

Rohr Vio, F. and Valentini, A. (forthcoming) "Roman Matron's Wealth between Political Action and Disapproving Clichés", in C. Steel and L. Webb (eds), Women, Wealth and Power in the Roman Republic.

During the Late Republic, the new laws approved in the 2nd century BC and the unusual circumstances determined by the civil wars allowed women of the Roman nobilitas to manage personal assets: this circumstance placed them in a very different position compared to matrons who lived in the Proto and Mid-republican Age. Model of behavior of the Roman aristocracy considered the possession of wealth a positive factor for men, considering the correct use of it and the initiatives aimed at its growth a strong reason to achieve social approval. This paper aims to verify if this positive perspective could be extended to women of the nobilitas: during the Late Republic, in fact, they could manage considerable personal assets. We also pay special attention to these questions: female wealth was a positive social indicator as it happened when it was managed and owned by their fathers and husbands? Wealth represented an important instrument in the political struggle, even when it was sometimes transferred to matrons to save it from confiscations suffered by their male relatives; this circumstance determined women's interferences in traditionally male fields of action: in which contexts or occasion and for what reasons women's use of wealth was legitimized? How did wealth influence the image of matrons in rebus and post res in historiographical representation? Were there different types and uses of wealth allowed for matrons and others excluded? What is the origin of the stereotypes related to the availability and use of wealth that often condition the portrayal of matrons? This paper aims to provide answers to these questions through some case-studies: Fulvia, Terenzia, Tullia, Cerellia, Publilia, Ortensia and Clodia.

Parole chiave

Matrons, Roman Republic, Wealth