures frequently take no account of the very young; besides, they record age at time of census, not at death. The Ulpiianic Life Table makes no allowance for mortality of children up to five years. The skeletal evidence is similarly biased against infants: infant corpses, being more fragile than those of older age groups, are more liable to decay through soil erosion; in addition, the different forms of burial for infants also distort the skeletal record.

Although no accurate statistics exist, the general consensus is that the Romans would have been fully aware of the common occurrence of death in the infant years (Finley 1981:158). Parkin (1992:180, n.12) agrees with Brunt (1971:564) that the Augustan legislation on procreation made allowance for the high rate of infant mortality: in accordance with the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* and *lex Iulia de maritandi ordinationibus* of 18 BC, and the *lex Papia Poppaea* of AD 9, testamentary freedom was granted to husbands and wives if one girl lived for 12 years or one boy for 14 years; if two children died before 3 years; or if three infants died before the day of naming. Individual authors demonstrate their awareness of the recurrence of death. Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* 7.588a8, observes that most infant deaths occur within the first week of life; Celsus, *de Medic.* 2.1.20, highlights the fortieth day as a particularly risky period in childhood. Seneca, familiar with infant death in particular, claims:

Because we do not imagine any evil befalling us before it happens, but believing that we ourselves are exempt and are journeying along a more tranquil route than the others, we are not warned by the misfortunes of others that such reverses are universal. So many funerals are conducted past our homes: but we do not think of death; so many deaths are untimely: but we intend for our infants to don the toga, take up military service, and succeed to their father's property!

Seneca, *Cons. ad Marc.* 9.1-2
As both this passage and the one quoted below from Seneca reveal, no one reflects upon the inevitability of personal disaster:

Who has ever looked upon his possessions as if he were about to die? Who among us has ever dared to think about exile, about indigence, about lamentation? Who, if he were urged to think of such things, would not spurn this advice as a fearful omen, and bid that it pass over on to the heads of his enemies or of his inopportune advisor himself?

Seneca, Cons ad Marc. 9.3-4

Therefore, while the Romans might have been aware of the general frequency of infant mortality, as parents they were not constantly thinking of the possibility of their child's death.

Perception hardly compensates for the absence of raw data, but some generalisations can be made about the demographic pattern of infant mortality. Rome, by nature of its underdevelopment in areas such as nutrition, medical standards and public health, can legitimately be placed in the class of "predemographic transition" societies and would, therefore, have been subject to the high mortality rates that dominated all preindustrial populations in Western Europe. The term "demographic transition" is applied to the profound change in the world's population structure which originated in economically advanced areas of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. In premodern Europe a pattern of high mortality and high fertility was the norm; whereas the current demographic trend is one of mortality decline and low fertility together with population growth. Such an alteration in the population structure is usually attributed to the achievements of "industrialisation": advances in medical techniques and standards; public and private health developments; improved nutrition due to expansion of agricultural production; increased manufacturing output.

Therefore, although a low rate of fertility seems to have been characteristic among the aristocracy in the late Republic (Hopkins 1983:69ff), the incidence of death at Rome, among all age groups and not only among infants, would have been on a scale comparable to that of all premodern societies.

In order to form more detailed speculations about Rome's demographic statistics, historians have turned principally to model life tables. Parkin (1992:79ff) regards the mortality trends and age structures of the Coale-
Demeny tables - the most popular life tables among historians of ancient demography - as "broadly applicable" to Rome, and uses them to hypothesise an infant mortality rate in the early Imperial period of c.300 deaths in the first year of life per 1,000 live births; a figure which he claims is to "be expected from comparative preindustrial history."^4.

Similarly high estimations of infant mortality have been given in other demographic studies. Hopkins (1966:263; 1983:72) suggests a rate of at least 200 deaths per 1,000 live births, which he regards as "generally true of preindustrial populations". Frier (1982:247-249) says that a third of all newborns died within the first year (247), and derives an infant mortality rate of 466.9 per 1,000 from the adult rates produced by his examination of the Ulpianic Life Table. Golden (1985:155; 1990:83) speculates that possibly between 30 and 40% of newborns died in their first year of life. The estimated figures for child mortality are equally high: approximately 50% of all children born live would have died before their tenth birthday (Garnsey 1991:52; Parkin 1992:92); Frier (1982:247) believes that only 50% of all children born live would have reached their fifth birthday.

Such figures are not accurate calculations of the infant mortality rate at Rome, but plausible hypotheses based upon model life tables. Moreover, an infant mortality rate of c.250 per 1,000 live births in the first year of life reflects long-term pattern only; such estimations take no account of short-term fluctuations produced in exceptional circumstances, such as plague, war or famine; nor indeed do they allow for mortality decline in periods of growth. In addition to temporal fluctuations in the infant mortality rate, spatial, class and gender variations are also ignored in using model life tables. Similarly, the rate of mortality is not consistent throughout infant (0-1) and early childhood years (1-4). Even in our own society where the infant mortality rate is steadily decreasing, the majority of infant deaths occur within the first week and month of life, and most of these within the first 48 hours (Myles 1965:67; Parkin 1992:94)^5. In Roman times there must have been an immense number of deaths in this period^6. However, as Hopkins (1987:115) points out, "oscillations by themselves do not defeat generalisation"; therefore, it should be accepted that the infant mortality rate was very high in late Republican and Imperial Rome^7.

The sources do not allow a more precise calculation, but from individual cases noted in the literature it is possible to surmise that infant death was
very common at Rome: Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, bore twelve children between 163 BC and 152 BC, but only three reached adulthood (Pliny, *NH* 7.13.57; Plutarch, *Tib. Gr.* 1.2; Seneca, *Cons. ad Marc.* 16.3; *Cons. ad Helv.* 16.6)\(^8\). Three of Agrippina's and Germanicus' nine children died very young (*Suetonius, Gaius* 7; Pliny, *NH* 7.13.57). Marcus Aurelius and Faustina lost thirteen of their children - at least five at less than 3 years - with only one son, Commodus, surviving to adulthood. Marcus' tutor, Fronto, lost five of his six children in infancy; only one daughter lived (Haines, *Loeb* vol. 2, p.222). Plutarch lost three of his four sons and his daughter in infancy (*Cons. ad ux.* 608.2; 609.9).

Etienne (1976:153) has calculated that out of 94 Julio-Claudians there were 12 early deaths (159, n.203); out of 35 Flavians there were 8 deaths in infancy (160, n.205). Etienne adds that such data are not wholly useful, since even in the Imperial family many infant deaths went unrecorded: *Suetonius* (*Claud.* 1) says that Drusus and Antonia had "several" children, of whom 3 survived (Germanicus, Livilla, Claudius).

If these specific cases cannot be taken as representative of demographic reality, they do show that even among the most elite groups and, moreover, in a single family, the death of an infant was not an isolated incident. A similar or, in all likelihood, an even more marked, pattern of infant mortality should be expected at lower social levels. Single tombstones on which several children are named indicate this high death rate\(^9\). In the first example, the parents commemorate 3 children, all daughters who died very young; in the second, a father honours his 6 sons, 4 of whom died under 3 years. Both inscriptions are dedicated to slave children:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
D\quad M \\
MANSUETAE FILIAE DULCIS \\
SIMAE QUAE VIX ANN IIII DIEB XVI \\
ET SEDATAE FIL DULC V A I M VIII \\
ET MANSUETINAE FIL AMABILISS \\
V A I M IIII D VIII \\
MANSUETUS ET MARCIA \\
PARTHENIS PARENTES \\
FECERUNT ET SIBI \\
SUISQUE ET \\
SEDATO FRATRI INFELICISSIMO \\
V A XXIX M IIII \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^{GIL6}\ 22013\)
However, since the dedicators of these epitaphs could at least afford the minimum cost of 100 sesterces for a stone memorial (the equivalent of three months non-specialised labour; Salmon 1987:102), they were not the poorest members of society; among the most impoverished, without the financial means to purchase an inscribed tombstone and a lower standard of living, the infant death toll could have been even more severe.

Causes of Infant Mortality

In order to provide further background information for the question of whether mourning and grief, if practised at all, were less intense for infants than for older children, an outline will be given of the factors which may have contributed to such a high rate of infant mortality. The intention is to demonstrate that the majority of infant deaths were caused, not by deliberate neglect or cruelty on the part of parents, but by a variety of what can be termed environmental factors. This conclusion would suggest that such deaths had been lamented to some extent by the parents.

Several possible causes of infant death have been reviewed in previous chapters - inadequate medical knowledge and child-care practices - and will not be included here. For similar reasons, choice-related determinants of mortality - exposure, infanticide, underinvestment (unconscious or deliberate) - have been omitted. The discussion will be based upon the influence of environmental factors on infant death, and will deal with hygiene; sanitation; socioeconomic conditions, such as living conditions and nutrition standards; and the concomitant infectious diseases. The effect of more exceptional phenomena, such as plague and famine, are not considered in detail here, since the main concern is with the general scale of infant mortality; in the long term, however, famine can cause poor nutritional standards.
The ancient sources, even medical texts, do not evaluate causes of mortality; for the majority of ancient Romans, the causes of infant mortality seem to have been inexplicable. In funerary inscriptions, parents often blame Fortune, Fate or “some malignant force” for the death of their young child (Chapter 9, p.229). At the popular level, death of an infant is also attributed to the child-stealing witch or sorceress who sacrifices newborns to use their vital organs and bones in spells. Trimalchio tells a story of witches stealing a baby boy and leaving a straw changling in his place (Petronius, Satyr. 63.8). Even in the epistolatory consolationes, the educated upper classes repeatedly reproach Fortune and “cruel Fate” (Seneca, Helv. 152-3; Marc. 1.1; Polyb. 2.2-7; 3.3-5; Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 610(8)); factors such as hygiene, nutritional standards, or medical treatment are not considered. Martial provides a graphic description of the gruesome facial decay that caused seven year old Canace’s death (Epigr. 11.91), but this inclusion of cause of death is unusual.

In view of this defect in the ancient evidence, the format of this section has been determined largely by studies of high infant mortality societies in modern Third World populations. According to Jain (1985:407), the factors determining infant mortality operate at three levels: community, household and individual. Factors at the individual-level have the greatest effect upon the death of a child; then those at the household-level and, finally, community-level factors. However, between all three there is much interaction: the use of communal amenities and the extent of personal hygiene in the home depends very much on the socioeconomic position of the individual.

At the community-level in ancient Rome, the rate of infant mortality would have depended essentially upon the physical environment; that is the measures for sanitation and water-supply. As modern research has demonstrated, the major determinants of infant death in Third World countries are water-borne intestinal diseases - typhoid, cholera, dysentery, gastroenteritis, and especially diarrhoea - caused by the contamination of the water-supply from ineffective waste-disposal (Jones 1990:53). Poor sewerage and inadequate, polluted water supplies have also been cited as the principal causes of diarrhoeal diseases, and so of death, in Europe of the Early Modern period (Stone 1977:77-79; Johansson 1987:355).

However, Rome, in the Imperial period at least, was highly advanced in
matters of public hygiene in comparison with much of the Third World and Early Modern Europe. According to several ancient authors\(^ {12} \), Rome had an impressive sewer system for the disposal of waste, the principal achievement of which was the Cloaca Maxima. However, Strabo's comment that the sewers emptied into the Tiber (5.8) raises some doubts about the level of this efficiency; moreover, it seems that sewers were often used as drains for rain and excess water rather than the removal of filth (Frontinus, *de Aquis* 2.111).

However, the sewers seem to have been cleaned on a regular basis, even from the earliest times (Livy 39.44.5). As part of Agrippa's building programme in the Augustan era, the efficiency and hygiene of the sewers was improved by diverting the overflow of the aqueducts into them through seven channels (Pliny, *NH* 36.24.104)\(^ {13} \).

Few homes were connected to sewers and street drains (p.112); but Rome had a variety of conveniences for public use. The *foricae* consisted of a row of seats, underneath which a shallow gutter was connected to *cloacae* for the removal of waste. By the fourth century AD, Rome had some 144 of these public lavatories linked by drains to sewers (Ward-Perkins 1974:34; 1984:121). As with sewers, public latrines were maintained to a high standard; by Juvenal's time, contractors were responsible for their running and upkeep (Sat. 3.38). However, since the contractors of public latrines charged an entrance fee (Carcopino 1941:53-54), the very poor would have to use the fullers' terracotta jars in the street (Martial, *Epigr.* 6.93.1).

The standard of public water supply - the medium by which intestinal diseases are transmitted - is the other major determinant of infant mortality. As with the sewage/drainage system, Rome's methods of supplying her population with water can be regarded as a great achievement of technology, an observation made by the ancients themselves (Elder Pliny, *NH* 36.24.123; Frontinus, *de Aquis* 2.88-89). In the Augustan era the system of aqueducts was revolutionised. During his aedileship of 33 BC Agrippa initiated a scheme for the construction of 700 public basins, 500 fountains, 130 distribution points, 3 aqueducts and the repair of the 4 older ones (Potter 1987:143). By the time of Frontinus, who held the office of water commissioner under Nerva in AD 97, Rome received water from 9 (later increased to 11) aqueducts, conducted along a system of underground channels to 247 reservoirs within the city (*de Aq.* 1.14; 2.65-
78). Under Trajan, a system was established whereby the rivers that supplied Rome were to be used for one particular purpose only (de Aq. 2.92). This scheme would ensure that the capital received only the purest drinking water.

As will be shown, few citizens enjoyed the luxury of having water piped directly into their homes; only the atrium-style houses would regularly have been equipped with internal water cisterns (Strabo 5.3.8). However, numerous fountains and water-basins supplied the Romans with their daily requirements. According to Frontinus, Rome had 39 ornamental fountains and 591 public basins in AD 97 (de Aq. 78); and by the fourth century AD there were 1,352 water points (Ward-Perkins 1974:34).

Rome might have had an elaborate network of sewers and drains, but it seems that the streets were still littered with human waste and other filth. The popularity of fillers' pots as latrines would have meant that certain parts of the city were "rank with the smell of stale urine" (Jackson 1988:52). Martial (Epigr. 6.93.2) describes the pungent odour that emitted when such pots were smashed in the street. Domestic waste also contributed to the filth and smell. Many inhabitants of apartment blocks emptied the contents of their matellae into the street (Juvenal, Sat. 3.269-272), or on some nearby dung heap or cess trench (Livy 39.44.5). The institution of various legal measures illustrates that the fouling of streets with waste had become such a problem as to demand State intervention.

The problem of filth thrown across public ways would have been exacerbated by the narrow, winding streets that characterised much of Rome, even after the realignment planned by Nero. Rome had been built haphazardly, with dwellings constructed at random in the available space (Livy 5.55; Tacitus, Ann. 15.38), and not along a well-ordered plan of straight roads. The majority of the streets were not of the via type; many were no more than passageways and few were paved. Both Juvenal (Sat. 3.246) and Martial (Epig. 7.61; 10.10.8) complain of crowded, muddy streets.

Therefore, in spite of the remarkable technology of Rome's systems for waste disposal and water supply, and the State effort to ensure that their efficiency, in certain respects both were potential risks to health: open-water outlets could be polluted by sewage overflow and the filth that lay in the streets (Scobie 1986:423); sewers emptied into the Tiber, thereby contaminating the river and posing a health risk to the neighbouring
districts when the water level rose.

However, not all Rome's public amenities should be condemned as insanitary. The standard of hygiene maintained in public baths shows that Rome cannot legitimately be described as a slum city as defined by Scobie (1986). By the time of Agrippa's aedileship in 33 BC, there were 170 baths in Rome, and in the fourth century AD this figure had risen to 856 (Nash 1944:34; Ward-Perkins 1974:134). Clearly, considerable importance was attached to public hygiene by the State. The baths were not only used as washing facilities; physicians also recommended them as integral to the treatment of various ailments. Celsus prescribes a visit to the baths for headaches caused by malarial infections (de Medic. 4.2.8); cholera (4.18.1); dysentery (4.23.3).

At the household level too, physical environment acts as an influential factor in the rate of infant mortality. The term "physical environment" incorporates the condition of the house - the material used in construction and the number of rooms; toilet facilities; supply and quality of drinking water; source of fuel and lighting. The physical environment of the household is determined essentially by the socioeconomic status of the individual; in modern high mortality communities, the extent of the individual's education in health matters also has an important role to play.

In the late Republican and early Imperial period Rome seems to have been "heavily overpopulated" (Yavetz 1958:500), which ancient authors themselves were aware of (Vitruvius, de Arch. 2.8.17). According to estimations, the population of Rome in this period was 750,000-1 million inhabitants (Brunt 1966:9; 1971:383; Parkin 1992:5). In such a densely-populated and cosmopolitan city the range of living conditions would have been enormous: from the opulent domus homes of the wealthy to the small, sometimes single, rooms on the upper floors of blocks of flats inhabited by the poor.

For the majority of the population, home would be in an apartment-type dwelling (insula). Frier (1980:5) estimates that between 90-95% of Rome's inhabitants lived in insulae. According to the Constantinian Regionary Catalogue (the Curiosum Urbis Romae Regionum XIV and Notitia), by the
mid fourth century Rome's 14 districts had 46,602 insulae and 1,797 domus (Nash 1944:23), a ratio of 26:1 (Carcopino 1941:34).

These blocks of flats housed not only the more destitute members of society: the rich rented out series of rooms (cenacula) on the lower floors (Frier 1980:6; 39-47); the poor were, however, crammed together into cellae up above. These upper floor dwellings were created by partitioning the surface area into a number of one or two room apartments. Frier (1980:6; 15) has shown that the ground floor flats were 150-300 square metres, while the average size for an upper floor apartment was c.10 square metres. Such living conditions, with approximately five persons per family (Parkin 1992:106), were forced upon the masses not only by population pressure, but also by the high rents charged by unscrupulous landlords. According to Yavetz (1958:515), unskilled artisans could barely meet the payment for house-rent; references in the literary sources to difficulties in collecting rent in insulae confirm the frequency of this problem (Cicero, ad Att. 15.17.1; 15.20.4).

The majority of insulae dwellers also seem to have lived in constant fear of fire and structural collapse on account of "poor building materials, inadequate preparation of foundations, and inexpert or careless workmanship" (Scobie 1986:404). No aspect of living conditions in Rome is commented upon more often in the literature; the numerous references culled from a variety of sources attest to the reality of frequent outbreaks of fire and collapse. In the Augustan age a number of reforms were instituted in an attempt to curtail the recurrence of fires within the city: a fire-brigade of 7000 vigiles was established (Dio 53.24; 55.26; Velleius Paterculus 2.91.2; Suetonius, Aug. 25). In order to prevent collapse, the speculations of contractors were legally controlled (Dig. 19.2.60.4), and height restrictions of 70 feet (20.65m) were imposed on buildings (Strabo 5.3.7; Suetonius, Aug. 89).

But in spite of these provisions, conflagrations continued with alarming frequency: Dio notes outbreaks of fire in 23, 14, 9 and 7 BC (53.33; 54.24, 29; 55.1, 8). Tacitus' account of the great fire in AD 64 demonstrates that even with the presence of a large, permanent fire-brigade, a city that was still characterised by "narrow, winding paths and irregular streets" could still be extensively damaged (Annals 15.38; 40-41). The collapse of houses observed by the Elder Seneca shows that the Augustan restriction on
the height of buildings had been disregarded (Controv. 2.1.11). Similar complaints about conflagration, collapse and unscrupulous contractors are to be found in the Younger Seneca (de Ira 3.35.5; de Ben. 4.6.2; de Ben. 6.15.7).

After the fire of AD 64 Nero ordered the reconstruction of the city and enforced new building standards. The districts which had been destroyed were rebuilt in regular streets, with broad avenues and open spaces; buildings were to be of a restricted height. The supply of water was also increased for public use by the creation of more distribution points. As a further protection, colonnades were built onto the front of insulae; these porches (porticus), erected by Nero at his own expense, would act as a platform from which fires could be fought and would keep burning timber from roofs out of the streets (Tacitus, Ann. 15.43; Suetonius, Nero 16.1).

Yet, in spite of Nero's extensive rebuilding and preventive measures, Juvenal and Martial continued to make the same criticisms about housing conditions in Rome, and tenants' demands for adequate repairs still went unheeded, as in the late Republic (Cicero, ad Att. 14.9.1; Catullus 23.9). Allowance must be made for obligatory satiric exaggeration, but other authors verify the complaints of Juvenal and Martial. The Elder Pliny refers to the collapse and conflagration of buildings (NH 36.24.106); Trajan had to introduce new height restrictions on buildings: the maximum height was fixed at 60 feet (17.70m; Aurelius Victor, Epitome de Caesaribus 13.13). Similarly, the outbreak of fires continued to be a common occurrence: in mid second century AD Aulus Gellius observes from the Cispian Hill the destruction of a high tenement block and the spread of the fire to neighbouring buildings (NA 15.1.2); and, according to the biographer, in the reign of Antoninus Pius 340 tenements and dwellings were consumed in a fire (SHA, Ant. Pius 9). These fires and collapses occurred in spite of the construction developments in the second century: insulae were increasingly built from concrete, with solid barrel vaults and covered in brick (Boethius 1960:154; Meiggs 1960:250; Packer 1971:74).

Within the home itself, a healthy living environment demands the provision of a number of basic facilities, principally the presence of an efficient waste disposal system. According to Scobie (1986:415), there is virtually no evidence for the existence of private latrines at Rome; but this is a reflection of the poor archaeological evidence for housing in Rome, and it cannot be assumed that Roman houses were not equipped with toilet
facilities. The evidence from Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia (Packer 1971:10-12;52;56) indicates that at the back of many of the large ground floor flats and mezzanine dwellings were latrines and drains connected to the common sewer. However, the majority of houses in these towns were not linked to public sewers or drains, but were dependent upon cesspit latrines. Many of these pits were designed to contain large amphorae or dolia (Scobie 1986:414), which would be emptied regularly by stercorarii (Dig. 32.7.12.10). Not infrequently, these "latrines" were situated in or close to kitchens (McKay 1975:50;60; Scobie 1986:409); the risk of food and water contamination must have been high. In such an insanitary environment the pathogens of the killer diseases - cholera, typhoid, dysentery, gastroenteritis - would have thrived; their main victims would be infants who were being weaned onto solid food, since at the age of c.3-6 months, babies do not have the immunity to resist exposure to otherwise "safe" levels of pathogens.

For Rome itself, because of the deficient archaeological material, the literary sources must suffice as evidence for domestic latrines. While the rich are more likely to have had latrines connected to public sewers (Dig. 43.23.1.9), or at least linked by a drain to cess trenches beneath the house (Carcopino 1941:52), the most common form of latrine was the portable vessel. Numerous authors, from Lucretius (de Re. Nat. 4.1025) to Martial (Epigr. 1.37.1; 12.33.11) mention matellae and lasana. Not only the very poor used such pots: Trimalchio permits his guests to relieve themselves in the dining room (Petronius, Satyr. 47.5), and at the baths he himself uses a silver chamberpot (Satyr. 27.3, 5). Inhabitants of insulae, as noted earlier, emptied the contents of their matellae onto dung-heaps or simply onto the street below. In some cases, a vat or dolium was placed under the staircase, into which tenants could empty their pots (CIL6 29791). Whatever the form of vessel, all these pots would have been hygienically unsound.

As for water-supply, the domus houses would have had their own internal cisterns, with water piped in directly from covered distribution tanks (Hermanssen 1981:28). Of the insulae inhabitants, only ground floor flats were likely to have a private supply. A number of insulae at Ostia had cisterns in the central court or fountains in the surrounding gardens (Meiggs 1960:240; Frier 1980:18) to be shared by those on the upper floors; but the public fountains and open water basins would have been the primary water-source, as the literary sources suggest. Martial (Epigr. 8.67.7-8; 9.18.5-6) has no water in his town house, even though it is near an
aqueduct. Ucalegon’s apartment is on fire and, even though it is on the ground floor, he has to shout for water to be brought (Juvenal, Sat. 3.198).

In spite of the continuous supply and the large number of distribution points, public water areas would have been exposed to many sources of pollution: not only from the filth that littered the streets and the dogs that seem to have roamed freely around (Dig. 9.1.2.1; Martial, Epigr. 3.82.18; 10.5.11ff; Suetonius, Vesp. 5.4)26, but also from unclean containers used by residents themselves and by servile aquarii who fetched and carried water to the houses of the wealthy (Dig. 33.7.12.42; Petronius, Satyr. 70; Juvenal, Sat. 6.332).

However, the Romans appear to have placed great emphasis upon personal cleanliness (Burn 1953:18), even if many of them did live in crowded, insanitary conditions. The remains of a large number of public and private baths and the innumerable references in the literary sources to bathing, exemplify this concern for personal hygiene (Seneca, Ep. Mor. 86.9-11; Pliny, NH 28.55). The very low entrance fee of 1/4 as (Martial, Epigr. 3.30.4) would mean that the baths were accessible to the great majority of the population; children were admitted free of charge (Juvenal, Sat. 6.152; Jackson 1988:48). A number of wealthy individuals could afford the luxury of a bathing suite within their own homes, such as Trimalchio (Petronius, Satyr. 73) and the owners of the House of Menander at Pompeii.

Sound living conditions at the household level require an adequate source of lighting and fuel (including heating and cooking facilities). Again, it is the grand domus and lower floor apartments of the wealthy that would have been well-lit and well-ventilated. Frier (1980:5-6) mentions the large façade windows that illuminated the cenacula of Ostia, and Packer (1971:25-26) notes that, apart from mezzanine windows, the windows of Ostian dwellings were "generously proportioned". Windows tended to be grouped in two’s or three's, so that light and air was freely accessible; but from those Ostian dwellings where the upper storey is still intact, such as the Insula di Bacco fanciullo and Caseggiato de Temistocle (Packer 1971:9-10), upper floor dwellings seem to have been inadequately lit. In such cases the primary source of light and air was commonly a small court at one end; the rooms at the opposite end would have been fairly dark. Frier (1980:15) says of the Casa di Via Giulio Romano, the only extant Roman insula with upper storey remains, that on the second floor most of the "tiny, squalid rooms" (c.10m sq)27 were not directly lit.
A similar divide between rich and poor emerges in the provision of cooking and heating facilities. Several luxurious ground floor apartments of Ostia are equipped with kitchens (Packer 1971:10-12; Hermansen 1981:43): Casa degli Aurighi possessed a masonry stove. Excavation, however, has shown that the great majority of Ostian insulae, including the opulent ground floor apartments, did not have a specific cooking area (Packer 1971:72); in Pompeii, by contrast, almost every house had a kitchen (Scobie 1986:409). At Ostia, in most cases, any cooking within the home would have been done over braziers or small hearths (McKay 1975:94). These braziers also provided heat, since no Ostian insulae were equipped with any form of heating system. Archaeological evidence for such facilities in houses at Rome does not exist; but a comparable pattern should be expected. Martial clearly had both a kitchen and a hearth in his apartment (Epigr. 8.67.7-8); but a beggar's family has to make do with a "green brazier" (12.32.11-14).

In the poorly-ventilated apartments above ground level open braziers, and the absence of chimneys in those apartments which did possess a separate kitchen or cooking area, were a potential fire-hazard. In addition, the smoke- and fume-filled atmosphere would have caused and spread respiratory infections such as bronchitis, pneumonia and tuberculosis: the infective micro-organisms of these diseases are passed by coughing and spitting (Jones 1990:44), especially in cold and damp conditions28.

On the upper floors of insulae, it was noted that the inhabitants would live in apartments of one or two rooms29. The sharing of rooms by families in an environment of dubious sanitary conditions would have added to the virulence of disease. In his study of the social structure of the upper class Roman house, Wallace-Hadrill (1988:52) notes that children did not have their own separate area; the very young must, therefore, have slept with nurses and slaves (Tacitus, Dial. 29; Soranus, Gyn. 2.37). The occurrence of "overlaying" as a cause of infant death seems to have been particularly widespread in Early Modern Europe (Fildes 1988:98-100). In the little cellae of the upper storeys the lack of proper ventilation, lighting, water supply and provisions for waste disposal would have combined with the small area of actual living space to create an unhealthy environment, effectively a breeding ground for a variety of infectious diseases.

The effect of community and household level factors on the rate of infant

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mortality in any population is determined largely by factors at the individual level: the provision of sanitation, water, lighting and heating/cooking facilities at the household level is determined by the socioeconomic position of the individual. Similarly, the use of amenities provided at the community-level, such as baths, medical services, water supply, will vary from household to household, depending on the degree to which the individual is aware of basic hygiene requirements.

As regards infant welfare, Jain (1985:409) divides individual-level factors into medical and non-medical care: since the medical treatment given to infants in Rome has been discussed, only non-medical care will be dealt with here. In this category can be included feeding practices and general cleanliness. Feeding practices will incorporate only nutritional standards, since the use of wet-nurses has already been considered.

As noted, the proliferation of public baths reveals that the Romans were concerned with personal hygiene. Infants could be bathed at home in a tub; literary and archaeological evidence demonstrates this concern for the general cleanliness of young children. On biographical sarcophagi, on which various episodes from the life of the deceased are depicted, scenes of the infant’s bath are a common motif. Such scenes owe much to artistic convention, especially to images of the infancy of Dionysus or Alexander the Great in Greek art, but they are also designed to represent activities from real life. Soranus provides precise instructions on the bathing regime of newborns: the bathing-water of the newborn must be gradually altered from warm to tepid and then to cold, so that the child does not become easily chilled (Gyn. 2.10). Plutarch (Cato mai. 20.3) notes that, public duty permitting, Cato would always help his wife, Licinia, bathe their son. From this evidence, it seems that Romans did regularly wash their young children. However, from Soranus' reference to nurses who allow babies' swaddling clothes to go unchanged, as a result of which ulceration develops (Gyn. 2.12), it is clear that hygienic infant care might not have been a universal preoccupation.

Investigation into the mortality patterns of Third World countries has revealed that one of the main reasons for the shortfall in life expectancy is the persistence of poor nutrition, particularly in the infant and early childhood years (Findlay and Findlay 1987:16). In such high mortality societies, breast-milk provides vital immunological protection against viruses and bacteria (Bond et al. 1981:428, 483); but in Third World countries
malnutrition is common at all age levels, and so many mothers are unable to provide an adequate supply of milk. Recourse to substitutes is unavoidable, but the failure to breastfeed can be particularly detrimental to infant health\textsuperscript{31}, as Pelto (Bond et al. 1981:192-3) outlines, when "bottles or their contents are contaminated with pathogens" or "the baby receives inadequate nutrients because the breast-milk substitute is diluted or contains few nutrients"\textsuperscript{32}.

At the age of c.3-6 months immunity from breastmilk gradually decreases and an infant's energy requirements will begin to exceed those that can be provided by an exclusively liquid diet. The period of transition from liquids to solids can be particularly dangerous, even in good environmental conditions. Infants are at risk not only from nutritionally-inferior supplementary food, but also from the unhygienic preparation of such foods and the provision of this food in unclean containers (Bond et al. 1981:484). In an insanitary environment infants, already vulnerable because of dietary deficiency\textsuperscript{33} or reduced immunity, are further exposed to a variety of diseases, particularly gastroenteritis, which contribute to the malnourished state and, therefore, increase the likelihood of death. Spacing of births can also be a contributory factor to infant mortality rates: repeated births at relatively short intervals pose a threat to the newborn, who may receive inadequate nutrition requirements from a mother weakened by successive pregnancies (Goldberg et al. 1984:106)\textsuperscript{34}.

Scholars have only recently applied the findings of nutritionists to the Greek and Roman world. Garnsey (1991:57-65) used the discoveries of investigative studies into infant feeding requirements in order to criticise childcare among the Romans. He adduces several practices - the rejection of colostrum as bad milk (Soranus, Gyn. 2.17-18); premature weaning; "nutritionally suspect" transitional foods - in support of his theory that there was "a high incidence of undernourishment and disease among the under-five population of Rome and the Roman world".

Two contrasting customs of infant feeding in antiquity would suggest the veracity of Garnsey's hypothesis: premature weaning and prolonged breastfeeding, both of which contribute to undernourishment and can, by cumulative effect, lead to malnutrition, susceptibility to infection and death. In his advice manual Soranus warns against nurses who wean infants off the breast too early (Gyn. 2.21). These women try to give cereal
foods to newborns after only 40 days, or coat their breasts with bitter substances to repulse the child; such a sudden change can be potentially dangerous for the child. Premature weaning is most likely to have been practised by lower class mothers without an adequate supply of milk or occupied in full-time employment; the introduction of supplementary foods may have seemed the most obvious, and safest, alternative. However, the use of low nutritional food during the transition period would have been prevalent at this social level, where protein-calorie malnutrition is most common (Scrimshaw 1978:390). The premature weaning of such infants, likely to have been underweight and undersize at birth (Garnsey 1991:61-62), would have exposed them further to the threat of mortality. Among the elite, food of poor nutritional quality is less likely to have been a problem, although the upper classes may not have had a better understanding of the nutritional requirements of the very young. Dietary deficiencies could have been common at higher social levels too. However, it was within the financial means of the rich to ensure a healthy supply of milk for their infants by providing wet-nurses with an adequate diet.

Soranus advocates that weaning should be a gradual process and should begin after six months - "when the baby has become firm" (Gyn. 2.21); this time period corresponds approximately to that recommended by nutritionists: Bond et al. (1981: 484) advise 4-6 months. However, in antiquity, according to the wet-nursing contracts from Roman Egypt (Bradley 1980:321-322; Lefkowitz and Fant 1982:270-272), two years appears to have been the normal duration of breastfeeding. The custom of prolonged breastfeeding is likely to have been a means of protection against protein-calorie malnutrition and disease in circumstances where the post-weaning diet tended to be of low nutritional value (LeVine 1977:19). However, as immunity from breast milk gradually decreases when the child is 3-6 months old, at this stage complementary foods must be introduced. Therefore, because of the practice of prolonged breastfeeding, large numbers of infants at Rome could have been undernourished and vulnerable to infection, since their basic energy requirements were not being met.

A two-year nursing contract need not, however, mean that prolonged breastfeeding was common at Rome; the nurse might have been retained as a carer until the child was of an age to be able to survive on a diet of adult pattern. In view of the high infant mortality, the provision of expert care during the transition period would have been crucial to a young
child's survival. As part of his chapter On the Care of the Newborn, Soranus provides a detailed programme for gradually weaning an infant. He suggests cereal foods to begin with, then moving on to a porridge-type substance; also included are foods to be avoided (Gyn. 2.21). If such an easy-to-follow procedure for weaning was widely adopted at Rome, then there may not have been a high level of undernourishment among the very young.

From the above discussion, it seems that Roman infants were exposed to a number of potentially life-threatening risks at the community-, household- and individual-level. The factors at the community level determining the rate of infant mortality will have included the public systems for the disposal of waste and the supply of water. At the household-level, the condition of the house; toilet facilities; supply and quality of drinking water; source of lighting and fuel were the main determinants. Finally, the quality of medical and non-medical care (feeding practices; general cleanliness) provided at the individual-level would have had the greatest effect on the level of mortality. The extent to which these factors were actual causes of death will have varied largely in accordance with the socioeconomic conditions of the individual.

In certain circumstances wealth could provide no protection. As Jackson (1988: 170-172) notes, in antiquity few diseases were curable; and the rich would not have been immune to the infectious, parasitic and respiratory diseases that are responsible for almost half of all deaths in populations with life expectancies as low as 40 years (Jones 1990:32). In a society such as ancient Rome, where the average life expectancy has been estimated as in the 20 to 30 year range (Parkin 1992:84), the death rate from these diseases could have been even higher. In the case of epidemics the mortality would have soared; infants, particularly those already weak or undernourished, would have been among the first to perish in urban outbreaks of plague. Crowded insulae, with their shared facilities and often insanitary conditions, would have contributed to the spread of epidemic diseases.

In addition to epidemics, the Roman population was exposed to frequent food shortages and famine, although food crises were rarely of serious proportions, and the majority date to the early period of Rome (Garnsey 1988:14;37). Yet, the very young in particular would have suffered in
periods of food shortage experienced by individuals, especially since they did not qualify for the grain-dole at Rome\textsuperscript{41}. Large numbers of infants at lower social levels may have been suffering from various deficiency diseases\textsuperscript{42}; even a brief interruption of food supply could, therefore, be life-threatening.

**Conclusion**

From several studies of ancient demography, the infant mortality rate at Rome can be hypothesised at c.250 per 1000 live births in the first year of life. The incidence of infant death would have fluctuated periodically, particularly in response to short term phenomena such as epidemics; in those periods of growth and prosperity at the national and individual level, the infant mortality rate would have declined\textsuperscript{43}. There may also have been a gradual decrease in infant deaths in the Imperial period. The improvements in such areas as sewage disposal, water-supply, and building standards initiated in the Augustan era and further developed under later Emperors, particularly the Flavians, would have had a concomitant effect on the incidence of infant deaths.

Yet, a variety of factors combined to keep infant mortality at a high level. With the exception of deaths due to congenital malformations or to complications at birth, death in the infant years was primarily the result of environmental conditions: hygiene, sanitation and nutrition. At the individual-level, the extent of medical and non-medical care would have been even more crucial. As a result of exposure to crowded, insanitary living conditions, without any adequate waste disposal system and water supply, and to unhygienically prepared and low nutritional value food, many infants at Rome would have been susceptible to a variety of killer diseases: cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis, gastroenteritis, and, in particular, diarrhoea\textsuperscript{44}, which is still the principal cause of infant death in most Third World countries (Jones 1990:33). A combination of poverty and ignorance of the existence of infective micro-organisms ensured the persistence of such diseases.

The information outlined in this chapter can be interpreted in two contrasting ways with regard to the question of how parents responded to the death of a child in infancy. Firstly, in view of the frequency of infant
mortality, it might be expected that the Romans buried their children in a hasty and unceremonious manner and grieved little, if at all, for them. Secondly, the theory that infant deaths were caused primarily by environmental conditions largely out with the control of the parents, and not by choice-related factors, would suggest that the loss of a young child was lamented to some degree by parents. The aim of the subsequent chapters is to test the validity of these hypotheses by examining the evidence for both the cultural and the individual response of the Romans to the death of a child in infancy.
CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

4. The infant mortality rate of a population is expressed as "the number of deaths of children under one year of age in a particular year per 1,000 live births in that year" (Jones 1990:27). See also Parkin (1992:93-94).
5. Parkin (1992:180, n.12): "Neonatal mortality (i.e. deaths within the first month of life) accounted for some 57.5 percent of infant deaths in England and Wales in 1985, and 80.8 percent of these deaths occurred within the first week of life". In Scotland, in 1991, the Annual Report of the Registrar General recorded 292 neonate deaths; 181 infant deaths (0-1); 113 early childhood deaths (1-4).
6. According to Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 102.288c: "until the seventh day (when the umbilical cord comes off) a child is more like a plant than an animal".
7. According to the 1991 Annual Report of the Registrar General Scotland, infant mortality in Scotland has steadily declined between 1945 and 1991 from 50.5 to 7.1 per 1,000 live births.
8. Seneca, Cons. ad Helv. 16.6, says of Cornelia's 12 children that "Fortune had reduced their number to two"; the one daughter who also survived childhood is ignored. Seneca's comment at Cons. ad Marc. 16.3 that "the rest (i.e. apart from Tiberius and Gracchus) whom the state never knew as either born or lost matter little" is typical of the ancients' lack of interest in the accurate recording of infant and childhood deaths.
9. See CIL6 8038 8198 13027 14139 14796 15160 17361 23615 27252 28055 28907 34949 37538
11. See Cicero, in Vat. 6.14; Horace, Epod. 5.12ff; Lucan, de Bell. Civ. 6.557-558; Pliny, NH 37.139. CIL6 19747: the parents of a three year old boy believe that their son was "snatched away by a witch's hand, cruel everywhere". At Fasti 6.135ff, Ovid refers to avidae volucres who gorge on the flesh of babies.
12. See Livy 1.56; Pliny, NH 36.24.104-106; Strabo, 5.3.8. Livy (5.55.5) notes that "ancient sewers, which were at first conducted through public places, now pass under private dwellings everywhere".
13. Frontinus (de Aquis 2.111) says that the overflow from fountains and public basins flushed out the city's sewers.
14. According to the law (Dig. 43.10.1.1-3), landlords whose buildings faced onto a public street were required to clean the area in front. Court action could be taken against those who threw vessels or liquid from balconies and covered anyone with filth (Dig. 9.3.5.1-2). One of the duties of the city overseers was to prohibit the throwing of excrement, dead animals or skins into the streets (Dig. 47.11.1.1).
15. Vitruvius, de Architect. 8.3.4ff and Pliny, NH 31.3-4 stress at length the curative power of water. Scobie (1986:425) provides a list of illnesses, for
which Celsius, in his de Medicina, prescribes a visit to the baths.

16. Since no system of "health education", as implied by Western standards, existed in Rome, significant variations in the rate of infant mortality at the individual-level would not have been caused by the extent of knowledge of health matters.

17. Scobie (1986:401-3) divides the living quarters of the Roman population into ten categories; here only the most common type of dwelling, the *insula*, will be considered; the *domus* is mentioned for contrast. For detailed description of *domus*, see Nash (1944:15ff); Meiggs (1960:235; 251-262).

18. Vitruvius, de Architect. 2.8.17, observes that the growth in population necessitated the construction of multiple dwellings.

19. No evidence exists of the amount paid in rent by the lower sections of society. However, since the daily wage at Rome was c.3 sesterces (Duncan-Jones 1982:54), Yavetz (1958:504;515) queries whether the poorer classes were able to pay even the "reasonable" annual rent of 2,000 sesterces for "modest" accommodation in Rome and 500 sesterces for a place outside the city in the late Republic (Cicero, de Off. 2.83; Dio 42.51;47.9; Suetonius, Iul. 9).

20. Yavetz (1958:510-511) lists fires recorded by Livy in 213 BC (24.47.15); 203 BC (30.26.5); 210 BC (27.27.1-3); 194 and 192 BC (24.44.78; 35.9.3-4; 25.4-5). According to Potter (1987:87), there are "at least forty fires" mentioned in the literary sources. See also Strabo, 5.3.7; Dio, 41.14.4. For structural collapse, see especially Vitruvius, de Architect. 2.8.7, 17, 20. The additional danger of the Tiber flooding is mentioned at Dio, 39.61.1-2.


22. See Livy, 5. 55; 40.5.8 on the haphazard construction of Rome after the Gallic attack in 390 BC.


24. Juvenal's third satire contains the classic description of terrible living conditions in the capital. For the complaints made by Martial, see Epigr. 1.108.3; 1.117.6-7; 3.30.3; 4.37; 5.22; 6.27.1-2; 7.20.20; 8.14.

25. Lead pipes were extensively used for domestic water supply; their toxic effect is described by Vitruvius (de Architect. 8.6.10-11). However, the current view is that the use of lead pipes did not contaminate Rome's drinking-water (Hodge 1981:488-489).

26. Dogs can be carriers of a number of diseases; e.g. rabies, ring-worm (Scobie 1986:420).

27. In contrast, the total floor area of the ground level apartments is 200 sq. metres (Frier 1980:15).

28. As Golding et al. (1985:32) observe, infants in particular are vulnerable to respiratory disorders, especially in the winter months and if there is a significant level of contact with a variety of people. Horace, Sat. 1.5.80, provides a graphic description of the uncomfortable night that he spent in a smoke-filled villa near Tivicum, on his journey to Brundisium.

29. On the advantages of co-sleeping, see Caudill and Plath (1966).


31. From their study of infant mortality and breast-feeding in North-Eastern Brazil, Goldberg et al. (1984:114) discovered that deaths in the first year of life are 1.8 times greater among infants who have never been breastfed.

32. According to Pelto (1981:196), among the East Indians of Trinidad feeding bottles "are filled with a variety of substances from skim milk to sugar water and tea".

33. According to Brothwell and Brothwell (1969:88), high-starch, cereal based diets may contribute to protein malnutrition among the very young.

34. The energy requirements of a breastfeeding mother are estimated as 20-25% greater than those of a woman who is not breastfeeding (Bond et al. 1981:487).
35. On wet-nurses, see section on childcare practices in Chapter 3, p.55ff: upper class mothers do not seem to have been in the habit of breastfeeding their infants, though there are exceptions.

36. According to nutritionists, by the end of the second year children can exist on a diet comparable to that of adults (Bond et al. 1981:483).

37. Livy records at least 11 outbreaks of epidemics in the Republican period, the earliest dated to 463 BC (3.6.2-3); cf. Livy 40.19.6-8: due to a plague in 181 BC the recommended levy of 8000 infantry and 300 cavalry could not be raised. See Dionysius of Halicarnassus for plagues in 403 BC (9.67.2) and 451 BC (10.53). The majority of plagues occurred in early Republican Rome, but several are recorded in the Imperial period: in the plague of AD 65 Tacitus states that "all classes of men were afflicted" (Ann. 16.13). In the pestilence that broke out in AD 165/6 "thousands were carried off" (SHA Ant. Pius 13.5).

38. Inscriptions do not specify cause of death, but CIL6 27556 is a dedication by parents to their two sons, aged eight and five years, who died in an epidemic.


40. Garnsey (1988:14) notes that from 509 to 384 BC food crises occurred at least one year in nine; in the late Republic and early Empire these "disappeared almost overnight, most notably on Pompey's appointments to suppress piracy in 67 BC and to restore the grain supply in 57 BC, and on Augustus taking personal charge of the grain supply in 22 BC".

41. On the grain-dole and private donations at Rome, see Chapters One, p.24, n.20, & Two, p.35.

42. Brothwell and Brothwell (1969:179-182). See Golding et al. (1985:110) for the list of the eleven trace elements that the human body requires in order to be able to function properly.

43. Frier (1982:250) does not believe that there was a significant decrease in mortality rates in the Roman period.

44. According to Celsus (de Medic. 2.8.30), diarrhoea can be fatal, especially in children up to ten years.
CHAPTER SIX

MOURNING: THE CULTURAL RESPONSE TO INFANT DEATH I
BURIAL PRACTICES

In this chapter, and the following one, the intention is to discuss how the Romans as a culture responded to infant death. Emphasis is placed, therefore, on the collective reaction, as expressed in funerary rites, of society as opposed to the emotions experienced by individuals at the death of their own child. The key point at issue is the widely-held notion that in Roman society infants received a different form of burial and a different funeral ceremony from that of older children and adults - a further manifestation of parental indifference to the very young. This present chapter is concerned with the burial practices of infants, and covers such topics as nocturnal burial, inhumation and cremation, location and form. The next chapter deals essentially with public mourning and the funeral, but looks also at funerary rites and afterlife beliefs\(^1\). An overall conclusion is given at the end of the second chapter on mourning.

This discussion of mortuary practices and of afterlife beliefs among the Romans is twofold in purpose: firstly to demonstrate that infant funeral ceremonies were in general less elaborate and their burials less careful than those of most older age groups, and it was thought that a particular fate awaited those who died very young in the next world; but also to prove that some Romans buried their infant dead in the same location and manner as other age groups, and imagined them enjoying a similar existence after death. Secondly, the aim is to assess the reasons offered by historians in explanation for the differences in infant burial by examining various theories: the widespread indifference to infant mortality; the social marginality of infants; the harmlessness of infant corpses; the fear of infant spirits\(^2\).

The expectation that the Romans would have treated their infant dead differently from other age groups is not unjustified in view of the frequency with which it is estimated that the very young died in antiquity: 250-300 per 1000 live births in the first year of life. Examples from literature and funerary epigraphy further illustrate the high levels of
infant mortality among individual families at both upper and lower social levels.

A number of customs highlight the distinctive features of infant burial practices. The most detailed information in the literary sources comes from Plutarch’s concluding remarks in a letter of consolation, written late first/early second century AD, to his wife on the death of their two year old daughter, Timoxena:

... our people do not bring libations to those of their children who die in infancy, nor do they observe in their case any of the rites that the living are expected to perform for the dead, as such children have no part in earth or earthy things; nor yet tarry where the burial is celebrated, at the grave, or at the laying out of the dead, and sit by the bodies. For the law forbids us to mourn for infants, holding it impiety to mourn for those who have departed to a better dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine.

Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 612(12)

The fact that Plutarch’s daughter died in Greece, and that Plutarch himself is Greek, writes in Greek and his account is, therefore, more likely to be a reflection of Greek practices would seem to preclude the applicability of this passage to Rome. Yet, there are Roman parallels for these customs: the ritual at the grave; the afterlife beliefs; the law against mourning for infants. These peculiarities of infant burial rites are discussed in the second chapter on mourning; here consideration is given to other traditions, which Plutarch does not mention, but are assumed by some historians to be part of the infant funerary ritual in the Roman period.

(i) Nocturnal burial

Traditionally, in Roman practice all cremations and inhumations were conducted by torchlight at night. According to Servius, ad Aen. 11.143, this custom was founded on religious grounds: the sight of a corpse was forbidden to priests such as the Pontifex Maximus and the Flamen Dialis, and it tainted or even impeded certain acts of magistrates. A nocturnal burial would ensure that priests and magistrates avoided meeting a funeral procession as they went about their daily business. The historical practice among the Romans was to have funerals during the day (Horace, Sat. 1.6.42; Plutarch, Sulla 38), although in AD 363 the Emperor Julian had tried, and
failed, to re-establish nocturnal funerals (Cod. Theod. 9.17.5); torches, however, continued to feature in the cortege.

Several scholars believe that this archaic custom survived into the Republican and Imperial periods in the nocturnal burials of the poor and of the very young. Several literary sources confirm that the poor and slaves were buried hurriedly and unceremoniously at night: Martial, Epigr. 8.75.9, describes the poor man's bier being carried by slaves at night; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 4.40, remarks that Tullius' wife and a few friends carried the body of her husband "out of the city at night as if it had been that of some ordinary person".

No source states that infants in particular were also buried at night. However, it is possible to conjecture, from the study conducted by Neraudau (1987:198-205), that the Romans could have disposed of infant corpses by the rite known as funus acerbum, which is thought to have taken place by night.

The nature of this ritual is not clearly known. The most detailed account by an ancient author of what is thought to be the funus acerbum rite is Servius' commentary on Aeneid 11.143, where the Trojans carry the bier of Pallas back to Evander by torchlight: according to Roman custom:

impuberes (i.e. those below the age of puberty) were carried out to burial at night by torchlight, so that the familial home would not be polluted by the corpse of a child who had died untimely; this used to happen especially in the case of those who were the sons of magistrates. So Virgil has the corpse of Pallas removed by torchlight, because it was a funus acerbum. Some say that funera derives from funalia candela, which are encased in tallow or wax, because the dead are carried out at night with these illuminating the way. Others say that funera derives from fungendo ("discharge"), because . . . we are "discharging" (fungimur) a duty for the one who has died, or because those who have died are said to have "discharged" (functi) life. Concerning sons in paternal power, some record that it should not be thought right that they (sc their deaths) be called and become funus, because slaves have taken over the parental role and if this were to happen, the family would be stained (i.e. in mourning; funesta). Therefore, for this reason, the funeral of Pallas is conducted by torches, as he is a son (filius). Others, such as Varro and Verrius Flaccus, say: if a son (filiusfamilias) died outside the city, family friends and freedmen went to meet him and he was carried at night into the city, with wax tapers and candles illuminating the way, and no one was invited to the funeral rites.

Servius, ad Aen. 11.143
Therefore, according to Servius the funerals of both *impuberes* and older *filiifamilias* (particularly the sons of magistrates), who had predeceased their fathers were held hurriedly at night by the light of torches or candles; the ceremony was not attended by family members and no invitations were made. However, Néraudau (1987:203) believes that only in archaic times were mature *filiifamilias* the recipients of the *funus acerbum*; by the Imperial period this nocturnal rite was reserved only for *impuberes*.

According to Servius, these funerals were conducted by night to avoid the stain of premature death. However, Néraudau (1987:200) believes that Servius' interpretation is incorrect because all children below the age of puberty were traditionally regarded as pure and nearer to divinity; therefore, *impuberes* cannot have been a source of contamination in death. Since their corpses were harmless, the deaths of *impuberes* would not require the complex series of purification rites preformed for adults (*feriae denicales*); a nocturnal burial was sufficient.

However, it could be that such deaths were seen as more tainted than those of others because they were against the natural order; by rights, it was the son who was supposed to ensure proper burial for his parents. A nocturnal funeral would avoid staining the light of day by the display of this unnatural event or, less superstitiously, would conceal such a perversity from society. This is the theory of Rose (1923:193), who believes that *funera acerba* were conducted at night because these deaths were "wholly abnormal" and so the fear of pollution was particularly acute. Such children were regarded as "ghosts" and to be disposed of immediately.

The idea that children who died before their time were buried at night from a sense of dread is related to the Greek notion of *aëtopoi*: souls of children who died untimely were destined to wander aimlessly or, more ominously, become either avenging spirits themselves or the agents of demons (Cumont 1922:134-7; Garland 1985:6;86). Hindus and Maoris of New Zealand similarly believe that children who died very young might become malevolent demons (King 1903:83-4). The only comparable Roman evidence is the case of the boy in Horace, *Epodes* 5. 87-102, who, when about to be slaughtered in a ritual by the witch Canidia, threatens to avenge himself by returning as a Fury to haunt his murderers. However, the boy is going to be butchered; it is not simply the case that he has died prematurely.
Rose’s theory is unsupported by Roman evidence, for no author mentions a fear of children who died before maturity. Such a superstition might have existed in archaic times, but in the preurban period the bodies of young children were interred within or near the familial home, which would suggest that even in earlier times there was no fear of the spirits of those who died very young; on the contrary, this particular form of burial implies that the deceased were regarded as harmless.

A more likely explanation for the nocturnal burial of *impuberes*, if this was indeed an historical practice, would be the child’s marginal social status. As those below the age of puberty did not make any positive contribution to society, their deaths were of no real concern to the community as a whole; therefore, because only the family in question was affected, there was no reason to cause any disruption to daily routine by holding the funeral ceremony during the day. This more practical motivation for nocturnal burials could be another attempt to keep the frequency of death, particularly among the young, out of public view.

However, it is by no means certain that the funerals of *impuberes* were conducted by night. All historically-attested examples of the nocturnal funerals of those who died below the age of puberty are unreliable as evidence for the existence of this rite. Two cases in particular are cited: the hurried cremation of Oppicianus’ son, described as a *puer*, before dawn (Cicero, *pro Cluent. 27*) and the nocturnal cremation of thirteen year old Britannicus (Tacitus, *Ann. 13.7*). But these deaths are exceptional in that both are murders; therefore, the surest method of concealment would be a hasty and unceremonious cremation at night. Since the same procedure is used of Nero’s murdered mother, Agrippina (Tacitus, *Ann. 14.9*), the examples of Oppicianus’ son and Britannicus cannot justifiably be taken as proof that the funerals of all *impuberes* were held at night, irrespective of the cause of death.

The exceptional nature of the cases mentioned in the sources of nocturnal burial suggests that in the historical period such behaviour was unusual and, by implication, that the funerary ritual of *impuberes* was not so very different from that of adults. However, infant deaths would have the least impact upon society and would, therefore, be all the more likely to be dispatched at night by the rite of *funus acerbum*.

In Seneca’s *Hercules Furens* a description is given of various categories
of the dead in the Underworld, including

infants that have only recently learned the name of "mother". To this group alone, so that they might not be afraid, it is permitted to lessen the darkness of night by torches borne ahead; the rest walk sadly through the gloom.

Seneca, Hercules Furens 854-857

The torches which guide the infants here are a reference, it is claimed by Néraudau (1987:201), to the funeral torches used to illuminate the burials of the very young at night. However, these torches should be taken in the context in which Seneca mentions them. Their function is, as stated, to prevent infants from being frightened by the darkness of Hades. Infants, because they were so very young, innocent and helpless, might be thought of as especially in need of a guiding light. There is no suggestion here that the torches are those of the funeral rite of funus acerbum; any such identification is undermined by the fact that no torches are mentioned in connection with the other impuberes (unmarried girls and boys who had not cut their long hair) whom Hercules saw in the Underworld and whom Néraudau suggests were the principal recipients of the funus acerbum.

In literature there are only two clear examples of funus acerbum used in the context of infant death. Virgil, Aen. 6.429, mentions how "black day has plunged" infants at the threshold of Hades in funere . . . acerbo. However, these exact words are also used of Evander's son, Pallas, a iuvenis, not an infans (Aen. 11.28). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that Virgil is thinking exclusively in terms of infant death when he uses the phrase funus acerbum at Aen. 6.429. Moreover, in neither of these passages is there any suggestion of a funerary ritual, since it is the cruelty of such premature deaths that Virgil wishes to emphasise. The second illustration occurs in Seneca's letter of consolation to Marcia on the death of her adult son:

So many deaths are untimely (tot acerba funera): but we intend for our infants to don the toga, take up military service, and succeed to their father's property!

Seneca, Cons. ad Marciam 9.2

Again, however, Seneca uses funus acerbum, as Virgil had done, in the general sense of "untimely/cruel" without any implication of a specific ritual, whether nocturnal or not. In this context the theme of untimely
death appears with a number of examples designed to illustrate how men fail to consider that the misfortunes suffered by others could equally befall them.

Therefore, the only certain conclusion that can be made on the basis of these two quotations is that the deaths of infants could also be described as funera acerba, i.e. "cruel", because they were "untimely". In fact in the majority of the literary sources funus acerbum has this broad meaning of a "cruel death", without any reference to specific age groups or to funerals conducted at night (Juvenal, Sat. 11.44). This is the sense implied by the misspelled funus acerdum which appears at the end of a four year old boy's epitaph (CIL6 22397) and also by Fronto when he uses acerbissima morte of his three year old grandson (Haines, Loeb vol. 2, p.224); similarly, when Isidorus applies acerbus solely to those who die in infancy (Etym. 1.14). Yet, none of these examples hints at a funeral rite, much less one conducted at night. In each case funus acerbum is used as a generalisation for premature death or the cruelty of such deaths.

Therefore, according to the literary evidence, in most cases funus acerbum was a non-specific term of description for all those who could be said to have died "untimely", i.e. before their parents - infants, older impuberes, adolescents, even married children with families of their own. If such a specific rite as funus acerbum did exist and was conducted by night, then by the Imperial period at least the typical recipients of this ritual were certainly impuberes, but only those who were no longer infants. However, it must be emphasised that it is not even certain that the nocturnal funeral of impuberes was a current practice in the Imperial period: the historically attested examples in the sources are all exceptions, and Servius' use of imperfect tenses implies a custom no longer observed at least when he wrote in the fourth century AD; e.g. "it was the Roman custom ut impuberes noctu efferentur ad faces, ne funere immaturae subolis domus funestaretur".

Therefore, is it reasonable to claim, as a general conclusion, that the nocturnal burial of infants was not a custom practised in Roman society? As has been shown, no clear evidence of a literary nature exists to the contrary; but the traditional practice of burying the poor and slaves by night could be interpreted as a parallel case.

At Rome, where the adult male occupied the predominant social position,
infants were relatively marginal figures at the community level. Likewise, the inferior position of the poor and the servile (because of financial situation in the case of the poor and birth in the case of slaves) and their unimportance as regards the common good ensured that they too remained on the periphery of society. Both infants and the poor tended to be buried hastily and unceremoniously (section iii). At Rome the poor could be buried en masse in large common graves, and probably, if not on the day of death, at least on the day after. Neither literature nor archaeology exclusive to the City of Rome can confirm that this was also the practice for infants, but clusters of infant skeletons buried in a simple manner like that of the poor at Rome have been found at various places throughout the Empire (section iii). If infants could be buried in a location and manner similar to that of the poor and slaves, then infant interments could have had a third feature in common with the funerary rites of these groups, namely burial at night. Infant burials might have been conducted at night because their deaths had a similar lack of impact upon the social consciousness - only the immediate family would be concerned - and did not merit intrusion upon the daily routine of the city’s population.

In conclusion, the extant sources do not allow any definite answers to be reached as regards the theory that the Romans disposed of infant corpses by night; but evidence from the funerary practices of other social groups could imply that nocturnal burial may have been a feature of substantial numbers of infant interments. Nocturnal funerals could have partially concealed the true frequency of death in Rome, if certain groups whose deaths had no great impact upon society (the poor, slaves and infants), and who were not usually honoured by a lavish funeral, were buried after sunset. Burial at night would likewise avoid disruption of the City’s daily activities by reducing the number of funerals passing through the streets.

However, some infants were treated no differently in death from many adults, as is confirmed by elaborate ash-chests, sarcophagi, commemorative plaques and family grave reliefs (section iii, p.144ff). The basic similarities between adult and infant forms of funerary art might be taken to imply that, like adults, young children could also be buried by day. A more public ceremony would suit the detailed form of burial accorded to these children.

Both nocturnal and daylight rituals may have been common practices for infant burial; perhaps the daylight ceremony increased in popularity from the Imperial period when more and more infants were being buried in the
same location and manner as adults, and greater emphasis was placed on the commemoration of the individual at death. Ultimately, however, the time of day when the burial was conducted would depend upon the choice and circumstances of individual parents.

(ii) Inhumation and cremation

As another distinctive feature of infant funerary practices, classicists claim that in Roman society infants continued to be buried rather than cremated even when cremation was the more popular method of disposal. No ancient author explains why infants were exempt from the widespread custom of cremation practised for all other age groups and social levels; even the very poor, who were traditionally interred in mass pits, could be cremated (Lucan, Phars. 8.730; Martial, Epigr. 7.75.9). In fact, there are only two literary references to this practice of inhumation for infants as opposed to cremation.

According to Pliny (NH 7.72), "it is the universal custom of mankind not to cremate a person who dies before cutting his teeth", i.e. younger than six months (NH 6.8). Archaeological evidence both from Rome itself and Greece has shown that children up to two years could be buried, while cremation was the preferred rite for all other age groups. However, the claim of Pliny is still applicable as a broad generalisation of cross-cultural practices of inhuming rather than cremating very young children, and, as will be shown, can be taken as a reference to the custom prevalent in Rome in his own day. The upper age limit for inhumation, which varies from culture to culture, is determined more by the age at which the child is accepted as a full member of society, rather than the cutting of teeth. The second source to mention infant inhumation is Juvenal, who notes that "at Nature's command we groan . . . when the earth closes over an infant too young for the pyre's flames" (Sat. 15.138-9).

The literary sources do not mention any superstitious or religious beliefs behind the practice of inhuming rather than cremating infants. Néraudau (1987:196), however, uses Pliny's claim that only the teeth remain in cremation (NH 7.70) to speculate that the Romans did not cremate children so young from fear that if there were no physical remains, their bodies
could not return to Mother Earth. Yet, a belief in the loss of individuality and a reunion with Nature was not a particularly popular view of the afterlife in Republican and Imperial Rome.

The Romans may have thought it too cruel to burn a child so young, and inhumation, being more gentle and less final, was more suited to innocent and helpless infants. The Roman form of cremation would normally leave charred bones for the relatives to gather and bury (Chapter 7, section ii, p.162), but the cremation of an infant would destroy the small body in its entirety. Inhumation may have been seen as a quicker, less elaborate and cheaper method of disposal than cremation that was particularly suited to infants under six months in view of the very heavy mortality among this age group in antiquity. Gjerstad (1956:155) suggests that infants who had not yet reached the teething stage were inhumed because "the human being was not complete, so to speak, before the cutting of the teeth". Therefore, the rite of infant inhumation could be another indication of the marginality of the very young - in this case babies under six months - at the societal level in Rome. Among other peoples, inhumation is an indication that the child is not yet a fully-recognised human being within the society (e.g., the Aborigines of Western Australia; Bendann 1930:205).

At certain periods it also seems to have been the custom among some Greek communities to bury infants, but cremate all other age groups; in fact, Morris (1992:187) regards this distinction as "quite common in archaic Greece". In Attica, from the Protogeometric (11th-10th century BC) to the Archaic (6th-5th century BC) periods, the standard rite was pit-cremation for adults, and inhumation in pots for infants and young children (Kurtz and Boardman 1971:36-101). The jar would be laid horizontally, with a tile, slab or second jar covering the mouth. At a later date, c.425 BC, in Athens small clay chests were used in preference to pots for the burial of young children (Young 1951:81; Morris 1992:141). The dividing-line for form of burial and container of remains seems to be the age at which children begin to display more definite characteristics of personality and independent action: walking, talking, etc.

In addition to the references made by Pliny and Juvenal, archaeological evidence demonstrates that the inhabitants of Rome once buried infants, but cremated older children and adults. A series of excavations conducted in 1902-1911 in the Forum revealed a cluster of burials, now known as the "Sepulcretum", along the Sacra Via to the south-east of the Temple of
Antoninus and Faustina. The site, c.20x10m, contained 37 graves dated variously to 11th/10th century BC or 8th century BC and to 7th/early6th century BC\textsuperscript{20}, Gjerstad (1956:13), who follows the dating of Boni, the initial excavator of the site, has divided the graves into three chronological periods in relation to the preurban history of Rome. The graves of Periods I and II A all belong to the Iron Age when the Forum site was used exclusively for burials; in Periods II B (c.725-625 BC) and III (c.625-575 BC) the graves are connected with the two phases of hut settlement; and in these two periods all the burials in this particular part of the Forum, which was by this time an inhabited area and no longer solely a necropolis, are children's graves. For the purposes of the inhumation/cremation distinction, the period c.725-625 BC which Gjerstad terms Period II B is the most important. In this period two topographically distinct forms of burial have been found in the Forum: cremation and inhumation.

The cremation graves were situated outside the site of the contemporary hut community, in the area between the Temple of Divus Julius and the Arch of Augustus. These graves were exclusively adult burials, and are of the \textit{pozzo} type (i.e. pit-shaped): at the bottom of each pit was a jar of the \textit{dolium} variety, covered with a bowl and containing a cinerary urn, small votive jars and some personal items. The 8 inhumation burials, contemporaneous with the adult cremations, are located within the inhabited area, along the Sacra Via to the south east of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina. All are children's graves of the \textit{fossa} or \textit{dolium} type (except Tomb GG, which is a \textit{pozzo}, i.e. cremation, grave of a ten year old boy). The \textit{fossa} grave, which becomes the standard form of burial in Period III (c.625-575 BC), is a trench grave sometimes lined and covered with stone slabs, in which the body was laid directly or in a coffin of hollowed-out oak tree trunk (4 examples). In three cases the child's body had been inserted into a \textit{dolium}, which lay horizontally with the mouth closed by tufa stones. The majority of the deceased were provided with ornate personal belongings (e.g. bracelets, beads, bronze \textit{fibulae}, iron or bronze bullas) and various tomb gifts (bowls, skyphoi, amphorae, etc.). In some graves traces of carbonised grains and animal bones have been found. The ages of these inhumed children range from less than one year to eight years, with three out of six aged four years and under (the seventh, Tomb H, contains remains of a body of indeterminate age; only the \textit{dolium} placed horizontally proves that it was a child burial). Similar distinctions between the rite of burial for young children and that of adults and older children are observable in the tombs discovered on the Esquiline, Velia and
Palatine, which also belong to the early Roman period.

There is, then, conclusive proof that in preurban Rome, as in archaic Greece and in other primitive cultures across the world, inhumation was the normal method of burial for young children, while older children and adults were cremated. The age range of these child inhumations goes beyond the maximum of six months implied by Pliny and Juvenal, but this should not prohibit a correlation between the literary and archaeological evidence. In the period between the late 7th/early 6th century BC and the 1st century AD, when Pliny and Juvenal were writing, the reduction in age limit of children for whom inhumation was the usual form of burial could reflect a parallel reduction over time in the child's marginality, as determined by age, at the societal level.

However, all these graves belong to the period when Rome was a collection of villages. Archaeology has yielded very little comparable evidence from the historical period to suggest the continuation of this archaic rite. Toynbee (1971:117-8) describes a series of late Republican tombs on the ancient Via Caelimontana: one of these contained a number of cremation burials in niches and the tile-built inhumation of an infant; but this is an isolated incident. Valuable though it is, the evidence provided by the excavations of the preurban site of Rome and by this single example from the Republican era does not offer significant enough proof that the Romans continued to inhum infants, but cremated older children and adults when cremation was the more popular practice.

In contrast, however, to the archaic practice of burying the very young, other archaeological findings reveal that some Romans in the historical period did in fact choose to cremate rather than inhum their infant children.

By the Augustan era the lower classes at Rome were depositing the cremated remains of their dead in Columbaria\textsuperscript{21}. The actual cremation would be held at a special place (\textit{ustrinum/ustrina}) outside the town near to the Columbarium. Large numbers of these underground tombs were built by the funds of burial clubs\textsuperscript{22}, whose members were mainly professionals, freedmen and slaves of the wealthy families of Rome; these were not the burial places of the very poor. The walls of the chambers were lined with hundreds of semicircular or rectangular niches which were designed to hold a variety of ash-containers; most were stone or marble urns and
chests. Very few Columbaria survive: the most well-known are the three Vigna Codini Columbaria within the Aurelian Wall between the Via Appia and Via Latina; these contained the cremation burials of freedmen and others connected with the Julio-Claudians.

The inscriptions (some 4,000) recovered from these tombs and other Columbaria in Rome have been catalogued in a special section in CIL6: 159 are dedications, i.e. cremation burials, to children aged four years and under. Of these only 5 commemorate infants aged 0-1 year, and just one falls within the age range (i.e. under 6 months) implied by Pliny at which children should only be inhumed (7303: 5 mth old girl). In Sinn's catalogue of ash-chests (1987), of those which feature an inscription only 7 belong to children aged 4 years and under; none commemorate infants under six months. This relatively insignificant number of cremation dedications to infants could be interpreted in several ways: the Romans may have cremated their infants as with all other age groups, but they did not mark the cremations of the very young with any permanent memorial; conversely, this result might indicate that in contrast to the general practice of cremation, the Romans generally inhumed their infant dead - the traditional distinction in burial practices that survived from the archaic era. The continuation of this custom seems evident from the fact that in a number of these chambers, in addition to the vast numbers of cremation burials in niches, infant sarcophagi have been found on the floors, positioned against the tomb walls.

However, the CIL6 evidence which could be used in support of the view that inhumation was the standard form of infant burial throughout the Roman period is disappointing. In the whole of CIL6, 40 inscriptions belong to sarcophagi (2nd and 3rd centuries AD) of children in the 0-4 years group. Of these 7 commemorate infants under 1 year; but again only one is dedicated to a child under 6 months (13302: 4 months old girl). So even from the period when inhumation was the preferred rite, CIL6 does not provide any significant proof that the Romans inhumed infants under 6 months; at any rate, they did not do so in sarcophagi.

Apart from the Columbaria and the sarcophagi inscriptions, in all the other parts of CIL6 there are an additional 1159 dedications to 0-4 year olds: 116 to 0-1 year olds; 43 for infants 6 months and under. The majority of these 43 inscriptions are either of the commemorative plaque type (19) or
have no description at all of the memorial (14), which precludes any positive identification of either cremation or inhumation burial. Only one (27811: a little marble urn) can definitely be classed as a cremation. The 8 examples of *cippi* and the one marble altar (25528) may have been for cremations, or might simply have been commemorative monuments. In the case of the former, although *cippus* is an ambiguous term which often means no more than "gravestone" without any implication about the form of burial, in *CIL6* the term is used of ash-chests, i.e cremation burials.

Therefore, in *CIL6* at least 10 (possibly 11; the marble altar could have contained the child's cremated remains in the base) inscriptions commemorate the cremations of babies aged six months and under. On the basis of these few epitaphs alone, it seems that among the Romans infants of this age were not exclusively inhumed. The data from *CIL6* also shows that some lower class parents were not averse to cremating other young children in the six months to 4 years age category. At higher social levels too, even among the Imperial family, very young children could be cremated: all three of the sons of Agrippina and Germanicus who died in infancy were cremated (*CIL6* 888, 889, 890).

The impression, therefore, is that inhumation was not the sole burial rite for infants in historical Rome, although this was the practice in the pre-urban period. Many infant cremations could remain undetected: infant skeletons, being more fragile than those of adults (Parkin 1992:50), would have been consumed to a far greater extent; traces of such burials are, therefore, much more difficult for archaeologists to pinpoint. However, it is likely that the great majority of infants, especially neonates, were buried (see section iii), this being a quicker, cheaper and more humane method of disposal than cremation for children so young. These burials were generally not in a decorated sarcophagus nor commemorated by any permanent form of memorial. Archaeological findings cannot refute or corroborate the idea conveyed by Pliny and Juvenal that the Romans buried their infants but cremated older children and adults even when cremation was the preferred form of burial. In fact, according to Statius, who writes in the late first century AD, among the groups of children whom parents have had to watch being cremated were infants still at the stage of breastfeeding (*Silvae* 5.5.15-18).

Yet, there is likely to have been a general distinction in method of disposal according to the age of the deceased, albeit without any formal insistence upon a specific minimum age for cremation. The cremation
burials of infants in the Columbaria are probably exceptions to the normal practice, perhaps explicable by the current fashion for cremation at all other age and social levels and by the commemorator's own membership of a burial club which subscribed to niche-burials in Columbaria. But the rite of inhumation for the very young was not prescribed in any legal code, and although inhumation may have been the more common method of disposing of infant corpses, with the exception of the preurban era, this does not seem to have been the invariable practice. In the historical period, burial by inhumation or cremation seems ultimately to have been the choice of individual parents.

(iii) Location and form

In addition to supposed distinctions in time of day and in form, infant burial at Rome is also thought to have differed from that of adults and older children in location. Evidence exists, of both a literary and archaeological nature, to show that the Romans, in the preurban period at least, buried infants within the family home; either under the eaves or the threshold, or in the foundations.

The practice of burying infants within or near the house is known from many primitive and premodern societies. Anthropological studies have provided abundant examples, a number of which have been given in Chapter Four (p.85)\textsuperscript{27}. A similar rite seems to have existed in Bronze Age Greece, where child burials beneath houses have been found in Aegina, Crete and Melos (Halliday 1921:154)\textsuperscript{28}. At Phylakopoi in Melos the bodies of young children - none of them possessed a complete set of second teeth - were placed in \textit{pithoi}, the mouths of which were covered with a basin. These jars were deposited in indentations scooped out of the rock beneath the foundations of the house. Adults were buried in cemeteries outside the inhabited area. Infant burial within the settlement or beneath the floors of houses seems to have been customary at certain periods in later Roman Britain (Scott 1992:78-9; 88-9). At the villa site in the Hambledon Valley, Bucks., occupied from mid 1st to end of 4th century AD, the yard was, according to Cocks (1921:150), "positively littered" with the corpses of 97, mostly newborn, infants.

As mentioned, there is literary and archaeological proof that the Romans
too buried their infants within the familial home. As regards the literary material, the only ancient author to imply the existence of this form of infant inhumation is Fulgentius, a bishop who writes in late 5th/early 6th century AD:

In earlier times the ancients used to call the tombs of infants who had not yet completed forty days suggrundaria, because they cannot be called tombs, because they have no bones to be cremated, nor do they have such a great mass of body to fill the space; on the basis of this, Rutilius Geminus says in his tragedy "Astyanax": "you, poor wretch, lament more for a suggrundarium than a tomb".

Fulgentius, Expositio Sermonum antiquorum 7

The reliability of Fulgentius as an authoritative source is highly questionable (Warde Fowler 1896:395; Halliday 1921:154), and the precise meaning of suggrundarium in this context has been debated in the past. However, the generally accepted solution is that suggrundaria, by analogy with suggrunda/suggrundium (OLD: "the projecting ledge or sill on a building; under the roof, over the doorway, etc."), refers to the "tombs" for the burial of infants below the eaves of houses overlooking the courtyard. The form of these tombs is not known: Granger (1897:33) suggests burial in a niche in one of the house walls covered by a projecting roof or eaves and offers an analogy with the niches of the Columbaria. However plausible Granger's theory may be, there is no proof that Fulgentius' statement is true in the first place - although his description seems too precise to be entirely fictitious - nor indeed does he mention niches.

Gjerstad (1956:152-3) equates Fulgentius' suggrundaria with the discovery of four infant burials within the area of the archaic settlement in the Sacra Via region of the Roman Forum. The bodies of the babies were inserted in jars (in three cases the mouth was closed by a flat tile; in the fourth, another jar was used as a covering), and were placed horizontally below the floors and along the walls of the houses dated to the period c.575 BC-c.450 BC when Rome was developing from a collection of hut villages into a town with stone dwellings which had tiled roofs. In contrast to the maximum age of 40 days given by Fulgentius for burial in suggrundaria, the ages of the infants buried in these jars range from an 8 month old embryo to two-and-half years. Gjerstad suggests that Fulgentius may have made up this figure, since the number forty did not have any significance for pagan Romans; therefore, the identification of the Sacra Via jar burials
with suggrundaria is not invalidated.

However, here it is not of central importance as to whether the jar burials of the Roman Forum can legitimately be identified with Fulgentius' suggrundaria. The main point is that there is evidence from literature and archaeology that the Romans, in early times at least, used to bury their infant dead near or within the familial home. The evidence for this practice is reinforced by the discovery of another, earlier series of tombs found in the same area as the jar burials - the child inhumations denoted by Periods IIB and III (c.725-625 BC and c.625-575 BC) in Gjerstad's chronological table (Gjerstad 1953:121-130; 1956:150ff; section ii). In contrast to the earlier use of the Forum site solely as a necropolis for the burial of adults and youths, all the tombs from this period are children's graves of the fossa type described above and all are situated below or near the contemporary hut settlement.

Néraudau (1984:375; 1987:196) correctly points out that this form of infant inhumation could not have persisted in an urban civilisation. However, Gjerstad (1953:130) believes that while burying young children in fossa tombs within the settlement in the Roman Forum ceased when the phase of hut habitation ended (c.575 BC); suggrundaria continued to be used into "late antiquity"; i.e. into the historical era. Other scholars (Granger 1897:33; Wiedemann 1989:179) also imply that at Rome very young children were buried under the threshold or in the foundations of a wall of houses in the urban period.

In some societies it was customary at certain periods to bury infants within the inhabited area (p.138), and in later Roman Britain (4th century AD) this practice actually increased in popularity, for example at Verulamium (Scott 1992:89). However, for Rome itself, there is no conclusive proof of the association between infant burial and dwelling in the historical period. Scholars who think that such a custom did persist in this era merely say so without providing any factual evidence in support. Fulgentius, when he writes in the late 5th/early sixth century AD, is surely describing an ancient custom, if indeed the burial under the roof eaves of infants less than 40 days was ever practised. His use of priori tempore and antiqui in the opening sentence suggest that he is referring to a long-elapsed practice; not one that continued down to "late antiquity". Similarly, Servius, who wrote his Commentary on The Aeneid in the fourth century AD, says in reference to 6.152 that it was the "ancestral" custom to bury all
the dead within the home (cf 5.46), but he does not suggest that this practice continued in the case of infants \(^{32}\).

*CIL6* itself does not contain any sure examples of dedications to infants under 40 days; but it should not be inferred that babies of this age were buried within or near the familial home. These findings from *CIL6* illustrate only that babies under 40 days did not receive any kind of permanent memorial marker, and may, therefore, have been accorded a different type of burial from those beyond this age \(^{33}\). Nothing conclusive can be said about what form this burial took, but it is highly improbable that it was burial within the houses. Archaeological excavations within the City of Rome have not revealed any examples of infant inhumations within or near dwellings of the historical period; but this is unlikely to be due to incomplete excavation. No burials of this sort are recorded in excavation reports from the architecturally more complete towns of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia. Such a practice would have died out with the development of the urban community. Infants were not, then, buried within or near the family home in Republican and Imperial Rome.

But such a negative conclusion does not adequately answer the problem of the location of infant burial in historical Rome. According to the Twelve Tables, enforced in 451-0 BC, cremation and inhumation were prohibited within the city walls (i.e. the *agger* of Servius Tullius, which extended from the Esquiline Gate to the Colline Gate) \(^{34}\), because of the risk of fire (Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.23.58) and the fear of the foul odour that emitted from corpses (Isidorus, *Orig.* 15.11). In addition to practical considerations, fear of pollution prompted the prohibition against burial within the City.

Such a ban is likely to have included infants too, since after the enforcement of the Twelve Tables only distinguished citizens or those who had done some service were, on account of their merit, buried inside the city (Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.23.58). Subsequent intramural burials were only for the descendants of such persons (Plutarch, *Publ.* 23.2-3; Dio Cassius 5.48.3-4) or for those who were granted special exemption, such as Emperors and Vestals “who were not bound by the laws” (Servius, *ad Aen.* 11.206). However, actual cases of burial within the limits of the walls seem to have been rare; the traditional practice of honorific burial in designated areas in the City itself, but outside the religious boundary (*pomerium*), such as the Campus Martius, ceased early in the second century AD \(^{35}\). Similarly,
burial in the Forum awarded to men of distinction in the past became a purely symbolic right for their descendants: the body was brought into the Forum, a lighted torch placed beneath it and then immediately withdrawn; "thus they enjoy the honour without exciting envy and merely confirm their prerogative" (Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 79). Presumably, these men would be interred in tombs outside the city, like the rest of their social counterparts.

Various edicts indicate that interments and cremations close to the city seem to have been a particular concern for authorities; a problem which arose through the increasing lack of space in the usual burial areas for the disposal of the thousands of corpses that Rome had to cope with annually. A senatorial decree banned *ustrina* (special places for cremations) in the *pagus Montanus* (*CIL* 3823). Augustus also prohibited any cremation within a two-mile radius of the town (*Dio* 48.48). Hopkins (1983:210) refers to three copies of boundary stones dated to 89 BC, which ban cremating corpses or dumping excrement or carcasses, erected in the Campus Esquilinus outside the Esquiline Gate (*CIL* 31615). Infant corpses could have been among those that were burned, buried or dumped within prohibited areas; but it was not traditional for the Romans to bury their infants within the walls of the City.

Secondary sources frequently discuss infants and the poor together in death (Rose 1923:191; Wiedemann 1989:179). However, those ancient authors who describe the location and manner of the poor man's burial make no mention of infant corpses, although this lack of evidence does not mean that the Romans could not have dealt with their infant dead in the same manner as the poor.

Traditionally, the poor were wrapped in a piece of black cloth (*Artemidorus, Oneirocrit. 2.3*), carried in a chest adapted as a bier (*Dio Cassius* 65.18) by mercenary *vespillones* (*Martial, Epigr. 8.75.9*) and interred in mass graves called *puticuli* (*Varro, de LL* v.25; *Davies 1977:17; Hopkins 1983:208; Morris 1992:42). Into these huge pits the bodies of the poor would be thrown and only when the trench was full would it be covered over with soil. In the third and second centuries BC one of the most well-known of such burial grounds was "beyond the Esquiline" (*Varro, de LL* v.25), i.e. just outside the city limits, so even the poor at any rate were not buried intramurally, because of the hygiene risks from such
open graves\(^4\). Early in the first century BC, in accordance with a senatorial decree, the site was concealed by a massive dump of rubble, although the area continued to be used for burials until in 35 BC Maecenas had the place transformed into gardens (Horace, Sat. 1.8.7; 14-15).

In addition to mass trenches, the poor could also be buried in individual graves: a simple inhumation could be covered by a few roof tiles (tegulae) laid gablewise. In other cases, a plain standing stone marked the grave, or a wine jar, embedded in the ground, with the neck visible to allow libations to be poured. Numerous examples of both types of burial, of second century BC in date, are to be found scattered around the wealthy house-tombs in the Isola Sacra cemetery, north of Ostia (Meiggs 1960:457; Toynbee 1971: 101-2). Propertius suggests that this was the lowest form of burial, for his final curse to the bawd Acanthus is that her tomb be "an old wine jar with a broken neck" (4.5.75).

Excavation within the vicinity of the City of Rome has provided no corroborative proof, but incomplete excavation, rebuilding on relevant sites, or the decay of fragile infant skeletons \textit{in situ} could account for this deficiency. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Romans buried their infants in similar communal graves, or in plain amphorae without any indication of name. Mass infant burials have been found elsewhere in the Empire, from which it could be inferred that the Romans themselves practised a comparable rite\(^4\). A large number of infant burials were uncovered in a settlement at Owslebury, Hants., in Britain (Collis 1977). At the Roman cemetery of El Castellet in Ampurias, Spain, approximately three-quarters of the graves were of children (Jones 1984: 252). In most of these cases, the infants were buried hurriedly and inexpensively. The traditional form of burial in Greece was in a jar of some sort, without any grave goods (Bolkstein 1922:229; Kurtz and Boardman 1971:190; Garland 1985:78); at Ampurias the child burials were covered with pieces of amphorae (Jones 1984:252). At the Romano-British villa in the Hambledon Valley, Bucks., the infants were wrapped in a cloth and bundled up (Cocks 1921:50). On other sites the burials were simply in the bare earth.

The only evidence from Rome itself to suggest that here too infants were buried less carefully than most other social groups is the marked under-representation of the very young on tombstone inscriptions (Chapter 9). Only 4.6\% of epitaphs in CIL6 are dedicated to infants aged 0-4 years, even though it has been estimated that the infant mortality rate at Rome was 250-
300 per 1000 live births in the first year of life and the rate of early childhood mortality was also high. Such statistics say nothing about the location or form of infant burial.

However, some infants were accorded the full adult form of burial, at least from Imperial times. As noted, the Columbaria section in CIL6 contains 159 dedications to infants under 4 years. The common practice adopted by the compilers of CIL6 of dissociating monument from epitaph means that the actual form of many of these infant memorials is unknown. However, from those instances in which the type of memorial is recorded and from examples found in the museums of Rome, particularly the Galleria Lapidaria in the Vatican, it is clear that, like adults, infant remains were placed in urns, ash-chests and other containers designed to hold ashes. Therefore, infants too were entombed in the niches of the Columbaria along the Via Appia, Via Latina and other roads beyond the city limits. Two such ash-chests from Sinn (1987) are described here; their decoration is similar to that found on adult containers (see Appendix 2, Figs. 1 & 2).

In the first example, dedicated to one year old L Cocceius Dexius Clymenus and to three year old G. Sergius Alcimus, there are numerous familiar features, particularly marine and nature motifs: central inscription panel; row of mouldings on the base; a candelabrum, supported by a dolphin, at each corner; fruit and blossom garland; shell in the centre of the gabled roof; birds and their young on the sides, an allusion to the youth of the deceased. The second ash-chest, which commemorates two year old M. Licinius Faustus, is more unusual in it contains none of the common decorative motifs (flowers, fruit, etc.) and has, instead, a relief of an infant boy clad in toga and bulla. However, as this urn was discovered in the columbarium of Pomponius Hylas, it further proves that infants could be buried in the same manner and location as adults.

In addition to urns and ash-chests, funerary altars were also dedicated to infants. These monuments, the majority of which date to the Flavian and Trajanic era, are a larger and more lavish type of memorial, and would stand in front of tombs or inside "funerary precincts" (Kleiner 1987:547). However, the undecorated back and the addition of attachments suggest many were affixed to the walls of family tombs; others again have been found in Columbaria. These cippi were not usually altars designed for libations to the deceased; some contained cremated remains in the base; many were simply commemorative memorials. The decoration, like that of
ash-chests and sarcophagi, is both ornamental and figurative; the former being more common in the case of funerary altars.

Three altars dedicated to infants can be found in the garden area of the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome\(^44\). No trace of the dedications on two of them could be found in \(CIL_6\), and since this thesis is concerned only with inscriptions from the City of Rome itself, of these three altars only the one with a \(CIL_6\) reference is included here (see Appendix 2; Fig.3). The cippus, dedicated to one year old Claudia Prima, belongs to the category of the smallest funerary altars: the inscription panel fills the facade; the traditional motifs of \(urceus\) (jug) and \(patera\) (dish) are carved on the sides.

From the Hadrianic period (AD 117-138), when inhumation gradually begins to replace cremation as the more popular form of burial, ornate and expensive sarcophagi appear in greater numbers\(^45\), first among the upper classes and, in a few generations, among the wealthy freed and servile groups. Walker (1990:10) estimates that over 6,000 sarcophagi survive from the City of Rome. The majority of these elaborately-sculptured coffins were intended for adults; but even infants were being entombed in marble or stone sarcophagi in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.

In \(CIL_6\) 40 inscriptions are attested as belonging to sarcophagi of children aged 4 years and younger (that is 2.9% of the 1357 infant epitaphs in \(CIL_6\)). Seven (17.5%) of these are for babies 6 months and under, the youngest being 4 months (13302)\(^46\). This total is an insignificant number in comparison with the infant mortality rate at Rome, but most sarcophagi - whether for adults or for children - carry no inscription at all or do not specify age at death. A study of all infant sarcophagi in three museums in Rome (Museo Capitolino; Museo Nazionale; Musei Vaticani) revealed that only a third had an inscription\(^47\). Again, the frequent failure in \(CIL_6\) to consider inscription and the monument together could mean that the total number of infant sarcophagi from the city of Rome has been under-recorded.

As it is outwith the scope of this paper, no detailed assessment will be made of the form of sarcophagi, their reliefs and alleged symbolism. Here, since the aim is to illustrate the similarities between infants and adults in form and location of burial in the Imperial period, it need only be said that sarcophagus decoration and, more often, type are similar for all age groups.
Cahen, in his article on *Sarcophagus* in Daremberg & Saglio's *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, vol.4.2:1071-1075, has adopted the convenient division of sarcophagi into two main groups as regards decoration: ornamental designs and figurative designs. This classification admits of many exceptions; but these two types are equally applicable to adults and to infants. For infants, scenes of Cupids, because they can be portrayed as childlike and playful, predominate. However, the representations of Four Seasons and Dionysiac rituals are found on both adult and infant sarcophagi in connection with life after death. On the whole, adults are more likely to receive sarcophagi with mythical scenes and, obviously, episodes from the life of the deceased will be different in each case. On biographical sarcophagi for children there is greater emphasis on images of the infant's bath and nurse. Scenes on adult (i.e. male) sarcophagi focus more upon military and public achievements; details from the life of wives are usually represented on less prominent parts of the sarcophagus (Davies 1985:638)

However, the basic similarities in form and decoration, particularly in the case of the garland sarcophagi, tend to outweigh the differences. Other shared features include the clipeus with an inscription or portrait, frequently unrealistic and idealised, but intended to represent the deceased, often upheld by Cupids; and the plain strigilated design, which does not feature solely on sarcophagi of the oval-basin type. In the case of children, "portraits" tend to display adult qualities - a reflection of the Roman preoccupation with the puer senex motif and related to the common lament for 'untimely death' in funerary commemoration. Little boys are depicted in full toga, often holding a scroll as an indication of their intellectual ability and oratorical skills, while girls are shown as Roman matrons (Panofsky 1992:pls.124 & 125). Many of these sarcophagi with "portraits" were taken from stock. Walker (1985:43) mentions several examples of "portraits" on funerary monuments which have been altered to suit the recipient: on the memorial to one year old Octavius Isochrysus the original portrait of a woman was recarved as a male infant with very short hair. Such alterations demonstrate that the child's unexpected death had compelled his parents to purchase a ready-made memorial from stock and to have the portrait on the front reshaped.

Two examples of sarcophagi for which *CIL6* numbers are available, thereby making their identification unequivocal as sarcophagi dedicated to children in the infant age group (0-4 years) from the City of Rome, and
which typify the most common form of infant sarcophagi are given in Appendix 2 (Figs. 4 & 5). The facade of the first, dedicated to two year old T. Iunius Severianus, depicts several favourite motifs: two Cupids upholding a clipeus which contains the inscription; on either side are Cupids wrestling or with weapons. The second sarcophagus, which commemorates three year old M. Aurelius Hermogenes, also features winged Cupids holding an inscribed clipeus; other familiar funerary motifs include the cornucopiae, baskets of fruit and torches.

Roman sarcophagi are, in general, undecorated on the back, since they were placed on the floor of tombs against the walls or in niches (arcosolia) above the ground. In the museums of Rome the majority of sarcophagi are similarly situated; this prevented a thorough examination. However, all free-standing infant sarcophagi had, without exception, uncarved backs. Therefore, infant sarcophagi too were designed to be positioned in the interior of tombs, like those containing adult remains. This arrangement of infant and adult sarcophagi can still be seen clearly in the Vatican cemetery under St. Peter's Basilica.

From this very brief look at three particular types of funerary monument - urns/ash-chests; funerary altars; sarcophagi - the impression is that the wealthier members of the lower classes at Rome did, on occasion, bury their infant children either in large, communal burial places like Columbaria, or in more private, small tombs of the family chamber-tomb type which would line the roads outside the City.

In the course of this section various theories have been offered and discussed with regard to the places where the Romans buried their infants. Numerous locations and forms were suggested, using literary, archaeological, artistic and epigraphic material.

A number of definite answers to this question of the location and form of infant burials can be given on the basis of archaeological evidence. In the preurban era, when Rome was a collection of villages, some inhabitants buried very young children near or within the familial home in oak-tree trunk coffins, or in jars along the walls and under the floors of the house. Nothing suggests that interment within the home persisted down to "late antiquity", as some scholars have claimed, in the form of burial under the eaves. In Imperial Rome, from the Augustan era to the third century AD, the wealthier members of the lower classes, to whom the majority of extant
funerary memorials belong, often buried their infants in the same manner and location as other age groups: ash-chests and urns within Columbaria; funerary altars, and sarcophagi in front of and inside the tombs erected along the roads leading out of the City.

However, there are vast numbers of unaccounted infant deaths from all periods of Roman history. In such cases, several solutions can be offered to the problem of location of burial. Infants, even those under six months, are unlikely to have been buried within the city walls. The Romans believed all deaths, possibly including those of infants, to be polluting, not simply from a religious point of view (Cicero, de Leg. 2.23.58), but from more practical considerations of the hygiene problems that would result from burying corpses, even those of babies, within the inhabited area (CIL6 31615).

As with adults and older children, infants were probably buried outside the city walls. This extramural burial could have taken a variety of forms: the wealthy may have buried infants anonymously in the family tomb along the roadside or on their estates, situated at the edge of a field (Martial, Epigr. 10.43; Dig. 47.12.5). Communal pits akin to those used for the poor could have been the most common form of infant burial, or infants might have been dumped in the trenches traditionally reserved for paupers. If pits reserved solely for infant corpses did indeed exist, then these need not have been outside the designated burial area, but could have been located in special infant cemeteries or in areas set aside for infants within the normal burial ground. Individual graves, such as jar burials or those marked on the surface by tiles laid gable-wise, may have existed alongside the grand tombs, as at Isola Sacra. Probably, the little bodies would be wrapped in a cloth and laid in the ground; often without any form of "coffin", however primitive (e.g. a lining of tufa blocks; a covering of tiles or pieces of amphorae). Even in the Imperial era when infants could be treated in the same manner as all other age groups in death, the very young would seem, on the whole, to have been buried in a hasty, unceremonious manner.

The age distribution on infant epitaphs suggests that babies under 40 days were never buried in the same manner and location as adults, at least not to the extent of being commemorated by a permanent memorial in stone. Such memorials were seldom given to infants under six months (55 out of the 1357 infant epitaphs belong to this age group) - the age of
cutting teeth and of weaning (Soranus, Gyn. 2.21), the age at which Pliny and, by inference, Juvenal implied that infants could be buried or cremated. More practically, on account of the vast number of neonate deaths in Rome\textsuperscript{53} and the cost of erecting a monument - and, closer to the individual level, the brevity of any bonds of attachment that might have been formed - the Romans might not have considered it necessary to give any form of commemoration to those under six months.

Infants could have been buried together with adults in full-sized sarcophagi (Néraudau 1984:389); this joint burial need not have been restricted to occasions when adult and infant died simultaneously, such as death of mother and baby in childbirth. Néraudau does not provide any actual cases, but three mother and child burials were found in the Roman Forum, dating to the time when the site was used exclusively as a necropolis for adult burials (Gjerstad 1953:129). Sarcophagi were apparently re-opened; some contain the body of more than one adult. In view of the cost of purchasing even an infant sarcophagus and the suddenness with which infant deaths can occur, infant corpses could be placed in family sarcophagi already positioned in tombs. Toynbee and Ward Perkins (1953:89) mention an early third century sarcophagus found in the Vatican cemetery which contained the skeletons of an adult and a child. The famous Velletri sarcophagus, with its two registers of detailed reliefs depicting the Labours of Hercules and scenes from the Underworld, contained the skeletons of seven adults and two children\textsuperscript{54}.

Therefore, in the historical period most Romans gave infants of all ages a simple burial outside the city limits. But by Imperial times infants (i.e. 6 months-4 years) could be buried in the same manner and location as all other age groups. In this period the method of disposing of infant dead depended very much upon the circumstances of the individual, since there was no officially prescribed treatment for the very young in death. Considerations of tradition, fashion, cost and natural affection all would have a part to play in determining the form and place of burial.
CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

1. Afterlife beliefs are also discussed in Chapters 8, p.205ff & 9, pp.232-233.
2. Several articles on infant burial appeared very early this century (Granger; King; Halliday; Rose), but the subject is now rarely discussed at length, with the exception of Néraudau (1984; 1987).
3. Servius, ad Aen. 6.22-4; ad Aen. 11.1.43. Rose (1923:192), however, believes that nocturnal burials were only ever performed for the poor.
6. For the use of children in religious ceremonies and magic rites, see Horace, Epodes 5; Columella, de Re Rustica 12.4.3; Pliny, NH 27.9; 29.13.1. Wiedemann (1989:176ff) attributes the presence of children in magic rites and religious ceremonies to their "marginality" in the community; children were "seen as mediators between the social world of adult citizens and the divine" (p.177).
7. For a son's death not requiring traditional family mourning, see Livy 2.8.8; Plutarch, Aem. Paul. 35-36.
8. A number of authors refer to the ability of the neglected dead to return and haunt the living (Ovid, Fasti 2.551-554; 5.419-492), particularly in dreams (Propertius 4.7; Tibullus 2.6.36-40).
9. Néraudau (1987:204) implies that girls too were recipients of the nocturnal funus acerbum; and certainly, females could be covered by Servius' use of the terms impuberis and immatura suboles.
10. Seneca mentions wax-tapers and candles in connection with untimely death at de Tran. An. 11.7; de Brev. Vit. 20.5; Ep. Mor. 122.10.
11. For the death of the young as acerbus because it was unnatural for parents to have to bury their children, whatever their age at death, see Cicero, de Senect. 23.84; Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 4.2; 17.7; Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 pr.3-4; Statius, Silvae 5.5.40-41.
12. Young (1953:132-133) refers to the "clandestine" (ie carried out by night) cremations of infants in fourth and third century BC Athens; but recent research has shown that this pits were more likely used for animal sacrifice (Morris 1992:141 n.8).
13. Rose (1923:194) claims that slaves were "dangerous" in death because they were non-Roman/non-Italian and could have no legitimate sons. Néraudau (1987:204) regards the poor as "the dangerous classes of the city", buried at night because they were feared. Infants might have been perceived as "dangerous" on account of their marginality: their inability to talk, walk and act independently marked them out as different. Such beliefs would, however, suit a primitive society more than Republican and Imperial Rome.
15. According to Pliny (NH 7.54.187), the rite of cremation was adopted "after it became known that the bodies of those fallen in wars abroad were being dug up again". Apparently, the Cornelii were exceptional in practising inhumation in the Republican era, although Sulla insisted that he should be cremated (Cicero, de Leg. 2.22.57).

In the reign of Hadrian inhumation began to replace cremation as the predominant form of disposal; and by mid third century it was practised throughout the Empire (Toynbee 1971:40). Various suggestions have been
offered for the change from cremation to inhumation: the growth of new mystery religions (Cumont 1922:387-390); the increasing belief in the continued existence of the dead in mortal form and with individual characteristics (Richmond 1950:18-19); change in fashion - the popularity of ornate sarcophagi (Nock 1932; Morris 1992:chap.2).

16. For the inhumation/cremation distinction in primitive societies, see Chapter 4, p.84.

17. This belief in the afterlife as a return to the bosom of Mother Earth is discussed in Chapter 7, section iii, p.170.

18. See Morris (1992:chap.7, 176) on Vroulia, a small site in southern Rhodes: from the age of six all children were given the adult rite of cremation.

19. Cremation was the more expensive form of burial, for the very poor continued to be buried in mass graves when cremation was the predominant practice. Hopkins (1983:209) refers to the "expensive fuel" of cremations.

20. Boni’s excavations in the Sacra Via area of the Forum uncovered 41 burials in total (Gjerstad 1956:13; Bloch 1960:76-77; Holloway 1994:32), for the moment the 4 child burials, which belong to the post-hut phase of inhabitation, are omitted from the discussion. The dating of the earlier graves is by no means certain; each scholar seems to have different time divisions (Davies 1977:16). Indeed, it is not even agreed that these graves are actually within an area of contemporary hut settlement; one of the current ideas is that the stake holes are not in fact those of huts (Holloway 1994:54). However, the association between huts and children’s graves of the seventh century BC on the Palatine is accepted (Holloway 1994:52); it is not unlikely that the inhabitants of the Forum site also buried their young children within the area of the hut settlement.

Holloway (1994:chap.3) provides a useful discussion of the controversy over the chronology of the Forum burials. Here the chronology of Gjerstad has been adopted, simply for reasons of clarity; other scholars prefer a more detailed chronology and divide the Forum tombs into four periods, whereas Gjerstad adopts only three. Holloway (1994:46), on the basis of the chronologies of Colonna and Pinza, establishes a new chronological chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1000-875 BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period I</td>
<td>1000-875 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period II A</td>
<td>875-800 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period II B</td>
<td>800-750 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period III</td>
<td>750-700 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period IV</td>
<td>700-580 BC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the discussion here, the precise details of dating are not essential; the important point is that there is a cremation/inhumation distinction between the adult and child burials in the Forum that date to c.725-625 BC.


22. On burial clubs, see Hopkins (1983:212-15); Flambard (1987). A number of inscriptions provide details of membership, fees, services, etc. of burial clubs in various parts of Italy; one of the most well-known being that in Lanuvium, AD 136 (CIL14 2112; ILS 7212). Some funerary monuments mention that they were erected from burial club funds (CIL6 4421; 5818; 5961; 9320; 10415; 21415), although infants were probably not enrolled as members. See Rose (1986:136-8) on burial clubs in nineteenth century Britain.

23. Many columbarium inscriptions can be found at various points throughout the whole of CIL6 (e.g. 15770; 15805; 17101; 17167; 27534; 34815);
but these tend to occur as isolated instances and, therefore, the following information is based only upon the epitaphs catalogued in the Columbaria section itself.
24. 5160; 5305; 5440; 7303; 7308.
25. 7540 (3yr old boy); 7577 (2yr old boy); 33688 (1yr old boy). These sarcophagi are likely to be later than the cremation burials, and may date to a period when the columbaria were reused.
26. 13302; 14469; 14290; 15381; 15709; 23609; 34257.
27. To these (see p.85) can be added examples from premodern European societies; e.g. the custom "retained for a very long time" by the Basques of burying children who had died unbaptised in the house, on the threshold or in the garden (Ariès 1960:37).
28. See Kurtz and Boardman (1971:188;331).
29. Varro, RR 3.3.5; Vitruvius, de Architect. 2.9.16; Pliny, NH 5.160.
30. The fortieth day after birth is significant in Christianity; this may have influenced Fulgentius, who was a bishop, in his use of 40 days. Eastern Orthodox practice favours an interval of 40 days between birth and baptism; and, according to Medieval Byzantine doctrine, women were impure for 40 days after birth and were forbidden to enter Church in this period. See J. Baun (1994), "The fate of babies dying before baptism in Byzantium", 115-125. In D. Wood (ed), The Church and Childhood, Blackwell, Oxford. Fulgentius may also have been influenced by those authors who stress the importance of the first forty days of life (Aristotle, Hist. Anim. 8.587b; Pliny, NH 7.4; Celsus, de Med. 2.1.20).
31. Gjerstad (1953:29): in the three instances where child inhumations are represented, all are buried together with their mothers.
32. Various suggestions have been offered for the beliefs behind the practice of house burial: rebirth (King 1903:84; Bendann 1930:273; Gjerstad 1956:156); the earth as the replenisher of life (Richmond 1950:26ff); indifference to the very young and their harmlessness in death (Hertz 1960:84; Ucko 1969:271). Garland (1990:156) concludes that "a conflicting network of feelings" lies behind burial within the home, "comprising not only indifference and neglect but also tenderness and compassion"; see Golden (1988:156).
33. Infants under 40 days may have been buried only in the simplest of manners because of the very high death rate in the first few critical weeks, and their almost complete lack of personality at this age (Aristotle, Hist. Anim. 587b6). See n.47, p.252, for a possible exception.
34. The agger of Servius Tullius was said to have been built in the mid sixth century BC; the visible fortifications of what is termed the "Servian Wall" actually date to the period after the Gallic invasion of 396 BC (Holloway 1994:96-98). Only in the Imperial era did Rome expand beyond the limit of the Servian Wall: of the fourteen districts, eight were within the limit of the Servian Wall, and six were outside (Yavetz 1958:504, n.7a).
35. Burial in the Campus Martius was accorded, by law or senatorial decree, to important persons, such as Sulla (Plutarch, Sulla 38) and Agrippa (Dio 54.28), a distinction reflected by the similar location of Augustus' Mausoleum (Dio 69.23).
36. On burial outside, see Varro, LL 25; Propertius 3.16.21,30; 4.7.29,84; Vitruvius, de Architect. 2.83; Petronius, Satyr. 62; Juvenal, Sat. 1.170-171; 5.55; Martial, Epigr. 12.72.1. The rich would be buried on their country estates (Martial, Epigr. 10.43; Dig. 47.12.5); but under M. Aurelius and L. Verus, this long-established custom was forbidden (SHA, M. Ant. 12.14).
37. See Dig. 11.8.2-3 (an early third century AD edict which permits praetorial action against burial in public places) and Dig. 47.12.3.5 (a rescript issued by Hadrian prohibiting burial within municipal towns).
38. For a description of this boundary stone, see A. E. Gordon, "Seven Latin inscriptions in Rome", pp.77-9 (Pl.1a), Greece and Rome, 20, 1951, 75-96;
Hopkins (1983:210) offers the following translation of the decree:

I. Sentius, son of Gaius, praetor,
has made regulation
by decree of the Senate, about the siting of graves.
For the public good. No burning of
corpse beyond this maker in the
direction of the City. No dumping of
odour or of corpses.

Take shit further on, if you want to avoid trouble.

CIL6 31615

The two other copies are CIL 3823; 31614 (ILS 6082; 8208).

39. Varro, LL v.25; Horace, Sat.1.8.7-16; Martial, Epigr. 2.81; 8.75.9; Suetonius,
Domit. 17; Lucan, Phars. 8.736; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 4.40; Porphyrio ad Hor. Ep. 5.100. For the Esquiline as a burial ground, see Horace, Epodes 5. 98-99.

40. See R. Lanciani, "Le antichissime sepolture Esquiline", Bulletin della commissione archeologica communale di Roma, 3, 1875, pp. 41; 190 on the excavation of 75 trenches, believed to be puticuli, in the area to the north of the Porta Esquillina. The contents included a mass of human and animal bones, lamps and vases. In his later work, Ancient Rome in the light of recent discoveries (London, 1888), p.65, Lanciani describes the discovery, near the Esquiline cemeteries of a mass grave dated to the late Republic, which contained the crumbled remains of 24,000 corpses. In early eighteenth century London the impoverished were buried in "poor" holes: these were large, deep open pits (Stone 1977:78).

41. For other large groups of infant skeletons, see Chapter 2, p.37. Such mass burials should not be arbitrarily interpreted as evidence for infanticide (Cocks 1921:150; Collis 1977:29); but may in fact be infant cemeteries (Angel 1945:311; Parkin 1992:171, n.127: Scott 1992:78).

42. For the most detailed catalogue of ash-chests from Rome, see Sinn (1987).

43. On Roman grave altars in general, see Boschung (1987).

44. Only 5 altars in Boschung (1987) belong to infants aged four and under: CIL6 15114 (described simply as a "marble tablet" in CIL); 15893; 19159 (large marble altar); 24209 ("marble cippus" in CIL); 33776 ("marble cippus" in CIL).

45. For detailed studies of sarcophagi, see Cumont (1942); Turcan (1958); Toynbee (1971:270ff); Nock (1946); Koch and Sichtermann (1982); Panofsky (1992). Most recently, see G. Koch (1993) Sarkophage der römischen kaiserzeit, Wiensenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt. On children's sarcophagi in particular, see J. Huskinson (1996) Roman children's sarcophagi, Clarendon Press, Oxford. Dr. Huskinson's book was published too late to be considered in this thesis, but I am extremely grateful to her for allowing me access to as yet unpublished information.

46. The number of babies six months and under commemorated by sarcophagi is significant in comparison with the representation of this age group in Columbaria inscriptions and in CIL6 as a whole:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbaria</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIL6</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. The chest length of those sarcophagi on which the age of the deceased child was specified was used as a means to identify uninscribed sarcophagi of comparable size as also belonging to infants.
48. None of these biographical sarcophagi can be said, on the basis of age in the inscription, to belong to infants. The size and the ubiquitous presence on those sarcophagi, where no inscription is given, of scenes from school suggest that they were intended for children beyond the age of infancy. However, in the case of sarcophagi whose size implies that they contained the remains of a very young child the idea of precocity or anticipation of future achievements should not be ruled out.

49. For the *puer senex* motif and laments for untimely death, see Chapters Eight, pp.189ff, 203 and Nine, pp.229-231.

50. Numerous other types of funerary monument are not considered here; for example family reliefs (Kleiner 1977), such as free-standing statues, full-length and portrait-bust reliefs. The majority of these monuments have no inscription, and those which do (*CIL* 17204; 21381; 28774) do not specify the age of the children. Commemorative plaques, which could be fixed on to the wall above niche burials in Columbaria or were free-standing stelai (*CIL* 28055; 27799), do feature inscriptions; however, since the same conclusions apply to plaques commemorating infants as to other infant funerary monuments, a detailed assessment of them has not been given here.

51. See Dig. 11.7.2.1; 11.7.6 on restrictions applying to slaves and freedmen.

52. Parts of cemeteries reserved exclusively for infant burials have been found throughout Greece (Kurtz and Boardman 1971:190). A similar practice exists in many British cemeteries today (see Chapter 9, p.223ff).

53. See Chapter 5, p.103. According to a survey of "cot death" in England and Wales, in 1981 only 6% of parents whose babies were registered as victims of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome purchased a headstone, gravestone or memorial tablet; however, in all cases parents paid for either burial or cremation, with the majority opting for a funeral service and only "a few" chose burial in a communal grave without any form of ritual (Golding et al. 1985:162). In Early Modern England, which had an infant mortality comparable to that of Rome, although infants tended not to be commemorated by a memorial in stone, "the burial ceremonies for these babies were still decently observed" (Gittings 1984:82).

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOURNING: THE CULTURAL RESPONSE TO INFANT DEATH

I I
FUNERALS AND AFTERLIFE BELIEFS

In his letter of consolation, written late first/early second century AD, to his wife on the death of their two year old daughter (Cons. ad ux. 612.12), Plutarch had mentioned several customs which distinguished infant burials from those of other age groups: the ritual at the grave; the afterlife beliefs; the law against the mourning of infants. Plutarch may be describing Greek customs of infant burial, since he himself is Greek and his daughter died in Greece, but there are Roman parallels for these peculiarities. This chapter will continue to explore the themes of the preceding chapter: the response of the Romans as a culture to infant death; the extent to which the mortuary practices of the very young differed from older age groups. Here “mourning” is taken further to encompass the funeral, funerary rites and afterlife beliefs. Throughout, an effort will again be made to interpret the different practices associated with infant burial.

(i) Laws of mourning

Athenian law contained a number of edicts concerned with funerary practices: the definition of various types of acceptable monument; restrictions upon funeral expenses and the number of mourners (Demosthenes, 43.62; Plato, Laws 12. 959D; Plutarch, Solon 21.4-5; Cicero, de Legib. 2.64-66)\(^1\). The "Law of Solon" had attempted to curtail the extravagant lamentations of female mourners at funerals; however, no surviving Athenian law prescribes the extent to which it was permissible to mourn depending on the age of the deceased. This omission might be no more than an accident of preservation of texts, but Plutarch could be referring to Rome in this case. At Rome the law designating the period of mourning - up to a maximum of ten months, one calendar year prior to Caesar’s reform - in accordance with the age of the deceased was supposed to have been instituted in the regal period by Numa:
Numa himself also regulated the periods of mourning according to ages. For instance, over a child of less than three years there was to be no mourning at all; over one older than that, the mourning was not to last more months than it had lived years, up to ten; and no age was to be mourned longer than that, but ten months was the period set for the longest mourning. This is also the period during which women who have lost their husbands remain in widowhood, and she who took another husband before this term was out, was obliged by the laws of Numa to sacrifice a cow with a calf.

Plutarch, *Numa* 12.2

On two later occasions this law was reinforced. In the Hadrianic and Antonine period, the jurist Pomponius (ap. Vatic. fr.321 = FIRA 2.536) advocated that for children aged 3-10 years the months of mourning were to correspond to the years that the child had lived; for 1-3 year olds there was to be "a little mourning" (sublugere); babies under one year were not to be lamented at all. In the final reissue of this law, by the jurist Paul early in the third century, the restrictions on the law of mourning of all young children were even more rigidly applied:

Parents, and children over six years of age, can be mourned for a year, children under six for a month. A husband can be mourned for ten months, close blood relations for eight months. Whoever acts contrary to these restrictions is placed in public disgrace.

Paul, *Sententiae* 1.21.2-5, 8-14

Therefore, in legal terms, the stipulated period of mourning for an infant (0-4 years) could range from a complete prohibition on all lamentation to a maximum of four months, depending on the age of the child. Mourning, according to the legal definition, entailed abstinence from feasts, jewellery, purple and white clothes (Paul, *Sent*. 1.21.14).

The use of officially appointed, or at least socially recognised, limitations upon the length of mourning for very young children has many cross-cultural parallels. Among the Olo Ma’anyan of Southern Borneo, even the parents do not lament the death of a child under seven years for more than a week; the Kayak of Borneo have forbidden all public displays of sorrow for a child as yet unnamed, i.e. less than one month old (Hertz 1960:84). Anthropologists commonly explain such restricted mourning as a reflection of the child’s marginal status in the society in question. Since young children were not yet fully-recognised members of the community, their deaths did not have any impact upon society nor cause any disruption
of the social order, and so did not require any extensive period of public mourning.

Therefore, in Roman society, with an infant mortality rate comparable to that of many primitive cultures, the existence of laws prescribing the official length of mourning in accordance with the age of the deceased is not remarkable. The legal restrictions and prohibitions on the mourning of infants could be the response of authority to the generally high infant mortality rate. Perhaps, the terms of the laws were a reflection of the young child's marginality at the community level: the more the child acquires a socially-recognised existence, the greater the mourning permissible in public. However, in view of the importance accorded to the very young in other legal aspects\(^3\), such a gradation of lamentation is more likely to have been influenced by an assumed notion of varying degrees of affective relations. Officials and, by implication, society at large, might have believed that the older the child, the greater the emotional bond with parents and the deeper the sorrow at the disruption of this tie through the death of such a child\(^4\). The limitation of public mourning seems to have stemmed from a concern to preserve Rome's social fabric: in a society with a high level of mortality at all ages and where death could be both unexpected and inexplicable, prolonged displays of bereavement would have a corrosive effect upon the psyche of the population (Ochs 1993:33).

However, even though the reissues of the edicts were instituted under recognised jurists and are enshrined in the codex of Roman law, these laws cannot be accepted without qualification.

The workability of any legal enactment from a past society can never be fully known, but the success rate of an official act trying to regulate emotion can only have been minimal, unless the laws were merely reinforcing actual practice. The re-enactment of the law of mourning, on different terms on each occasion, alone suggests that a substantial number of parents - at least enough as to demand official intervention - were excessive, or were considered to be excessive, in their public sorrow for children who had died in infancy, and continued to be so in spite of the appointed period for mourning. Rome did not possess a cohesive social unit comparable to the primitive tribal communities mentioned above; therefore, there was greater scope for individual expression of grief in public. In such a society, intensity of grief for an infant will vary from individual to individual depending, not on age, but the extent to which the
child is loved and missed. More material considerations, such as the wealth and/or status of the child's family, could also determine the display of public sorrow.

Apart from women who had lost a husband and were bound by legal sanction to observe the ten month mourning period before remarriage, no penalty beyond the threat of "public disgrace" is prescribed for the violation of these laws. The provisions applicable to widows may have been prompted in part by the extravagant displays of public grief by women (Cicero, de Leg. 2.23.59): rending hair; beating the breast; wearing, and then ripping, mourning clothes; withdrawal from society\(^5\). Since there was no concerted effort to enforce them, strict adherence to the terms of these edicts could not have been realistically envisaged. The laws are, therefore, guidelines as to the length of time considered respectable to display sorrow in public at the death of various relatives. Designated periods of mourning, if they did have any force in the community, probably owe more to custom than to law.

In the context of infant death, these acts cannot be interpreted as proof that the Romans, on the whole, grieved little for children whom they lost in infancy. The private grief of many parents would have lasted beyond a month or two; this would depend very much on the individual's attachment to his or her child. The laws of mourning were probably a response to the extravagant displays of grief at funerals in general and to the high mortality rate among the very young. To try and conceal the frequency of infant deaths by keeping grief out of the public eye might have been an attempt by the authoritative powers to preserve the psychology of community.

(ii) Funerary rites

This section on mortuary ritual will be concerned with another custom mentioned by Plutarch (Cons. ad ux. 612.12) as a peculiarity of infant burial - the funerary rites performed for infants\(^6\).

Cahen's article on Funus in Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines (2-2: 1386-1409) provides a convenient and detailed description of
the procedures that accompanied the deaths of various individuals in Roman society. The type of ritual for which literary references are most numerous is the funus translaticium (vulgare) of a private citizen. The sequence of this funeral is outlined below. The description given is very generalised, but is designed to embrace all the various procedures that could occur in a funus translaticium. Such a detailed ceremony would obviously be conducted only at the funeral of someone with wealth, typically an adult male of the elite.

When death was near, relatives gathered round the dying person's bed to offer comfort and to grieve. At the moment of death the closest male relative gave the final kiss (Suetonius, Aug. 99; Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 3.2) in order to catch the deceased's soul as it left the body with the last breath (Cicero. In Verr. 5.45, 118; Virgil, Aen. 4.684-5). The eyes of the departed would be closed (Ovid, Tristia 3.3.44; Virgil, Aen. 9.486-7); lamentation would break out, and the dead person would be called upon by name (Seneca, de Tran. An. 12.7); the call would be repeated until the corpse was carried to burial or cremation (Servius, ad Aen. 6.218) to ensure the certainty of the death (Pliny, NH 7.52). The body was then laid on the ground (Ovid, Tristia 3.3.40), washed in hot water (Apuleius, Met. 8.14), perfumed (Lucian, de Luctu 11) and dressed in the toga (Martial, Epigr. 9.57.8). A coin would be placed in its mouth to pay Charon, who ferried souls across the Styx to Hades (Juvenal, Sat. 3.267).

Until the time of burial the body was laid out in the atrium of the house on an ornate bed, with the feet of the departed pointing towards the house door (Persius, Sat. 3.103-5); this period of lying-in-state could last as long as a week (Servius, ad Aen. 5.64; 6.218). The marble relief, of late Flavian/early Trajanic date, from the Tomb of the Haterii depicts a deceased woman laid out on a couch in the atrium of her house, around her are hired mourners, grieving relatives and freed slaves (Toynbee 1971:44-45). The nearest relatives sat by the bed (Dio Cassius 58.2), surrounded it with flowers (Pliny, NH 21.1 & 3) and burned incense; friends would come to lay flowers and wreathes (Dion. Hal. 11.39; Pliny, NH 10.43). A slave or a mercenary soldier was in charge of guarding and fanning the corpse (Dio Cassius 74.4; Apuleius, Met. 2.21 & 23). To show that a death had occurred, branches of fir (Pliny, NH 16.10.40) or cypress (Horace, Odes 2.14.23) would be planted in front of the door; and, as a final sign of mourning, no fire would be lit in the house.
The funeral itself, if the deceased was a wealthy individual, comprised three distinct acts: the transportation of the corpse from the house to be cremated or to the tomb; the entombment; the acts of purification.

The transportation of the corpse was on an ornate bier, borne by male relatives or friends, or by freed slaves and was centred around a lavish procession. At the head walked trumpeters (Propertius 2.7.12) and flute-players (Ovid, Tristia 5.1.48) who would accompany the dirges of the hired female mourners (praeficiae; Varro, de LL 7.70). These women would tear their hair and beat their breasts while uttering piercing cries. Behind the bier came the cortege proper (funus comitari; Ovid, Pont. 1.9.48) of relatives and friends. In this part, the women would give the most extravagant display of grief; like the praeficiae, their hair would be dishevelled (Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 14) and sometimes covered with ash (Virgil, Aen. 10.844), their clothes, the black lugubria (Propertius 4.11.97), torn (Virgil, Aen. 12.609) and they would be uttering laments (Juvenal, Sat. 13.30) while beating their breasts (Cicero, TD. 3.26). Men would exchange their gold rings for iron (Suetonius, Aug. 100), and magistrates wore the black praetexta (praetexta pulla). Boys walked with their head covered (Servius, ad Aen. 3.407); girls, dressed in black, kept their faces uncovered (Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 14). The marble relief, late Republican or Augustan in date, from Amiternum (Appendix 2: Fig.6) provides the most complete visual representation of the funeral of a man of some social standing. The bier with its canopy of moon and stars, which supports the funerary couch where the deceased is laid out on two mattresses and pillows, is carried by eight bearers. In front of the bier are musicians and hired mourners; to the rear are the wife and daughters of the deceased, slaves and other female relatives (Toynbee 1971:46-47; Walker 1985:9-10; pl.2).

In this order the cortege proceeded to the place of burial, where the rite of disposal would be either inhumation or cremation. Inhumation would involve enclosing the corpse in a chest of some form and placing it in a grave or in the family tomb. Cremation could take place at the actual site of burial (bustum denotes both pyre and tomb; Servius, ad Aen. 11.201) or in a special place for cremations (ustrinum/ustrina); in this case the remains would then be deposited in an urn and inserted in chamber-tombs or columbaria. The pyre was made from a mass of wood (Cicero, de Fin 3.22; TD 1.35), papyrus could be added to assist burning (Martial, Epigr. 8.44.13; 10.97); members of the funeral cortege would fan away the foul odour that emitted with cypress branches. The eyes of the deceased would be opened before incineration (Pliny, NH 11.37.150), and then personal items and gifts
would be placed on the pyre. Relatives and friends uttered the last call to the deceased (Servius, *ad Aen. 6.218*) and, with averted face, lit the pyre with the torches that they had been carrying in the funeral procession (Dio Cassius 76.115; Appian, *BC* 1.48).

After the incineration of the corpse, the pyre was extinguished with water or wine (*Statius, Silvae* 2.6.90-1). The cortege departed after saying a final farewell and left the relatives to gather the burned bones and place them in a piece of linen (Tibullus, 1.3.5; 3.2.38). Both cremation and inhumation burials had to be "legitimised" by a covering of earth; in the case of incineration, since there was no body to be buried, the ritual involved cutting off one of the deceased's fingers (*os resectum*) and throwing over it three handfuls of earth in a symbolic act of burial (Servius, *ad Aen.* 2.116; 4.512). The tomb would then be consecrated by the sacrifice of a pig (Cicero, *de Legibus* 2.22).

Since the home and family of the deceased were tainted (*funestae*) from the moment of death, a complex ritual of purification had to be enacted in order to remove this stain. Before the burial, the house would be swept clean and after the funeral all those who had participated in the funeral would be purified with water and fire (Servius, *ad Aen.* 6.229). The purification of the family comprised two acts: the funerary meal (*silicernium*), which involved the sacrifice of a sow. The meal itself included the customary food - eggs, celery, beans, lentils, salt, bread, poultry and wine; a share of this was given to the deceased (*Lucian, de Luctu* 9). Finally, the domestic Lar was purified by the sacrifice of a ram (Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.22.55). During this period of purification (*feriae denicales*), the family would abstain from all agricultural work (*Cicero, de Legibus* 2.21) and all citizen duties, such as serving in the army (Aulus Gellius, *NA* 16.4) and acting as a juror (*Dig.* 2.4.2; 2.11.4.2).

The funerary rites continued for a period of nine days after the burial (*novendial; Apuleius, *Met.* 9.31.3*). The *novendial* was concluded by another series of propitiary rites: libations of wine to the departed and a sacrifice to ensure that the soul of the deceased became one of the family's protective deities (Servius, *ad Aen.* 3.168). A set meal then followed (*cena novendialis; Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.5*), for which the guests laid aside their clothes of mourning (*Cicero, in Vat.* 12). If the deceased had sufficient wealth, then on the ninth day after the burial funeral games might be held (*ludi novendialis; Servius, *ad Aen.* 5.64*). Ritual visits to the tomb would continue to be made throughout the year, particularly at the festivals devoted to the worship of
the dead - at the *Parentalia* (13-21 February), the main festival for the dead and at the *Lemuria* (9, 11, 13 May); the *Rosaria* (May and June), although not exclusively a festival for the dead, was a time when the family would decorate their relatives’ memorials with roses - when all public business was suspended and temples were closed. These festivals were held to honour the memory of the deceased and also served as occasions for keeping the tomb in neat order. Some testators would bequeath sums of money for the provision of ritual libations, flowers and funerary meals during festivals and other anniversaries, such as birthdays (Toynbee 1971:62).

To what extent the *funus translaticium* commonly followed this pattern is not known; the ritual would have varied from individual to individual. However, according to the literary sources, the only recipients of such a complex series of rites were men, either adults or adolescents, of wealth and, habitually, of upper class status - though the inherent male bias of the literature must be taken into account in this instance. In Rome, as in other cultures, the format of a funeral would depend essentially upon the wealth and status of the deceased (Plato, *Laws* 12.959D, on Athens); and, for the Romans, such considerations were legally enforced (*Dig. 11.12.5-6*). The Twelve Tables, 451-0 BC, had tried to establish a degree of uniformity in all funerals in order to prevent lavish displays, but these prescriptions had no effect, as subsequent literary accounts attest. The expense of a funeral had been limited by this law to "three veils, a purple tunic, and ten flute-players"; open lamentation was to be severely curtailed - "Do not let women scratch their cheeks, nor have a *lessum* at funerals"; and there was to be "no lavish sprinkling, no long garlands, no incense-boxes" (Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.23.59; 24.60). Cicero himself was appreciative of the value of the law:

> These stipulations are praiseworthy and in general common both to the rich and the masses; because it is indeed natural that distinctions in fortune should be removed in death.
> Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.23.59

From the literary evidence, it seems unlikely that women were given equally opulent funerals, and for infant children, there appears to be no doubt that their burial rites were extremely simple by comparison. In contrast to the lengthy period of "lying-in-state" for up to a week that could be accorded to prominent and wealthy individuals (Servius, *ad Aen.* 5.64; 6.218), infants were probably buried on the day of death or the day after, as
happens in a number of tribal cultures. In Rome, then, as in Greece and in premodern and primitive societies generally, a system of hierarchy operated in death. Prominent among anthropological investigations into status-determined rituals at death is the study of Hertz (1960:76;84; see Chapter 4, p.84); Binford offers a useful summary:

When a child dies within a society in which social position is not inherited, very few duty-status relationships outside of the immediate family are severed. The level of corporate involvement in the mortuary rites is thus largely at the familial level; the rites are performed either within the precincts of the family's "life space" or outside the life space of the wider society, which therefore remains uninvolved in the mortuary rites. Upon the death of adults, their greater participation in the social life is recognized by rites conducted in a more obtrusive fashion in a location more in keeping with the scale of corporate involvement. Frequently such burials are accompanied by processions through the life space of the wider community.

Binford 1972:234

In the case of deaths which do not entail social disruption, any rituals will be "largely a matter of personal feeling". Among the Aborigines of South East Australia the bodies of children under 4 years are buried without any ceremony one day and one night after death (Frazer 1913:205). The LoDogaa of North West Africa only perform a third of the full funeral ceremony in the case of unweaned infants (Goody 1962:114;149).

Therefore, although Rome was not as unified social unit as these primitive cultures with their strict hierarchy of status and although, in consequence, the scope for individual action among the Romans was much greater, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the Romans too performed a very simple and brief burial rite for infants. Plutarch (Cons. ad ux.6.12) had stressed that the death of a child in infancy did not require the usual funerary rites, such as libations and sitting beside the body in lamentation, because they had not been fully integrated into the world and so their souls returned immediately to the heavenly heights.

However, age as a determining factor of the intensity of funeral ritual applied also among infants. The deaths of babies who had not yet undergone the dies lustricus ceremony (eight or nine days after birth), when the child was formally acknowledged and given a name, probably occasioned very little, if any, ritual; perhaps no more than the act of burial. Those who had been named, but were still unweaned and had not yet cut
their teeth (i.e. under six months) would have received more of a ceremony. In addition to the actual burial, there might be a simple libation and some sign of public mourning on the part of the mother at least. Probably it is to these two age groups, the first in particular, that Plutarch is referring when he describes the absence of all ritual for children who die in infancy (Cons. ad ux. 612); so too Cicero, when he says that some people think that the death of an infant still in the cradle should not be mourned at all (TD 1.39.93). But for infants who had passed the weaning stage and had shown signs of individual personality and independent action, a more detailed ceremony could be performed. The verse epitaph dedicated to Speratus, aged between 5 and 9 months (CIL6 26680), mentions the tears shed at the child's funeral. The extent of this ritual can only be speculated at, since society did not prescribe a fixed set of rites in such cases and the sort of ceremony must have been very much the choice of the individual.

Further details of infant funerary rites may be conjectured from the existence of laws restricting the mourning of infants (section i). The fact that three variations of this edict were issued suggests that mourning (i.e. funerary rites as well as public displays of sorrow) of very young children was a familiar occurrence. Evidently this mourning went beyond the stage of libations and offerings at the burial site. If the funerary practices described by Plutarch can be taken as applicable to Rome, as was argued in the first chapter on Mourning (p.125), then his praise of his wife's restraint at the death of their two year old daughter, Timoxena, would suggest that many mothers were quite excessive in the mourning of infant children:

This also those who were present repeat with amazement - that you have not even put on mourning, that you did not subject yourself or your women to any uncomeliness or ill-usage, and there was no sumptuous display, like that of a festival, at the burial, but that everything was done with decorum and in silence, in the company of our nearest kin . . .

Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 608(4)

This passage also suggests that the burial of an infant child was attended by people who were not relatives. These relatives are probably the visitors whose lamentations provoke sorrow (Cons. ad ux. 610.7; 611.9) or hired mourners. Even Plutarch's claim that "everything was done with decorum . . ." indicates the performance of some rites. This suggestion of a funerary ritual contrasts with the impression given later of the absence of all ritual
action at infant burials (Cons. ad ux. 612.12); though Plutarch is likely to be describing a philosophical ideal more than the reality. The complaint against husbands who permit their wives "to crop their heads in mourning, to dye their clothes black, to sit in uncomely posture and lie in discomfort" (Cons. ad ux. 609.5) illustrates the sort of public behaviour that Plutarch regarded as unacceptable at the death of an infant.

Various types of funerary artifacts associated with the very young also imply that a ceremony of some sort accompanied the burial of infants. In the preurban tombs found in the Sacra Via area of the Roman Forum traces of carbonised grains of emmer, spelt, wheat, barley; grass peas; grape pips; and animal bones (pig, sheep) in infant graves show that sacrifices had been made in honour of the dead (Gjerstad 1956:156-160). Food was traditionally placed in tombs, the belief being that nourishment was needed in the afterlife (Cumont 1922:50). In the historical period, the very existence of commemorative plaques, ash-chests, urns, cippi, funerary altars, sarcophagi and other forms of funerary memorial dedicated to infants implies the performance of the usual practices - lamentation by relatives, libations, offerings. However, repeated visits long after the burial at Festivals and birthdays may not have been as common; although, if there were other relatives buried in the same tomb, the family might continue to honour deceased infants too on special occasions.

As mentioned, infants would not have had the sumptuous funeral described in Daremberg and Saglio's Dictionnaire des Antiquités; but sarcophagi reliefs suggest that one aspect at least of the funerary ceremony was accorded to infants: the conclamatio, the lament around the death-bed when the departed was called upon by name (Ovid, Tristia 3.40; Servius, ad Aen. 6.21). Several sarcophagi feature such a scene, and all are designed for young children. One such example can be found in the British Museum: the facade of the sarcophagus (late second century AD) shows the conclamatio around the death-bed of an infant girl (Appendix 2: Fig.7; Walker 1985:48, pl.40; Walker 1990:17-18; pl.2, fig.6). Walker gives the following description:

The principal scene shows the deceased girl propped on pillows on a kline with a high back. Beneath the kline a pet dog plays with a garland that has fallen from her hand. The girl's slippers are laid on a plain footstool beside the dog. At the head of the bed a bearded and veiled man sits on a folding stool, his legs crossed. He holds his head in grief. Similarly depicted is a woman in a high-backed chair at the foot of the
bed, her arms and legs uncrossed. These are most probably the parents of the dead girl. A young man, his tunic rolled down to his waist, stands in front of the mother. The only male to appear in that part of the scene, he may be a brother of the dead girl. Two women mourn behind the mother's chair, and two men behind the father. Around the bed are three mourners.

Walker 1990:17

Walker goes on to say that the small group of children's sarcophagi depicting the rite of *conclamatio* "shows such consistency in technique that the sarcophagi may be products of the same workshop. Though the figures of the mourners are generalised, the age and the sex of each deceased child is clearly indicated. The figures are intended as portraits of the deceased". The interior of this particular sarcophagus in the British Museum has two circular depressions beside the headrest; these were probably designed to contain offerings of liquid or food.

A scene - also featuring a young girl - identical to that on the British Museum example is found on a sarcophagus façade, now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris (Daremberg & Saglio 2.2:1386, fig. 3357; Toynbee 1971:288-9, n.119; pl.10); although in this case the father is clasping his right knee with his hands, rather than holding his head in grief. A relief in the Louvre depicts a young boy or girl lying on the funerary couch. Again, the grief-stricken father sits at the head, the mother at the foot; nine mourners - four female (three behind the couch), five male - stand nearby. In the necropolis under St. Peter's a child's sarcophagus (the inscription has no name, only *mensibus vi diebus x*), depicting three Cupids upholding two garlands, has a relief of a grieving father on the left side and a grieving mother on the right. The poses of the parents are comparable to those on the *conclamatio* sarcophagi (Toynbee and Ward-Perkins 1951:88-89).

These scenes on sarcophagi of *conclamatio* around the death-bed of a young child might be merely decorative in purpose; a standard motif for the grief of parents, without any correlation between art and ritual, as is suggested by the similarities between the various depictions. However, since the scene is supposed to be an episode from the life of the deceased and is free from mythological or divine allegories, then this basic uniformity need not mean that parents never grieved in the manner shown on these reliefs. If the rite of *conclamatio* could be performed for the very young, then other traditional features of the funeral ceremony could equally have been carried out for infants - the washing, anointing
and dressing of the body; the placing of the coin in the mouth; the libations and offerings at the burial, etc.

Therefore, although the extant source material provides no clear account of the funerary rites accorded to infants in Roman society, from the evidence, it would seem that the burial ritual of the very young was not as different from that of other age groups as Plutarch claims and the laws of mourning imply. The infant ceremony would obviously have been less detailed, with fewer mourners and a simple ceremony at the grave, as their age and social position would dictate, than that of older children and adults in general. Yet the growth in numbers and diversity of Rome's population in the historical era, especially in Imperial times, and the concomitant increase in importance of the individual over the collective social group could have had an effect on infant funerary rites. In this period the personal circumstances of the individual (financial position; depth of affectionate attachment) would have had a greater influence upon the extent of the mortuary ritual for infants than in the past when considerations of custom were more effective in dictating the form of funeral ceremonies. Since there was no pressure or even expectation at the societal level to bury young children with minimal rites, then the status-determined funeral described by Binford above cannot be wholly applicable to Rome.

(iii) Afterlife beliefs

This final section on the mourning of infants will focus on the fate that the Romans envisaged for the very young after death.

In his letter of consolation Plutarch had instructed his wife not to grieve for their infant daughter because she had "departed to a better dispensation and a region too that is better and more divine" (Cons. ad ux. 612.11). So Plutarch imagines that his daughter's soul, released from its bodily prison and untainted by earthly corruption, has returned to its natural state in the high heavens.

According to Plutarch, one of the notions held by the ancients of the afterlife that awaited infants was derived from the Pythagorean and Stoic doctrine of the immortal soul being reunited at death with the fiery ether.
from which it originated and enjoying the company of the gods and other souls of the blessed. Visions of an afterlife in the upper air, being essentially philosophical, may have been more popular among the literary elite. But, as verse epitaphs reveal, such notions filtered down to lower social levels, largely through the influence of Eastern religions and mystery cults which promised devotees eternal bliss in the next world.

As will be shown in Chapters 8 & 9, the age-old belief in the Underworld, as described by Homer and Virgil, as the dwelling-place of the dead also imagined that infants went to Hades. Along with others who had died before their time, infants were excluded from the Underworld proper; their souls remained at the threshold, weeping (Virgil, Aen. 6.426-9). Timarchus, a traveller to the world beyond in his oracular dream, sees a similar sight: from a deep abyss comes "the wailing of innumerable babes" (Plutarch, de Genio Socratis 590F).

Cumont (1922:128-136), who traces most notions of the afterlife back to Pythagoreanism, believes that Virgil and Plutarch are adapting the Pythagorean belief that if the soul was torn untimely or violently from the body, then it had to spend a miserable existence near the earth until the completion of the allotted years. These souls, Cumont states, could become malevolent and vengeful demons; but since it was unacceptable to think of young, innocent children condemned to suffering, there developed beliefs in a kinder existence after death: the return of the soul to its place of origin in the high heavens. Cumont's notion of a transitional period spent by the souls of the prematurely dead is criticised by Nock (1946:1-43 n.15), who correctly points out that no beliefs in the anthropomorphic existence of the soul envisage the dead as growing older in the next life; the departed are always imagined as remaining exactly as at death.

In support of Nock's assessment must be included Roman conceptions about continuance after death, as illustrated by Virgil's portrayal of the Underworld and the various dreams of the dead recorded in literature (e.g. Propertius 4.7; Tibullus 2.6.36-40), where the dead are envisaged in their living forms. Among the Romans, even at the popular level, there is no evidence for a fear of the premature dead as malevolent spirits. Moreover, the whole idea of the Homeric/Virgilian Underworld, with its areas of blissful existence and of torture, does not appear to have been widely believed from the late Republic onwards and its continued popularity is
largely as a literary commonplace, favoured especially by poets. Authors in the late Republican and Imperial eras typically scorn traditional ideas of the Underworld, and claim that nowadays only old women and children believe such tales (Cicero, Tusculan Disputations 1.21.48; de Natura Deorum 2.2.5; Seneca, Ep. Mor. 24.18; Pliny, NH 2.63.15; Juvenal, Sat. 2.149ff). As Toynbee (1971:37) observes, epitaphs (excluding verse), funerary art, rites and artifacts associated with the place of burial all imply that the Romans as a whole did not really believe in Hades as the dwelling-place of the dead.

The theory of the upper air - either the sun, moon, stars or fiery ether, or some unspecified site - as the location of the afterlife, where the soul was restored to its natural state has already been commented upon. Only a few echoed the Epicurean belief that the soul was completely annihilated at death (Pliny, NH 7.55.188; CIL6 29884). In the case of innocent and helpless infants who had lived only a short time, such a fate might seem particularly cruel. For parents, the belief in some kind of existence beyond the grave must have been more comforting.

In the view of others, the dead would return to the bosom of Mother Earth, as the popular end-of-epitaph phrase sit terra tibi levis implies. As Richmond (1950:26) emphasises, such a belief, though it does not allow for the continuation of individuality, rests upon the notion of the fertile earth as the giver and replenisher of life. According to this line of thought, the wish expressed on epitaphs that ashes or bones may produce flowers (CIL9 3184). These ideas, claims Richmond (1950:27), lie behind the vegetative decoration that adorns so many aspects of Roman funerary art, especially ash-chests and sarcophagi - cornucopiae, garlands, baskets of fruit, flowers, leaves, sprays, etc. However, over the course of time such decoration would have lost much of its original symbolic meaning. By the second and third centuries AD, when the art of the sarcophagus was flourishing, vegetative designs tended to be either purely ornamental in purpose or were associated with the paradise promised to the adherents of mystery religions.

The extent to which this idea of a return to the Earth at death pervaded the minds of the Roman population cannot be gauged. The silence of the sources could be taken to imply that it was mainly a lower class idea; but even at this social level, such an ancient belief is unlikely to have been very popular. This primitive notion is more suited to the superstitions of
tribal, agriculture-based society such as archaic Rome.

As for infants, apart from the motifs from Nature on funerary monuments, there is no evidence to suggest that the Romans believed that their young children became participants in the cycle of Nature. The formula *sit tibi terra levis* is more likely to be a conventional end phrase and need not refer to anything more than the earth covering the body, without any implication of the afterlife of the deceased being bound up with the fertility of the Earth.

The majority of Romans who imagined some sort of continued existence after death seem to have thought that the spirits of the dead dwelled near or in the place of burial, and lived on in anthropomorphic form. The offerings of food and drink made at the time of death and, later, at the annual festivals of the dead suggest a belief that the dead continued to exist in human form and still needed to be nourished. Sarcophagi reliefs of the deceased participating in the funerary meal; tomb gifts such as vases and bowls; personal belongings - jewellery and toys for children; tombs designed and decorated in the form of houses (after the Etruscan fashion) all suggest that most Romans conceived of the dead as existing in human form, with the personality that they had in life, and continuing to enjoy activities of mortals. Numerous graves in the Isola Sacra cemetery (2nd-3rd century AD), north of Ostia, have been provided with libation pipes or amphorae into which portions of food, oil or wine could be given to the dead. Even young children were thought to require sustenance after death. The discovery of carbonised grains and animal bones in the children's tombs in the Sacra Via burials has already been mentioned (section ii, p.166). Among the tombs at the Herculaneum Gate, Pompeii, are two small, vaulted rectangular niche-tombs for children; in each case the urn was embedded in the ground beneath the apex of the niche and was provided with a libation pipe (Toynbee 1971:123). In the Vatican necropolis (1st-4th century AD) is a child's grave (Grave γ), an inhumation dating to the Hadrianic period, containing a terracotta coffin; the stone block which partially enclosed it had a vertical tube embedded in it (Toynbee 1971:51).

Various forms of the afterlife were envisaged by the Romans, because they were not united in a single faith. For a very small minority nothing of man remained after death; but all other creeds advocated immortality in some form or other. The only way to cope with the pervasive and arbitrary nature of death at all age and social levels was to believe that there was an
The most popular conception of this continued existence was in human form with individual personality, although each "sect" had its own particular ideas about the location of the afterlife: underground at the place of burial; the tomb itself; the upper atmosphere.

The Underworld as conceived of by Homer and Virgil, though popular in poetry, does not seem to have been wholly accepted. The Romans did not imagine that those children whom they lost in infancy would wander for all eternity at the entrance to Hades, bewailing their lot. For individual parents, it would be inconceivable that such a miserable existence would be spent by their child. Most evidence, particularly archaeology, suggests that the afterlife thought to be spent by infants was no different from that awaiting adults. Infant spirits also dwelled in or near the tomb, or up in the high heavens, where they associated with gods and Muses, or enjoyed the paradise delights promised to the adherents of such mystery religions as the Dionysiac and Isiac cults.

Conclusion

In the course of this discussion as to how the Romans as a social entity mourned the death of an infant child, it has emerged that only in the preurban era were young children accorded a unique form of burial. In the historical period certain evidence suggests that the funerary ritual of infants did have distinctive features, or was perfunctory in comparison to the normal adult ceremony: the inhumation of babies who had not yet cut their teeth; simple burial in mass graves; the laws of mourning; limited performance of funerary rites; under-representation in tombstone inscriptions. Funerary monuments, artifacts associated with the grave and afterlife beliefs, however, imply that a different or limited form of mourning for infants was not insisted upon by society. In the Imperial era at least, from which most of the relevant literary and archaeological material comes, the form of burial and rites would depend upon a combination of such external factors as the value of the child at the societal level, custom and the influence of current trends in mortuary practices in general, and circumstances peculiar to the individual: financial position and depth of affection for the deceased child. The extent of the role played by these public and private considerations will have varied from individual to individual.
However, at the cultural level it does not seem to have been expected that the Romans should be thorough in their treatment of infants at death. In general, the form of infant burial was less careful than that of other age and social groups (with the exception of the very poor), and the funerary ritual much simpler. If answers are to be sought for these limitations, then they must lie in the age and social marginality of infants. No evidence suggests that the Romans shared the views of many primitive peoples that the death of infants required minimal rites because a lengthy ceremony was not needed to aid their return to the spirit world, since they had been separated from it for only a short time. This belief seems to have been the view only of a small number of philosophical literati. The notion of the harmlessness of infant corpses could have been popular in Republican and Imperial times, although since Roman funerary rites prescribed a period of purification from the stain of death, they may have believed that infant corpses also caused pollution. However, the pollution from infant bodies is unlikely to have been regarded as very severe and their deaths may have needed only a simple rite of purification.

Differences in infant burial, if parents chose to make them, should not be explained in terms of parental negligence of or indifference to young children. Mortuary practices are concerned with the ritual expression of grief, not the emotion experienced by individual parents. Roman society as a whole did not expect an elaborate ritual at the death of an infant; but it does not follow that individual parents did not experience acute personal grief. It cannot be denied that, to a certain degree, cultural practices influence emotional expression; for Roman society, this is particularly true of the elite, of whom restraint in grief was required. This ideal would explain the absence of public mourning for infants by members, especially adult males in the public eye, of the upper classes. However, as the literature of this class demonstrates (see Chapter 8), the ideal often proved unworkable in reality. Republican and Imperial Rome was not a cohesive social unit like the primitive cultures to which anthropologists apply these principles. Therefore, in the case of infant death, the influence of social pressures to conform would have been much less, and the scope for the individual expression of emotion outside the private sphere much greater. In consequence, by the Imperial period the form of burial and the intensity of ritual accorded to infants at Rome was governed largely by the concerns of individual parents. Elaborate funerary rituals and monuments should, therefore, be seen as an indication of the depth of a parent’s attachment and of their grief at the loss of their child in infancy.
CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTES

2. On specific occasions mourning could end before the official time: an unexpected honour for the family; the betrothal of a daughter; the birth of a child; the return from captivity of a father; a child, a husband or a brother; participation in the mysteries of Ceres (Festus sv Minuebatur populo luctus). But for widows, mourning could only be ended before the designated ten months through pregnancy (Dig. 3.2.11.2) or special permission from the Emperor (Dig. 3.2.10).
3. Rawson 1986b:174; Dixon 1992:104-107. See Dig. 20.1.6.8: young children could not be used as a pledge.
4. Such a correlation between age and emotional response at death is theoretical only, and hardly reflective of the reality of parent-child relationships. See Chapter 4, p.92, for the notion that the age of the child has no bearing upon intensity of grief.
5. The excessive mourning of women became something of a literary stereotype, see Chapter 8, p.18-4.
7. On the source material problems involved in reconstructing the Roman funeral, see Hopkins (1983:203).
8. Hopkins (1983:202, n.2) refers to Livy's summary of Bk 48 where M. Aemilius Lepidus (d. 153-2 BC) instructs his sons to give him a relatively inexpensive funeral, costing "no more than one million asses". Hopkins calculates that this sum of 400,000 sesterces is "enough to sustain >800 peasant families at minimum subsistence for a year". See M. Gluckman (1937), "Mortuary custom and the belief in survival after death among the Southeastern Bantu", Bantu Studies, 11, 117-136, p124:

One must note, however, that there is no mean for funeral rites and variation from it, a death creates a different social situation according to the status, manner of death, of the deceased and each funeral involves the participation of different persons behaving in prescribed ways.

quoted by Binford 1972:226

10. "a sort of doleful lamenting", according to Cicero, de Leg. 2.23.59. The Roman law restricting expenditure and mourning at funerals was supposedly based upon that of Solon (Cicero, de Leg. 2.25.64). See Plutarch, Solon 21.4-5, for the limitations imposed by Solon on the mourning of women in Athens.
11. Women could, however, be given funeral orations (Cicero, de Leg. 2.24; Livy 5.50; Plutarch, Cam. 8; Dio 39.64; Suetonius, Iul. 8; Aug. 8) and so, by implication, elaborate funerals. The elaborate relief from the Tomb of the Haterii near Rome, and now in the Lateran Collection, depicts a woman propped up on pillows on a funerary couch (Toynbee 1971:81ff, pl.117).
12. See also Blauner (1966:379): "a key determinant of the impact of mortality is age and social situation of those who die".
13. In China mourning is worn only for children older than 8 years (Hertz 1960:152, n.332).
14. Even if infant burial practices were analogous to those of the poor, the problem of what rites were performed remains, since the ritual accorded to the poor is not clear. Propertius, in anticipation of his own death, shuns all funereal excess and asks only "the scanty rites of a common burial" (2.13.24: piebei parvae funeris exsequiae). Young children could, however,
be given elaborate funerals, as this extract from an epitaph to six year old Marcianus attests:

quam pie, quam crebre venit Sacra Via tota,
flavit et immensa turba funusque secutae!
dixerunt ferale diem stationibus atris,
quod tenerae aetati spes fallax apsutilit annos.
nes non omnigna passim vicinia venit,
ut mecum florem fato moriente viderent.

CII6 7578

How dutifully, in what a crowd came the whole Sacred Way, how the huge gathering wept and accompanied the funeral!
They said it was a day of the dead with its gloomy processions, because deceitful hope snatched years from such a tender age. All kinds of neighbours too came from everywhere to see the flower dying by fate along with me.

15. I should like to thank Janet Huskinson for pointing out to me that scenes of *conclamatio* only appear on children's sarcophagi. *Conclamatio* does feature on other funerary monuments dedicated to adults; e.g. *loculi* (none have mourners) and a group of third century *lenoi*, which are influenced by the second century children's sarcophagi (Walker 1990:17).
16. The sarcophagus is made of Carrara marble (Tuscany). Dimensions: H (chest) 36.2cm; (lid) 11cm; L 105cm; W 59.8cm. Interior H (chest) 23cm; L 96 cm; W 29cm. Sarcophagi with similar measurements which include the age of the deceased would suggest this *conclamatio* sarcophagus was intended for a child aged 2-4 years. Cf G.M.A. Hanfmann et al, American Journal of Archaeology, 57, p.242, pl.72:fig.24.
17. In Britain today, the burials of newborns and infants is much simpler than that of other funerals. According to Golding et al (1985:162), sometimes the format is burial in a communal grave without the presence of the parents, with no mourners, no Church service and only a rough wooden coffin.
18. This notion of the soul returning to the upper air is commonly found in *consolutions*, the lengthy philosophical letters written to comfort the bereaved on their loss; see Chapter 8, p. 205ff. Scrimshaw (1978:393) notes that the country people of Ecuador believe that when a baby dies, its soul flies directly to heaven; therefore, death is cause for celebration, since the child will not have to suffer poverty and has, instead, become one of God's "little angels".
19. See Chapter 9, p.232ff, on the various afterlife beliefs mentioned in funerary inscriptions.
20. Cf Plato, Rep. 10.6.15bc: "and other things not worthy of record he said of those who had just been born and lived but a short time". Warbuton (Loeb edit.) believes that this refers to "the doctrine of infants in purgatory". Servius, ad Aen. 6.426, say that in the Underworld the dead are surrounded by nine circles; the first of these holds the souls of infants, and is outside Hades proper; see Virgil, Aen. 6.426-429.
21. For the earliest allusion in Latin literature to the idea that those who had died untimely were excluded from the Underworld, see Plautus, *Most.* 490-1:

For Orcus did not wish Acheron to admit me, because I was deprived of life too early

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According to Tertullian, *de Anima* 56, the souls of those who have died prematurely wander until the completion of their allotted years.

22. In *Somnium Scipionis* (de Rep. 6.10ff), Cicero humanises the theory of astral deification: the souls of the blessed have a unique personality and are able to participate in activities similar to those they enjoyed in life. This idea of continued existence of the soul in mortal form, rather than a return to the pure natural state and a reunion with the fiery ether, becomes the more popular theory among Romans.


24. Panofsky (1992:23) stresses that the garland, so common a design in Roman funerary art, is not for "purely decorative purposes", but is a feature of the actual funeral ceremony. See Cicero, *de Leg.* 2.23.59, for the prohibition of the Twelve Tables on long garlands at funerals: garlands were a reward, a mark of honour and could only "be placed without fraud upon both the man who has earned it and also his father".

25. The dead were also perceived as *Manes*, "originally ghostly spirits, without personal or individual shape" (Hopkins 1983:227). From the first century BC, they were believed to have an independent existence (Propertius 4.7.1).


27. Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1956:145, fig. 13) date the child's grave to the end of the reign of Vespasian (69-79 AD).

28. Nock (1946:144, n. 19) correctly queries the assumption made by Cumont (1922:138) that "initiating children into mysteries became a means of preserving them from the fatal lot which threatened them and of ensuring their happiness in the other life". According to the ancients themselves, parents did not dwell upon the possibility of their child's death (Seneca, *Cons. ad Marc.* 9.1-4; see Chapter 5, p.102), therefore it is unlikely that they would imagine them as suffering after death.

29. Social historians, such as Stone (1977:409), who assume a correlation between demography and emotion are particularly guilty of this approach. See Humphreys (1981:3) for a critique.

30. Huntington and Metcalf (1979:23ff) provide a useful summary of the ritual and emotional reaction to death.
CHAPTER EIGHT

GRIEF: THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO INFANT DEATH I: THE LITERARY EVIDENCE

This chapter and the subsequent one will focus upon grief: the emotional reactions shown by the Romans as individuals to the death of a child in infancy. In the next chapter the grief of parents will be discussed within the context of the funerary inscriptions in CII6; this present chapter deals with the various attitudes of the upper classes to be found in the literature. The value of each source is impaired by a number of serious biases, but the literary and epigraphical material together represent the most comprehensive range of responses shown by individual Romans to infant death. The two groups of evidence will be brought together in a general conclusion to Part B of this thesis. The aim is not only to demonstrate that individual parents did in fact grieve over infants, but also to discuss whether the sentiments expressed by parents in the literature and on tombstones could be a genuine reflection of inner sorrow.

The language of grief

The interpretation of the sentiments in literature and on tombstones is complicated not only by the biases that impair the value of each category of source material, but also by linguistic conventions. The language of grief used by the ancients is confined to a limited stock of traditional themes and phrases; consequently, any attempts to analyse both sources in order to recover feelings of genuine grief seem misguided. The very presence of stock themes and clichéd phrases would suggest that the emotions described by the bereaved are not expressions of real sorrow.

Yet, as Hopkins (1983:220), and Lattimore (1942:19) before him, points out, the expression of emotions, whether verbally or in written form, always follows a standard, formulaic pattern:

the very act of transforming feelings into words automatically channels them along conventional lines. Language is a set of conventions ...

Hopkins 1983:220
From a linguistic perspective, the phonological and syntactical rules of any language must be adhered to in order to produce meaningful utterances. In addition, the "linguistic competence" (Lyons 1981:223) of an individual is affected by a number of non-linguistic considerations, including

on the one hand, social conventions, beliefs about the world, the speaker's emotional attitudes towards what he is saying, his assumption about his interlocutor's attitudes, etc. and, on the other hand, the operation of the psychological and physiological mechanisms involved in the production of utterances.

Lyons 1981:233

Of these factors, it is the influence of "social conventions" on language that is most significant for the argument here:

since man is a social animal and the structure of language is determined and maintained by its use in society, self-expression in general and self-expression by means of language in particular are very largely controlled by socially imposed and socially recognized norms of behaviour and categorization.

Lyons 1981:144

Therefore, the individual might have feelings peculiar to himself; but because this is not true of language, he is limited in the expression of these feelings by various linguistic and non-linguistic constraints. As a result of these determinants, and because there will always be a discrepancy between the individual's inner emotional experience and the outward expression of these emotions in verbal form, the vocal and written form of emotions must inevitably consist of what will be termed "commonplaces". According to our own social norms, and those of the Romans, sorrow is perceived essentially as a negative feeling; consequently, the idioms used in the expression of such a distressing, and occasionally violent, emotion are even more limited and standardised than those of more acceptable feelings, such as love, gratitude or joy.

However, since both sincerity and affectation of feelings are conveyed by the same standard modes of expression, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether the bereaved is describing exactly how he feels in literature or on a tombstone, or whether from a sense of obligation to adhere to society's practices, he is simply describing what he is expected to feel. Although, it must be emphasised that conventional sentiments on tombstones indicate society's acceptance of the public expression of grief.
Therefore, traditions of the written expression of grief pose a dilemma for the researcher: does the conventional format adopted in literature and on tombstones mean that the sentiments recorded are artificial, because the bereaved has copied the ideas of others and is acting in accordance with custom? Or can individuals still be sincere in their expression of emotion, even though the form is clichéd and dictated by social practice? Both questions are considered with reference to funerary epigraphy in the next chapter; here discussion will focus upon the communication of grief in literary form.

The written expression of grief: modern perspectives

As part of his discussion of a transformation in attitudes to death, Ariès (1960:450ff) looks at nineteenth century consolation literature in America. The textual arrangement adopted by the authors under review betrays a remarkable similarity to that of the Classical literature as regards popular themes: death is not the end, the bereaved will be reunited with their loved ones after their own deaths; in the blessed afterlife (heaven) people find everything that made them happy on earth - love, affection, family; children are represented as the embodiment of "piety, goodness and filial love". As regards precocious children in consolations, Douglas (1974:57) notes that the ideal son is one who behaves like a clergyman: respectful of his elders, not mingling with other boys at school and devoted to study of the Bible. In The Oxford Book of Death (1987), an anthology of prose and verse writings, the expression of grief is uttered within the confines of a limited number of recurrent ideas:

- searching for the deceased at familiar places
- the deceased as the centre of the author's world; therefore, there is no point to life any more
- shared pastimes, once a source of pleasure, now cause pain
- growing anguish after the numbness of shock has worn off
- the thought that the deceased can never return is unbearable
- the desire for solitude in remote places
- unexpected bouts of depression and weeping
- no pursuit can divert the author from a preoccupation with the deceased

These themes also appear in laments for the death of a child; but other ideas are used more particularly of those who have died in childhood: the child as a bud or a flower that is just about to bloom; the precocity of the child -
advanced learning, adult virtues, the calm words of reassurance spoken to the parent by the dying child; the pain caused by physical reminders of the child - toys, clothes; the child as free from sin. If a particular author's grief is judged together with similar examples of sorrow, then the feelings he describes seem artificial. The recurrence of conventional sentiments, the standard pattern, and the fact that grief in written form is not an spontaneous outburst of raw emotion, but a literary creation that has been carefully thought out and artistically reworked, inevitably detract from any sense of immediacy. However, the use of platitudes should not automatically be equated with lack of sincerity. As emphasised, the conventions of language and the usual modes of expression, verbal or written, preferred by any one culture will regulate the manner in which the individual conveys his inner emotions. Conventional phraseology in communication of grief in writing must, therefore, be accepted. In general, authors use the same standard idioms to articulate their sorrow, but these idioms are the approved means by which sincerity of emotion is related.

The literary evidence: problems and biases

As a preliminary, it will be useful to note several important points in connection with the literary evidence, particularly the biases referred to above. To a certain extent, these observations are self-evident, but since they affect any interpretation of expressions of grief in the texts, such points must be highlighted at the outset.

Every text used in this discussion (see Appendix 3 for list) reflects the attitudes of a very small minority of the population, that of the upper classes, and, more accurately, the educated, middle-aged adult male. Life in the public sphere predominates in the extant literature; family life is referred to most often in philosophical or rhetorical contexts, and any expression of emotional attachment is usually incidental. The attitudes of women are either omitted entirely or, if noted, are commonly stereotypical and coloured by the male perspective. This absence of first person accounts by women means that records of infant death, and even more so, responses to them, are relatively rare in the literary sources. This defect is even more patent in view of the estimated infant mortality of 250-300 per
1000 live births\textsuperscript{4}. The extant literature is further biased against females, in that only a very small number of texts focus upon the death of daughters, whether infants or older: of twenty-nine historical cases of the death of a child, in only seven is the death of a girl lamented.

In addition to a discrimination in the sexes, there is also an age bias in the literary accounts of the death of a child. Indeed, although the texts examined here date from Plautus in the late third century BC, the earliest reference in Latin literature by an author who has directly experienced the loss of a child in infancy (aged 0-4 years) is Statius, Silvae 5.5, in the late first century AD, and the only other accounts are those of Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, in 163 AD (Haines, Loeb vol.2, pp. 222ff) and Ausonius, Parentalia 10, in the fourth century. All other passages in which the author describes his personal suffering refer to older children: for example, Cicero's letters to Atticus after his daughter Tullia died in childbirth (\textit{ad Att.} 12.14;15); Martial's poems on the death of five year old Erotion (\textit{Epigr.} 5.34; 5.37; 10.51).

In most of the passages on the death of a child the reactions of the bereaved are not first-hand narratives, but reports by relatives and friends, or by commentators, who have no direct connection to the bereaved. Here too accounts of infant death seldom occur and more written consolations are offered to bereaved parents of older - especially adult - children than to those who had lost a young child. Some notable exceptions are Seneca's letter to Marullus (\textit{Ep. Mor.} 99) and Tacitus' report of Nero's devastation at the death of his infant daughter (\textit{Ann.} 15.23).

Most of these passages were written with the thought, or even the intention, of publication in mind, which further complicates any attempts to assess the feelings of the bereaved. Authors, particularly those commenting upon the sorrow of others, might have simply given the standard literary description of grief and of the bereaved individual. Their efforts might be no more than a literary exercise in the art of composing letters or poems of consolation; the finished product having no relation to the actual feelings of the bereaved. Even those few texts in which the bereaved express their personal feelings at the loss of their own child are highly polished works of literary art, in which the emotional outpourings, which in many cases seem so spontaneous and so heartfelt, have been defined by the convention of articulating grief in written form.
These difficulties associated with the source material are observable especially in the consolationes - philosophical essays, letters and poems of consolation written to bereaved individuals to help them overcome their grief. The typical consolatio is rhetorical in form, dominated by platitudes of Stoic philosophy and adheres to a set format inherited from Greek and Roman literary predecessors, from which there is little variation. Both Cicero, TD 3.33.81, and Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 2.1, recognise that traditional precepts and exemplars culled from the pages of Roman history must be adapted, as each case demands its own particular treatment. In spite of these variations, authors generally keep close to the pattern for consolationes laid down by Crantor, the Academic philosopher of the fourth century BC, and by Lucretius, de Rerum Natura 3.798-1087ff. Stock themes include death as the great leveller; death as an escape from the miseries of life; there is nothing to fear after death; grief is of no benefit to the bereaved nor to the departed; others have suffered greater or equal losses; the deceased had achieved all that was possible in this life, and so death was not untimely.

Therefore, the literary sources available for the study of emotional reactions to the death of infants are limited in number, full of commonplaces, distorted by the prospect of publication and hampered by biases of class, gender and age. Any efforts to study responses in the literature by bereaved parents to the death of an infant might seem unproductive. However, the literary evidence can be discussed within a number of topics which will reflect how the upper classes responded, or were expected to respond, to the death of a young child: generalisations on the nature of grief and on responses to death; reactions to the loss of older sons and daughters; attitudes to the death of infants. Each of these topics will be studied in turn below.

Grief

In much of the appropriate literature, in particular the more philosophic consolationes, discussions of grief - its nature; whether it is an innate response or one conditioned by social custom; the extent to which it is reasonable for the bereaved to mourn - figure prominently.

According to upper class ideals, in death the bereaved should betray no emotion and carry on with duty as before. In the third book of his Tusculan Disputations Cicero claims that Q, Maximus, L. Paullus and M. Cato all
remained unmoved by grief at the deaths of their sons "because they thought that mourning and sorrow were not characteristic of a man" \( (TD\ 3.28.71)\)\textsuperscript{5}.

Several authors assert that grief is pointless - it helps neither the bereaved\textsuperscript{6} nor the deceased, nor would the deceased have wished his/her relatives to be so upset; the bereaved ought, then, to honour the deceased by self-control. So Sulpicius informs Cicero that the best way of showing his love for his daughter is to force an end to his grief \( (ad\ Fam.\ 4.5.6)\).

In the majority of consolationes, a less dogmatic approach is adopted towards grief. The Stoics, unlike Cicero, are prepared to admit that grief is natural \( (Seneca,\ Ep.\ Mor.\ 99.16;\ Marc.\ 7.1;\ Plutarch,\ Apoll.\ 102.3)\)\textsuperscript{7}, and do not forbid their correspondents to grieve, as Seneca emphasises in his consolation to Polybius on the death of his brother \( (Cons.\ ad\ Polyb.\ 18.5)\).

However, this admission is made only on the premise that the bereaved must not grieve more than is natural, but should be moderate and restrained. Seneca explains this principle to Marullus, who has lost his infant son:

\begin{quote}
Tears slip out, even though we hold them back, and as they fall, they soothe the soul. So what is to be done? Let us allow them to fall; but let us not command them; let them flow, as much as emotion has driven them out, but not as much as imitation demands . . . in agreement with the wise man, I am of the opinion that some tears are permitted to fall, others are brought on by force . . . Let them fall of their own accord . . . They often flow, while the authority of the wise man remains intact, with such great restraint that there is no lack of feeling nor dignity. It is possible, I say, to obey Nature and still preserve propriety.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Seneca,\ Ep.\ Mor.\ 99.15;\ 16;\ 18;\ 20
\end{quote}

According to the philosophers, any extravagance in mourning is forced because mourners either feel obliged from a sense of loyalty to the deceased to indulge in such displays or the influence of society and custom demands that they grieve to excess. In book three of the Tusculan Disputations the crux of Cicero's argument rests upon the premise "that it is proper, it is right, it is a duty to be aggrieved at what has happened" \( (TD\ 3.25.61)\)\textsuperscript{8}.

In his letter of consolation to his wife on the death of their two year old...
daughter Plutarch is particularly critical of excess in mourning, for he says that if his wife were to behave in such a manner, "this will be more grievous to me than what has happened" (Cons. ad ux. 608.2). Plutarch also warns his wife: "you must not dwell upon the present tears and lamentations of your visitors, a performance dictated by a pernicious custom and rehearsed to every sufferer" (ux. 611.9).

The "visitors" that Plutarch has in mind are his wife's female friends. Women were especially prone to the excesses in mourning that the ancient writers berated, so much that the image of the grieving mother had become something of a literary stereotype. Cicero can tell Paetus "I have already mourned for my country more bitterly and for longer than any mother for her only son" (ad Fam. 9.20.3). Both Propertius and Tibullus can imagine female mourners, hair dishevelled, beating their breasts and tearing their cheeks at their own funerals (Propertius 2.24.52; Tibullus 1.1.67-68; 1.3.5-8). According to Plutarch, the "virtuous woman" must show a restraint in grief "that does not resist maternal affection, as the multitude believe, but the licentiousness of the mind" (Cons. ad ux. 609.4).

Indulgence in grief as a female trait is further suggested by Seneca's praise of his mother's self-control:

> It is not in your nature to use the excuse of the label "woman", to whom tears have been granted almost as an immoderate, yet not immeasurable, right... It is not in your nature to look to certain women, whose grief when once undertaken was ended only by death (you know some, who, when they put on clothes of mourning for the sons whom they had lost, never took them off). Life, harder from the outset, demands more from you; the excuse of being a woman cannot fall to someone who is free from all the faults of women.

---

Seneca, Cons. ad Helv. 16.2

In his letter to Lucilius on the death of his friend, Seneca claims that in reality the grief of women is very brief and not one weeps for more than a month (Ep. Mor. 63.13). Yet, Seneca's assertion is disproved by the case of Marcia herself, who was still grieving for the loss of her adult son three years later (Marc. 1.7). Similarly, although Seneca praised his mother for her restraint, the content of his letter indicates that Helvia's sorrow was just as violent as that commonly attributed to women, nor did her grief quickly pass (Helv. 1.1). Women in general may not have grieved for more than a month in public; but the deep personal sorrow, which society at
large did not see, must have persisted for much longer in many cases.

Ancient authors censure men, particularly educated men, for similar outbursts even more harshly. In such attacks the grief of women is used in a proverbial, derogatory, sense\(^1\): Seneca asks Polybius "What is so abject and womanish as to resign oneself to be consumed by grief?" (Polyb. 6.2; 17.2). Such criticism relates to the upper class ideal (Cicero, \textit{TD} 3.28.70-71) that a man must not show any sign of emotional weakness. According to Seneca (Ep. Mor. 63.13), no legal restrictions were imposed upon mourning by men, in contrast to measures instituted against displays of grief by women, "because for men it is not at all respectable". Elsewhere Seneca, however, is more pragmatic and forbids displays of grief only in public (Marc. 13.3).

Some authors, by contrast, actually encourage indulgence in grief. Statius recommends this approach because only then will the bereaved be receptive to some words of consolation (\textit{Silvae} 2.1.14-17)\(^1\). Melior's frenzied display of grief at the cremation of Glaucias, when he attempted to throw himself on the pyre (\textit{Silvae} 2.1.23-25), and tore at his clothes and breast to the astonishment even of the boy's parents (169-174), shows no regard for philosophical admonitions, nor for the view of society at large that such violent mourning was especially effeminate and to be condemned in men. However, even Seneca himself is aware of the unpredictability of grief:

\begin{quote}
I know that this is not something that is under our control, and that it is impossible to enslave any emotion, least of all one which originates from grief; for it is untamable and obstinate in the face of all remedies. Sometimes we wish to overwhelm it and gulp down our groans; yet tears stream down the very faces that are composed in a feigned expression. Sometimes we occupy our minds with public games or gladiatorial shows; but amid the very spectacles, by which it is being distracted, the mind is broken by some sign of longing.

\textit{Seneca, Cons. ad matr. Helv. 17.1} \(^{14}\)
\end{quote}

Therefore, according to the literary elite, grief is essentially a negative emotion: it is pointless, undignified in women, and particularly in men, of the upper classes, and to be strictly controlled.

The purpose of the remainder of this chapter is to investigate the extent to which the view expounded by the authors was shared by their social
peers, who had lost a child. In the first part, emphasis is placed on reactions to the death of an adolescent or adult child; in the second part, responses provoked by the loss of a young son or daughter will be discussed. Both sets of reactions will be used to discover the extent to which the Roman elite may have grieved at the death of a child in infancy, and whether this sorrow was less intense than the emotions they displayed at the death of an older child.

The death of an adolescent or adult child

Ancient authors stipulated that the upper class Roman should betray no emotion, at least in public, in bereavement. Numerous examples of parental composure can be cited as proof that such restraint could accompany the death of even an adolescent or an adult child - regarded as the most devastating of all deaths by the Romans (p.197). Such exemplars of conduct appear in the letters of consolation written to bereaved individuals whose grief has shown no signs of abating.

In an attempt to reason Marcia out of her deep sorrow for the death of her grown up son, Metilius, Seneca highlights the conduct of Livia. Although she had lost her son Drusus when he was destined for imperial power, Livia displayed all the qualities demanded of the proper behaviour in grief, for her mourning ended with the interment of her son (Cons. ad Marc. 3.2). Similarly, Sulla, Xenophon, Paulus, Bibulus, and Tiberius all lost sons, but showed no signs of grief at their deaths (Marc. 12.6-16.6).

However, the very necessity of such case studies demonstrates that the bereaved correspondents in question were far from being self-controlled in their grief. Indeed, the recurrence of the same limited number of exemplars emphasises how exceptional the restraint of these historical figures actually was; by implication, most parents would openly display their sorrow at the loss of a child. The public eminence of Livia, Sulla and the others demanded a state of emotional reticence; for the ordinary members of the elite, and even for many in the public eye, these models of self-discipline were representations of an ideal that few were apparently able to attain. The literary sources contain numerous illustrations of upper class parents who bitterly lamented the death of their adolescent or adult children.

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In all eighteen instances of the death of an older child which form the basis for discussion in this section (see Appendix 3), the grief of the parents is evident. A selection of examples and quotations has been included to illustrate this sorrow.

In contrast to upper class ideals, men too seem to have been deeply affected by the loss of an older child. Cicero had thought it "shameful" not to bear his loss in the manner prescribed by Sulpicius; but he cannot control his own grief over his daughter, Tullia, who died in childbirth (ad Fam. 4.6.1). So he writes to Atticus from Asturia in March 45 BC:

> In this solitude I do not converse with anyone at all, and when I have hidden myself in a dense and thorny wood in the morning, I do not come out before evening. Second to you, I have no greater friend than solitude. In it all the conversation I have is with literature. However, weeping will interrupt it; I resist it as much as I can, but I am still not yet a match for it.

> Cicero, ad Att. 12.15

According to Pliny, the death of his 13 year old daughter, Minicia Marcella, caused Fundanus to reject all virtues - "he is wholly preoccupied with a father's love" (Ep. 5.16.8).

Even the loss of children who were not the mourner's own could be bitterly lamented, particularly a favourite slave (delicatus/deliciae). Melior's anguish at the death of his 12 year old verna, Glaucias whom he adopted as his son, has already been noted. Statius' other addressee, Flavius Ursus, a rich, young lawyer, was also inconsolable in his sorrow for the death of his favourite, Philetus (Silvae 2.6.96).

For Marcia, all forms of consolation had failed - friends, relatives, books; even the passage of time had done nothing to soothe her sorrow, "which revives and strengthens itself day-by-day" (Marc. 1.6-7). After the death of her son, Marcellus, Octavia refused to listen to advice and cut herself off from the outside world (Cons. ad Marc. 2.4). Seneca cites Livia as the model of female restraint in mourning; but in the Consolatio ad Liviām, falsely attributed to Ovid, the description of the Empress in grief at the death of her son contains none of the propriety to be found in Seneca. Like Seneca's description of Octavia, this Livia indulges in self-pity (103-104) and behaves like the crazed female mourners whom the philosophers condemn (317-8; 323).
Further examples of parental grief at the death of an adolescent or adult child could be provided, but the conclusion is clear: according to the extant literature, the loss of a child at this age was an occasion for sorrow, often bitter and prolonged. Grief at such a loss was proverbial in literature, which implies that the reactions above were typical of parents among Rome's elite. The traditional image of mother grieving for her adult son has been mentioned; but a father mourning a son who had just reached maturity was also a literary commonplace. Statius, Silvae 3.3.10-11, compares Claudius Etruscus' grief for his father to that of someone mourning a son who has just reached puberty. Seneca (Ep. Mor. 99.6) says that the death of a iuvenis was particularly lamentable; and, according to Lucian (de Luctu 13), the funeral of a "handsome young man" was "all the more moving".

However, in view of the biases and problems of the literary evidence discussed at the outset, the question arises: could the emotions experienced by individuals among the Roman elite at the death of child in adolescence or adulthood be genuine expressions of sorrow?

In order to answer this question, an outline will be given of the themes that recur repeatedly in connection with the death of a child who has, or would have soon, reached maturity; then an attempt will be made to highlight instances where the expression of grief seems to be genuine.

Grief for the death of an adolescent or adult child is structured around stock themes and conventional phrases. Responses made in the consolations to the lament of untimely death typically include the following sentiments:

- those who are most virtuous and excellent die young
- the bereaved at least had a child, however brief the time they shared
- the bereaved still has many other consolations as compensation
- man and the world of which he is part are mortal, and, therefore, doomed to destruction
- no death is untimely when the span of human life is measured against that of eternity
- the deceased has lived his/her allotted time, for life is like a loan which must be repaid
- death is not an evil, but an escape from the miseries of life
- the soul of the deceased is immortal and returns more easily to its original state because of its early release from earthly corruption; united forever
with the souls of the blessed in the high heavens, the soul will enjoy a blissful existence.

Accounts of the death of a child in his or her prime are based on three themes: the child’s precocity; fortitude in illness; tragedy of untimely death. Pliny’s characterisation of thirteen year old Minicia Marcella (Ep. 5.16.3-6), who died before her marriage to an egregius iuvenis is a case in point. Even in such a short letter all the stock ideas of the more lengthy consolationes can be found. All these elements are also included in the eulogistic characterisation of Quintilian’s elder son, who was only nine years old when he died, but is attributed all the traits of maturity. Such idealisation belongs to the popular literary topos of puer senex - the perfect child as an adult in miniature, with childish qualities suppressed beneath a serious demeanour. Just as, according to Pliny (Ep. 5.16), Fundanus’ grief is heightened by the failure of his daughter to marry, so too disappointment of parental expectations contributes to Quintilian’s sorrow. Of his elder son, he had high hopes of him reaching the top political positions. Quintilian’s description of his son conforms to the standard pattern of praise for a deceased child:

I swear that I saw in him these qualities, not only natural ability in understanding the subjects he was taught - and although I have experience of a great many things, I have not known anything more outstanding than this - and dedication, which was voluntary even then, as his teachers are aware. In addition all those fortuitous qualities were his: a pleasant and clear voice, sweetness of articulation and proper, distinct pronunciation of every letter in both Greek and Latin, as though he were a native speaker in exclusively one or the other.

Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 10-11

Just like Minicia Marcella in Pliny’s letter (Ep. 5.16), Quintilian’s son displayed the courage of the best Stoic in illness:

He had those qualities that maturity brings: constancy, dignity, and strength against fear and pain too. How calmly he bore an illness that lasted eight months to the astonishment of his doctors! How he consoled me in his final moments! How even when he was slipping away and was no longer our very own did he focus his wandering, distracted mind upon learning and literature.

Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6. Pr. 11

The idea that the deceased had acquired in his or her short lifetime all the
qualities of an adult is intended to comfort the bereaved. The
generalisation that "those who excel in virtues pass on to their fate while
young, as though beloved of the gods" (Plutarch, Cons. ad Apoll. 111.7;
119.34) typically introduces the eulogy of the child; also common is the
argument that the deceased could have attained nothing more in life21.
Seneca uses such a commonplace to console Marcia (Cons. ad Marc. 23.3;4;
24.1).

In the consolatory poems too there is emphasis on such traditional
themes. However, the poets indulge in even more extravagant eulogies of
the deceased22; the conventions of panegyric are so prevalent that it is
impossible to discern the true character of the deceased beneath the
platitudes. In his poem to Melior, Statius begins his eulogy of Glaucias with
the cliché that the boy was far advanced for his years (Silvae 2.1.39-40).
From this, Statius descends into hyperbole:

Oh! where is that radiance tinged with rosy vigour and the
starry orbs, those eyes, shining with heaven's light and
where the assembled propriety of the bowed forehead, the
natural curls above and the soft edge of beautiful hair?
Statius, Silvae 2.1.41-45

The praise becomes more excessive, as Statius claims that in his short
lifetime Glaucias was on the way to equalling the labours of Hercules (124-
125). The portrayal of Flavius Ursus' favourite, Philetus, is similarly
embellished; even Statius himself seems to realise this, for he defends
himself against possible accusations of exaggeration (2.6.29-31; 34-35).
According to Statius, Philetus' physical beauty (38-47) and his advanced
intellectual qualities are so remarkable that the poet claims to be unable to
define them in verse (50-52). Such descriptions of physical beauty are
found only in the case of favourite slaves, whose principal value was as a
source of pleasure. In cases where the deceased is the mourner's own
child, the emphasis is on the child's intellectual capacity and their
prospects for an eminent career or a good marriage.

For the bereaved themselves, however, the mature qualities of their son
or daughter were not a comfort, but a reason for even greater grief.
According to Pliny, Minicia Marcella is missed and lamented by her father
particularly because of her precocity and fortitude, and because she was
about to marry a young man from a distinguished family (Ep. 5.16).
Quintilian had hoped that his elder son's early promise would lead to
greater accomplishments (Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 11); therefore, his untimely death was even more painful. Marcia’s continual complaints to the effect that "it could have been longer, it could have been greater" (Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 12.3) indicate that the early development of excellence in her son did not provide her with any solace.

The idea of the precocity of the deceased child is bound up with the universal belief that death before full maturity was especially lamentable. For a child to predecease his or her parents was considered contrary to the laws of nature, no matter at what age death occurred (Seneca, Marc. 17.3). Martial claims that "it would have been more fitting" for the name of Telesphorus to be carved on the tombstone than that of his daughter, Antulla (Epigr. 1.114.3-5). Both Fronto (Haines, Loeb 2, p.228.7) and Ausonius (Parentalia 11.15-16) state that "it would have been more fitting" had they died before their grandsons. Plutarch effectively summarises why untimely death was lamented so bitterly:

because of the failure of the dead to gain what are commonly held to be the advantages of life, such as marriage, education, manhood, citizenship, or public office.

Plutarch, Cons. ad Apoll. 113.23

Lucian, de Luctu 13, adds military service, working on the farm and old age. Sulpicius envisages Cicero as having high hopes of a good marriage and brilliant sons for his daughter (ad Fam. 4.5.3).

As was noted above, numerous problems arise in attempting to analyse the feelings of the bereaved from literature: the expression of grief is clear, but are the sentiments genuine? By its very nature, grief is more complex than any other emotion, and grief caused by bereavement is even more acute. The words used in an effort to convey something of the intense pain seem trite and inadequate, and the discrepancy between the actual inner experience and the subsequent expression of emotions can often be substantial. Seneca is fully aware of such problems:

Nothing is more difficult than finding words to equal a great sorrow

Seneca, Cons. ad Polyb. 3.3

the magnitude of all grief that exceeds all limits inevitably snatches away the choice of words, since it often stifles the voice itself too.

Seneca, Cons. ad matr. Helv. 1.3
First person accounts, in which the author describes his own experiences, feature the most recognisable manifestations of what appears to be genuine emotion. In these texts the sorrow of the bereaved author often adheres to the pattern of behaviour recognised by recent research into the psychology of grief and bereavement. Therefore, even though their grief has been artistically reworked to meet a number of literary requirements, it is possible that these writers did genuinely lament the loss of their child.

Cicero, when faced with the loss of his beloved daughter Tullia, finds himself unable to act upon the advice he had given to others in their bereavement. In his letter to Titius (ad Fam. 5.16), Cicero had tried a number of devices to console his correspondent: "nothing new has happened to us"; "there is no evil in death"; such deep sorrow is indecorous in a man, especially one of such dignity and wisdom. Yet, Cicero himself is inconsolable in his grief (ad Fam. 4.6.1). Just as research has shown that some bereaved individuals are so preoccupied with thoughts of the deceased and with their own self-pity that they cannot take account of loved ones still left, so too Cicero refuses to believe that he has any other sources of comfort and he becomes withdrawn:

But sometimes I am oppressed and can scarcely resist my grief . . . I used to have a place of refuge and rest; one upon whose conversation and sweetness I could unburden all my cares and sorrows . . . I am absent from both my home and the Forum, because my home can no longer console the sorrow that the State produces in me, nor can my domestic sorrow be consoled by the State.

Cicero, ad Fam. 4.6.1;2

In his letters to Atticus (ad Att. 12.14;15), Cicero mentions that he had tried to comfort himself by writing a book on consolation; but like others who have suffered a painful bereavement, he finds that such continual devotion to activity provides only temporary relief and his concentration is frequently shattered by violent outbursts of grief. As a man of pre-eminence, Cicero's personal struggle to regain some composure of form and thought is deeply moving. Typical of the bewilderment that bereavement brings, he is unsure of the correct course of action: he feels guilty about any form of activity which takes his thoughts away from the deceased, and that he will be disloyal in doing so; but, on the other hand, believes himself to be wrong, if he just sits idly by and wallows in self-pity, doing nothing constructive.
Any efforts to discern true feelings of sorrow at the loss of an adolescent or adult child are more problematical in the case of the *consolationes*, where the descriptions of the bereaved's grief are not first person accounts. The extent of literary embellishment and the influence of the consolatory tradition contribute to the difficulties. Nevertheless, in the consolations there is some indication that the addressees were deeply troubled by the deaths of their children.  

Research has established that the grief of mothers is, on average, more intense and prolonged than that of fathers. Ancient Romans were also aware of this distinction between the response to bereavement shown by males and females: the excessive sorrow of women was proverbial, while men were conditioned to restrain all displays of emotion in public. From Seneca's description of paternal love as practical and maternal love as emotional, it might be expected that Roman mothers too would grieve more intensely than fathers at the loss of a child (de Provid. 2.5).  

Therefore, it is unsurprising that Octavia and also Marcia were particularly excessive in their sorrow for their adult sons. Seneca has chosen Octavia as a stereotypical illustration of lifelong, excessive grief, and so it is uncertain how accurate his description is (Marc. 2. 3-4); but in the case of Marcia, Seneca has seen for himself his addressee's grief and, commonplaces aside, a number of personal details suggest that Marcia did find her son's death difficult to come to terms with. Like many of the mothers investigated in bereavement studies, her grief is still pronounced long after her son has passed away; all other forms of consolation have failed to detract her from her despair (Marc. 1.6-7; 8.2). Marcia, too refuses to take comfort in the loved ones around her (16.6) and blames Fortune for her loss (1.1).  

Seneca's *Consolatio ad matrem Helviam* is unique, for it was not written on the death of a child; Seneca himself is the deceased, as it were, consoling his mother in the absence of her exiled son. However, Helvia's sorrow conforms to the characteristics of maternal grief noted above. Like Marcia, Helvia's anguish has been bitter and persistent (1.2); past bereavements have not enabled her to cope better with the exile of her son (3.1); and she hurls reproaches at Fortune for her cruelty (15.2). Just as "those who grieve usually shun the ones whom they love most dearly and seek freedom to mourn unrestrained" (19.3), Helvia too has to be reminded of the consolations she still has in her other two sons and her grandchildren.
As noted (p.188), a father grieving for the death of a son who has just reached maturity is one of the most familiar of bereaved figures in literature, and also paternal reactions to the loss of a son comprise the majority of literary references; by contrast maternal grief is rarely mentioned other than as a literary commonplace. However, the cases of Marcia and Helvia can be supplemented by a number of examples in order to provide a fuller account of how mothers responded to the death of a child.

The fortitude shown by Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, at the murders of Tiberius and Gaius, and by Cornelia, wife of Livius Drusus, at the death of her son, M. Livius Drusus (Seneca, _Marc._ 16.3-4) seems to have been exceptional. Pliny (Ep. 3.16) is full of admiration for the courage displayed by Arria in concealing the death of her son from her ill husband, but such composure was merely for show and Arria found it difficult to maintain a cheerful disposition. Her deep sorrow at the loss of her son is clear:

> Then when the tears that had been long restrained overcame her and burst out, she would leave the room; only then would she yield to grief; once her sorrow was satisfied, she would return, her eyes dry and her face composed, as if she had left her childlessness outside.

_Pliny, Ep. 3.16.5_

Domitia Lepida, though estranged from Messalina, came out of pity to see her daughter as she awaited her fate and took care of her body after she had been murdered by one of the tribunes (Tacitus, _Ann._ 11.37-38).

The literary bias against females continues in the under-representation of adolescent or adult daughters. Many upper class females of this age would have been married and so lamented by husbands rather than parents, but the scarcity of references to daughters is noteworthy. Out of the twelve examples of parental restraint in grief given to Marcia, only one is for a daughter - Caesar's daughter Julia (Marc. 14.3). In the sample of texts discussed here so far, only two are for a grown daughter - Cicero's Tullia and Fundanus' daughter, Minicia Marcella; but Cicero's and Pliny's letters demonstrate that the death of a daughter could be equally as painful as that of a son. Seneca remarks that Julius Caesar did not allow the death of his daughter Julia to interfere with his campaign in Britain. However, his sorrow had in fact forced him to forego his duties as a military commander.
for three days and it was only the necessity of duty that compelled him to suppress his grief (Marc. 14.3). Telesphorus Faenius dedicated a grove and gardens to his daughter, Antulla (Martial, Epigr. 1.114; 116); Ausonius says that his niece and her husband lamented the untimely death of their recently wed daughter, Dryadia (Parentalia 23).

In verse consolationes considerations of metre and poetic licence further complicate the question of whether the author has recorded the true feelings of the bereaved. Both Statius' poems abound in mythological allusions used to highlight the extraordinary qualities of the deceased, and there is an unmistakable sense of the tragic throughout: the direct appeal to Fate (Silvae 2.1.138; 2.6.58-59); the poet's inability to sing because of his own tears (2.1.17-18); Envy as the agent of the child's destruction (2.1.122; 2.6.69). Statius' description of Melior's grief, with its obscure, learned references to the Sirens and to Orpheus, is typically exaggerated (Silvae 2.1.8-12). The format of Statius' poem to Flavius Ursus is similar in theme to that dedicated to Melior: the precocity of the boy; the cruelty of Fate; the tragedy of untimely death. Although Ursus seems to have been deeply distressed by the death of Philetus, there is little sense of the addressee's personal grief. In the end, it is difficult not to conclude that Statius is indulging in a literary exercise, rather than aiming to offer some special words of comfort for Ursus.

The consolatio to Melior also adheres to the traditional pattern, yet, amidst the platitudes and the hyperbole, greater emphasis is placed on the bereaved's own pain, and the impression is that Melior was genuinely distressed at the death of twelve year old Glaucias, whom he had adopted as his alumnus (2.1.1) when a baby. The tender description of how Glaucias used to run to meet Melior as he returned (65-68); the lavish cremation gifts and spices (23-25); the distraught attempts, when he burst through the crowd of mourners, to embrace the boy's pyre (23-25); the frenzy with which he tore his clothes and bosom (171-172) all suggest that Melior was bitterly upset at Glaucias' death. Martial's two Epigrams (6.28; 29) confirm that Statius' account of Melior's grief is not simply a literary elaboration.

The death of a child in infancy

On the basis of the literary evidence, it was shown that the parents in question did experience grief for the deaths of sons and daughters beyond
the age of childhood and that his grief could be genuine, but how did the Roman elite react to the loss of a much younger child, particularly one who was still an infant (0-4 years)? Was their response similar to that occasioned by the death of an older child, or did they, as might be expected from the high infant mortality rate, express their sorrow less forcefully, if at all? In effect, the intention here is to demonstrate that, while infant deaths might be recorded with seeming indifference by ancient authors, or omitted entirely, the literary evidence reveals that for individual parents, the loss of an infant son or daughter could cause no less anguish than that of an adolescent or adult child.

The differences in parental response depending on the age of the child at death found in Early Modern diarists parallel the pattern in the ancient literature. In those texts in which the deaths of older and younger children are mentioned together, inevitably greater emphasis is placed upon the death of the older child as being the more painful. In his letter of consolation to Apollonius on the death of his youthful son, Plutarch encapsulates this sentiment:

But if untimely death is an evil, the most untimely would be that of infants and children, and still more that of the newly born. But such deaths we bear easily and cheerfully, but the deaths of those who have already lived some time with distress and mourning.

Plutarch, Cons. ad Apoll. 113.23

Cicero describes in detail the frenzied grief of Oppianicus' wife at the murder of her son (puer), but then says succinctly, "Not ten days had passed before his other son, the infant, was murdered" (pro Cluen. 27). Admittedly, Cicero's account is tailored for maximum rhetorical impact and for publication, and he could have excluded the mother's response to her infant's death as being unnecessarily repetitive. Yet, although Cicero might not have accurately represented the grief of Oppianicus' wife at the death of her infant child, other, more conclusive, evidence demonstrates that parents tended to grieve more for the loss of an older child.

Quintilian's account of the deaths of his two sons (Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 6-13) clearly shows that age was a determining factor in both the intensity of grief and the quality of the eulogy for the deceased child. The character-sketch of the nine year old is more thorough and more moving than that of the five year old - "for he was not just a little flower, like his younger
brother" (6 Pr.10). Yet, the death of his younger son, though recounted more concisely, still distressed Quintilian. His laments, in which, like other bereaved parents, he idealises the boy, are similar to those commonly uttered at the death of an older child: his precocity; his charm; the mutual love between father and son:

But how can I keep secret the loveliness in his face, the delight in his speech, the sparks of talent he showed, the possession of a calm and, though I am aware that it scarcely seems credible, even then a noble mind? Any infant of that sort, even if he were another's, would deserve love.

Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 10-11

Pliny's criticism of Regulus' excessive display of grief for his son implies that such sorrow for a puer was immoral, particularly since Regulus had sacrificed the boy's pets on his pyre (Ep. 4.2); erected commemorative statues and portraits throughout the town; and even composed and published a panegyric of him (Ep. 4.7). Pliny is convinced that Regulus' grief is self-interested, since at the death of the boy, Regulus will inherit his mother's estate. However, amidst all the excess, Regulus' feelings of affection for his son also seem to have contributed to his sorrow. Pliny's disapproval seems to stem not from the fact that the boy was a puer, but from his personal dislike of Regulus, whom he describes as "the most worthless being on two feet" (4.2).

In contrast to Regulus, much more commendable is the reaction of Marcus Aurelius to the death of his seven year old son, Verus, in AD 169:

He did not mourn him for more than five days and even during this time, if consulted on public affairs, he responded. And because the games of Jupiter Optimus Maximus were being staged, he did not wish them to be interrupted by public mourning and so he ordered only that statues be voted to his dead son, that a golden bust of him be carried during the procession in the Circus and that his name be included in the song of the Salii.

SHA, M. Ant. 21.3

But this emphasis upon concealment of grief as worthy of praise implies that such reactions were the exception and it was more common for parents to display openly their sorrow at the loss of a young child. Augustus' habit of kissing the statue of Germanicus' son each time he entered the room and Livia's commission of a statue of the boy to be placed in the Temple of Venus (Suetonius, Calig. 7) do not suggest that they were unmoved by the child's death. Martial's poem on the death of seven year old Canace, which is in
effect an epitaph, describes the little girl's death as "an atrocity, a crime" (Epigr. 11.91.3).

More well-known are Martial's Epigrams to little Erotion, who died just before her sixth birthday (5.34; 5.37; 10.51). These epigrams further illustrate the emotion experienced by some members of the elite for the death of a young child. The three poems are filled with familiar commonplaces, such as the prayer that the earth might lie lightly upon Erotion (5.34) and the cruelty of the Fates. However, Erotion's death does seem to have profoundly affected Martial, as his tender description of her reveals - he calls her "my sweetheart and my darling" (5.34.2) and "my love, my delight, my playmate" (5.37.17); he imagines her playing and chattering in the Underworld (5.34.7-8); and he justifies his sorrow in the face of criticism from his friend Paetus (5.47.18ff).

However, in none of these examples can it be said that the deceased child is an infant, i.e. aged 0-4 years. Therefore, are the observations made by Plutarch that the death of an infant is borne "easily and cheerfully" (Apoll. 113.23), and by Cicero that some people believe that "if a little child dies, the loss must be borne calmly; if a baby in the cradle, there must not even be a complaint" (TD1.39.93), symptomatic of the general reaction to infant death in the sources and, by implication, among the upper classes?

This conclusion receives support from a variety of ancient evidence. As noted, the proverbial examples of excessive grief were mothers and fathers mourning their adult or adolescent sons, not infant children. According to the three laws of mourning, the prescribed period of mourning for an infant (0-4 years) could range from a complete ban on all lamentation to a maximum of four months, depending on the age of the child. By contrast, the mourning of children aged five years and older could last from five months to one year.

In the literary sources instances of infant death are either omitted entirely or referred to only briefly; such economy could be taken as evidence that the very young were not mourned by the elite. The following examples from the Imperial family are illustrative of this inattention to infant death. According to Suetonius, Tiberius no longer lived with Julia after the death of their infant son at Aquileia (Tib. 7.3); Germanicus and Agrippina had nine children - "of these two were snatched away while still
infants" (Calig. 7); and Drusus and Antonia had "several" children, of whom three survived: Germanicus, Livilla, Claudius (Claud. 1.6). Cicero's casual remark about the survival prospects of his prematurely born grandson, mentioned briefly at the start of a letter to Atticus (ad Att. 10.18) and from which he quickly moves on to discuss political matters, shows that relatives too might think that infant death merited only cursory response.

Seneca makes no mention of any grief he might have felt at the loss of his own young son (Helv. 2.5; 18.6: "I shall not complain at all about my childlessness") and severely censures Marullus for his sorrow at the death of his little boy (Ep. Mor. 99.2). For him the loss of an infant seems insignificant; to be treated, if not with indifference, at any rate not with kind words and eulogies. Plutarch praises his wife for her dignified behaviour when their two year old daughter, Timoxena died: she did not wear mourning clothes, nor indulge in frantic displays of grief (Cons. ad ux. 608.4). A similar self-discipline had been shown by Plutarch's wife at the deaths of her two sons, at least one of whom died in infancy (609.5), so much so that Plutarch's companions "thought that no tragedy had occurred, and that a false report had got abroad".

Marcus Aurelius seems to have responded to the deaths in infancy of a number of his children (at least five) with what could be perceived as a certain callousness. He writes that he learned from Apollonius "to remain ever the same... on the loss of a child" (Reflect. 1.8), and claims that man should pray not that he might not lose an infant, but that he might not be afraid to lose him or her (9.40). He even goes so far as to state that the death of a child is as natural as the harvesting of corn (Reflect. 11.34).

Yet, these examples of restraint in grief cannot be accepted without qualification. Both Plutarch and Cicero note the complacency with which the deaths of the very young are accepted; but Cicero adds his own reservation with reference to the death of a baby still in the cradle: "And yet Nature's demand for the return of her gift is much more cruel in this case" (TD 1.39.93). The very existence of a law of mourning, and its re-enactment on different terms on each occasion, alone suggests that many parents were extreme, or were regarded as being extreme, in their public displays of grief for children who died in infancy, and continued to be so in spite of a legally designated limit to mourning.

The conciseness of Suetonius' record of infant deaths in the Imperial
family could be taken as a sign of indifference: no indications of names, ages, and sometimes sex, of the children are given; but, as an Imperial biographer, Suetonius is concerned with the lives of the Emperors, and may have considered such details as extraneous to his general plan of composition.

Plutarch's repeated emphasis upon his wife's self-control demonstrates that such restraint at the death of a child was exceptional behaviour; as does the reference to the "amazement" of others (ux. 608.4; 609.5). According to Plutarch, "most mothers" in their mourning are "wild, frenzied, and difficult to calm" (609.6). Since Plutarch devotes much of his letter to standard consolatory themes, it seems that even his wife may not have been as composed in her grief, at least in private, as he implies. At the outset, he expresses his fear that his wife might be excessive in her sorrow (608.2) and, later on, that she might succumb to immoderation (610.7); he emphasises the adverse effects of grief (610.6); he warns his wife against visitors, under whose influence she may be stirred to lamentation (610.7); he urges her to dwell not upon untimely death, but upon fond memories of their little daughter (610.8; 611.9).

Finally, the philosophical maxims of Marcus Aurelius need not be his actual reaction to the deaths of his young children, but a Stoic effort to cope with tragedy upon tragedy as he experienced the traumatic loss of twelve of his thirteen children. The great concern shown by the Emperor when his children were ill (Haines, Loeb 1, p.202; Haines 2, pp.18; 32) would suggest that their deaths were deeply lamented.

According to Seneca, the Romans did not have such a pessimistic resignation to death; such negativity would make life intolerable (Cons. ad Marc. 9.3-4). In view of the value which the Romans placed upon their young children and the concern shown for them in illness, it seems improbable that parents were constantly thinking of the possibility of their child's imminent death. Such thinking "my child could die at any moment" was, as Seneca relates, unnatural and uncommon. Seneca himself admits that he did not imagine that his friend Annaeus Serenus would die before him because "he was younger and much younger in fact, as if the Fates kept to the order of ages" (Ep. Mor. 63.14).

Seneca's letter to Lucilius (Ep. Mor. 99), in which he describes the
sentiments he expressed to Marullus on the death of his infant son, proves that in Roman society there were some who considered it unseemly for the upper classes, and men in particular, to mourn at length for the loss of a child in infancy. From the outset, the tone of Seneca's letter is one of condemnation rather than consolation (99.1): not only has Marullus been "acting unmanly" and behaving uncharacteristically (99.32), but he is mourning, excessively in the opinion of the author, for an infant son. His grief is, therefore, even more unwarranted, and so Seneca asks:

What would you do, if you had lost a friend? A son of uncertain hope has died, a little boy, a fraction of time has perished. . . That loss of yours is not pain, but a sting; you are the one who is making that pain.

Seneca, Ep. Mor. 99.2; 14

According to Seneca, the boy's nurse was closer to the child than his father (99.14); Marullus should not grieve, for the boy would more likely have been a disappointment to him than an exemplar of virtue (99.12-13).33.

But beneath Seneca's censure, which in itself demonstrates the intensity of Marullus' grief, it is clear that Marullus was greatly distressed: although well-versed in philosophical precepts, he could find no comfort in his knowledge when his little son died (99.14; 32). His sorrow is all the more moving, in view of his obvious, but human, failure to adhere to the constraints in emotion forced upon him as both a man and a member of society's elite. Therefore, is the correlation between age of the deceased and degree of grief, as outlined by Seneca and Plutarch, simply a philosophical ideal, which proved to be unworkable in reality?

In his opening address to Flavius Ursus, Statius directly attacks this "value system" (Evans 1992:175); in his opinion, which parallels the findings of recent bereavement studies, the deaths of all loved ones including young children can be equally tragic:

Too cruel are you, whoever you may be, who makes differences in lamentation and imposes limits on grief. For a parent it is heartbreaking to cremate little children - how horrific! - or growing sons and daughters; bitter too when a spouse is carried off by untimely death is it to call by name in mourning the one who shared the couch now deserted; sorrowful too are the laments of sisters and the groans of brothers

Statius, Silvae 2.6.1-6
On the death of his young adopted son, Statius is again critical of those who would fix limits to mourning; he recognises the impracticality of trying to impose specific limits on grief and claims that those who do so can never have suffered loss (Silvae 5.5.59-65). Statius' plea for the right to unrestricted grief is much more than a conventional poetic outburst. As other literary evidence attests, his own bitter sorrow for his son is not an uncommon reaction among the upper classes to the death of a child in infancy.

According to Juvenal, it is only natural to shed tears at the death of an infant:

> at Nature's command we groan when we meet the funeral cortege of an adult maiden or when the earth closes over an infant too young for the pyre's flames.

Juvenal, Sat. 15.138-140

Statius also notes the frenzied grief displayed at pyres by mothers who have lost infants still at the age of breastfeeding (Silvae 5.5.15-18). From such generalisations, it does not seem unwarranted to speculate that here Juvenal and Statius are commenting upon an attitude typical in society among those who had suffered the loss of an infant child.

A study of the literary evidence on reactions to the death of a child in infancy shows that, in contrast to Dixon (1992:100), who states that the strongest laments on untimely death are for those aged c.16-30 years, such a loss was lamented in terms similar to that for older children. All the stock themes and cliché phrases reappear: the eulogy of the deceased child; the child's precocity; the tragedy of untimely death; the reproach of Fortune; the insistence that the bereaved should have pleasant memories of the child; the blessed afterlife.

Plutarch tries to console his wife by drawing attention to the mature qualities of their two year old daughter. Such a description betrays the influence of the *puer senex* topos; but this idealisation is typical of those who have lost a child. Yet, Plutarch's appreciation of his little daughter's childish traits should not be overlooked; his description indicates an interest in, and affection for, the young child commonly perceived as unusual in the men of antiquity (Dixon 1986:100-114; 1992:100):

> She had herself, moreover, a surprising natural gift of mildness and good temper, and her way of responding to
friendship and of bestowing favours gave us pleasure while it afforded an insight into her kindness. For she would invite the nurse to offer the breast and feed with it not only other infants, but even the inanimate objects and playthings she took pleasure in, as though serving them at her own table, dispensing in her kindness what bounty she had and showing her greatest pleasures with whatever gave her delight.

Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 608.2

Ausonius, however, does not regard such precocity as a consolation, but as a reason for particularly grieving for the death of his "little son" Parentalia 10. 3-4 35. Likewise, Martial represents two year old Urbicus lamenting that his beauty and his childish chattering were of no use to him (7.96).

This exaggerated praise is related to the child's untimely death - a lament as popular for infants as for adolescent or adult children. The same little epigram to Urbicus ends, as in many epitaphs, with a prayer for the safety of the passerby's son and the universal wish that parents are survived by their children. Seneca imagines Marullus offering the objection "But he died while still a boy" to his argument that all men must die (Ep. Mor. 99.9). No more is said on this theme in Seneca's letter, which is not unusual in view of both the boy's age and Seneca's harsh treatment of Marullus. Plutarch, however, devotes considerable attention to his wife's complaint that their daughter died "unmarried and childless"; but he does not resort to the usual responses - "the deceased had lived his/her allotted time and had lived a full life in spite of young age at death"; "no death is untimely when human life is measured against that of eternity". Instead Plutarch claims that his daughter had not missed out in life, since she did not know about the possibilities available to her and she had been happy with the things she had during her life (Cons. ad ux 611.9). Such an enlightened view contradicts the popular, ancient and modern, sentiment that the death of a young child was a tragedy of unfulfilled potential.

In the case of infants too, parents will condemn Fortune or Fate for her cruelty in robbing them of their child36. Statius, in his lament for his adopted son, cries

What revels of yours, Pierian sisters, what altars have I dishonoured? Speak, after the punishment, let the crime be revealed. Did I set foot in some inaccessible grove? Did I drink from a forbidden spring? What fault, what error so great am I paying for?

Statius, Silvae 5.5.3-8

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Statius, in common with all bereaved parents, feels responsible for the child dying. He thinks it must have been his fault, because he had offended a higher power in some way. According to Plutarch, "not being to blame for one's unhappy state...surpasses all others as a remedy for the cure of grief" (Apoll. 114.25); but those who had lost an innocent child could not rid themselves of the notion that they themselves must in some way be guilty. Statius could not accept the doctrine of predestination advocated in the epistolary consolationes. Similarly, Fronto, even though highly educated, does not believe that the death of his three year old grandson was predetermined:

Is this anyway fair or just that Victorinus has been afflicted by the most untimely death of his son? For he is a man of the greatest affection, mildness, rectitude and integrity; an exemplary man, in short, in all the most distinguished practices. If events are governed by Providence, has this also been rightly provided? If all things are decreed by Fate, should this have been decreed by Fate? So shall there be no discrepancy in fortunes between good and bad? Are the Gods, are the Fates not able to determine what sort of man will be robbed of his son? Some villainous and criminal human being - and it would have been better if he himself had never been born - brings up his children safe and sound, then leaves them at his death to outlive him. Victorinus, an honourable man, has been deprived of his dearest son, although it would have been best for the State that as many as possible like him be born. What Providence, damn!, provides so cruelly?

Haines, Loeb 2, p.224.3

Other standard forms of comfort used of the death of an older and an infant child include the instruction that the bereaved should take pleasure in happy memories of their child. In much of his letter, Seneca's words of "comfort" to Marullus seem callous, but he is also capable of the humane attitude found in his other letters of consolation:

But speak frequently of your son and honour his memory as much as you can. This memory will return to you more often, if it is going to come without bitterness...if to any of his conversations, if to any of his jests, even though he was a little boy, you listened with pleasure, call them to mind more often. State with confidence that he could have fulfilled the hopes which you, as a father, had formed.

Seneca, Ep. Mor. 99.23

In the other consolation on the death of a child in infancy, Plutarch exhorts his wife to similar happy memories of the brief time they enjoyed with little Timoxena (Cons. ad ux. 608.3). When he returns to the same idea
later on, Plutarch adds that they should be grateful for having had Timoxena even for a short time (Cons. ad ux. 610.8).

In view of the other occasions in the letters when standard consolatory themes are either not applied to infants at all, or are applied only in a brief or derogatory manner, this emphasis on urging the bereaved to cherish the short-lived, but precious, moments of pleasure they shared with their young child is noteworthy and poignant. Such sentiments, though commonplace would suggest that these parents of the elite were closely involved with their infant children in life and felt real sorrow for them when they died.

Finally, as a means of consolation for the death of an infant, authors urge their correspondents to reflect upon the immortality of the soul and the blessed afterlife of the deceased. Nothing is said by Seneca about the afterlife of Marullus' son; Plutarch's views, however, illustrate that some at least believed that the fate of infants in the next life was no different from that enjoyed by adults. Little Timoxena is said to have "passed to a state where there is no pain" (ux. 611.9); the description of the early release of her soul from earthly corruption and from the prison of the body, and its unimpaired flight to its natural state (611.10) parallels that in the letter to Apollonius and in Seneca's letters to Marcia and Polybius.

Such an attitude seems to have belonged more to the detached world of the philosopher; many parents do not seem to have been comforted by these theories. Fronto's candid refutation of this idea encapsulates what must have been the feelings of most parents when confronted with such impersonal, philosophical platitudes. Fronto is prepared to accept that death is a release from suffering and that the soul rises to a more serene place more readily than that Providence governs the world, but such thoughts do not help parents in their bitter sorrow. In this passage Fronto speaks openly and movingly about how painful the loss of a child can be:

But if men should be thankful for death rather than distressed at it, the younger each one has attained it, the happier and dearer to the gods must he be considered, having laid aside bodily evils sooner, having been summoned to take possession of the honours of a liberated soul sooner. But however true this may be, it is of little importance to us who long for the ones whom we have lost; nor does the immortality of souls bring any consolation at all to us, who are without our dearest ones while we yet live. We search for that posture and carriage, the voice, the appearance, the free air; we grieve for
the pitiful face of the dead, the closed mouth, the averted eyes, 
the colour completely vanished. No matter how much it is 
agreed that souls are immortal, this will be a subject of debate 
for philosophers, not a cure for the longing of parents. 

Haines, Loeb 2, p.226.5

Others seem to have believed that infants descended to the Underworld after 
death (Statius, Silvae 5.5.78; Martial, Epigr. 7.96); but such a fate, if 
mentioned at all, is referred to only in passing; there does not seem to have 
been a strong conviction among the Roman literary elite in the 
Homeric/Virgilian Underworld.

Therefore, the same images that characterised laments for older children 
are also typical of written expressions of grief for infants. Any 
interpretation of these sentiments is subject to objections similar to those 
that could be raised in connection with older children - the highly artistic 
nature; consideration (or even motivation) of publication; the standard 
format; the clichéd phraseology could all be evidence of pretence of 
sorrow. However, in view of the linguistic arguments outlined above, it is 
equally legitimate to see in all the artistry and commonplaces indications 
that the bereaved were emotionally affected by the death of their infant 
children. In spite of the conventional format of consolationes, there are a 
number of differences between those written for older and younger 
children.

It is not to be expected that the writers of consolationes would resort to 
the cliché "he/she lived the sort of life that full maturity brings; death is 
not surprising, since there was nothing left to achieve" for children so 
very young. Seneca does not assert that Marullus' son had lived his allotted 
time, nor does Plutarch make similar claims about little Timoxena; to have 
maintained that these children who had died in infancy had lived as long as 
Destiny had required could not have been accepted by the bereaved. 
Seneca and Plutarch must have been aware how insubstantial such 
arguments were in the case of infants.

The use of exemplars of commendable behaviour in bereavement are 
scattered throughout the consolationes of Seneca and Plutarch, but the two 
letters written on the occasion of an infant's death are free from historical 
comparisons. In the case of Marullus, Seneca might not have referred to 
any examples of men displaying great self-control at the death of an infant 
simply because for men of the elite emotional restraint at such deaths was 
nothing remarkable, and it was Marullus who was the exception by
grieving so inappropriately. Yet, the sorrow expressed by Nero, Agricola, Statius, Fronto and Ausonius for the loss of their infant children (p.208) suggests that Marullus' grief was not so unusual. Therefore, the absence of case studies might be due, rather, to the nature of the account of Marullus' grief: Seneca reports his friend's bereavement in an ordinary letter addressed to Lucilius; it is not a proper consolatio as such and so many features of this genre are understandably lacking. In Plutarch's letter to his wife, the lack of models of conduct reflects the more personal tone pervasive throughout; this consolation contrasts with the example- and cliché-ridden consolation to Apollonius, in which the bereaved himself is seldom mentioned. However, in her restraint Plutarch's wife is herself the embodiment of appropriate behaviour; more commonly, mothers will indulge in frenzied displays of grief at the death of their children (ux. 609.6).

In spite of the similarities, therefore, between consolationes for children of all ages, authors recognised that the death of an infant demanded a different sort of treatment from that afforded to those who had lost an older child. Such awareness shows an appreciation of the distinctions between infancy and other stages of childhood, which some historians claim ancient authors were incapable of perceiving (Ariès 1960:270).

In the first part of this section, the universality of sentiments expressed at the deaths of children of all ages was stressed. Ancient texts, however, also contain a number of instances of more individual responses to the loss of a child in infancy. Again, this evidence can be divided into reports by third parties and records of personal sorrow.

In the first category can be included Bassus' grief for two year old Urbicus (Martial, Epigr. 7.96), and the passing reference by Fronto (Haines, Loeb 2, p.162) to Herodes, who is "overwhelmed with grief" at the death of his son within hours of his birth. According to Tacitus, Ann. 15.23, at the death of his three month old daughter, whose birth he had celebrated so exultantly, Nero "was excessive in sorrow, just as he had been in joy" - the child was deified and voted a place on the gods' ceremonial couch as well as a temple and a priest. Tacitus' account of sorrow at the death of Agricola's infant son (Agric. 29.1) is most moving: Agricola did not show the unyielding emotional restraint that other public figures displayed nor did he react immoderately like a woman - "in his grief war was among the remedies he sought"; his sorrow, Tacitus implies, was the normal response to the loss of an infant. As Tacitus notes earlier (Agric. 6.3), Agricola was in
some way consoled in his grief by the birth of a daughter.

According to Bradley (1986:217-218), in such cases, grief was occasioned not only by parental love, but also by "anticipation of children's new contributions to the family's traditions, accomplishments and prestige". Sorrow would undoubtedly be a combination of natural affection and more self-interested concerns; but, as outlined in Chapter 4 (p.93), bereavement studies have revealed that parents mourn the death of a child out of love and for "the ending of dreams and hopes and plans, the loss of a future" (Kohner & Henley 1991:9). Whatever the factors that provoked the grief of Bassus, Herodes, Nero and Agricola, it is clear that they were bitterly upset at the deaths of their infant children.

Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Plutarch do not mention how they were affected by the deaths of their infants; but the two other personal accounts of infant death, by Statius and Fronto, both vividly describe the author's sorrow. In the past Statius was able to soothe the pain of bereaved parents by comforting poems (Silvae 2.1.30-34; 5.5.38-45); but now, faced with a similar tragedy, he finds himself incapable of alleviating his own torment (Silvae 5.5.23-27; 5.5.32-34). Statius' failure to conform to his own prescriptions seems to have been typical of those who had once dispensed words of comfort. The description of grief owes much to poetic licence - the image of the distraught poet and his powerless lyre (Silvae 5.5.28-33) detracts from any sense of intimacy; but Statius' grief, though exaggerated for maximum effect and displaying all the hallmarks of poetical skill, seems to have been genuine. The touching description of his affection for his little boy in the final lines would imply the sincerity of his sorrow:

While you were safe and sound, I did not desire children; you, my first born, whom I attached to myself and adopted as mine as soon as you were born, I instructed in words and sounds; I dispelled your complaints and secret pains, and as you crawled along the floor, I bent down and raised you to my kisses, and as I caressed you in my bosom, I nursed to sleep your already drooping eyelids and summoned sweet slumber. My name was your first word, my play caused your tender little laughs, my face your delight.

Statius, Silvae 5.5.79-87

One of the most poignant accounts written on the death of a child in infancy is the letter of Fronto prompted by the death in Germany in AD 165 of his three year old grandson, whom he had never seen. Several points
have already been made from this letter in connection with predestination and the immortality of the soul, but this letter is also noteworthy for the candour with which Fronto describes his sorrow. In contrast to the philosophers who state repeated exposure to death eventually renders the bereaved immune to emotional outbreaks of sorrow (Cicero, TD 3.27.65), Fronto records how his grief-stricken state at the deaths of his own children has been intensified by the loss of his grandson:

I have lost five children in the most pitiful circumstances of my life, for I lost all five and each one always an only child, having suffered steadfastly this repeated succession of bereavements, so that a child was never born to me except when I was bereft of one. Accordingly, I always lost children without any remaining as a consolation and when my sorrow was still fresh, I procreated.

But I endured more courageously those distresses, by which I myself alone was afflicted. For my mind put up resistance, struggling against my very own grief, placed, as it were, in single combat, one against one, equal against equal. But I no longer stand against a single or lone foe, for grief from bitter grief is augmented and I cannot bear any longer the accumulated mass of my distresses; I am consumed by, I melt along with the tears of my Victorinus. Often too I dispute with the immortal gods and accost the Fates with complaints.

Haines, Loeb 2, p.222. 1-2

In addition to his own pains at his grandson's death, Fronto comments upon the grief of the child's parents. Victorinus, he imagines, will comfort his wife "weeping as she weeps, sighing as she sighs, speaking when she speaks, being silent when she is silent" (p.228.7). Significantly, here no distinction is made between male and female in intensity of grief; Fronto pictures his daughter and son-in-law experiencing equal sorrow for their little son.

Conclusion

A number of difficulties associated with the literary evidence affects any interpretation of expressions of grief for the death of a child: the attitudes of women are usually neglected in the sources or are coloured by male perspective; the accounts, either by the bereaved themselves or by observers and commentators, are artistically reworked, conform to a set pattern and may have been written with the prospect of publication in mind. In addition, there are relatively few examples in literature where the death of a child is lamented; the evidence is particularly deficient in
the case of infants and females.

However, in spite of these problems, the texts discussed above demonstrate that the majority of the parents in question did grieve deeply over the loss of their child. Upper class ideals stipulated a show of restraint in emotion, which might explain the deficit in written accounts of children's deaths, but the sources quoted above indicate that this prescription was unworkable in reality. The emphasis placed by several authors on examples of parents who had courageously borne the deaths of their children and the extensive criticism of excessive displays of grief alone imply that such stoicism was not the norm.

As to the genuineness of this grief, it was argued, from linguistic principles, that conventionality of expression should not be interpreted as insincerity, rather as the socially acceptable means of conveying inner feelings. An analysis of the grief expressed by Roman parents showed that their grief reaction exhibits a pattern identical to that traced by psychologists in studies of the bereavement behaviour shown by parents in modern western societies. This similarity would further suggest that the grief of Roman parents described in the literature could have been an expression of genuine sorrow at the loss of their child.

In the literary sources greater emphasis is given to the death of an adolescent or an adult child, since such deaths, it was assumed, were much more significant and painful than that of a very young child. The loss of an infant probably had a different impact at the social level than that of an older child because of the high infant mortality rate; yet, there is evidence that at the individual level some parents were deeply troubled by the death of a child in infancy. A comparison of literary accounts of the two age groups reveals that, although laments for adolescent and adult children tend to be more detailed, the expression of grief for infants is remarkably similar. All the familiar themes appear in connection with infants: the eulogy of the deceased child; the child's precocity; the tragedy of untimely death; reproach of Fortune. In addition to these expressions of personal grief by individual parents, the authors of the *consolationes* also urged their addressees to have pleasant memories of the deceased and to contemplate their continued existence in the blessed afterlife. Yet, these writers seem to have been aware of the differences between the loss of an infant and of an older child, for no one is so insensitive as to state that such a young child had lived their allotted time.

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The literary evidence might be limited, but it does not seem unreasonable to regard the reactions of grief as representative of the upper class as a whole. Certainly, for some, the death of an infant did not provoke any sorrow, but in view of the specific accounts given above and abundant concern for the young child throughout Latin literature, it is clear that the majority of Roman parents did not bear the deaths of their infants "easily and cheerfully", as Plutarch claims (*Cons. ad Apoll.* 113).
CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES

1. See C. Leach, Letter to a younger son, 1981, Dent, London, in which a father candidly and poignantly describes how he was affected by the death of his twelve year old son.

2. Fronto (Haines, Loeb 2, p.222.1) does not mention his wife's sorrow at the death of their five children in infancy. Seneca notes that women do not receive the same recognition as men: "O how many women's outstanding achievements lie in obscurity" (Cons. ad matr. Helv. 19.5). On account of female bias, Plutarch's consolation, though Greek, to his wife on the death of their two year old daughter has been included in the study here.

3. See Chapter 9, p.236ff, for a detailed discussion of this male-to-female bias.

4. For estimations of the infant mortality rate at Rome, see Chapter 5, p.103.

5. According to the doctrine of the New Academy, grief "does not originate from nature, but ... from a sort of invitation to feel sorrow, when we have decided that this is how we ought to react" (Cicero, TD 3.34.82).

6. Grief is so destructive that it can cause death (Seneca, Cons. ad Polyb. 4.1); both the fathers in Plautus' Menaechmi (30-36) and Poenulus (64-71) died of broken hearts over their young sons who had been kidnapped.

7. Seneca (Ep. Mor. 63. 1) begins his letter to Lucilius on the death of his friend Flaccus - "I will not dare to demand that you should not grieve at all; and yet I know that this would be better". See Seneca, Ep. Mor. 99.27; Cons. ad Marc. 3.4; Cons. ad Polyb. 4.3; 18.6; Cons. ad matr. Helv. 10.1.

8. Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 7.4; Martial, Epigr. 1.33; Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 609.6; Lucian, de Luctu 1; 15: 21 claim that excessive mourning is conditioned by custom and the presence of onlookers.

9. For the mother mourning her son in a proverbial sense, see Catullus 39.5; 64.349; Tacitus, Agric. 29.1. The image of the mother anxiously awaiting the return of her son was also proverbial in literature (Horace, Odes 4.5.9-13; Ovid, Remedia Amoris, 547-548).

10. For other generalisations about women in connection with mourning, see Seneca, Cons. ad Marc. 11.1; Cons. ad Helv. 3.2.

11. Cicero, ad Fam. 5.16.6, says that every mother who has lost children sooner or later ends her mourning.

12. Plutarch claims that "mourning is verily feminine, and weak and ignoble, since women are given to it more than men" (Apoll. 113.2).

13. Statius, Silvae 2.1.34-35, even expresses a desire to join Melior in his sorrow.

14. Cf Ps. Ovid's description of Livia's brave, but unsuccessful, attempts to restrain her tears (Cons. ad Liv. 113-118).

15. The phrase "adolescent or adult child" is used generally for any child beyond the age of infantiia (older than seven years: Quintilian, Inst. Or. 1.1.15), so that Quintilian's elder son, aged nine years, is included in the first section on older children.

16. Seneca mentions Octavia as an example for Marcia not to imitate; but the writers of consolationes seldom cite cases to be avoided. The other exception is the Emperor Caligula, whose excessive behaviour at the death of his sister leads Seneca to exclaim "Let that example be far from every Roman man" (Polyb. 17.3-6).

17. Plutarch describes Apollonius as being "prostrated in both body and soul" in the early stages of bereavement (Apoll. 102.1).

18. In spite of conventional idealisation, Pliny appreciates that Minicia was still a child (Ep. 5.16.3).

19. Quintilian (Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 10) is aware that he could be accused of idealising his son in death, as he swears by his son's spirit and by the gods as witnesses to the truth of his description.
20. According to Statius, Silvae 2.1.152-153, with his dying breath Glaucias told Melior not to mourn, and consoled him in his grief.
21. Sulpicius does not resort to the cliché of other writers that "he whom the gods love, dies young", but does try to convince Cicero to remember that Tullia died, "when the Republic fell" (ad Fam. 4.5.5).
22. See Ps. Ovid, Cons. ad Liv. 13-20; 445-468, for the praise of Drusus' character.
23. On the pattern of bereavement behaviour, see Chapter 4, pp.87-88.
24. Cicero mentions his grief over Tullia or his consolation at ad Att. 12.14.3; 12.18.1; 12.20.2; 12.22.2; 12.23.; 12.24.2; 12.38.1; 12.46.4. Cicero avoids anything that will remind him of Tullia; three months after his daughter's death he is unable to feign outward composure and concludes that his grief will always remain the same.
25. Quintilian also finds himself torn between inactivity and industry (Inst. Or. 6 Pr.14)
26. Examples are drawn only from Seneca, Cons. ad Marciam and Statius, Silvae 2.1; 2.6. Ps. Ovid, Consolatio ad Liviam, has been excluded because of the lack of connection between bereaved and author; Plutarch's Consolatio ad Apollonium has been omitted, since few references are made to the personal circumstances of Apollonius.
27. On the differences in intensity of grief between mothers and fathers, see Chapter 4, p.94ff.
28. For a selection of extracts from Early Modern diarists, see Appendix 1.
29. On the Roman laws of mourning, see Chapter 7, p.156.
30. The boy's age is not mentioned, but he was probably very young - Seneca reminds Helvia how he died "in your arms and amid your kisses" (Helv. 2.5).
31. The value of children to the Romans and their concern for them in illness is discussed in Chapters 1-3.
32. Seneca often mentions that man never thinks of the inevitable fate of those close to him: Ep. Mor. 63.14; Marc. 9.1-2; 12.5; Polyb. 11.1.
33. Status too, it seems, affected the extent to which it was reasonable to mourn. Martial records how his friend Paetus had rebuked him for his sorrow over Eortion ("a little homeborn slave girl"), when he himself, by contrast, had lost his wife, yet remained dignified in his conduct (5.37); cf Statius, Silvae 2.1.84-105; Silvae 2.6.8-12.
34. Ps. Ovid's first question to Livia is "Does anyone dare to dictate conditions of weeping to you? Does anyone regulate the tears upon your face?" (Cons. ad Liv. 7-8).
35. See Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 11; 13.
36. Quintilian believes that the gods are against him and finds himself blaming Fate (Inst. Or. 6 Pr. 3-4); cf Ausonius, Parentalia, 11.10-11. Plutarch, Cons. ad ux. 610.8, says that "memory of past blessings" is "an antidote in the hands of those who . . . do not insist on reproaching Fortune for everything".
37. For guilt as one of the reactions experienced by parents who have lost a child, see Chapter 4, p.94.
38. Plutarch, Apoll. 108.13; 114.25; 119.34; 120.34; 121.36; Seneca, Marc. 23.1-2; 25.1-3; 26.3-4; Polyb. 9.7-8. On afterlife beliefs, see Chapter 7, p.168ff.
39. Several lower class parents, who adhered to one of the Mystery religions, seem to have been comforted by a belief that their young child's soul had ascended to a blissful existence in the upper air (see Chapter 9, p.225ff). Many Christian diarists of the seventeenth century had been consoled in their grief at the loss of their infants by a belief that the child had gone to Heaven (Stone 1977:113); but by the eighteenth century several authors questioned a God who deprives young, innocent children of life (Stone 1977: 209-210).
40. Cicero, ad Fam. 4.55; TD 3.30.73; Seneca, Ep. Mor. 63.14.

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GRIEF: THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO INFANT DEATH II: THE EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

As a complement to expressions of grief in the literary sources, this chapter focuses upon funerary epigraphy as evidence for the sorrow at the death of an infant. Social historians repeatedly highlight the comparatively insignificant number of tombstones dedicated to young children in order to support their theory of a generic failure among the Romans to mourn children who died in infancy. Nielsen in particular is dismissive of infant tombstones:

It seems pointless to concentrate the discussion (of the feelings and emotions of the Romans) - as far as mourning is concerned - on the death of infants, since the Romans were not interested in giving any information on infant mortality.

Nielsen (forthcoming):22-23

From the findings produced by a study of CIL6, it will become clear that Nielsen's disregard of infant epitaphs is entirely without justification. The distribution of funerary inscriptions in CIL6 reveals that the Romans did in fact commemorate the loss of an infant child and this form of commemoration was no different from that accorded to older children. The results will also demonstrate that babies aged 0-1 year are not as greatly under-represented in the epigraphic evidence as is usually assumed by scholars. From the findings of this survey a number of conclusions will be suggested concerning not only the commemorative pattern on tombstones, but also the emotions felt by the dedicators towards the children whom they are commemorating.

The basic framework of this chapter has been formed by a study of 39,340 inscriptions from the City of Rome published in the various parts of volume 6 of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. The sepulcrales section of CIL6, an “alphabetized collection of tombstone inscriptions” (Taylor 1961:113) contains the majority of the sample number; but funerary inscriptions are
to be found in other sections of CIL6, principally *columbaria, officiales et artifices, milites*, etc. Therefore, the estimation of Saller and Shaw (1984:124) that approximately three-quarters of all Latin inscriptions are tombstones has been used to surmise that in *CIL6* as a whole there are approximately 29,250 epitaphs. This figure has been used as a sample number for the following study.

From the survey of *CIL6* only two specific categories of epitaphs were evaluated: those commemorating infants aged 0-4 years and children 10-14 years. For the latter age category only details of age and sex were noted, since this group is intended to function as the control in order to ascertain whether the number of inscriptions dedicated was influenced by the age and sex of the child. The 10-14 years age category was chosen in preference to the 5-9 year olds on the hypothesis that the findings from the older age group would show a more significantly contrasting result, particularly as regards male to female ratios, and in preference to 15-19 years and older since at these ages many females are commemorated as wives rather than daughters (Hopkins 1966:261). In general, fragmentary epitaphs were omitted; however, those which gave at least full age and some indication of sex, if no name, were included.

For the purposes of discussion the inscriptions have been grouped into a number of categories: verse epitaphs; age distribution; male to female ratios; infants commemorated individually or in conjunction with others; order of names of dedicatee and dedicator; epithets given to infants; commemorators. With the exception of the three categories of verse inscriptions, age distribution and male to female ratios, all groupings deal exclusively with infants (0-4 years). Only the inscriptions themselves, and not the various types of monument from which they come, will be considered.

*Introduction: biases and problems*

The use of funerary inscriptions to recover, or even guess, the emotions experienced by the dedicator at the death of the commemorated has provoked varying responses, mostly sceptical or negative, from social historians. Many scholars are rather hesitant in their assessment of sentiments expressed on tombstones. Although these scholars often refer
to several epitaphs which, in their opinion, show that some Roman parents were bitterly upset when their infant son or daughter died, however, they place greater emphasis on the problems encountered in interpreting emotions from tombstones and conclude that it cannot be determined whether the grief on tombstones is genuine or not.

Other historians are more emphatic in their criticism of attempts to discover the feelings of the bereaved from inscriptions. Shaw in particular doubts the sincerity of any sentiments expressed in epitaphs: “the erection of a permanent memorial to the deceased, a practice with nothing naturally or biologically necessary about it, is a distinctly artificial and cultural act” (1987:34); to commemorate by a tombstone is “not an automatic response triggered by death, but a cultural act . . . even more artificial than the relationships and sentiments that it records” (1991:67). Susini (1973:61) claims that “inscriptions help us to reconstruct, not the history of the individual as it actually was, but the individual as he wanted to appear vis-à-vis both contemporary and future society”. Bradley (1991:30) too is wary of accepting the expressions of grief on tombstones at face value: he considers tombstones to be an act of duty, conditioned by “very pronounced religious restraints”.

The general view seems to be that the commemoration of the deceased by a funerary monument is a product of the pressures and expectations at the familial and societal level to honour one’s relatives in death. Since the commemorator is aware that the monument will be permanent and public, the sentiments on it cannot be genuine; rather, they illustrate what was considered appropriate to say in such circumstances. In view of this preoccupation in some studies with the question of sincerity of grief expressed on tombstones, it was felt insufficient simply to establish that individual Roman parents did grieve over infant children and, thereby, conclude that expressions of grief for young children were acceptable in Roman society. The additional aim of this introductory section is, therefore, identical to that in the previous chapter on the literature: to argue that, although the emotions inscribed on tombstones are repetitious and the commemorator is acting in accordance with custom, conventionality of expression can in fact be interpreted as an indication of sincere grief.

The standard format of Roman tombstones will be dealt with presently; as a preliminary, the various biases in funerary epigraphy that impair its value as source material will be outlined. The three most significant
biases relate to class, age and sex ratio. For this study of infant epitaphs, the biases of age and sex are most important; therefore, while a summary of both is provided here, the greater part of the discussion features in the relevant sections on infant dedications in CIL6.

As regards class bias, the great majority of extant funerary inscriptions in every age group were erected by and for the lower social groups, primarily freedmen; rather surprisingly, the elite are greatly under-represented. Taylor (1961:118) calculated a ratio of approximately three freedmen to one freeborn in the epitaphs of CIL6. From a sample of 3181 tombstones, Nielsen (forthcoming:25) found that 62% of dedicatees with an indication of status were freed, 14% slaves, and 27% freeborn. Of dedicators who mention their status, 67% were freed, 23% slaves, and 10% freeborn.

This discrepancy between classes, which also applies to the number of infant commemorations, could simply be one of proportional representation: as slaves and freed greatly outnumbered the free in Rome\(^8\), it might be expected that funerary inscriptions would be in proportion to population figures. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the loss of a child in infancy was a greater blow to slaves and freedmen than to their social superiors. The literary evidence reveals that for parents of the elite sorrow at the death of a child was just as much for the untimely demise of a dearly loved child, as well as a frustration of hopes for future social and economic security; it is likely that lower class parents grieved over the deaths of their children for similar reasons (p.225ff).

According to Taylor (1961:131), the freeborn of the lower classes preferred the anonymity of mass graves or unmarked jars, because, unlike the more successful freedmen, they had little in the way of public and professional achievements to boast of. Such considerations do not explain why the upper classes, who also had the financial means to commemorate deceased relatives by permanent, stone memorials and who were also in the habit of publicising their accomplishments, seldom dedicated monuments to their children who died in infancy. The elite might have, however, buried their infants anonymously within the confines of their family tombs\(^9\), where the burial space itself would be labelled with the family name rather than individual grave within. By contrast, in Columbaria, where freedmen and slaves could be buried, each niche or ash-chest/urn had to be marked by the deceased's name because the remains of several hundred unrelated collegia members might be contained in a single tomb.
The generally-accepted explanation for the greater tendency of the lower classes to erect funerary inscriptions to their infant children is the desire of freedmen to advertise their newly-gained status as Roman citizens. A tombstone, being the most public form of advertisement available to such people, enabled a freedman to proclaim the freedom of his family through the tria nomina of his children. For the upper classes, the greatest prestige came through honours received and offices held by adult family members - these are the achievements that are emphasised most often on tombstones of the elite.

Yet, according to the findings of Shaw (1991:69), slaves were the largest single group of dedicators of infant tombstones; but they did not have advertisement of status as an obvious motivating factor. In some cases parents were demonstrating their concern for familial ties, by commemorating a child who had been separated from them through sale and brought up in a different household (Rawson 1966:78). However, from her study of the order of names in servile epitaphs, Flory (1984:218-219) has shown that slaves were just as "status-conscious" as freedmen. The names of freed wives normally preceded those of servile husbands, unless the husband had an important position (e.g. CIL 6 27274: Tertius is a slave in the Imperial household):

The public nature of the record and the desire to appear important and successful and to have some mark of prestige, however small, to inscribe are the factors that influenced the text.

Flory 1984:223

Similarly, on infant epitaphs the tria nomina of a freed child are recorded before the single name of servile parents (e.g. CIL 6 22693; 23027). The influence of custom must also have contributed to the decision to erect a tombstone, as the vast majority of inscriptions dedicated by the freed and servile classes date to mid second century AD (MacMullen 1982:245; Meyer 1990:74); thereafter, the habit of funerary commemoration by these groups begins to decline in popularity. Therefore, for some freed and servile families considerations of position within society must have contributed to their decision to erect a funerary monument to their infants; but genuine sorrow should not be ruled out as one of the main motives for parental dedications to young children.
Secondly, one of the most serious biases in funerary epigraphy is the implausibility of the age structures. According to the findings of Sailer and Shaw, in the City of Rome children under the age of 10 were far more likely to receive a memorial at death than any other age group\textsuperscript{14}, and the people of Rome honoured their children with a tombstone more than any other population in the whole Empire, with the exception of Ostia (Shaw 1987b:34; 1991:74; Sailer and Shaw 1984:138). Yet, in spite of this preference shown by the Romans for commemorating young children, the distribution of tombstones in the infant age group (0-4 years) in \textit{CIL6} does not accurately reflect the death rate among this age group. The infant mortality at Rome has been estimated at 250-300 per 1000 live births and approximately 50\% of all children born live would have died before their tenth birthday (Chapter 5, p.103), but there are only 1357 tombstones in \textit{CIL6} dedicated to 0-4 year olds and of these only 128 commemorate 0-1 year olds. Therefore, infant deaths, in particular 0-1 year olds, are still greatly under-recorded on funerary inscriptions from the City of Rome\textsuperscript{15}.

Examples of this under-representation can be found in most demographic studies, the earliest being Harkness (1896). From a sample of 16,106 tombstones from Rome and Italy with ages at death, Hopkins (1983:225) calculated that only 1.3\% were for infants dying under one year; the 1-4 years age group represented 13\% of all tombstones on which the age of the deceased at death was specified. Shaw (1991:69, table 4.1), in his analysis of tombstones in the Western Empire, showed that in the first three centuries AD among slaves and freedmen at Rome only 1.6\% and 0.6\% respectively of all inscriptions commemorated 1-12 month olds. The 13-24 months age group was represented by 5.2\% and 1.8\% of all commemorations among slaves and freedmen respectively.

Tombstones are, therefore, demographically valueless as evidence for mortality rates. The demographic patterns produced by calculations from epigraphic data are "improbable . . . unlike those found in any human populations" (Hopkins 1987:117)\textsuperscript{16}. The mortality pattern that emerges from funerary inscriptions should be regarded as a reflection of Roman social customs at death. In the case of infants, society did not expect parents to commemorate children who died so young by a permanent, engraved marker, although, from the Imperial period, many from the freed and servile classes did not conform to the practices of funerary commemoration traditionally accepted by Roman society.
The majority of infants who received some form of dedication could have been commemorated by memorials made of less costly, and more perishable, materials such as wood or stucco (Hopkins 1966:247); or by anonymous markers, such as a plain urn sunk into the ground. However, as mentioned in Chapter 6 (pp.143;149), large numbers of infants may have been buried, communally or individually, in unmarked graves.

The third major defect in the epigraphic evidence is the marked bias in the number of males commemorated by a tombstone in comparison to the number of females. The skewed sex-ratio in Roman funerary inscriptions is well-illustrated in demographic studies, particularly those of Hopkins. Hopkins (1966:261), from a study of 20,758 epitaphs with age at death, calculates a ratio of 135 males to 100 females, and elsewhere (1987:114) describes this discrepancy in commemoration of gender as the "most serious bias" in funerary epigraphy. The severity of this bias varies across age categories. Hopkins (1966:261) calculates a sex ratio of 159:100 in the 0-4 years age group; this ratio decreases to 144:100 in the 5-14 years category.

Again, such ratios are unlikely to be a reflection of the demographic reality. At Rome males might have outnumbered females in certain periods (Burn 1953:35; Lo Cascio 1994:35), but the skewed sex ratio on tombstones is a product of the traditions of funerary commemoration and not a reflection of a larger number of males in the population, nor of greater male mortality. In a culture such as ancient Rome where boys received a larger allowance than girls in the alimentary scheme and males occupied the predominant position in society, (Wiedemann 1989:18-19), it is not surprising that on tombstones males are more commonly honoured than females.

Therefore, each of these three biases - class, age and sex - in the epigraphic evidence can be explained as products of socially recommended practices of funerary commemoration. Yet, if the epigraphic pattern in CIL6 is a reflection of custom, then a number of difficulties arise in attempting to discover the emotions felt by the commemorators at the loss of such young children. Adherence to custom might imply that the bereaved were not motivated primarily by genuine grief to honour their son or daughter.
The conventions of funerary epigraphy could further prove that the epitaphs are not genuine reflections of the emotions experienced by the bereaved. Yet, as in the case of literary evidence, compliance with social custom in the erection of a tombstone need not preclude genuine sorrow as an equally motivating factor.

In Roman funerary inscriptions the typical arrangement is opening invocation, name and age at death of the deceased, and identity of the commemorator. By far the most common introductory dedication is to "the Spirits of the Departed", the *Di Manes*\(^2\). This formula, always in the dative *Dis Manibus*, becomes popular on tombstones from the mid first century AD. Many variations of the unabbreviated form *Dis Manibus* (18249) occur, but in the great majority of cases the form *DM* (14306) is given.

Choice of monument, whether a rough stone to be adapted to requirements or one of the mass-produced ones that was in a finished state with all the decorations and an inscription panel; choice of stone (ranging from costly marble to less expensive limestone or, cheaper still, brick or tufa with marble or limestone facings); and biographical details were all the responsibility of the bereaved. However, the structure of the text would often have been the stonemason's\(^2\): the form of *Dis Manibus*\(^2\); the grammatical case of the dedicatee's name (nominative, genitive or dative); the use of abbreviations\(^2\); the inclusion of epithets and end phrases. Style of lettering and text would also depend upon current trends in funerary epigraphy and the size and cost of the monument\(^2\). The recurrence of epithets and set phrases implies the existence of a stock of conventions at least, if not of manuals (Hopkins 1983:204)\(^2\). From these the customer could select something appropriate, perhaps with the assistance of the stonemason, or may have simply instructed the stonemason to inscribe a suitable phrase of his own choosing. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the stonecutter might have had more to do with the sentiments recorded on tombstones than the bereaved themselves. Considerations of epigraphic trends and finance would also seem to undermine any theories that feelings of genuine grief are being expressed freely by commemorators in epitaphs.

Interpretation of the sentiments on tombstones is further complicated by the linguistic conventions of funerary epigraphy. In addition to the aforementioned standard epithets and idioms, the choice of motifs is
confined largely to a limited stock of themes based on phrases and ideas familiar from poetry. This use of stereotypical language is manifest most clearly in the verse epitaphs (p.225ff), where the modes of expression, though verbose and florid, are very similar. Recurrent images include the deceased child entreating his/her parents not to grieve; the cruelty of Fate; the lament of untimely death; appeals to passersby; the precocity of the child; well-known images from the Homeric Underworld: Elysium, Tartarus, Acheron, Styx, Orcus, Dis, Pluto, Persephone.

Therefore, there is much to support the view of Shaw (1987:34; 1991:67) that funerary commemoration is "a distinctly artificial and cultural act". The façade of conventionality on tombstones seems impenetrable, any attempt to discover whether genuine grief lies beneath misguided. Yet, in the linguistic introduction to the chapters on Literature and Epigraphy it was shown that the expression of emotions always follows a standard, formulaic pattern. In our own society in order to convey feelings, not only those of grief, it is the traditional practice to turn to the words of others. Cards can be bought not only to communicate one's sorrow at a bereavement, but also to express congratulations, happiness, gratitude, love, etc. Each of these emotions has its own long-established, and limited, stock of vocabulary, themes and ideas; this forms the reserve for composers of verses in cards. The pre-prepared expression of sentiments is the more common, appropriate and convenient way of communicating one's feelings to others.

A gravestone is a "cultural act" (Shaw 1991:67) and "the fulfilment of a duty" (Dixon 1992:13), but a tombstone can also have more personal implications for the individual. Memorial monuments provide a place where the bereaved can visit and remember the loved ones whom they have lost; they serve as a focus for grief, particularly in the early stages of bereavement when distress is often acute27, and give a legitimate reason for the open display of emotion, which tends to be discouraged, particularly in the case of infants, by our own society and that of ancient Rome.

The influence of custom cannot be denied as a motivating factor in the erection of a tombstone, particularly since the bulk of Roman epitaphs date to the mid second century. Yet, the influence of contemporary practices is by no means incompatible with the role of grief and natural affection as motivating factors; the extent to which one predominates over the other will depend upon the individual.
The Gravestone in the Modern Cemetery

In order to illustrate further the theory that custom and conventional expression can operate simultaneously with genuine grief in the erection of a funerary monument, a survey was made of gravestones in four British cemeteries. In all four graveyards taken as a whole, it was clear from the wording of the tombstones that the use of standard forms and formulaic phrases is even more marked than in the Roman epitaphs catalogued in CIL6. Although, in mitigation, the Roman funerary inscriptions do span a much larger timescale, in the course of which fashions and customs could have changed many times, and are subject to more pronounced class biases than those in modern cemeteries.

Nevertheless, the standardisation of British tombstones is striking. The opening invocation is almost always "In loving memory of . . . "; variations such as "Sacred to the memory of . . . ", "In fond remembrance of . . . ", "Treasured memories of . . . ", "Erected to the memory of . . . ", often appear no more than once or twice. As for epithets, in cases where these are included, there is virtually no deviation from "beloved" and "dear"; these are applied equally to males and females, to husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. A few adaptations are given, such as "much loved" or "dearly beloved".

Phrases and proverbs included at the foot of headstones are influenced largely by Christian sentiments: direct biblical quotations are more common on tombstones belonging to the earlier part of the twentieth century and to the period beforehand; on more recent epitaphs, a number of short religious expressions consistently reappear. For young children, the most popular scriptural references are the phrases "Fell asleep in Jesus"; "One of God's Angels"; "Safe in the arms of Jesus". The idea of reunion with God and with loved ones in Heaven appears on adult epitaphs: "Present with the Lord"; "In thy Father's keeping"; "In Christ we are united"; "Reunited in God's kingdom". On gravestones dating to the second half of the twentieth century sentiments without any direct scriptural reference are more popular as concluding phrases to epitaphs. A number of themes recur consistently: death as sleep or rest ("Peacefully sleeping"); R.I.P.; reunion with loved ones after death ("Till we meet again"); love and missing the deceased ("Loved always"; "Sadly missed"). However, the majority of end phrases express the idea of remembrance ("Always remembered"; "Always in our thoughts"; "Worthy of
In addition, cemeteries impose severe restrictions on both the type of memorial and the wording of epitaphs. For example, the price list issued by H. Peasegood & Son, Saffron Walden, NW Essex, specifies that "white polished granite is seldom allowed in churchyards. Dark or light grey granite with a fine honed finish is usually allowed". Several cemeteries also prohibit the use of affectionate, abbreviated terms of relation on tombstones: the more formal "father" and "grandfather" must be used in preference to "dad" and "grandad". Cremation burials demand an even greater degree of consistency in the form of commemoration. Gardens of Remembrance in cemeteries, like that at Saffron Waldon, often consist of a number of rows of small bronze plaques all with the commencement "To the memory of . . .", followed by the deceased's name and age at death. Outside the little hedge, which surrounded the garden in this particular cemetery, a notice stated that no containers for flowers were to be placed on the surrounding grass. The garden is maintained and the plaques provided by the local council, hence the strict adherence to uniformity. Crematoria often have rows and rows of identical marble or bronze plaques, sometimes placed over square niches containing ashes, affixed to their walls.

Funeral directors and monumental masons also contribute to the preservation of uniformity in funerary commemoration. The range of tombstones available is limited due to the restrictions imposed by cemeteries, and also because individual masons have only certain types of monument which they can, or are prepared to, carve. On request, the recently bereaved are issued with a sheet of guidelines to enable them to compose an epitaph; original sentiments are discouraged or actually prohibited. The whole procedure of erecting a gravestone involves minimal effort on the part of the commemorator; but genuine grief is not lacking. Most individuals who have experienced the loss of a close relative are not psychologically able to deal with such arrangements unaided.

By comparison with ancient Rome, in Britain today, children rarely die in infancy; yet, in modern cemeteries infants are seldom commemorated on their own, but more often with a parent who has died at a later date. Infant epitaphs tend to be brief in biographical details: frequently only the child's name is given, and age is usually replaced by the more general "died in infancy"; epithets, if included, commonly describe the child as the parents' "little angel". In the case of memorials erected exclusively for infants, which tend to be extremely simple, both the form and the wording
are dictated by the monumental mason and by the conventions of what is acceptable in a particular cemetery. Yet, it would be unthinkable to question the sincerity of the parents’ grief for the child whom they have lost.

Similarly, the traditional format of Roman dedications to infants and the adherence to cultural traditions should not be taken to mean that all sentiments on tombstones are insincere. Scholars, such as Shaw (1984:34; 1991:67), who claim that the sentiments on Roman funerary inscriptions are “artificial”, are unlikely to make the same criticisms about modern epitaphs. Therefore, it is unreasonable to argue that comparable conventions in Roman funerary epigraphy must inevitably preclude the sincerity of emotion.

The purpose of this discussion of the conventions of ancient and modern funerary inscriptions was to demonstrate that genuine sorrow can be expressed within the confines of epigraphical and cultural traditions. The study of infant epitaphs in *CIL*6, the details of which were outlined above, will now be used to support the viability of this relationship between convention and sincerity of emotion. The principal aims of this investigation are as follows: first, to show that standard expressions of sorrow suggest that Roman society as a whole expected that parents would grieve over an infant, since there would be no such conventional phraseology, if parental grief for infant death was exceptional; secondly, to argue that the dedicators of these tombstones could have been genuinely upset at the death of their child in infancy.

*Roman Verse Epitaphs*

As mentioned (pp.221-222), the Romans had a restricted number of set themes which they could use to convey their feelings about death in general and their loved ones in particular. The most satisfactory method of studying these themes is to discuss them within the specific context of verse inscriptions, principally because these epitaphs are relatively few in number and they provide a ready-made framework for discussion, since they contain all the sentiments (and more) to be found in the much larger group of prose inscriptions.
The literary evidence revealed that excessive displays of all emotion provoked censure. Society prescribed that the upper classes should conceal their grief, or at least be moderate in their sorrow; signs of emotion at the death of an infant could be condemned even more strongly (Cicero, *Id* 1.39.93; Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 99). In Latin literature this restraint is further suggested by the fact that there are only seven historical cases of grief for a child aged 0-4 years, and only one of these is for a female31.

The funerary inscriptions in CIL6, however, suggest no such restraint upon the part of parents at the death of an infant child. Parents of the lower classes did not feel the same compulsion to be controlled in their display of grief as the ideals and values demanded of upper class parents. The expression of this grief on tombstones can be seen most clearly in the verse epitaphs; these obviously lend themselves to more elaborate and poignant manifestations of grief than the matter-of-fact conciseness generally required by prose inscriptions.

In the case of prose inscriptions the most common pointer to parental sorrow is the epithet *infelicissimus*, although this occurs in only 42 (3.1%) of inscriptions in which commemorators are named: one father describes himself as *infelicissimus* and *aeterno dolore adflictus* (*CIL*6 15268). But such a meagre number does not mean that the majority of parental dedicators did not grieve for their infants; rather, this figure is again the product of the conventions of Roman funerary epigraphy. On modern tombstones, the bereaved do not express their own feelings of grief, but refer more commonly to their affective relationship to the deceased by such phrases as “dearly loved” and “gone, but not forgotten”. So too on Roman tombstones, commemorators do not express their sorrow by choosing particular epithets for themselves; custom dictated that grief be demonstrated by epithets applied to the deceased child. However, an absence of all indications of grief on tombstones need not mean that the deaths of the children commemorated were not lamented at all. The dedication to Minicia Marcella contains only the girl’s name, that of her father and her age at death (*CIL*6 16631; Appendix 5), but Pliny’s letter (*Ep.* 5.16) reveals the extent of Fundanus’ affection for his daughter and his sorrow over her death.

The fact that parents opted for a more elaborate epitaph than the popular, brief prose inscription would suggest that their sorrow over the death of their child was genuine. However, verse epitaphs are not the most
reliable guide to the interpretation of grief on tombstones for three reasons in particular:

a) verse inscriptions may have been recorded in handbooks available at the workshops of stonemasons and are unlikely to have been composed by the dedicators themselves; therefore, the authenticity of any expressions of sorrow is questionable.

b) poetic licence doubtless played a part in the emotions contained in the verses; the sincerity of the grief uttered is debatable.

c) verse epitaphs, on which the age of the deceased is given, form only 30 (2.2%) of the 1357 inscriptions in CIL6 dedicated to 0-4 year olds.

Yet, contrary to expectation, of the epitaphs to 10-14 year olds only 1.9% (14) are in verse (Appendix 7: Tables A.1 & A.2). Therefore, older children were not always accorded the most lavish laments because their death represented a greater loss to the parents, as some scholars suggest (Dixon 1988:24; Nielsen, forthcoming:21). Moreover, the verse inscriptions do not support Dixon’s contention (1992:100) that the theme of mors immatura is applied more often to older children than to infants: 40% of infant dedications, 36% of 10-14 year old commemorations, mention mors immatura. The poetic laments to 10-14 year olds were not in fact more detailed or more original than those in the infant age group, as the survey below indicates. Similar themes recur throughout the epitaphs in both age categories: the merciless cruelty of Fate; the precocity of the deceased child; the afterlife; appeals to passersby. Parents of infants and older children alike vividly describe their sorrow at the untimely demise of their cherished sons and daughters. The age distribution on infant verse epitaphs also reveals that infants under 1 year are not as seriously under-represented as the findings of several demographic studies of tombstones have illustrated. As Tables A.1 and A.2 show, more 0-1 year olds are commemorated by verse inscriptions than children in the following age categories: 4 years, 11-12 years, 13-14 years and 14 years.

Therefore, Roman verse inscriptions parallel the findings of current research into bereavement that the age of the child at death is not a major
factor in determining the emotional impact upon parents.

In addition to the unexpected lack of age biases, it is surprising to find that the greater proportion of verse epitaphs commemorate slave children, the freed children of slave parents, or freed children whose parental status is unknown: 24 of the 30 verse inscriptions fall into this category; 16 of these are for slave children. Although some tombstones were erected to slave children by foster-parents, the majority were parental dedications. This result further confirms the notion that parents of lower social status did not share the upper class obligation to be restrained in public displays of grief for infants. Slaves and the freed tended to be either foreigners themselves, mostly of Greek extract, or of foreign descent, therefore they might not have empathised with Roman virtutes.

As with gravestones in modern British cemeteries, verse epitaphs have their standard phrases for the expression of grief; the most popular is the formulaic nolite dolere, parentes. Here the child is represented as entreating his or her sorrowful parents not to mourn, for death was decreed by fate:

nolite dolere, parentes, eventum meum properavit
aetas hoc dedit fatum mihi
17196 (2 yr old Ephebus)

nolite dolere, parentes, hoc faciendum fuit
26203 (1 yr L. Sentius Coccetus)

In an almost exact repetition of CIL 6 17196, twelve year old Auctus Tullius addresses his brother:

dolere noli, frater, faciendum fuit.
properavit aetas, voluit hoc Fatus meus.
27728 34

In addition to the three nolite dolere examples, another fifteen verse epitaphs in the 0-4 year group express parental grief in some form or other. Therefore, in 60% of verse epitaphs parents describe their sorrow for their infant child; by contrast, there are only four such cases in the 10-14 years group (12009; 12013; 14578; 29609). This result further contradicts the assumption that parents would express their grief more intensely for older children. In these epitaphs parents vent their sorrow by referring to
themselves as "weeping" (flentes, 19331; flete, 10764; flebilis, 27140; flevere, 18290; flet domus, 26680); the mention of tears is also popular (27383; 27060; 28239). The parents of Speratus, who was not even one year old when he died, describe themselves as "mourning without end" (lugunt sine fine, 26680). Moreover, there is none of the marked bias in expression of grief between male and female children found in the literature.

A number of other recurrent themes illustrate that the dedicators of these inscriptions may have been genuinely upset at the loss of their infant.

Many parents seem to have found the death of a child at such a young age inexplicable, for verse epitaphs often assert that it was the will of Fate that the child should die at such a tender age. In addition to the nolite dolere, parentes examples, eight inscriptions feature this idea; six in the 10-14 years group\(^3\). For example, quem Fatus longius ducere noluit is the description used of two year old Flavius Hermes (18086); while one year old Gn. Domitius Proculus is made to reassure his mother by saying cavere fatum nemo mortalis potest (35126).

The Fates are also accused by parents of "snatching away" their infants. Fourteen verse epitaphs in the first age group, and more than half of those dedicated to older children\(^4\), contain this popular motif or refer more generally to the child being "stolen":

\[
\text{raptus qui est subito, quo fato, non scitur}
\]

\[28044\] (71 day old L. Valerius)

Similarly, in many inscriptions parents lament the cruelty of the death or fate that has befallen their child. This notion of mors invida/crudelis funus/iniquum fatum occurs in more verse commemorations to older children (6/14) than among 0-4 year olds (4/30)\(^5\).

Since these children died before achieving their full potential as adults, in verse inscriptions parents commonly praise their children's precocity in spite of their youthful years. This notion of outstanding intellectual and moral development which atones for premature death is more common among older children\(^6\). Among the examples in the 10-14 year group

228
(6182; 7898; 12103) 12 year old Antonius Severus is made to claim:

studia amavi, obsequens magistris fui, observavi parentorum
praeccepta, meos amicos colui, patronos,
bonos [omnes], officio praestus fui . . . .

12013

But this sentimental idealism is not entirely absent from infant epitaphs; it occurs in four cases (6319; 10764; 18086; 34817). Like that of Antonius Severus, the dedication to three year old Charinus stresses his obedience:

moribus innocuis puerum blandisq. Charinum
qui iam ferre pium coeperat opsequium

34817

The idea that the child had the wisdom and understanding of someone much older is also found:

hic tamen in biennio vixit quasi qui vixisset sedecim annis,
talis enim sensus erat illi, quasi properantis ad Orcum

18086 (2yr old Flavius Hermes)

This idea of precocity is taken to extremes in the non-verse inscription which describes ten month old Aurelius Gelasius as a homo innocentissimus (35112). The intellectual capacity of six month old P. Aelius Pius is remarked upon with amazement:

qui, mirum dictu, posset iam nosse parentis

10764

The recurrence of this motif in literature, epigraphy and art has led scholars to argue that the Romans were incapable of perceiving young children as individuals in their own right (see Chapter 1). However, this is a favourite topos, applied to children in general and not just at the moment of death; certainly, it is not the only, or the most common, perception Roman parents had of their children. The prose inscription below focuses upon the exquisite chatter of three year old Anteis Chrysostom (see Appendix 5 for translation):

ANTEIDI CHRYSTOSOMY
SUAVI LOQUACI AUCLAE* GARRU
LAE QUAE VIXIT ANNIS III MEN
SIBUS V DIEBUS III FAENOME
NUS ET HELPIS PARENTES
INFELICISSIMI FILIAE CARIS

229
*auclae = aviculae  **vociclaem = vociclae me(llitissimae)

Incidentally, all the examples of precocious children in both age groups are males, which would confirm the theory of the superior position of males in Roman society; the only exception is the ten year old slave girl, Bassa, described as:

... pia filia, virgo pudica, 
excedens cunctas ingenio aequalis

In verse epitaphs bereaved parents often lament that by burying their son or daughter parents are performing a duty that their child should have eventually carried out for them\(^4\). This idea occurs in six verse epitaphs in the 0-4 years group\(^4\), and in two in the 10-14 year group (12013; 30110):

\[
\text{quod decuit natam patri praestare sepulto,} \\
\text{hoc contra natae praestitit ipse pater}
\]
22994 (3yr Ninnia Cronis)

The idea that the child has been "ungrateful" by dying appears on three occasions (18086; 26544; 27060):

\[
\text{ante dedi matri et patri luctum quam brachia circum} \\
\text{darem, quam grata fuerim matri aut patri}
\]
26544 (2yr old Siculina)

There are two instances of the notion of futility and wasted effort:

\[
\text{quid prodest vixisse in amabilitate facetum} \\
\text{cunctaque blanditiis emeruisse suis?} \\
\text{num potuit dilectus ob haec perducere lucem} \\
\text{longuis?}
\]
6319 (3yr old Spudes Gratus)

230
non nasci melius fuerat quam indigna iacerent ossa. cinis facta est iam non resposura parenti

28695 (infans Vettia Chrysis)

For the late twentieth century reader, used to phrases such as "dearly loved son" or "darling daughter", the complaint of "ungrateful" children and the emphasis on futility and wasted effort might seem shocking. However, such laments should not be dismissed as self-interest or a lack of feeling. They are an open admission of a reaction to death which our society prefers to be left unexpressed publicly, but belongs to the complex process of grieving just as much as more acceptable feelings of loss and missing the deceased as a dearly-loved individual.

The verse epitaphs, even those in which the sentiments are conventional, leave no doubt as to the intensity of parents' grief at the loss of a very young child. Here a slave father begins a touching lament (27383) to his two year old daughter with the question:

\[
\text{quis non volta riget lacrimis maeore coactus,} \\
\text{quis non tristitiam pectore concipiаt} . . . ?
\]

and describes her as \textit{dilecta ante alios multum defletaque cunctis}.

The commemorator of an illegitimate boy, two year old C. Iulius Maximus, gives no clue as to identity, but the sorrow is unmistakable:

\[
\text{Atrox O Fortuna, truci quae funere gaudes,} \\
\text{quid mihi tam subito Maximus eripitur?} \\
\text{qui modo iucundus gremio superesse solebat,} \\
\text{hie lapis in tumulo nunc iacet miser.}
\]

20128

These inscriptions to infants demonstrate that for the commemorators in question the death of a young child could have represented a very real and great loss. Beneath the artistic veneer and the careful reworking of the expression of the emotions, there is a sense of deep sorrow that seems too candid to be insincere. Parents, it seems, could feel grief at the death of an infant; this sentiment is captured in the epitaph of a three year old slave boy who cries out in warning to passersby: \textit{vos vestros natos concustodite parentes, ni dolor in tuto pectore fixus erat} (19747). Verse epitaphs may contain expressions of grief that are elaborate and conventional, but the
very presence of these expressions would suggest that such displays of sorrow for infants were socially acceptable.

In addition to testimonies of parental grief, verse inscriptions are invaluable for the insight they provide into the afterlife beliefs held by those sections of society about whom the literature is silent. In the literary sources the predominant belief among the educated classes seems to have been the notion of the immortal soul of the deceased child enjoying a blissful existence in the high heavens. On verse epitaphs, both those dedicated to 0-4 year olds and those to 10-14 year olds, the next life is perceived most often in terms of the Homeric/Virgilian Underworld (seven inscriptions in each age group express this belief). Much less common is the idea, popular among the literary elite, of the return of the soul to its natural state, where it joins the stars. Only three epitaphs mention the upper air as the location of the afterlife (and they are all in the 0-4 years group), and in each one the traditional motifs of the Underworld are treated with scorn (10764; 12087; 27383).

On those inscriptions which refer only to the Underworld the usual motifs appear: lower world deities Dis Manibus (6319), Orcus (18066), Persephone (20760); the "insubstantial shades" (leves umbras, 35126; 10078); the Underworld itself - tenebris . . . atris (23010); lato . . . in antro (28239); and three year old Grusoglosus is described as flebilis et misere raptus ad inferias (14786). From the 10-14 year old group can be added Pluto . . . infera templa (7896); Stygias umbras (6182); Di Manes/Manes Inferi (14578; 19874; 30110); and inferi (10731; 27728). This result confirms the conclusion reached in Chapter 7 that parents envisaged the souls of departed infants in the same afterlife as themselves.

Survey of Funerary Inscriptions in CIL6

The remainder of this chapter will focus upon the non-verse epitaphs in CIL6 dedicated to children who died in infancy. The study has been subdivided into a number of categories: age distribution; male to female ratios; infants commemorated individually or in conjunction with others; order of names of dedicatee and dedicator; epithets applied to infants; commemorators of infant epitaphs. The principal intention is to use the
findings from this study of infant funerary inscriptions to demonstrate that the parents who dedicated these tombstones grieved at the loss of their infant children, and, thereby, suggest that this grief could have been genuine. The results will also show 0-1 year olds are not as greatly under-represented on tombstones as other demographic studies have emphasised. A quantitative approach to the evidence was deemed the most suitable in this instance.

Age distribution

As remarked (pp.218-219), in comparison to other areas of the Empire, with the exception of Ostia, the inhabitants of the city of Rome - the servile classes in particular - were more likely to commemorate those who died in infancy; but this age group is still under-represented in funerary inscriptions. Of the 29,250 inscriptions in CIL6 examined in the study, 1357 were dedicated to infants 0-4 years, that is 4.6% and 703 to 10-14 year olds (2.4%)44 (Appendix 7: Tables B.1 & B.2). In the infant age category the death rate would have been highest among 0-1 year olds, but the extent of under-recording is most marked in this group: only 128 inscriptions overall, that is just 9.4% of infant epitaphs; the other infant age groups, among which the death rate would have been lower, each account for some 20-odd percent of 0-4 years inscriptions45.

Such figures do not represent the demographic reality, especially since these inscriptions span a period of some three centuries and in view of the frequency with which it has been estimated that infants died in antiquity. In ancient Rome there must have been an immense number of deaths in the first week and month of life46; yet, possibly only one inscription in the whole of CIL6 is dedicated to a neonate (i.e. under 28 days)47.

The number of inscriptions in CIL6 is in itself misleading. Many tombstones are no longer recoverable: they have either been destroyed to be reused in building or have simply crumbled through time. Moreover, new inscriptions are continually being unearthed - at a rate of "upwards of 1000 items per year" throughout the Empire (Keppie 1991:9) - and are published annually in L'Année Epigraphique. In the volumes published for the years 1966-1990 the city of Rome has 90 epitaphs to infants 0-4 years, and 63 for children 10-14 years. Many infant tombstones might
remain to be discovered, but such findings would not significantly alter the percentages recorded above.\textsuperscript{48}

In Britain today, most stillborn and perinatal deaths do not receive any form of commemoration.\textsuperscript{49} Frequently, the hospital will make all the necessary arrangements, and the baby will be commemorated along with many others by a general headstone or a plaque in a memorial garden in the local cemetery. Even for older children within the infant age group, a formal memorial in stone is unusual. One study of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Cot Death revealed that although the majority of parents chose to have their child buried or cremated in an individual ceremony, only 6% paid for a headstone or memorial tablet (Golding et al. 1985:162). Parents entrust the responsibility for the burial of their child to experienced authorities, and prefer not to have any physical reminders of their loss, not because of a lack of affection and genuine sorrow, but from the conviction that non-involvement will ease their trauma and enable them to start rebuilding their lives. Likewise, the decision of parents not to commemorate their infants by a memorial would not be interpreted as indifference; rather, the financial burdens of young parents and the common practice of burying babies in a very simple manner would be offered in explanation.

Similar considerations should be extended to Roman traditions of funerary commemoration. The under-recording of infants, as revealed by the epigraphic pattern in \textit{CIL}6, is a reflection of the cost involved in setting up an inscribed marble tombstone and of the fact that social custom did not require infants to be honoured with a permanent memorial. As with the modern parallel, this lack of commemoration does not imply that the parents in question did not grieve at all for their children; allowance must be made for financial constraints and for culturally acceptable practices.

Significantly, even non-verse Roman epitaphs to infants tend to be more detailed than their modern counterparts. In contrast to the non-specific “died in infancy” found on most modern tombstones, all Roman epitaphs except two give the infant’s age in terms of years, months and days. Some commemorators recorded the age of their young children at death with a precision that is quite remarkable. In 69 examples (5.1%) of infant epitaphs, the age of the child is actually specified to the number of hours. In the first inscription below Aelius Romanus is said to have lived 3 years 9
months 25 days and 5 hours; in the second Martialis is recorded as having lived 1 year 5 months and 21/2 hours:

AELIO ROMANO
HERMES ET AELIA
SATURNINA FILIO
PIENTISSIMO FECERUNT
QUI VIXIT ANNIS III
MENSIBUS V
DIEBUS XXV ET
HORIS V
CIL6 10784

SER ASINI HERMETIS PATRONI SUI
ET MARTIALIS VERNAE AMANTISSIMO
SUI VIXIT ANNUM MENSES V
HORAS IIS FECIT SER ASINIUS
NICEPHORUS SIBI ET SUIS
LIBERTIS LIBERTABUSQUE
POSTERISQUE EORUM
CIL6 12526

In only three cases (0.2%) is the child’s age represented by the vague plus minus, “more or less” (CIL6 12403; 17935; 27147).

The registration of births from the time of Augustus implies that the recording of such precise ages at death on infant memorials could have been accurate and not simply another convention of funerary epigraphy, particularly since almost all extant tombstone inscriptions belong to the first century AD and later. Two Augustan laws, the lex Aelia Sentia (AD 4) and the lex Papia Poppaea (AD 9), stipulated that registration was only open to legitimate children of Roman citizens, and had to be within thirty days of the birth50. But there also existed a procedure whereby parents of illegitimate children could make a "private statement" (Schulz 1942: 81) of the birth of a child. The Augustan restriction was subsequently repealed under Marcus Aurelius (Cod. Inst. 22.3.29.1), which allowed every Roman child, legitimate or not, to be legally registered51.

Therefore, it seems that most of those Romans who chose to commemorate their young child went to the trouble and expense of specially commissioning a detailed memorial. Such meticulousness suggests that the infant in question was loved and valued while alive, and missed in death.

Male to female ratios

In concurrence with the results produced by other surveys, the epitaphs examined in this study revealed that there was a marked bias in the number
of males commemorated in comparison to the number of females. In the 0-4 years age group the overall sex ratio is 171 males to 100 females, and the greatest disparity is among 0-1 year olds, where the sex-ratio is an incredible 204:100 (Table C.1). As expected, among 10-14 year olds the sex-ratio disparity, though still not demographically realistic, is not as biased: the overall figure is 132:100; among 14 year olds there is a near balance in the sexes: 111 males to 100 females (Table C.2).

Various explanations have been given for this skewed ratio, often in the form studies of particular households or social groups. Treggiari (1975:400) found, from tombstones, that among the staff of the Volusii Saturnini in Rome there were 17 boys to 6 girls, and among the staff of the Statilii family, also from Rome, there were 24 boys to 9 girls. This disparity, she suggests, is partly a reflection of the higher birth rate and early death rate for boys; or possibly owners may have rid themselves of unwanted females by exposing them at birth, thereby creating a greater number of males in any one household. Ultimately, however, Treggiari admits that her sample is too small to allow for any positive conclusions52. Rawson (1986:179-180; 191-2) discovered a similar disparity among alunni ("foster-children") and verna ("home-born slaves") inscriptions in CIL6: the sex-ratio for under fives was 170:100 and 220:100 respectively for the two groups; among those under one the sex-ratio was still more marked, 200 and 250 respectively. Rawson (1986:180) believes that among alunni this ratio illustrates that "very young girls who . . . had been deprived of natural parents were less likely to find a foster-parent to take care of them". As for verna, the greater number of males is to be attributed to the practice of recalling very young boys from the countryside, where they were being reared, to the city at an earlier age than girls.

In the introductory section on biases in funerary epigraphy, it was suggested that this skewed ratio was a product of the tradition of funerary commemoration: popular practice prescribed that males be honoured more than females by an inscribed, permanent and public memorial. Different commemorative customs, therefore, account for the predominance of tombstones to males. Such explanations as a higher rate of exposure among females at birth, because girls were valued less than boys, can be dismissed in light of inconclusive evidence and sources to the contrary53. The absence of any differences between males and females in intensity of parental grief in verse epitaphs demonstrates that the male-to-female bias in funerary inscriptions should not be used as proof that parents lamented
the loss of a son more than the loss of a daughter. The ratio is not unexpected for a society where the dominant position belonged to males.

In the remaining sections discussion will focus exclusively on 0-4 year age group since the intention was to use the 10-14 year old group only for comparison of numbers and sex-ratios. The aim is to use the findings collectively to suggest that the dedicators of these tombstones could have experienced grief at the death of their infant children.

**Infant epitaphs: single and multiple dedications**

In modern cemeteries, most infants are not commemorated at the time of death, but at a much later date, when one of the parents passes away; individual memorials are rare. By contrast, in Roman funerary inscriptions the greatest proportion of infants are commemorated on their own: of the 1357 inscriptions to 0-4 year olds, 1086 were individual dedications, that is 80%. Moreover, in proportional representation to the total number of inscriptions in each age group, most individual dedications are to 0-1 year olds. On those 271 inscriptions which are joint dedications, 428 persons are named in addition to infants (268 males and 160 females)\(^54\) (Tables D.1 & D.2).

In contrast to the modern practice of commemorating young children together with one or both parents, on Roman epitaphs the most common co-dedictees of infants are children (35.5%); whereas mothers and fathers account for only 10.1% and 5.6% respectively of joint dedications. This predominance of maternal over paternal joint-dedications with infants, which occurs in all five infant age categories (especially in 1-2 year group, where the figures for mothers and fathers are 11.2% and 4.5%), cannot be attributed to mothers dying in childbirth, since none of the infants in question were neonates. However, since males commonly dedicated tombstones more than females (p.245) and women tended to be more closely involved in the day-to-day care of small children, the greater number of mothers commemorated together with infants is not unexpected\(^55\).

The discrepancy between modern and ancient practices as regards joint-dedications is a product of the different mortality patterns in the two societies. At Rome the mortality rate among children, particularly among
the very young, was much greater than among adolescents and adults; multiple dedications to children are, therefore, extremely common (e.g. CIL 6 8038; 8198; 13027; 15160; 22013; 27572; 28055; 28967). In Western urban societies of the late twentieth century the largest proportion of deaths is among the elderly and it is rare for children to die in infancy; as a result, few gravestones commemorate more than one child.

Order of Names

On modern funerary monuments, even when the infant had predeceased his or her parent(s), the common practice is to have the child's name in last position. This order of precedence is due to the tombstone being dedicated primarily to the parent, the infant having died some forty or fifty years beforehand in many cases. The study of alumni and verna inscriptions in CIL 6 made by Rawson (1986: 185;195) produced similar results: only a third of the children's names were recorded in first position; in other cases the dedicator's name preceded. This pattern, claims Rawson, "reinforces the picture of alumni (and verna) as a socially inferior group: young and of comparatively low status". Therefore, it would seem that in both ancient and modern tombstones first position is reserved for the most important person in the epitaph. Since infants too were, by certain Roman standards, "a socially inferior group", the order of names in their epitaphs should be similar to the pattern outlined by Rawson.

However, of the 1022 infant inscriptions in which the name of the dedicator is given, in 76.6% of cases it is the child's name which precedes. In view of the importance attached to status in Roman society, it is significant that in infant epitaphs parents and other commemorators forego the public advertisement of their own prominence. This evidence could indicate, by implication, the extent to which these dedicators loved, and lamented, their infant children.

Epithets

The survey of funerary monuments in the four British cemeteries revealed that the child's name is generally recorded without any descriptive phrase; by contrast, on almost half of Roman funerary memorials infants have one or two epithets: the 1357 inscriptions contained
634 epithets (Table E.1). However, since some tombstones contain more than one epithet, the actual number of infant inscriptions with an epithet is reduced to 570. Most commonly, one of the two epithets is benemerens, the standard adjective applied to adults and children alike\(^{59}\); but benemerens is different from all other epithets in that it appears most often in inscriptions as a formulaic end phrase\(^{60}\). Other combinations of epithets are also found, as the two inscriptions below illustrate. In the first Callistianus is described as “most sweet and most charming”; the second is dedicated to Fortunata, “most pious, but unfortunate”:

D M
M ULPIUS ZOSAS
CALLISTIANO FIL
DULCISSIMO ET
BLANDISSIMO VIX
AN II M X D XVI
B M
CIL 6 29287

D M
FORTUNATA
V AN III M VIII D XXVII
PATER INFLICISSIMUS
FILIAE PISSIMAE
SED INFELICI
CIL 6 18566

For the purposes of discussion six categories of epithets have been identified (Table E.2): benemerens; carissimus; dulcissimus; pientissimus; piissimus; "other". The last includes desiderantissimus (17426), innocentissimus (13112), infelicissimus (18566), amantissimus (12526), amabilissimus (22013), optimus (37444), blandissimus (29287), incomparabilis (14629), sanctissimus (34320), clarissimus (1334), suavissimus (21738). These epithets have not been grouped into individual categories because most of them occur only two or three times, e.g. clarissimus (1334; 1457).

Most of these epithets, usually given in the superlative form of the adjective\(^{61}\), stress the moral qualities of the deceased child: benemerens, pientissimus, piissimus, incomparabilis, sanctissimus, optimus. This emphasis upon honourable characteristics relates to the mors immatura theme and the idea of precocity. Though very young, such children were, in the opinion of their commemorators, already beginning to display the valued Roman virtutes. Other epithets are of a more affectionate nature and reflect the depth of feeling between adult commemorator and child: carissimus, dulcissimus, innocentissimus, suavissimus, amantissimus, blandissimus.

By far the most common epithet is dulcissimus (46.1% of the total), both
for males (47.3%) and females (44.0%); and in all five infant age categories: *dulcissimus* ranges from 42.9% (2-3yrs) to 50.9% (0-1yr) of the total number of epithets in each age group (Tables E.2 & E.3).

Such findings conflict with those produced by Nielsen's study of *alumni* (1987:177) which showed that *benemerens* was the most popular epithet: from 270 inscriptions mentioning 276 *alumni*, *benemerens* appeared 82 times; *dulcissimus* was second with 55 instances. In her paper at the Conference on the Roman Family in Australia (August 1994), Nielsen discussed an investigation which had produced similar results. From a sample of 2220 epithets, Nielsen discovered that *benemerens* constituted 83% of all epithets, but *dulcissimus* accounted for only 12%. Yet, in infant tombstones *benemerens* is found in only 23.0% of cases overall; and for each of the five age categories the figures are 15.1%; 20.4%; 26.8%; 26.8%; 21.1% respectively (Tables E.2 & E.3).

As noted, *benemerens* is used most often as a conclusion to epitaphs in the abbreviated form *B M* but in instances where *benemerens* is found outside the non-epithetical formulaic sense, it is applied most often to non-familial relatives, especially adults. As for the young, more foster-children are commemorated by *benemerens* than natural sons or daughters. Both categories fit into Nielsen's conclusion that in such examples

*benemerens*, when used as an epithet proper, seems primarily to have been used to characterize relationships based on obligation. The relatives of the commemorated persons express their gratitude towards the deceased, who had done what could be expected to make the relationship a harmonious one.

Nielsen (forthcoming):11

Nielsen's definition of *benemerens* explains the proportional discrepancy between the distribution of *benemerens* in her own studies and in this present survey. Nielsen's sample has no age restrictions, and adults are included; here the upper age limit is four years old. Infants are unlikely to be described as "behaving well" (or "well-deserving":OED), since their age would preclude their relationship to the commemorator as being one genuinely based upon obligation and gratitude.

With the exception of *benemerens*, which is used mostly in the formulaic sense for infants, after *dulcissimus* the epithet most commonly used of infants is *carissimus* (13.4% of the total), both for males (14.5%) and females (11.6%). In most of the five infant age groups *carissimus* is the
second most popular epithet: it accounts for 20.8%; 18.5%; 12.7%; 11.4% of the total in the first four; but among four year olds carissimus constitutes only 7.5% of all epithets and is superseded by both pientissimus (10.5%) and piissimus (9.0%) (Tables E.2 & E.3).

The numerical difference between carissimus and dulcissimus in infant epitaphs can be explained with reference to Nielsen's findings (1994:14-17). In her literary review of carus and dulcis, Nielsen found that carus was considered more formal than dulcis, and dulcis generally described sons and daughters younger than those to whom carus was applied. The epigraphical material produced a similar result: whereas both epithets denote a warm and intimate relationship, carissimus, which forms 12% of the epithets examined in Nielsen's study, is used of a wider range of relations, being particularly common for spouses (the peak age is 25 years); those characterised as dulcissimi tend to be much younger (the peak age is under five years). In 68% of cases where dulcissimus is found, it is used of a son or daughter.

Nielsen's conclusions corroborate the pattern of age distribution of epithets in this study. In 46.1% of cases infants are called dulcissimus, and in 13.4% carissimus; this implies that dulcissimus was regarded as a much more suitable epiteth than carissimus for the very young. The expected result, on the basis of Nielsen's study, would be that the frequency of carissimus would increase along with the age of the child, but here the pattern produced was entirely to the contrary. As Table E.3 shows, carissimus declines in popularity with the increasing age of the child, which suggests that the older the infant, the more acceptable it was to use a wider range of epithets. Table E.3 also indicates that only among 0-1 year olds is carissimus a more popular epithet than benemerens; it seems that it was particularly inappropriate to characterise babies as having discharged some sort of obligation or as deserving gratitude.

In her study Nielsen treated pientissimus and piissimus as a single category; this formed 10% of all epithets used64. Nielsen's figure of 10% indicates that overall there is no great difference in the use of pientissimus/piissimus as an epithet from that of dulcissimus and carissimus (both 12% of the total). However, the age distribution of the epithets shows a different pattern: while the peak age of those commemorated by dulcissimus was under five and carissimus was applied most often to twenty-five year olds, pientissimus/piissimus is most

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commonly used of fifteen year olds, with sons and daughters constituting the greatest proportion. In infant dedications, pientissimus and piissimus account for 6.6% and 4.6% respectively of the total number of epithets (Table E.2). These findings are not surprising, as such small children could not be reasonably expected to perform any acts of pietas towards their parents. In Nielsen’s view the application of pientissimus/piissimus to adolescent children is a projection of the disappointed hopes of the bereaved parents:

The parents’ expectation of pietas had been frustrated by their son or daughter’s untimely death and this is what they express by mentioning both the age at death of their sons and daughters65 and by characterizing them as pientissimi/piissimi in a situation where they had themselves, contrary to nature, shown pietas towards their children.

Nielsen (forthcoming):21

There is a great difference in the percentage of total epithets constituted by dulcissimus, carissimus and pientissimus/piissimus between Nielsen’s study and this investigation. Whereas the percentages for each of the three epithets in Nielsen’s paper was approximately the same (12%; 12%; 10% respectively), in this investigation pientissimus and piissimus account for only 6.6% and 4.6% of the sample number in contrast to 46.1% and 13.4% represented by dulcissimus and carissimus respectively. In the context of epithets suitable for infants this would suggest that pientissimus and piissimus were even more unsuitable than carissimus. When infants are described as pientissimus or piissimus, this seems primarily to be an expression of the child’s precocity: although these children had met an untimely end, they had displayed all the essential qualities of the Roman virtutes, including pietas, that they would have shown as adults.

The implication made by Nielsen that children as they grew older would be more capable of acting with pietas and so more deserving of pientissimi/piissimi as epithets is corroborated by the findings of this study. As Table E.3 illustrates, no babies at all under one year have been given either of these epithets. In the four other age categories the number of infants described as pientissimi or piissimi increases in proportion to the age of the child: the respective totals are 7; 16; 19; 26.

Therefore, from the distribution of epithets in infant dedications, it seems that parents were careful in selecting a suitable phrase for their child. The application of epithets was not simply gratuitous, but designed to
reflect the qualities of the deceased child. By contrast, on modern gravestones, the presence of “dear” and “beloved” is ubiquitous, and the use of epithets does not vary significantly in accordance with the age of the deceased. Although the epithets on Roman inscriptions doubtless owe much to the conventions of funerary epigraphy, their use is nowhere near as banal as those on modern tombstones. In view of such considerations, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these epithets could be expressions of genuine affection and sorrow on the part of the parents.

As noted, two of the most serious defects that impair funerary epigraphy as a source are age distribution, especially in the 0-1 year old age group, and sex ratio. The pattern of epithets seems, at first, to reflect these familiar biases: epithets to 0-1 year olds form only 8.4% of the total; and the sex-ratio is, skewed, especially among those under one year: 163.1m:100f overall, 231.3m:100f among 0-1 year olds (Table E.1).

Yet, if infant epithets are taken in proportion to the total number of infant inscriptions, then these biases disappear. As Table E.4 shows, babies under one year were not less likely than any other infant age group to receive an epithet: 41.4% of inscriptions to infants aged 0-1 year contain an epithet; the highest proportion of epithets to inscriptions is only 48.8% (1-2 years). As Table E.3 reveals, the greatest percentage of original/uncommon epithets (those subsumed under the term “other”) actually belongs to the 0-1 year age group: 13.2%. Both sets of data are particularly significant in view of the under-recording of this age group generally on tombstones. According to the pattern in CIL6, the younger the child, the less likely were commemorators to resort to conventional epithets. Again, the epigraphic evidence suggests that parents could have been moved by the deaths of their small children.

Similar principles of proportional representation reveal that male infants were not more likely than females to receive an epithet: 45.9% of dedications to male infants contain an epithet; 48.1% to females. Therefore, although the difference is only marginal, proportionally more female infants than males received an epithet. Male and female infants were equally likely to be characterised as piissimus/a: piissimus forms 4.8% of all epithets attributed to males, 4.1% of all those for females. Most notably, pientissimus is used proportionally of more females (8.7%) than males (5.3%). Admittedly, the sample numbers are small in each case, but at least these results display none of the male-to-female bias traditionally associated with Roman tombstones. Therefore, as the distribution of
epithets on infant dedications reveals, it should not be assumed from the funerary inscriptions in CIL6 that sons were valued more than daughters.

Commemorators

In addition to the frank declarations of sorrow in verse epitaphs and the impression of grief conveyed by the use of epithets applied to both infants and dedicators, an analysis of the various types of commemorators of infant tombstones further suggests that many Roman parents could have been deeply upset at the death of a young child.

Those who chose to honour children who had died in infancy by a tombstone can be grouped into seven categories (the figures in brackets indicate one example from CIL6 of each category): three groups of parental relatives - father (6707), mother (12670), both parents (28923); owner; surrogate; other relative; unknown/other relationship, which includes cases where the inscription offers no clue as to the connection between the deceased and the commemorator, and instances of relationships outside the above groupings, e.g. 17682 is dedicated to, amongst others, one year old Faenia Hygia who is described as the collactia of the commemorator L. Faenius Vitalis. The term "owner" incorporates dominus/patronus (18904); libertus (15235); contuberna (21809); delicium/delicatus (12156; 26689); verna (20532). "Surrogate" includes alumnus (16946); nutrix (17157); mamma (22227) and tata (28906). "Other relative" means avus (11634); avia (16845); nepos (28860); soror (5308); frater (17485); matertera (25913); avunculus (18914); vitricus (21554); necessaria (17715).66

As Table F.1 shows, by far the largest proportion of those who dedicated memorials to infants were parents: of the 1164 dedicators named in infant funerary inscriptions, parents, both as individuals and as mother and father together, form 72.2% (840) of the total. In this category fathers outnumber mothers as individual commemorators by almost 2:1: the respective figures are 24.1% (280) and 12.5% (146); both parents as dedicators account for 35.6% (414). The greater number of dedications in which only the father is named need not imply that the child lacked a mother. Since finance played a large part in determining the size and wording of epitaphs and because the father is likely to have been financially responsible for the tombstone, many less well-off couples
might have been forced to include only the father's name (e.g. *CIL* 6 18174: the father's full name, T. Flavius Primus, is given; the mother is referred to simply as *mater*). The conclusion made by Flory (1984:216) that a husband's name preceding his wife's in joint dedications "reflects the husband's position as head of his family and the man's more important role in Roman society" explains the prominence of paternal dedicators on infant tombstones. Those epitaphs where the mother is the sole commemorator (*CIL* 6 14115; 29254), or dedications by the mother and her parents (*CIL* 6 16845; 21608) or mother and stepfather (*CIL* 6 2154; 3831), would suggest that the father was in fact absent.

Cases where neither parent is mentioned and the child is commemorated by another relative would suggest that both parents were deceased and the child was reared in the household of other family members. Grandparents are especially common, as are siblings (17485). The dedication to four year old Fausta by Livia Delphis describes her simply as *necessaria sua* (17775).

The death or absence of both parents also accounts for the presence of non-kin commemorators on dedications: the three categories of "owner", "surrogate" and "unknown/other relationship" form 22.7% of the total. In some cases the child might have been abandoned at birth and reared by chance finders, or handed over by impoverished or unwilling parents to someone who wished a child either to rear as their own or as a slave. Some infants were born into slavery, as the term *verna* indicates. A number of these epitaphs mention both owner and parents, but on others only the owner's name is given, as the child may have been separated from his/her parents through sale. Although the commemorations of *vernae* are not by relatives, the use of various diminutives shows that the relationship between owner and slave was often as warm and as close as that expected between parent and child. In the first example one year old Doracis is described as Verania Vitalis' "little home-born slave"; in the second "sweetest little home-born slave" is used of two year old Tyche:

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<td>VERANIA VITALIS</td>
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<td>CAECILIUS EUHODUS</td>
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However, the predominance of parents as dedicators of infant epitaphs illustrates the importance of nuclear family relations among the lower orders. Contrary to the impression of family life given by some social historians, particularly Bradley, as being unstable and complex, the funerary inscriptions of CIL6 would suggest that the majority of the infants commemorated were raised within a secure environment in which both parents were present. Therefore, it seems justifiable to surmise that these children were loved and valued while alive, and were sorely missed in death.

Conclusion

As a source in general, the value of funerary epigraphy is impaired by a number of inherent biases, principally with regard to age and sex in the case of infant memorials. Although the importance of these defects should not be underestimated, the funerary inscriptions in CIL6 are still invaluable as evidence, not least because they offer an insight into social groups largely ignored by the literature of the elite. Tombstones redress the imbalance constituted by the literary sources: they contain a greater proportion of expressions of grief for infant children. In addition, many of these epitaphs are expressions of grief for female children or examples of mothers displaying sorrow at the death of their infant children; in both of these the literary evidence is deficient.

In spite of the biases inherent in infant epitaphs, the findings produced by this study of CIL6 at least demonstrate that some Roman parents did care enough about the death of their young children to honour them by a permanent memorial in stone. This very act of commemoration would suggest that their emotions were stronger than mere adherence to social custom. The detailed expressions of grief in the verse epitaphs; the precision with which the deaths of the very young were often recorded; the fact that the great majority of infants are commemorated on their own and their names precede those of dedicators on inscriptions; the application of epitaphs appropriate to the age of the child; the fact that the category of commemorators is dominated by "both parents" collectively imply that the deaths of these infants were lamented by their parents.

The influence of custom and fashion and the dependence upon conventional images and idioms complicate the use of funerary
inscriptions as a guide to the reactions of Roman parents to the death of a child in infancy. Tradition need not, however, preclude the conclusion that feelings of genuine sorrow were a motivating factor in the erection of a memorial to infants. In such cases, genuine grief is more likely to have been responsible for the decision to make a dedication, since society did not prescribe that children so young should be honoured by a permanent memorial in stone, and the vast majority of infant deaths in Rome received no such monument. Therefore, the sentiments on infant tombstones should not be dismissed as “artificial” (Shaw 1987:34; 1991:67). Within the restrictions imposed by tradition and society, there is still scope for the expression of true sorrow on the part of the individual. The format may be standardised, but on many of the monuments themselves the commemorator’s anguish and sense of loss is unequivocal.

In view of this conclusion the words of William Wordsworth seem particularly apposite:

... to slight the uniform language of these memorials as ... not trustworthy would obviously be unjustifiable. Enter a Church-yard by the Sea-coast, and you will almost be sure to find the Tomb-stones crowded with metaphors taken from the Sea and Sea-faring life. These are uniformly in the same strain; but surely we ought not thence to infer that the words are used of course without any heart-felt sense of propriety. Would not the contrary conclusion be right? ...

An experienced and well-regulated mind will not, therefore, be insensible to this monotonous language of sorrow and affectionate admiration; but will find under that veil a substance of individual truth.

... In an obscure corner of a Country Church-yard I once espied, half-grown with Hemlock and Nettles, a very small Stone laid upon the ground, bearing nothing more than the name of the Deceased with the date of birth and death, importing that it was an Infant which had been born one day and died the following. I know not how far the Reader may be in sympathy with me, but more awful thoughts of rights conferred, of hopes awakened, of remembrances stealing away or vanishing were imparted to my mind by that Inscription there before my eyes than by any other that it has ever been my lot to meet with upon a Tomb-stone.

*Essays upon Epitaphs*

(Dickensen & Johnson 1993:309-311)
CHAPTER NINE: NOTES

1. See Etienne (1976:153); Nielsen (1987:159); Garnsey & Saller (1987:139); Dixon (1988:114; 1991:100); Garnsey (1991:52); Rawson (1991:16). In contrast, youths 10-19 years are greatly over-represented in tombstones erected by parents (Hopkins 1966: 246). Meyer (1990:78) believes that the tombstone pattern shows that "heirship, not family, is the primary basis of commemoration". Saller (1994:99) argues that parental dedications to children "must have been motivated by affection and duty".

2. The term "under-representation on tombstones" means that the number of inscriptions in any one age group is fewer than would be expected in view of the hypothesised death rate for that age group: the infant mortality rate in ancient Rome is estimated at 250-300 per 1,000 live births in the first year of life (Chapter 5, p.103), yet for this age group there are only 128 funerary inscriptions out of 29,250 in CIIf. For the under-representation of 0-1 year olds on tombstones, see Hopkins (1966:246; 1983:225; 1987:114); Brunt (1977:132); Salmon (1987:104-105); Parkin (1992:6). More generally, see Garnsey and Saller (1987:139); Nielsen (1987:159); Dixon (1988:114; 1991:100); Garnsey (1991:52); Rawson (1991:16).

3. The sepolcrales section in CIIf forms parts 2, 3 and 4.1 (10424-29680), with supplements in parts 4.2 and 4.3 (34029-36602; 37857-39082a).

4. Rawson (1986b) uses the 10-14 year age group in her survey of inscriptions dedicated to alumni and verna.

5. For the various types of infant funerary monuments, see Chapter 6, section iii, p.138ff.


7. For a recent, and comprehensive, survey of the biases of funerary inscriptions, see Parkin (1992:5-18).

8. In the city of Rome, slaves and freedmen accounted for "well over two-thirds of the urban population . . . possibly three-quarters" (Brunt 1977:387).

9. For the burial of infants in family tombs, see Chapter 6, section iii, p.149.

10. See especially Taylor (1961:129-30) on inscriptions and Kleiner (1977:18-19) on group portraiture. Treggiari (1961:212-3) notes that freedmen generally commemorated only those children born to them after manumission. According to Kleiner (1987:553), freedmen commemorated their infants because with the death of their freeborn children their own hopes of a better future died. Nielsen (forthcoming:25-26) disputes the traditional view that freedmen erected funerary monuments to emphasise their new status as citizens and the legitimation of their family as only 26% of freedmen dedications are relationships within the nuclear family, compared to 53% for CIIf as a whole.

11. The figures given by Shaw (1991:69) are quoted on p.218 in connection with biases in the age structure.

12. For examples of dedications to infants who belonged to a different household from their parents, see CIIf 11924; 26755.

13. The group portraiture among the freed had an even shorter life span: over 85% of such reliefs are datable to 30 BC-AD 5 (Kleiner 1977:181).

14. Under 10's accounted for 27.7% of all servile and freed commemorations at Rome in the first three centuries AD and 34.0% of all Christian dedications in the third to sixth centuries AD.

15. See notes 1 and 2.

16. For the unrealistic mortality figures that emerge from the age pattern on tombstones, see Burns (1953:14); Hopkins (1966:246-247); Brunt (1977:132); Engels (1980:113); MacMullen (1982:239-240); Saller and Shaw (1984:130); Shaw (1987:33-41); Nielsen (1987:159); Wiedemann (1989:114);
17. See p.143 for inexpensive memorials.
18. For other figures illustrating the male to female bias in funerary inscriptions, see Brunt (1977:133) and Parkin (1992:15). Rawson explains "sex-ratio" (1986:19, n.32): "The sex ratio expresses the number of males compared to 100 females. Thus a sex ratio of 100 would indicate exactly equal numbers of males and females".
19. According to Dio 54.16.2, in 18 BC among the nobility there were more males than females (Chapter 2, p.32). See Parkin (1992:103ff) for a discussion of greater female than male mortality in antiquity.
20. Even today the death rate is consistently higher at all ages among males than females (Lo Cascio 1994:35).
21. Other, less common, opening dedications are: memoriae/a ("in/to the memory of...": 12644; 12957; 24916; 26356; 29431) and somni aeternali ("to the everlasting sleep of...": 13241; 28054).
22. For the procedure involved in the carving of a tombstone, see Susini (1973:chaps. 3 & 4).
23. Inscriptions dedicated to 0-4 year olds in CIL6 contain twenty-one variations of Dis Manibus, the most common being D. M.
24. The age of the deceased, one of the most widely used abbreviations, is repeatedly shortened to V (VIXIT) A (ANNIS) M (MENSIBUS) D (DIEBUS). There is, however, no standard for abbreviated forms of common phrases.
25. Scholars disagree as to whether tombstones were expensive or not. Hopkins (1966:247) estimates that even the cheapest inscribed tombstones "may have cost roughly the equivalent of three months wages of unskilled labour". Duncan-Jones (1982:127) calculates a median average of HS 10,000 for expenditure on tombs among the Italian population of up to first century AD; median average in Africa is HS 1,380. However, Sailer and Shaw (1984:128) argue that "memorial stones were within the means of modest men"; even at Rome the cost, including funeral, could have been "no more than a couple of hundred sesterces". Shaw (1987:40) later remarks that the size and cost of tombstones implies that those who erected them were "specifically the slaves and freedmen of the wealthy and powerful of the city of Rome".
26. See Lattimore (1942:19), where CIL6 9856 and CIL10 7296 are quoted as evidence that workshops provided manuals of inscriptions.
27. For modern theories on the development of the grief reaction according to a set pattern, see Chapter 4, pp.87-88.
28. The four cemeteries were Saffron Walden (pop. 15,000), NW Essex, late eighteenth century to present day; Lanark (pop. 10,000), South Clydesdale, early nineteenth century to present day; and two in the West End of Edinburgh (pop. c.450,000): Dean Park, predominantly eighteenth to early twentieth century; Comely Bank, mainly second half of the twentieth century.
29. Some of the more common end-of-epitaph phrases on adult tombstones include

Thy will be done
In Christ we are united
The Lord is my Shepherd
Present with the Lord

Until the day breaks
At peace with God
Called to rest

30. With the exception of "sadly missed", R. I. P. is the most common phrase at the foot of gravestones in Comely Bank, but is rare at Lanark, where the formula "Peace, Perfect Peace" is more popular.
31. The seven main texts are those marked by * in Appendix 3.
32. Verse inscriptions in CIL6 (see Appendix 4 for text and translation):
33. See Littlefield and Rushton (1980). The empirical investigation conducted by Kohner and Henley (1991), as outlined on pp.92-93 above, demonstrates conclusively that the death of a baby can have a profound effect on the parents.

34. On Roman epitaphs, it is not uncommon to find that the deceased child is made to speak out. Parents also appeal to passersby to guard their own children or warn them against desecrating their child's tomb.

35. This idea is found in only one non-verse inscription: this epitaph to 3yr old Isias is the only occasion that the widespread belief "he whom the gods love dies young" appears on an infant's tombstone:

```
QUEM DI AMAVE
RUNT HAEC MORI
TUR IN FAS ANNO
RUM III MENS SEX
D XIII ISIATI FILIAE
B N M ANTINOUS
ET PANTHIA PAR
19716
```

36. Four prose epitaphs can also be included (8038, 14389, 20070, 23790), the most unusual is that to C. Papirus Ianuarius (no age is given): *hic sum matris ab ubere raptus* (23790); cf verse epitaph of 4mth old Flavia Athenais (18290), which describes her as being *raptu sinu matris*. See Martial, Epigr. 1.116.3, where *cito rapta suis* is used of Antulla, the young daughter of Telesphorus Faenius.

37. Only one non-verse inscription, that to the 3yr old slave Eperastus (22397), expresses this idea: his parents lament the funus acerdum (*sic*) of their infant son.


39. For burial of parents as a duty of children, see Plutarch, *Cons. ad Apoll.* 119.34.

40. *CIL*6: 5261 7479 16059 22994 27383 28239. In one non-verse epitaph (26458) the parents of 4yr old Pescennius Tryfonianus describe themselves as erecting the tombstone of their son *contr. votum*. See Martial, *Epigr.* 1.114.4-6.
42. On the mixture of feelings experienced by the bereaved, as revealed by empirical investigation, see Chapter 4, pp.87-88.
43. On afterlife beliefs of the elite, see p.205ff.
44. In five epitaphs to dedicated to children no age at death is given, and the only indication of age is the vague, general term infant (10078, 15388, 23790, 28695, 36355). In CIL6 23790 C. Papirius lanarius must have been only a few months old at most when he died, since he is made to proclaim hic sum matri ab ubere raptus. None of these epitaphs has been included in this study since they cannot be placed in any particular age group.
45. Appendix 7 contains all tables referred to in this section of Chapter 9.
46. Aristotle, Hist. Anim. 7.588a.8; Plutarch, Quaest. Rom. 102.288c.
47. The number of days in this inscription may not refer to the lifespan of the deceased, since the customary vixit does not appear in any form:

D M
TI CLAUDI
IANUARI D X\(\text{II}\)
TI CLAUDIUS
SECUNDUS
LIBERTUS
CIL\(\text{6}\) 15122

The youngest children commemorated by a funerary inscription, whose ages at death are not in doubt, are a 40 day old boy (23642) and a 45 day old girl (1334).
48. For infant funerary memorials, see Chapter 6, section iii, p.144ff.
49. Prior to the late 1970's, the hospital would deal with all stillbirths and perinatal deaths. The standard practice was to clean the baby, dress it in a white cotton bag which would be stitched up and covered with a clear polythene bag. The porter would remove the corpse in a small wooden case, either for burial within the hospital grounds, or to the incinerator in the case of severe abnormalities or very premature births. For the above information, I should like to thank my mother, Margaret W. King, R.G.N., S.C.M., who has been a staff midwife since the late 1960's. According to an elderly neighbour of my mother's, the death of her child at only a few weeks old some fifty years ago was not commemorated in any way, since this was "not the done thing".
50. See the birth certificate of AD 145 (no.2), translated in Appendix 6.
51. Examples of birth certificates are given by Sanders (1927; 1928); Schulz (1942; 1943). See Appendix 6 for translations of birth certificates to legitimate and illegitimate children.
52. See Gardner (1984:157-8) for criticism of Treggiari's hypothesis.
53. The popular theory of a higher rate of exposure among girls in ancient Rome is discussed in Chapter 2, p.32ff.
54. The number of individuals commemorated (428) is larger than the total number of inscriptions (271) because in many epitaphs two or more names of other dedicators are given. Here sibi et suis . . . is taken as referring to only one person since the exact number cannot be established.
56. On both ancient and modern monuments, names could be added to existing memorials. In British cemeteries today, the name of a spouse is usually appended to gravestones dedicated to husbands or wives. On Roman tombstones the names of children were often added (CIL\(\text{6}\) 14139; 14796; 22013; 27572; 29230), although in the absence of the monument itself it is difficult to estimate from CIL\(\text{6}\) the extent to which the subsequent inclusion of names was practised. More commonly, commemorators would honour themselves and others by the standard phrase sibi et suis libertis libertabus
The inscription and Imperial importance of nuclear family relations did actually erect the monument; 13241 19345 
22672 22859 24193 24751 25337 27687 28562 29465.
59. For example, the dedication to three year old Marus is to *f(ilio) dulcissimo et beneficenti* (*CIL* 6 22316). For the application of *beneficenti* to adults, while the child has a different epithet or no epithet at all, see *CIL* 6:

8461 11175 14105 16185 22385 24452 25288 25827
27799 29230 33227 34633 35123 37176

60. Nielsen (1994:8) compares the formulaic use of *beneficenti* (in the abbreviated form *B. M.*) as a conclusion to the epitaph with the use of *D. M.* as an opening. For this use of *beneficenti*, see *CIL* 6 29287, quoted in the main text (p.240), and those inscriptions where *B. M.* appears as part of the phrase *beneficenti fecit/erunt*: 12366 18661 22936 24012 25728 34640.
61. Occasionally, the simple form of the adjective is found (cf. the use of *infelici* in *CIL* 6 18566, quoted in the main text, p.240), most commonly in the phrases *carus/a suis* (17240; 26467; 27534) and *animae bonae* (26473; 36101).
62. I should like to thank Dr. Janet Huskinson for bringing this paper to my attention.
63. The sentiments expressed in two verse inscriptions confirm that the relationship between commemorators and infants cannot have been based upon obligation and gratitude. Of two year old Flavius Hermes, it is said *qui maluit luctum linquere quam gratias reddere suis* (*CIL* 6 18086); two year old Siculina is made to claim *ante dedi matri et patri luctum quam brachia circum darem, quam grata fuerim matri aut patri* (*CIL* 6 26544).
64. Nielsen’s paper came to my attention only after I had formed my own categories of classification. My system could have been changed to conform to that of Nielsen, for I too agree that there is no difference in meaning between the two superlatives in funerary epigraphy. However, I chose to keep *pientissimus* and *piissimus* in separate categories because my results showed a preference, albeit a marginal one, for *pientissimus* over *piissimus*. Moreover, since I am also concerned with any male to female biases (omitted in Nielsen’s study) in the use of epithets, I decided to retain my original form because a slight difference between males and females in the use of *pientissimus* and *piissimus* was discerned by my investigation.
66. In a number of epitaphs the child is said to be, for example *verna* of . . . (38345) or *filius* of . . . (17458). Such inscriptions are not included in the calculations here, since there is no explicit confirmation that the person named is in fact the commemorator; for example:

**EUPHEMUS**
**BASSI SERV**
**VIX AN II MEN V**
6439

The inscription states that Euphemus is the slave of Bassus, but whether Bassus actually erected the monument is not asserted categorically. This omission did not affect overall findings.
67. The findings of Saller and Shaw (1984:134, 147-151) demonstrate the importance of nuclear family relations at all social levels in Republican and Imperial Rome: among civilians, from the lower classes to the
senatorial aristocracy, nuclear family commemorators comprise 72-78% of the total number of dedicators.
CONCLUSION TO PART B

According to demographic reconstructions, the rate of infant mortality in the Roman period was 250-300 per 1000 live births in the first year of life. Historians of the Roman family, influenced by their Early Modern counterparts, have assumed that this high infant mortality must have governed the individual's emotional attachment to a very young child and produced an attitude of resignation, or even indifference, among Roman parents to the loss of a child in infancy.

In general, infants in Roman society seem to have received a less thorough form of burial and funeral ceremony than that accorded to most adults, a familiar custom in a number of primitive societies. However, only in the preurban period did the Romans practise a distinctive mortuary ritual for the very young: inhumation in fossa trenches; burial within the inhabited area. In the historical era, infants constituted a special category of the dead only in the three legal measures instituted to an effort to curb, or prohibit, public displays of mourning for the very young. The re-enactment of these laws on different terms, however, suggests that parents could not be controlled in their show of grief for their infant children. Republican and Imperial Rome did not possess a social cohesion comparable to that of a tribal culture. Consequently, although infants were generally buried in a simple manner, the social pressure to conform to the legal prescriptions was minimal and there was ample scope for open expression of private grief. Funerary monuments, artifacts associated with the grave and afterlife beliefs demonstrate that the mortuary practices of infants could be identical to those of older age groups. Such evidence can be regarded, in individual cases, as a measure of a parent's attachment and sorrow at the death of their infant child.

This social autonomy in the mourning of infants is reflected in the emotional reactions expressed by individual Romans in the literature and on tombstones. However, while irrefutable evidence for mourning is manifest in the form of funerary monuments, tombstones and gravegoods, those literary accounts and epitaphs which record the grief of bereaved parents are more difficult to interpret. Without verbal testimonies by individuals now available to researchers of bereavement, issues of conventional images, set format, standardisation of expression and publication become significant in the analysis of emotions.
The influence of these factors upon the written record of grief will have varied from individual to individual. However, the findings produced by current research into the parent-infant bond and the biological basis of grief permit the historian to adopt a more flexible approach in interpreting grief from literature and funerary epigraphy. From an awareness of the processes of attachment and grief, particularly as regards infants, and an understanding of the linguistic and non-linguistic constraints that influence the expression of feelings, the human qualities of the Romans as bereaved parents will become more evident to the historian.

This humanitarianism should not, however, obscure the fact that some Romans responded to infant death, if not "easily and cheerfully", at least without any recognisable distress. The literary evidence reveals that many infant deaths went unrecorded or were referred to only briefly, without sorrow. Grief at the loss of an adolescent child was so commonplace as to become proverbial and the literary sources examined showed that several authors felt that the death of an older child was more significant and painful than that of an infant. Such a reaction should not be assumed to be indicative of parental indifference to the very young, but of the differences in meaning between the death of an infant and that of an older child. For parents, the death of a child of any age is the loss of a future, but the death of an older child is also lamented for past pleasures.

Yet, the Romans do not seem to have had a pessimistic resignation to the likelihood of infant death, and some authors actually condemn the "value system" which grades degree of emotional impact in accordance with the age of the deceased. Upper class ideals stipulate restraint in grief, but the literature demonstrates that for most of the parents in question the death of a young child could prompt feelings of sorrow comparable to those expressed at the loss of an older child. Statistical analysis of the evidence proves that the majority of infant deaths passed by without written expression of grief, but it is indefensible to presume that in every case these parents were unmoved by their loss simply because there is no written record of it some two thousand years later. Grief does not have to be communicated, least of all in writing, for it to be genuine.

A similar under-recording of infants is to be found also in the corpus of funerary inscriptions from Rome, although here the issue of mere adherence to convention versus genuine emotion becomes more problematical. Verse epitaphs feature the most obvious examples of
parental sorrow. Poetic licence would have influenced the sentiments, but it is clear that the ideal of restraint in grief demanded of the elite had no effect at lower social levels. As a further point of contrast, there is no suggestion in the verse epitaphs that the death of an infant was any less tragic or less meaningful than that of an older child.

This pattern should not be taken to mean that the death of an infant was more painful for parents of lower social classes than for the elite. The close similarity between the expression of grief for infants and for older children in the verse epitaphs is likely to be a reflection of the greater maternal representation on tombstones than in literature. In agreement with the findings of current research, the grief of Roman mothers for the death of their infants seems, on the whole, to have been more prolonged and intense than that of fathers - a product of the closer bond of attachment that generally exists between mothers and very young children.

Signs of parental grief are much less apparent in the ordinary prose inscriptions which make up the bulk of CIL6. However, the results of a quantitative approach to the evidence, in which the inscriptions were examined within a variety of categories, suggested that emotions stronger than mere adherence to custom lay behind infant commemorations. Indeed, the very existence of infant funerary monuments demonstrates that some parents did care enough about the death of their young child to go to the expense of commemorating their loss by a permanent memorial in stone.

The reconstruction of the feelings experienced by individuals from a thematic approach to the verse epitaphs and a statistical analysis of other funerary inscriptions could seem misguided and a misrepresentation of the motivational factors behind the erection of a funerary monument to an infant in the Roman period. Yet, in view of the innate aspects of grief and the human ability to form affectionate attachments to others, in particular to helpless infants, it does not seem unwarranted to speculate that Roman parents could have experienced a sense of loss, pain and disappointment at the death of their child in infancy. Differences do exist between past and present in the emotional impact of infant death, but these differences are not so much in the presence or absence of grief as in the factors that determine the nature of the grief reaction.

For the Romans, the death of a child meant the ending of parental hopes
for their own future security: a successor to the family name and property, and social and political advancement through a good marriage or progression through the *cursus honorum* were the principal concerns among the upper classes. At lower social levels, particularly among the freed and servile groups, parents would look for financial security from their child's employment and social standing from a child with a higher status than themselves. Parents of all social classes seem to have found the death of a child especially upsetting because of their fear that there would be no one to bury them.

Yet, research into bereavement has shown that parents today can be equally self-interested in their grief over their deceased child, though their goals may have shifted more towards academic and professional success for sons and daughters equally. Children are still the embodiment of parental aspirations. Yet, factors of love, pleasure and value for the child as an individual also contribute to the grief experienced by parents. For Roman parents too, such altruistic feelings would have been part of their sorrow. To what extent grief is influenced by reasons of self-interest or altruism cannot, in the absence of testimony by the individual, be determined; the available evidence, however, does demonstrate that Roman parents did grieve at the death of their child infancy. The issue of the sincerity of this sorrow will always remain controversial amongst scholars, but the discerning historian will be able to identify with many of the feelings described by Roman parents and their modes of expression.
CONCLUSION

In this conclusion the intention is to summarise the main findings of this thesis and to offer some recommendations for further research in the study of young children and infant mortality in the Roman period. Only a brief summary has been given, since detailed conclusions were included at the end of each chapter and after Parts A and B. However, prior to this overview, it is appropriate, at this stage, to reiterate the key purposes of this investigation.

The central aim of this thesis was to determine the behavioural and emotional response of the Romans, both at the societal and the individual level, in the period c.200 BC-AD 235 to the loss of a child in infancy. The hypothesis formulated at the outset was that, while it is important to recognise the diversity of parental reactions towards children who had died in infancy, a comprehensive survey of the available evidence would suggest that the Romans could have experienced feelings of sorrow at the loss of an infant, and that society recognised this grief as a normal reaction.

Part A was concerned with the "indifference theory", and discussed the extent to which the attitudes and behaviours traditionally cited in support of this notion can legitimately be regarded as indicative of parental neglect or cruelty towards infant children prior to death. Variations in parental concern and treatment were accepted, but an examination of the evidence showed that the attitudinal and behavioural patterns of the Romans were in general child-oriented.

In view of the difficulties involved in assessing emotional responses to bereavement, these conclusions reached in Part A were designed to substantiate the hypothesis advanced in Part B that the death of an infant could be a painful experience for Roman parents.

The study of infant burial practices, funerary rites and afterlife beliefs revealed that at the societal level there was no expectation that Roman parents should be thorough in the treatment of infants in death. However, the archaeological evidence demonstrated that a number of parents were burying their infants in the same manner and location as adults. From the literature, it was clear that Romans could perform the same rites and
imagine the same afterlife for their infants as for older age groups. The loss of an infant could, therefore, occasion displays of public mourning and funerary ritual on the part of parents.

The idea that Roman parents could have grieved emotionally for the loss of a child in infancy was complicated by difficulties in the literary and epigraphic sources. These problems were recognised and it was accepted that large numbers of infant deaths could have passed by unlamented. Current theories of attachment and bereavement were, however, used to suggest that the expressions of grief recorded in literature and on tombstones could have been a genuine reflection of the feelings of the bereaved individual.

While the evidence reveals that the Romans did express sorrow at the death of an infant and that such emotional displays reflected the attitudes of society as a whole, as an overall conclusion to the question of whether this grief was sincere, in view of the unbridgeable distance between the bereaved Roman and the modern researcher, it is impossible to offer a single answer that is irrefutably correct. The recreation of the emotions of individuals in the past will always be a contentious subject in the field of family history. Some scholars will continue to advocate that the feelings of the Romans are irrecoverable and any expressions of grief in the sources available are artificial and biased. Such an approach will claim that the temporal, demographic and cultural differences between Roman society and the researcher's own preclude the possibility that the Romans could have experienced the same emotions as parents nowadays who lose a child in infancy.

However, this pessimistic outlook would have the historian ignoring all questions of emotion in connection with societies where individuals cannot communicate their feelings in person. With regard to Roman family history, such an approach would return the subject, whose current popularity is founded essentially on widespread interest in affective relationships, to studies based on legalities and stripped of all that is personal and integral to family history. Emotions cannot be set aside all together, if we truly want to aim at recreating a fuller picture of Roman life.

Yet, more than any other topic in family history, the interpretation of feelings is unavoidably influenced by the personal opinion of the researcher. The current debate over the issue of emotional change or
continuity over time has developed from the subjective approach of historians to family relationships in the past. As a student whose primary interest in Roman family history is the emotional relationship between parents and young children, I cannot claim some sort of moral superiority because I alone have managed to be entirely impartial in my own assessment of the emotions expressed by Roman parents at the death of an infant. This thesis has tried to adopt an approach between the extremes of continuity or change, and has emphasised throughout the variety of parental reactions to infant death that existed in the period under discussion.

At the societal level in ancient Rome, reactions to the loss of a young child will have been determined by the high infant mortality rate and the value placed on infants, and children in general, in Roman society. In the period under discussion it is clear that young children were highly regarded by society, and it was acceptable for parents to mourn their deaths in public. The existence of infant funerary monuments and of a conventional language to express sorrow at infant deaths demonstrates this recognition by society of parents’ need to convey their grief openly. At the individual level, the death of a child will always provoke different emotional responses in any society, particularly those which are not cohesive units, depending on the importance of the child to the parents and the degree of affectionate attachment. A minority of parents will feel no grief at all; the grief of most will be a combination of self-interested and sentimental factors: the child as an investment in future security, as an object of love, as an embodiment of parental ambitions. This mixture of practical and sentimental factors that contribute to feelings of grief is no less true of ancient Rome as it is today.

Most children who died in infancy in Rome received no formal commemoration, and legal strictures prohibited, or severely restricted, open displays of mourning. Yet, at Rome children under ten years were more likely to be commemorated by a permanent memorial than adults of all ages. An analysis of the ancient evidence shows that there could be a strong emotional attachment between parents and young children, and in spite of differences in the mortuary ritual, the severing of that relationship at death could cause parents to express their feelings of loss in a manner that the historian in the late twentieth century can empathise with.

As regards further research, the young child is still very much a
secondary subject in Roman family history. A study equivalent to Golden's *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens* is needed, which will explore fully the social and legal position of young children and consider the question of the emotional attachment between parent and child. A more detailed examination could be conducted into parent-child relations among the servile and freed classes, which would expand on the individual studies by scholars such as Bradley, Rawson, Shaw and Treggiari. More directly relevant to infant mortality, an in-depth investigation into the causes of the high death rate among the young is essential in view of the fact that most studies simply list possible causes without any extensive evaluation. Such a study will focus less on the question of parental cruelty and neglect and causes attributable to the "indifference theory", and consider infant mortality within a socioeconomic context. This framework would take into consideration factors at the community, household and individual level. A comprehensive catalogue of infant funerary monuments would be another option. A study of children's sarcophagi by Dr. Janet Huskinson has just appeared, but it embraces all age groups of children. A similar project could be devoted to children's ash-chests and funerary altars. In any such study a close integration between monument and epitaph must be adhered to.
Appendix 1: Infant Death in Early Modern Diaries

A. Differences between fathers and mothers in intensity of grief

According to Stone (1977:247), examples of extreme grief at the death of a young child only began to appear in Early Modern diaries (seventeenth to nineteenth century) in the eighteenth century. Men, however, still tended to express their grief less openly than women (Stone 1977:247-248):

Byrd (1674-1744) recorded this entry on the death of his nine month old son:

My wife was much afflicted but I submitted to His judgement better, not withstanding I was very sensible of my loss; but God's will be done.

James Boswell, an eighteenth century diarist, describes his reaction at the death of his five month old son David in 1777:

I was as calm as I could wish and resigned to the dispensations of God. My wife was in a real state of grief, but composed her mind better than I could have expected.

But the next day Boswell was unable to retain his composure:

I was tenderer today than I imagined, for I cried over my little son, and shed many tears. At the same time I had a really pious delight in praying with the room locked and leaning my hands on the alabaster frame as I knelt.

B. Differences in intensity of grief according to age of child

Several Early Modern diarists grieve more deeply for the loss of an older child than for an infant (Stone 1977:106; Pollock 1983:136):

The diarist Trench (1768-1837), who lost a daughter at only a few days old and a two year old son about the same time, felt greater anguish at the death of the latter:
The loss of my infant daughter, which seemed heavy at the time, shrinks into nothing compared to this. She was merely a little bud; he was a lovely blossom which had safely passed all the earliest dangers, and gave dearest promise of delicious fruit . . . Oh, my child, my child! . . . when I saw you cold and motionless before me how came it that my heart did not break at once.

Josselin (1616-1683) was merely "sad" when his infant son, Ralph died:

it was ye youngest and our affections not so wonted unto it

but the death of his older daughter, Mary, is recorded with greater emotion:

it was a precious child, and a bundle of myrrhe, a bundle of sweetness: she was a child of 10,000 full of wisdome, womanlike gravity, knowledge, sweet expressions of God, apt in her learning, tender-hearted and loving, an obedient child to us . . . Lord, I rejoice I had such a present for Thee . . . it lived desired and dyed lamented.
CII6 10244 (Sinn, No. 121): a decorated angular urn, dated to the late-Claudian era; now in the British Museum, London (N.2359). The epitaph in the inscription panel reads:
L COCCYUS M F
DEXIUS
CLYMENUS
VIXIT ANNUM I
MENSES VII
DIEM UNUM

In the blank area below the panel, a second, unrelated inscription has been carved at a later date (post-Neronian):

C SERGIUS C FIL ALCIMUS
VIXIT ANN III MENSIB III
DIEBUS TRIBUS
FRUMENTUM ACCEPIT
DIE X OSTIO XXXIX
SERGIUS ALCIMUS F SUO

Front: the base comprises a rows of various mouldings, including acanthus leaves and dental incisions. At each corner is a candelabrum, supported by a dolphin. Remains of wings on the tabula show that in the lunette there used to be a Medusa head flanked by swans. The fruit and blossom garland has been largely removed in order to make room for the second inscription.

Back: the rows of various designs continue; there is also a candelabrum surmounted by a crater and a burning torch attached to hanging leaves, and in between is a fruit and blossom garland, underneath which are two pecking birds.

Sides: on the left side is a bird's nest with three young birds being fed by their parents. On the right side are two birds snapping for food. Such a design is particularly suited to a young child similarly dependent upon his parents.

Top: the top is flat. A gable adorns the facade, along the slants of which is a moulding in the form of twisted rope; a similar design runs along the bottom of the gable. Inside is a mussel shell flanked by dolphins; outside are two palmettes.

The urn was used twice: the mention of frumentum, the corn-dole, in the second inscription, is designed to emphasise the filiation and freeborn status of the boy.

265
CIL 5557 (Sinn, No.281): a rectangular urn, of Flavian date; now in the Museo Capitolino, Rome (Inv.142):

(in the cornice)  
DIIS MANIBUS

M LICINI FAUSTI  
V ANN II  
MV DXI

(at the bottom)  
ARRUNTIA SABINA DSP

Front: a low base relief with profile. An infant boy is depicted: he sits on a stool, clad in toga and bulla. In his right hand he
holds either flowers or grapes and in his left a bird, which sits on his left knee. There are no decorative motifs, such as mouldings, garlands, baskets of fruit, etc. The ledge on the front continues round to the back.

Top: the lid is not original; the original is now on Sinn, No.441, which is from Campania. At the front and back are borders.

The dedicator of the urn, Arruntia Sabina, may have been the child's mother. The boy's name probably came from his father; the gentile name indicates his freed status. The straggly, tightly-curled hairstyle of the boy is Flavian, i.e. Titus or Domitian. This monument was found in the Columbarium of Pomponius Hylas, and the urn is actually visible in the foreground, on the right, of a drawing executed in 1831 and reproduced in Nash (Vol II,1968: 346, pl.1120).
Funerary Altars

Figure 3

*CIL*6 15560 (no Inv. No.); (H 47.5cm; base: L 30cm; w 20.5cm; block: H 30cm; L 25.5cm; W 19.5cm); now in the garden of the Museo Nazionale, Rome:

D M

CLAUDIA
PRIMA
VIX AN I
MENSIB XI
DIEB XV

268
A small marble cippus in a fairly worn condition, especially on the top, on a tiered base. Traditional motifs of *urceus* (jug) on right side and *patera* (dish) on left. Top has a hole in the centre, and probably the *cippus* was originally crowned by a four-cornered gabled lid. The lettering is large, well-spaced and evenly cut.

*Sarcophagi*

Figure 4

*CIL* 6 20834; now in Museo Chiaramonti, Vatican Museums, Rome (Inv. 1863):

```
D M
TIJUNIUS
SEVERIANUS
VIXIT ANNIS
I I
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On the facade two winged Cupids uphold a *clipeus* containing
the inscription: the lettering is evenly-cut and well-spaced (the red paint has been added in modern restoration to recreate the original). Underneath the clipeus are two sphinxes. To the left two Cupids, in cloaks, wrestle; in the background between them is a tree. To the right are another two cloaked Cupids; between them a helmet rests on top of a pillared pedestal. The facade seems, therefore, to depict a conflation of two scenes: Cupids in the palaestra and Cupids with the arms of Mars.

Figure 5

_CIL_6 13124; now in the Galleria Lapidaria, Vatican Museums, Rome (Inv. 9252/9249):
On the facade two winged Cupids, who appear to be flying, hold a *clipeus* with the inscription: the lettering (painted in red) tilts down slightly to the left. Underneath the *clipeus* are two cornucopiae, the points of which are intertwined. On either side of the cornucopiae is a vase of fruit lying on its side. At each corner is a Cupid: neither is winged; both have short hair, wear cloaks and brandish a torch, which is turned inwards, as a sign of life continuing.

Figure 6

Late Republican/Augustan Relief from Amiternum: the funeral procession of a man of some social standing (Museo Archeologico di L'Aquila; photo: I.N. 30.516; Walker 1985:9-10, pl.2).
Late second century AD child's sarcophagus from Rome: scene of *conclamatio* around the death-bed of an infant girl (British Museum, London, Sc. 2315; Walker 1985:48, pl.40; Walker 1990:17-18; pl. 2, fig.6).
Appendix 3: Literary Sources on the Death of a Child

A. The death of child beyond infancy
1. Ausonius, Parentalia 11: his grandson (puer)
2. Ausonius, Parentalia 23: his niece's children, Paulinus and Dryadia (juvenes)
3. Cicero, ad Fam. 4.5; 4.6; ad Att. 12.14; 15: his daughter, Tullia (c.34 years)
4. Cicero, pro Cluent. 27: Oppianicus' elder son (puer)
5. Martial, Epigr. 5.34; 37; 10.51: his verna, Erotion (5 years)
6. Martial, Epigr. 6.28; 29: Atedius Melior's favourite, Glaucias (12 years)
7. Martial, Epigr. 1.114; 116: Faenius Telesphorus' daughter, Antulla (puella)
8. Martial, Epigr. 11.91: Aeolis' daughter, Canace (7 years)
9. Ps. Ovid, Cons. ad Liviam: Livia's son, Drusus (29 years)
10. Pliny, Ep. 3.16: Arria's son (puer)
11. Pliny, Ep. 4.2; 4.7: Regulus' son (puer)
12. Pliny, Ep. 5.16: Fundanus Marcellus' daughter, Minicia Marcella (13 years)
13. Plutarch, Cons. ad Apollonium: Apollonius' son (youth)
14. Quintilian, Inst. Or. 6 Pr: two sons (5 & 9 years)
15. Seneca, Cons. ad Marciam: Marcia's son, Metilius (married, two daughters)
16. Scriptores Historiae Augustae, M. Ant. 21.3: M. Antoninus' son, Verus (7 years)
17. Statius, Silvae 2.1: Atedius Melior's favourite, Glaucias (12 years)
18. Statius, Silvae 2.6: Flavius Ursus' favourite, Philetus (15 years)

B. The death of an infant
* 1. Ausonius, Parentalia 10: his firstborn son (parvulus)
2. Cicero, ad Att. 10.18: his grandson (newborn)
3. Cicero, pro Cluen. 27: Oppianicus' youngest son (infans)
* 5. Fronto, Haines, Loeb 2, p.222ff: his grandson (3 years)
* 6. Martial, Epigr. 7.96: Urbicus, mourned by Bassus (2 years)
7. Plutarch, Cons. ad uxorem: his daughter, Timoxena (2 years)
* 8. Seneca, Ep. Mor. 99: Marullus' son (parvulus)
* 9. Statius, Silvae 5.5: his adopted son (infans)
10. Suetonius, Tib. 7.3: son of Tiberius and Julia (infans)
11. Suetonius, Calig. 7: two of Agrippina's and Germanicus' children (infantes)
* 12. Tacitus, *Agric.* 29: Agricola's son (one year)

* = texts referred to in Chap. 9, notes 32; 78
The verse inscriptions are listed in the numerical order of CIL6. See Buechler (1895) for the various metres of the epitaphs in this section. The textual reconstructions given are those made by Buechler. The notes here provide alternative solutions made by other scholars. For the infant age category 32 verse inscriptions have been included, but in Table A.1 only 30 have been used in the calculations because CIL6 10078 and 28695 do not feature any explicit indication of age other than the vague infans.

I should like to thank Dr. W. S. M. Nicoll for his help with the translation of many of these epitaphs; any errors are, of course, mine. Since these inscriptions do not belong to the educated classes, the Latin is often misspelled, ungrammatical and difficult to follow. Therefore, sometimes the translation given might not be readily comprehensible; but I decided to provide a close translation of the Latin so that the reader may gain some awareness of the standard of literacy at this level of society, rather than put the thoughts of the commemorators in more logical English. In some cases where the meaning is unintelligible, comments have been made at the end of the relevant inscription.

0-4 years:

CIL6 5261  {Julia Primigenia vix an iii mensib iiii}
Debuit haec gnatae pietas praestare parenti:
nunc pater hic gnatae fungitur officio.

Julia Primigenia lived 3yrs 4mths
A daughter should have carried out this act of piety for her father:
as it is this father does his duty for his daughter.

6319  {hic sunt ossa sita Spudenis Lysae medici filiae*}
Inmatura sinu, tellus, levis accipe Grati
ossa et legitimo more sepulta fove.
quattuor huic cursus Phoebos fata negarunt,
eruptum sibi quem luget uterque parens.
quid prodest vixisse in amabilitate facetum
unctaque blanditiis emeruisse suis?
um potuit dilectus ob haec perducere lucem
longius? heu Ditis foeda rapina feri.
* filiae is probably an error for filii here, since adjectives, etc., are masculine throughout the epitaph; so the child's name is Spudes Gratus. It seems that the stone-cutter has inadvertently taken Lysae as the child's, not the parent's, name.

Here lie the bones of Spudes, son of Lysa, the doctor. Receive in your bosom, earth, the immature bones of delicate Gratus and cherish them since they have been buried in the proper manner. The Fates denied him four courses of the sun, parents lament the son that has been stolen from them. What good did it do him to have been humorous and loveable in life and to have earned everything by charming words? Surely he, loved for these qualities, could have drawn out the light of life longer? Alas! shameful plunder of cruel Dis.

Decimus Caecilius Optatus born when Plancus and Silius were consuls on 29th August died on 12th April when Taurus and Libo were consuls lived two years and seven months. A duty which a son should have performed for his parents. Not deservedly but by destiny death has snatched untimely a boy most dear to his family.

Here I lie, Florus, once an infant chariot driver, who, while in hurried eagerness for the car, hurriedly fell down to the shades. Ianuarius set this up for his sweetest foster-child.
Here lies Publius Aelius Pius
Weep a great deal for Pius consigned to the tomb by death as he is fulfilling the months during the crescent of the sixth moon. Alas, an unspeakable crime to the reader, and detestable, that this tiny little boy, alas, is snatched away by death, who, marvellous to tell, was already able to recognise his parents and was in all respects more beautiful than Dionigena.
But he does not visit the Manes nor the Acherusian realms, since this Pius here is being raised to heaven's realms. The lofty breezes have lifted up tiny little Pius, he has gone to the stars, he has fled the abodes of Tartarus. Here his pious mother buries the bones of her son Pius.

To the Spirits of the Departed
of Ampliata who lived 4yrs 6mths 24 days
Pedonia Primigenia set this up for her dearest slave
Don't grieve, mamma, this should have happened, my time of life has been quick, because my destiny willed it.
To the Spirits of the Departed

My spirits of Anulina are remembered in this song
a tiny little girl who lived one and a half years.
But my divine celestial soul is not about to go down
to the shades. The heavens and stars have taken me up,
the earth has my body and the rock merely my name.

To the Spirits of the Departed

Here lies a tiny little boy, he lived for 3 whole years,
and into nine months and some sickly days,
Grusoglosus by name, lovely, and since he was an infant,
to be wept over and wretchedly carried off to the Lower World.
Saturninus erected this to his son, Velia Lalema to her favourite

Sacred to the Spirits of the Departed

Soterichus and Tyche, their parents, set this up
to Communis who lived 2 yrs 5 mths
and Zosimus who lived 1 year 3 mths
What children should have done for their parents,
untimely death has ensured that parents do it for their children.

Ephebus, son of Auctus, lived for two years
three months and fourteen days
Don't grieve, parents, life has hastened my outcome,
it gave this fate to me.
Hic est Fl(avius Hermes quam Fatus longius ducere noluit, qui maluit luctum linquere quam gratias reddere suis, derisor aviaes, quia se dicebat nutrire bacchillum* summae senectae, delusit fratrem patris, quia nimius erat blandus illum, aviumque suum adlectabat voce pusilla, ut cuncti vicini dicebant "O dulce Titul"
dunc haec agerentur, iuvenes de subito acceperunt sui luctu(m) parentes.
hic tamen in biennio vixit quasi qui vixisset sedecim annis, talis enim sensus erat illi, quasi properantis ad Orcum.
itaque tibi dico, qui nescis dulce(m) voce(m) dicere filii,
ne vellis, cupidus poen(a)e, manere mal(a)e**.

* bacchilum = baculum.
** The Latin here is very difficult to follow: vellis should be taken as a corruption of velis, and the sense is that if people are foolish enough to pray for children, then they will outlive their sons and daughters.

Here is Flavius Hermes whom Fate did not wish to guide any longer, who preferred to leave grief than to pay thanks to his family, mocker of his grandmother, because she used to say that she was nurturing a little staff of extreme old age, he deluded his father's brother, because he was too charming to him, and he used to entice his grandfather with his weak voice, while all the neighbours would cry "O sweet Titus!" While these things went on, suddenly his young parents received grief. However, he lived for two years as if he had lived for sixteen, for he had such understanding, as though of one hastening to Orcus. And so I say to you, who do not know what it is to utter the sweet word "son", do not wish, eager for punishment, to remain behind in suffering.

raptu sinu matris iacet hic miserabilis infa(n)s, ante novem plenos lunae quam viveret orbes. hanc pater et mater maesti flevere iacentem parvaque marmoreo clauferunt membra sepulcro.
To the Spirits of the Departed
To Flavia Athenais. Apollonius slave of the Emperor Domitian Augustus Germanicus and Flavia Pallas, her parents, set this up for their dearest daughter who lived eight months and twenty six days.

Snatched from the breast of her mother here lies a pitiably infant, before she had lived for nine full circuits of the moon. Her sorrowful father and mother have wept for her as she lies dead and have enclosed her little bones in a marble tomb.

19331

D  M  S
{Herenniae Nice v a iii m viii
d xvi, Anicetus pater fec.}
condita sum Nice, quae iam dulcissima patri
ducens aetatis tenera quattuor annos
 abrepta a superis flentes iam liqui parentes.

To the Spirits of the Departed
To Herennia Nice who lived 3yrs 8mths and 16 days, Anicetus her father set this up.
Here I am buried, Nice, a delicate child, already most sweet to her father. I lived for four years, but I was snatched away by the Gods above and have now left behind weeping parents.

19747

{lucundus Liviae Drusi Caesaris,
f(iHus) Gryphi et Vitalis}
In quartum surgens comprensus deprimor annum,
cum possem matri dulcis et esse patri.
eripuit me saga manus crudelis ubique,
cum manet in terra et nocit arte sua.
vos vestros natos concustodite parentes,
 ni dolor in tuto pectore fixsus erat.

lucundus, slave of Livia, wife of Drusus Caesar
and son of Gryphus and Vitalis
As I was going up into my fourth year I was checked and brought down, although I could be sweet to my mother and father. I have been snatched away by a witch's hand, cruel everywhere, while she remains on earth and causes harm by her art. You parents watch carefully over your children, so that pain does not become lodged in your whole heart.
To the Spirits of the Departed
Gaius Iulius Maximus, son of Spurius, lived 2yrs and 5mths
O brutal Fortune, you who delight in grim death,
why is Maximus so suddenly stolen from me?
Recently he was in the habit of resting pleasantly in my lap,
but look now, this wretched stone lies on his tomb.

Sacred to the Spirits of the Departed
Here I lie, Maximus, the sweetest infant, two years old,
going on three. May you lie lightly on me, earth.
I was sweet to my mother, dearer still to my father.
Lucius Petronius Ampliatus and Masonia Briseis
set this up to their sweetest son.

Ninnia Cronis lived 3yrs 10mths 25 days.
The act that a daughter should have performed for her
father when he was buried, conversely a father himself
has performed for his daughter.

Lucius Arizygus, son of Lucius, lived 3yrs
He had not yet completed three single years when
he was deprived of light and joined the gloomy darkness.
He lived 1yr 5mths 10 days:
To the Spirits of the Departed
Primilla made this for her son Ismarus
A mother gives this tomb to you in the name of piety
and hurries inside to fulfil her duty, farewell.

Lucius Sentius Coccetus lived 1yr 6mths
Don't grieve, parents, this had to happen.

Sophron lived 1yr and ... mths.
His sister Saturnina lived ...
Here lies Sophron, whose time of life was short, and greetings
to his sister Saturnina most dear to our hearts.
Xanthus and Aemilia set this up for their children.
Speratus lived 5(-9)mths
The household weeps and his dear parents mourn endlessly for their boy stolen by the Fates: I am concealed by this inscription. Who would not be pained at this example of bitter death? If you had seen me or if you had known of my funeral, you would have shed tears, stranger, on my bones. Speratus Attalus Politice

Symphorusa: she lived 1yr 11mths 20 days.
Born, but only into tears and sorrow for all, an infant here I lie, I have lived a futile amount of time for my family. The first year of life passed, then presently on the threshold of the second Persephone snatched me for herself.

To the Spirits of the Departed
of Telephus Dulcitius
I lived by the name by which my father called me: Telephus is my father, I myself was Telephus. My weeping parent, Augustina, bereft of her son, lost me in my fourth year and thirteenth day. So reader won't you cry? The mighty reputation of a lying astrologer deceived them both

283
{vixit annis duob d xxv, fecit Threptus pater}

Quis non volat riget lacrimis maeore coactus,
quis non tristitiam pectore concipiat,
immatura videt si* parvae busta puellae,
quam tristi rapuit mors scelerata die?

pro superum crimem, Fatorum culpa nocentum,
condit earn quod humo vae sepelitque parente,
quae speciem voltus habuitq. Cupidinis artus,
dulcis ad Elysios rapta repente lacus,
dilectas ante alios multum defletaque cunctis,
Vestina infantum Clodia sola decus,
hic posita: an superas convisit luminis auras
innocua aeternis condita sideribus?

*tristia praeteriens haec parvae busta puella - "as he passes by this sorrowful tomb of a small girl".

She lived 2yrs 25 days, her father Threptus set this up.
Who would not drench his face with tears, compelled by grief,
who would not harbour sadness in his heart, if he sees the untimely
tomb of a little girl, whom wicked death snatched on a sad day? Oh fault of the Gods above, crime of the guilty Fates, that her parent places and
buries her in the ground, alas. She had the beauty, expression and
form of Cupid, sweet child suddenly carried off to the Elysian lakes,
loved much more than others and lamented by all, Vestina Clodia, she
alone the glory of infants, laid to rest here: does she, innocent child, look upon the heavenly world of light
concealed in the everlasting stars?

Dis Manibus sacrum I Valerio infanti
raptus qui est subito, quo fato, non scitur.
natus noctis h vi vixit diebus lxxi, ab(i)it noctis ab. h vi
quisquis cum* laesit sic cum suis valeat

* The best sense that can be made of the Latin here is to take eum for cum in reference to the boy.

Sacred to the Spirits of the Departed to Lucius Valerius,
an infant suddenly stolen, by what fate, it is not known.
Born at night at the 6th hour he lived 71 days, he passed away at night at the 6th hour. Whoever has caused him harm
may he suffer the same fate with his family.

{Valeria Novella mater, Hyparchus alumnus}
bis binos vixdum compleverat annos
et nimium lato citius depulsus in antrost,
nec licuit lumen fato superare parentes.
venit iniqua dies et acerbae terminis hora,
vt titulum miseri lachrimis impleret acerbis.
vivite felices superi quorum fortuna beatast.*
{Valeria Novella mater have et tu frater Hyparche
zetema: plenum et inanum}
Valeria Novella mother, Hyparchus foster-child
He had scarcely yet completed four years and has been
far too quickly cast down into the wide cavern, and, according
to fate, he was not allowed to outlive his parents. There came
a cruel day and the hour of a bitter end, so that it fulfilled the
inscription of the wretched boy with bitter tears*. Live lucky ones
up above whose lot is happy.

Valeria Novella mother hail and you brother Hyparchus
riddle: full and empty* *

* Or "he earned the title "wretched" with bitter tears",
referring to the boy rather than to the day.
** The riddle "full and empty" expresses in cryptic form the
sentiments of Verse Epitaph 12087: the tomb is "full" in the
sense that it contains the body, but also "empty" because the
body is of no importance since the soul, the most valuable
part, has left it and has now ascended to the high heavens.

28895  {Vettiae C f Crhysidi}
Te rogo, praeteries, ut parcas calcare iacentem,
infantis miserae membra iacentis humo.
quae totiens lugenda erit, quoties te, memorabilis aetas,
erpta doluere sibi qui te genuere parentes
non nasci melius fuerat quan nunc indigna iacerent
ossa. cinis facta est iam non resposura parenti.

To Vettia Chrysis, daughter of Gaius
I ask you, as you pass by, to refrain from pressing your heel
upon the limbs of a poor infant lying in the ground.
You must be mourned every time the parents who bore you
grieved for your removal from them, o memorable infant.
It would have been better not to have been born than that
her bones should now lie undeservedly. She has become
ash and will no longer reply to her parent.

29884  de nil in nil, qui bibit boni nil,
bixit an ii m ii di xdi (h)or iii fecit
innocenti mater et pater et frater.
dixe tu nobis bibes.

From nothing into nothing, he who lives, nothing good,
lived 2yrs 2mths 21 days 3 hours. To an innocent a mother, father
and brother set this up. Say "you will live for us".

285
... buried here, you, Fotune,
... ought to have spared
Charinus, a boy of innocent and charming ways,
who had already begun to act with pious obedience.
... if by chance you ask, traveller,
... his hometown is Parthenope
... years He lived three years

To the Spirits of the Departed: to Gnaeus Domitius Proculo
How sweet had my first birthday been for my family,
but I did not spend another because I was taken by a cruel fate.
At one year and seven months I was deprived of breath,
I wander, robbed of these (sc 19 mths), to the bodiless shades.
Why, mother, do you tear your stomach, why do you beat your breast?
    No mortal can guard against fate.
Gnaeus Domitius Verecundus (set this up)
To the Spirits of the Departed

To Gaius Vettius Capitolinus, her most dutiful son
Plotia Capitolina, his most unfortunate mother, set this up:
he lived 13yrs: he perished on his birthday at the hour
at which he was born.
As quickly as he had been carried down to the Stygian shades so
through talent the boy become known as an embroiderer. But if the
fates wanted another life in place of my breath, his mother would
have preferred to be commemorated first in this inscription.

Here I lie Bassa, a dutiful daughter, a chaste maiden,
 surpassing all my contemporaries in natural ability.
Although my Fates had granted me ten years, I wasn't allowed
to complete my eleventh year, and although my father and mother
flattered the Gods on my behalf, but savage Pluto carried me off to the
Lower Realms. By taking me as hostage, the Fates seem to have
finished, having snatched three other slaves before me.
If perchance anyone takes delight in my cruel death,
may Ceres be cruel to him and wear him away with hunger.
For Caecinia Bassa, daughter of Sextus
To the Spirits of the Departed
Learn each of you who is a devoted father or a mother who has given birth: it would be good to have children, if the Fates were not envious. So may envious death not steal your children from you so quickly, provided that you pray for the earth to lie lightly on my children and your relatives who deserve to die and you must always have death before you and cultivate it.

I, Aelius Marcellinus, his father, set this up for my son Felicissimus, and I did it well, if the dead are sensible of anything. He lived 10yrs 5mths 11 days.
Sacred to the Spirits of the Departed.
By a wretched destiny here lies Antonius Severus Aquila
without a soul. He lived 12 yrs and 16mths, who prayed that he
should have provided these things for his parents, but untimely
death ensured that the parents did this for their son. I loved my
studies, was obedient to my teachers, observed the precepts of my
parents, cultivated my friends, patrons, all good men, was ready in
duty, but with destined time of life they brought too much grief . . .
because the gods . . . me
(farewell traveller, and you, fare ye well)

To the Departed Spirits of Lucius Catellus Florus:
Clodia Africana set this up to her most dutiful son.
Stop, stranger, at this tomb while you read through these deeds,
look at how life has been undeservedly allotted to me.
I lived 12yrs for my sweetest mother, to whom I have left
tears after I was quickly carried off by a cruel fate, when I
was by chance celebrating New Year, while my mother and my full
sister were leading the worship among the festal temples of the
shrine and friends accompanied them. Infernal Spirits, if my verse
can account for anything, please spare my family, I beg, pray and
beseech, and you, mother, may you live among those above, and
may you always be fortunate for many years . . .

Here lies Bassianus, son of Iulius Bassus,
who lived 10yrs and 14 days. Since the Spirits
of the Departed stole him as their nursling,
please don't tread nor be heavy upon this spot.
Now an end to life has been granted, now a cessation of evils for you whom this tomb holds, a daughter and mother violently killed on the Phocaean seashore at the place, from where the Tagus and the noble river Ebro flow, one to the east, one to the west, the Tagus beneath the waters and the Ebro beneath the Tyrrhenian ocean: indeed a long time ago the Fates began and spun the threads of life upon you, when first Lucina bestowed light and breath, in such a way that there might be different days of birth, but one day of death. But for me another day of death has been appointed from the triple spinning of fate, which it seemed good to them to lengthen by their own silent judgement in accordance with everlasting law, which bids everyone to appear in the court of death.

To the Spirits of the Departed of Julia Secunda, his daughter and Cornelia Tyche, his wife

(under of effigy of daughter) far superior to all by her extraordinary beauty, most gracious manners and learning beyond the proper age for her sex. She lived 11yrs 9mths 20 days.

(under effigy of wife) both of incomparable affection and virtue towards her husband and of outstanding duty towards her children. She lived 39yrs 3mths 7 days, 11yrs of these with me.
27728 Bene adquiescas, frater Aucte Tulli, sei quicquam sapiant inferi. te, lapis, optestor, leviter super ossa residas, ni nostro doleat condita ab officio. dolere noli frater, faciundum fuit. properavit aetas, voluit hoc Fatus meus. vixit annos xii.

May you rest well, my brother Auctus Tullius, if the dead are sensible of anything. I implore you, stone, may you rest lightly upon his bones, so that he does not grieve that they have been buried by my duty. Don't grieve, brother, it was meant to happen. Life has hastened, my Destiny has willed this. He lived 12 years.

28228 {Valeria O L Lycisca xiiannorum nata Romam veni} quae mihi iura dedit civis, dedit et mihi vivae quo inferrer tum cum parvola facta ceinis.

Valeria Lycisca, freedwoman of Gaia, 12yrs old, came to Rome, which gave me citizen rights, and gave to me while I was still alive a place to which I might be brought when I had been made into tiny little ashes.

29436 Ummidiae Manes tumulus tegin iste simulque Primigeni vernaes, quos tuit una dies. nam Capitolinae compressi examine turbae supremum fati competiere diem Ummidia Ge, et P Ummidio Primogenio, vix(it) ann xiii, P Ummidius Anoptes lib fecit

This tomb here covers the spirits of Ummidia and likewise those of the slave Primigenius, whom one day carried off. For they were crushed by the swarm of the Capitoline crowd and together they met the final day of destiny. Ummidia Ge, and for Publius Ummidius Primigenius, lived 13yrs, Publius Ummidius Anoptes, freedman, set this up.

29609 Invida sors fati rapuisti Vitalem, sanctam puellam, bis quinos annos, nec patris ac matris es miserata preces. accepta et cara suets: mortua hic sita sum. cinis sum, cinis terra est, terra dea est, ergo ego mortua non sum

Envious lot of fate, you have stolen Vitalis, a pious girl, 10yrs old, and you did not take pity upon the prayers of her father and mother. Welcome and dear to her family: here I lie dead. I am ash, ash is earth, earth is a goddess, therefore I am not dead.
So may a fortunate journey be your lot, traveller, 
read through an untimely death at this spot of mine. 
Here I lie, Zelotos, I lived while the fates allowed, 
if however this is life - to be able to die so quickly. 
The ultimate end has been granted to me after 14yrs, 
death has snatched me, hostile because of my name*.

* Death is described as "hostile" because of a pun involving 
the child's name: Zelotos is connected with the Greek δ ζηλος 
("jealousy"); ζηλω ("to be jealous"); ζηλοτυπος ("jealous").

It would have been more natural for you, daughter, 
to have dedicated this inscription to your mother than 
for your mother to set this up for you, daughter, poor thing. 
The cruel day of wretched death has snatched you away 
from your mother, my child, after 12yrs. I implore you, 
spirits of a well-deserving and pious patroness and I pray that the 
earth may conceal her with a gentle mound.
Appendix 5: Translations of Funerary Inscriptions

The inscriptions translated below appear in the main text or the notes at the end of the relevant chapters; but here they have been catalogued numerically according to CIL6, and are not listed in the order in which they appear in the text and notes.

CIL6 5557

To the Spirits of the Departed
of Marcus Licinius Faustus
lived 2 yrs 5 mths 11 days
Arruntia Sabina dedicated this
at her own expense

6439

To the Spirits of the Departed
slave of Bassus lived 2 yrs 5 mths

10244

Lucius Cocceius Dexius
Clymenus, son of Marcus,
lived 1 yr 7 mths 1 day

Gaius Sergius Alcimus,
son of Gaius, lived 3 yrs
3 mths 3 days
He received the corn dole
on the 10th day ...[ostio xxxix]
Sergius Alcimus
set this up for his son

10784

To Aelius Romanus
Hermes and Aelia
Saturnina set this up
to their most dutiful son
who lived 3 yrs 9 mths
25 days and 5 hours
To the Spirits of the Departed
of Servius Hermes, his patron
and of Martial, his most
affectionate home-born slave,
who lived 1 yr 5 mths 21/2 hours
Servius Asinius Nicephorus
set this up to himself and to his
freedmen and freedwomen
and their descendants

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Marcus Aurelius Ermogenes
who lived 4 yrs 15 days

Tiberius Claudius Ianuarius
12 days. Tiberius Claudius
Secundus, freedman, set this up.

To the Spirits of the Departed
of Claudia Prima
who lived 1 yr 11 mths 15 days

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Minicia Marcella
daughter of Fundanus
lived 12 yrs 11 mths 7 days

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Dorcas who lived
1 yr 10 mths 24 days.
Verania Vitalis set this up to
her little home-born slave.

To the Spirits of the Departed
Fortunata
lived 3 yrs 9 mths 27 days
a most unfortunate father
set this up to his
most pious, but unfortunate
daughter
Whom the Gods have loved
this infant dies aged
3 yrs 6 mths 14 days
to Isis, his well-deserving
dughter
Antinous and Panthia,
his parents, set this up

To the Spirits of the Departed
Titus Iunius Severianus
lived 2 yrs

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Mansuetia, a sweetest daughter,
who lived 3 yrs 16 days and
to Sedata, a sweetest daughter,
who lived 1 yr 9 mths and
to Mansuetina, a most loveable daughter,
who lived 1 yr 4 mths 9 days
Mansuetus and Marcia Parthenis,
their parents, set this up and to
themselves and their family and
to Sedatus, their most unfortunate brother,
who lived 29 years 4 mths.

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Memma Romana, a well-deserving patronness
and to Aulus Memmius Telesinianus, her son,
who lived 2 yrs 39 days 10 hours.

Lucius Numitorius Privatus
set this up to his sons
to Eurus lived 5 yrs 10 days
to Heruses lived 2 yrs 5 days
to Felix lived 8 yrs 20 days
to Asellus lived 40 days
to Clemens lived 2 yrs 30 days
Larus lived 2 yrs 5 days.
To the Spirits of the Departed
of Marcus Turranius Benedictus
who lived 4 yrs and 4 mths
Turrania Onesime, his mother,
set this up and to herself and to
Marcus Turranius Secundus,
her patron whom she served well, and
to her freedmen and freedwomen
and their descendants and to
Marcus Lollius Athenagora
her most loyal friend
in ///////////////

To the Spirits of the Departed
Tyches
lived 2 yrs 10 mths 3 days.
Caecilius Euhodus
and Sextilia, his wife,
set this up
to their sweetest
little slave.

To the Spirits of the Departed
to Marcus Valerius Masculus, son of
Marcus, lived 4 yrs 3 mths 20 days
to Marcus Valeris Verus, son of
Marcus, lived 3 yrs 4 mths 21 days
Marcus Valerius Secundus, freedman of Marcus
and Valeria Melitine, freedwoman of Marcus
their parents set this up to their
most pious sons together with
Marcus Valerius Masculus, their patron

and to themselves
and their descendants

To the Spirits of the Departed
Marcus Ulpius Zosas
set this up
to Callistiano, his most sweet
and most charming son
who lived 2 yrs 10 mths 16 days
Well-deserving
Her most unhappy parents, Faenomenus and Helpis, set up the dedication to Anteis Chrysostom - sweet prattler and chatterbox - who lived 3 yrs 5 mths and 3 days, our dearly beloved, well behaved daughter with her piping voice. Porcius Maximus and Porcia Charita and Porcia Helias and Sardonyx and Menophilus who tended her to the day of her death also commemorate her.


To the Spirits of the Departed
Gnaeus Domitius Helius
set this up
to his dearest daughter
Domitia Felicitas
who lived 1 yr 5 mths and 16 days
and to Helpis Domitia,
his well-deserving wife.
Likewise Julius Epagatus and
Trophime, the nurse, dedicate this.
Appendix 6: Translation of Birth Certificates

1. Legitimate Roman citizen, AD 128

In the consulship of Lucius Nonius Torquatus Asprenas and in the 2nd of Marcus Annius Libo, on the 13th of April, in the 12th year of the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, on the 18th day of the month Parmuthis, at Alexandria on the coast of Egypt. Transcribed and authenticated from the register for births of free children, which had been displayed in the Forum of Augustus, upon which was written that which has been written below. In the consulship of Marcus Claudius Squilla Gallianus and Titus Rufus Titianus, in the year of the Emperor Caesar Trajan, Prefect of Egypt, the registers of legitimate children received without knowledge of reasons. Written on the 8th tablet on the 2nd page in fuller form, in the consulship of Lucius Nonius Torquatus Asprenas and in the 2nd of Marcus Annius Libo there is added on the next, page 9. On the sixth day before the Kalends of April Gaius Herennius Germanus notes down in the register for 375 sesterces his daughter Herennia Gemella, a Roman citizen born to him by Diogenis Thermuthario daughter of Marcus on the fifth day before the Ides of March just past.

Mich. Pap. 766 (text, Sanders 1927:409)

2. Illegitimate twin boys, AD 145

Sempronia Gemella under the guardianship of G. Julius Saturninus, called to witness those who were about to affix their seals, that on the 12th day before the Kalends of April just past she brought forth twin sons from uncertain father, and that these are named Marcus Sempronius Sarapion and Marcus Sempronius Soraction, the sons of Spurius; and she said that she had employed these written testimonies for this reason, because the Aelian-Sentian and Papian-Poppaean laws forbid the illegitimate sons and daughters to be registered in the public record. I, the above-mentioned guardian of her property, have sanctioned the copy concerning this matter. Dated at Alexandria on the coast of Egypt on the third day before the Kalends of May in the 4th consulship of the Emperor Titus Aelius Hadrian Antoninus Augustus Pius and the 2nd of Aurelius Caesar, in the 8th of the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrian Antoninus Augustus Pius, on the 4th day of the month Pachon.

Appendix 7: Funerary Inscriptions - Tables

A. Verse Epitaphs

Table A.1: Number of Verse Epitaphs: Infants by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male No.</th>
<th>Male Perc.</th>
<th>Female No.</th>
<th>Female Perc.</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total Perc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2: Number of Verse Epitaphs: 10-14 Years by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male No.</th>
<th>Male Perc.</th>
<th>Female No.</th>
<th>Female Perc.</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total Perc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&gt;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Inscriptions by Age Categories

Table B.1: Infants by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of inscriptions</th>
<th>Percentage of sample</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&gt;</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 1357  Total: 29,250

Table B.2: 10-14 Years by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of inscriptions</th>
<th>Percentage of sample</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&gt;</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>703</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 703  Total: 29,250
C. Inscriptions by Age and Sex

Table C.1: Infants by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&gt;</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>856</td>
<td></td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sample: 1357

Table C.2: 10-14 Years by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&gt;</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>397</td>
<td></td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sample: 703
D. Single and Multiple Dedications in Infant Inscriptions

Table D.1: Dedications in Proportion to Inscriptions: by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1086</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single = Infants commemorated on their own
Multiple = Infants commemorated with others
Dedicat. = Number of dedications by age
Inscript. = Total number of inscriptions by age
Perc. = Percentage of dedications in proportion to total number of inscriptions

Table D.2: Categories of Co-Dedicatees: Total Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-dedicatee</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other children</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other relative</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other/unknown</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sibi et suis</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>428</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

302
E. Epithets

Table E.1: Total Number of Epithets: by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male No.</th>
<th>Female No.</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Perc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>231.3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>134.3</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>215.6</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>125.8</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&gt;</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>182.9</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>163.1</td>
<td>634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E.2: Categories of Epithets: Total Numbers by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>benemerens</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carissimius</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dulcissimius</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pientissimius</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piissimus</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>634</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

other: iucundissimius; infelicissimius; innocentissimius;
amantissimius; amabilissimius; optimus; blandissimius;
sanctissimus; suavissimus
E. Epithets

Table E.3: Categories of Epithets: by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epithet</th>
<th>&lt;1</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>4+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b/merens</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car/mus</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dul/mus</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pientis.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piissimus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. = Number of epithets in age group
Per. = Percentage of epithets in age group

Table E.4: Epithets in Proportion to Inscriptions: by Age and Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Epit. = Number of epithets
Insc. = Total number of infant inscriptions in CIL6: by age
Perc. = No. of epithets as a percentage of no. of inscriptions
F. Commemorators

Table F.1: Categories of Commemorators: Total Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commemorator</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both parents</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owner</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surrogate</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other relative</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown/other</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

owner: dominus/a; patronus/a; libertus/a; delicatus/delicium; verna
surrogate: nutrix; mamma; tata; alumnus
other relative: avus; avia; avunculus; matertera; vitricius; frater; soror; nepos
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