

**Rohr Vio, F. (2022) *Powerful Matrons. New Political Actors in the Late Roman Republic* , Sevilla - Zaragoza, Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza.**

The *mos maiorum* stated that only men could hold magistracies and military office, operating in the spaces dedicated to the city's politics — the senate, the popular assemblies, the courts, the Forum. Women, on the other hand, were obliged to conform to traditional behavioural models which excluded them from any form of political activity. Nevertheless, in the 1st century BCE, the emergency situation of the civil wars led some women to undertake political initiatives. This opportunity arose from the Roman matrons' contingent need to represent and replace the men who until recently had managed the city's politics, and to safeguard the ruling power among the families on which the oligarchic system was founded. Their contemporaries and subsequent historiographers often found ways to justify these women's actions in order not to compromise their families' reputations. To that end, certain legends, recast during the Late Republic and the Early Principate, identify authoritative precedents that would legitimise women's initiatives in the present. This book studies the protagonists, the methods, the aims, the consequences, and the judgement of matrons' political acts. The purpose of this study is twofold: on the one hand, it seeks to shed light upon a defining moment in the history of women; on the other hand, it aims to reconstruct a crucial aspect of the political history of ancient Rome.

This book originates from my study “Le custodi del potere. Donne e politica alla fine della repubblica romana”, published in 2019 in Italian by Salerno Editrice (Rome). Its publication for the Editorial Universidad de Sevilla and Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza in English has represented an opportunity for me to revise the text, whose contents have since been expanded and its structure redesigned. The new edition is also accompanied by an integrated and updated bibliography and a new chapter discussing the legitimacy of women's political initiatives in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, which is key to understanding the processes outlined in these pages.

## Introduction

1. Creators of family ties and political relationships
  - 1.1. Matrons as instruments in their own family's marriage strategies
  - 1.2. Promoters of marriage ties and divorces
  
2. Educators of *cives*
  - 2.1. Educated, before becoming educators
  - 2.2. Mentors for sons
  
3. Guardians of the family and of public memory
  - 3.1. Useful in their death
  - 3.2. Organizers of funerals for family members
  - 3.3. Suicides for their own men
  
4. Delegates of their relatives
  - 4.1. Wives acting on behalf of their husbands
  - 4.2. Mothers acting on behalf of their sons
  - 4.3. Women interacting with soldiers on behalf of their relatives
  
5. Their male relatives' advisors

- 5.1. Active alongside their husbands
- 5.2. Instigators for their children
- 5.3. Accomplices of brothers, fathers, lovers

## 6. Mediators in Politics

- 6.1. Mediators towards their relatives
- 6.2. Mediators towards men outside the family

## 7. Innovators or conservatives? Legitimacy strategies for women's political action

- 7.1 The ways through which matrons act: the role of precedents
- 7.2. Typologies of female action: examples in the past

Conclusion

Bibliography

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