



**CRISTINA ROSILLO-LÓPEZ and SILVIA LACORTE** (eds.)

***CIVES  
ROMANAE***

**ROMAN WOMEN AS CITIZENS  
DURING THE REPUBLIC**

EDITORIAL UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA  
PRENSAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA



CIVES ROMANAE  
*ROMAN WOMEN AS CITIZENS*  
*DURING THE REPUBLIC*



CIVES ROMANAE  
*ROMAN WOMEN AS CITIZENS  
DURING THE REPUBLIC*

Edited by  
*Cristina Rosillo-López and Silvia Lacorte*

EDITORIAL UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA  
PRENSAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

Dirección de la Colección:

Francisco Pina Polo (Univ. Zaragoza)  
Cristina Rosillo López (Univ. Pablo de Olavide, Sevilla)  
Antonio Caballos Rufino (Univ. Sevilla)

Consejo Editorial:

Antonio Caballos Rufino (Sevilla), Antonio Duplá Ansuátegui (Vitoria), Enrique García Ríaza (Palma de Mallorca), Pedro López Barja de Quiroga (Santiago de Compostela), Ana Mayorgas Rodríguez (Madrid), Antoni Naco del Hoyo (Girona), Francisco Pina Polo (Zaragoza), Cristina Rosillo López (Sevilla), Elena Torregaray Pagola (Vitoria), Fernando Wulff Alonso (Málaga)

Comité Científico:

Alfonso Álvarez-Ossorio (Sevilla), Denis Álvarez Pérez-Sostoa (Vitoria), Valentina Arena (Londres), Catalina Balmaceda (Santiago de Chile), Nathalie Barrandon (Reims), Hans Beck (Munster), Henriette van der Blom (Birmingham), Wolfgang Blösel (Duisburgo), Clément Bur (Albi), François Cadiou (Burdeos), Cyril Courrier (Aix-en-Provence/Marsella), Alejandro Díaz Fernández (Málaga), Harriet Flower (Princeton), Estela García Fernández (Madrid), Marta García Morcillo (Durham), Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp (Colonia), Michel Humm (Estrasburgo), Frédéric Hurlet (Nanterre-París), Martin Jehne (Dresde), Thibaud Lanfranchi (Toulouse), Carsten Hjort Lange (Aalborg), Robert Morstein-Marx (Santa Bárbara), Henrik Mouritsen (Londres), Sylvie Pittia (París), Jonathan Prag (Oxford), Francesca Rohr Vio (Venecia), Amy Russell (Providence), Manuel Salinas de Frías (Salamanca), Eduardo Sánchez Moreno (Madrid), Pierre Sánchez (Ginebra), Federico Santangelo (Newcastle), Catherine Steel (Glasgow), Elisabetta Todisco (Bari), W. Jeffrey Tatum (Wellington), Frederik J. Vervaeke (Melbourne), Kathryn Welch (Sidney).

© Cristina Rosillo-López y Silvia Lacorte

© De la presente edición, Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza (Vicerrectorado de Cultura y Proyección Social) y Editorial Universidad de Sevilla  
1.ª edición, 2024

Imagen de cubierta: Pintura mural de la habitación H de la villa de P. Fanio Sinistor en Boscoreale (50-40 a.C.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nueva York.

El volumen ha sido financiado por el grupo de investigación PAIDI HUM 545 («Religión y pensamiento en el mundo antiguo»).

Colección *Libera Res Publica*, n.º 12

Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza. Edificio de Ciencias Geológicas, c/ Pedro Cerbuna, 12, 50009 Zaragoza, España. Tel.: 976 761 330  
puz@unizar.es <http://puz.unizar.es>

Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, c/ Porvenir, 27, 41013 Sevilla, España. Tel.: 954 487 447  
eus4@us.es <https://editorial.us.es>

La colección *Libera Res Pvblica* de Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza y la Editorial Universidad de Sevilla está acreditada con el sello de calidad en ediciones académicas CEA-APQ, promovido por la Unión de Editoriales Universitarias Españolas y avalado por la Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA) y la Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología (FECYT).

Impreso en España

Imprime: Servicio de Publicaciones. Universidad de Zaragoza

ISBN (PUZ) 978-84-1340-804-0

ISBN (EUS) 978-84-472-2557-6

D.L.: Z 1066-2024

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	
<i>Cristina Rosillo-López and Silvia Lacorte</i> .....	9

## CITIZENSHIP

<i>Civis Romana sum</i> : Roman women as citizens	
<i>Susan Treggiari</i> .....	27
The first Roman female citizens were foreigners	
<i>Aglaiia McClintock</i> .....	49
Beyond Roman citizenship: the invisibility of Latin women	
<i>Estela García Fernández</i> .....	65
De esclava a ciudadana. Transición y negociación de una nueva identidad	
<i>Carla Rubiera Cancelas</i> .....	87
Were Roman women part of the <i>populus</i> ?	
<i>Amy Russell</i> .....	105
Dowries and female citizenship	
<i>Giulia Vettori</i> .....	121

## POLITICAL AGENCY

Background Noise? Livy's <i>Matronae</i> and the Story of Verginia	
<i>Kathryn Welch</i> .....	145
Female oratory in the Republic	
<i>Henriette van der Blom</i> .....	179

Roman Women and Criminal Law <i>Lovisa Brännstedt</i> .....	205
Women and Legal Change in the Roman Republic <i>Kit Morrell</i> .....	229
Did Roman women pay taxes during the Roman Republic? <i>Cristina Rosillo-López</i> .....	253
Mujeres y práctica diplomática en Roma: contextos y oportunidades <i>Elena Torregaray Pagola</i> .....	299
Tres mujeres para una República en crisis: Emilia Tercia, Cornelia y Sempronia <i>Pilar Pavón</i> .....	327
Las mujeres de la aristocracia augustea como actores políticos y económicos. Emilia Lépidia como caso de estudio <i>Frédéric Hurlet</i> .....	359

#### SPACES, MEMORY AND COMMUNITY

Regimes of Memory. Female Remembrance from the Archaic Period to the End of the Roman Republic <i>Ana Mayorgas</i> .....	385
Citoyenneté, appartenance, identité: les matrones au sein d'une communauté des <i>cives</i> dans la Rome républicaine <i>Francesca Rohr Vio</i> .....	409
<i>Cives Romanae</i> Embodied: <i>Ordo Matronarum</i> and female citizenship in Republican Rome <i>Lewis Webb</i> .....	427
Religión y participación cívica de las mujeres durante la República. Una mirada fuera de Roma <i>Lidia González Estrada</i> .....	453
Conclusiones: Ciudadanas en la República romana <i>Carmen Alarcón Hernández</i> .....	475
List of tables and images .....	489
Index of persons .....	491
Index of subjects .....	499



# INTRODUCTION

Cristina Rosillo-López and Silvia Lacorte

The woman who is looking at us from the cover of this book was a Roman citizen belonging to a community that had become, by the Late Republic, the ruling power in the Mediterranean. However, women are not often included in the historical narratives of the Roman Republic. Be that as it may, this state of affairs is gradually changing (and will hopefully continue to do so), which begs the question of why academia is showing a growing interest in this respect.

Accordingly, the intention of this book is to offer a series of perspectives and discourses on Roman citizen women during the Republic, their roles in the public sphere and their place in the community and the *res publica*. This introduction provides a brief historical overview of the topic, before establishing the notion of citizenship that will be employed throughout the book, whose general premise leaves no room for doubt: Roman women were citizens and their civic roles and public presence are essential for gaining a better understanding of this period.

Women's (and subsequently gender) history originated in the study of the ancient world with the pioneering work of Pomeroy in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> There had

---

<sup>1</sup> Pomeroy 1975, plus the reflections of Culham 1987. See the interesting thoughts on the role of women and gender studies expressed in a survey of reviews appearing in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2000-2020) by Sebillotte Cuchet and Noûs 2020.

been previous books focusing on ancient Greek and Roman women, yet Pomeroy brought relevant methodological questions to the fore with the aim of highlighting their role in Antiquity. In the following decades, further works, like that of Schmitt Pantel, attempted to include women in a global narrative of ancient societies, rather than confining them to the corner of “female experience” or exclusively to the religious sphere.<sup>2</sup>

Since the 2010s, much progress has been made in the field especially as regards the social importance of gender distinctions, albeit without really broaching the subject of the relevance of the “woman” category.<sup>3</sup> Leaving aside sex, gender has become a useful methodological tool, for it allows to study the prevailing discourse and division of roles in society.<sup>4</sup>

A second theoretical tool that has proven its worth in the study of women and gender in the ancient world is that of agency, namely, the way in which individuals perform independent actions within social structures. Finally, there is also the relevant matter of intersectionality, which helps to analyse how a person’s different identities combine to give rise to situations of discrimination or privilege.<sup>5</sup> Although the connections between gender, race and other systems were noted by Scott, intersectionality has shed light on the myriad of experiences that women could have in the ancient world: an enslaved woman and her female owner, for instance, neither experienced the same type of discriminations nor had the ability or opportunity to develop a similar degree of agency. All these methodological tools have paved the way for the study of women not as a cohesive group that never existed but as individuals.

As it is impossible to cover in-depth all or even most of the research on the role of women in the Roman world in this brief introduction, the literature review performed below focuses on the Republic and, especially, on women’s experiences of the public sphere, a field that has gone from strength to strength in the past 20 years. It includes studies covering the Republic and also the Empire, provided that a substantial part of them is devoted to the first period.

---

2 Schmitt Pantel 1991.

3 For further considerations on the “woman” category, see Sosin 1997. As to the relevance of gender, the fundamental work is still Scott 1986; for a number of reflections on Scott’s analysis and women’s history in Spain, see Cid López 2006.

4 For some relevant considerations on this question (and the difference between sex/gender) in relation to ancient Greek history, see Sebillotte Cuchet 2022.

5 A term coined by Crenshaw 1991.

Regarding the role of women in politics, in her detailed study of Roman women during the Republic Rohr Vio has called attention, among other things, to the fact that elite women acted in the public sphere on behalf of their families, in absence of their husbands or other prominent male relatives.<sup>6</sup> Given the frequency with which Roman senators served abroad and the age difference between men and women when they married, the large number of elite women, including Cornelia, Servilia and Julia, to name only the best known, who protected the interests of their sons, daughters and other relatives, should come as no surprise. Other studies have focused on the relationship between women and different members of their families, such as fathers and brothers.<sup>7</sup>

Richlin has called attention to “the woman in the street”, in other words, ordinary women going about their business in the city, including *matronae*, prostitutes and slaves, while underscoring their presence in Plautus’ comedies.<sup>8</sup> The author contrasts this presence with the current all-male model of Roman political culture, which she exemplifies in Hölkeskamp’s remarks on “the man in the street”.<sup>9</sup> Regarding the public presence of women, in contrast to Richlin, for Boatwright, taking a *longue durée* approach to the topic, this was unusual or even transgressive.<sup>10</sup>

However, the presence (and influence) of elite *matronae* in politics is gradually gaining currency. It is telling that the recently published *Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic* includes a chapter on this very topic, thus challenging the aforementioned all-male model.<sup>11</sup> Rosillo-López, for instance, has included elite women as important agents in her study of political conversations; by studying them at the same time as other members of the elite, it can be assumed that women did politics in meetings and conversations not because they could not do so publicly (as was previously thought) but because it was exactly how their male peers acted. Indeed, Roman politics revolved around meetings and conversations.<sup>12</sup>

---

6 Rohr Vio 2019 and 2022a. Bauman 1992 is an early study, the Republic being covered in Chapters 2-7.

7 Fathers: Hallett 1984. Brothers: Harders 2008.

8 Richlin 2021.

9 Hölkeskamp 2014: 67.

10 Boatwright 2011.

11 Rohr Vio 2022b.

12 Rosillo-López 2022.

As to the presence of women in the religious sphere during the Republic, Schultz has observed that Roman women often participated in public religious rites and, in many cases, worshipped the same gods and goddesses as Roman men did. In light of this, the author contends that it would be incorrect to ghettoise Roman women exclusively in “women’s cults”.<sup>13</sup> DiLuzio has enquired into the presence of women in Roman religion by studying female priestesses and acolytes across the board, from the Vestals to the *flaminicae*, through priestly couples. In her opinion, women played an important role in many types of fundamental rituals for ensuring the welfare of the city and the citizenry, performing them in an official capacity and, more often than not, on par with their male colleagues.<sup>14</sup> For her part, Mowat has recently studied the agency of women who practiced divination following traditional systems in the late Roman Republic.<sup>15</sup>

In the past decades, scholars have written biographies of individual women of the Republic and the Triumviral period, including Cornelia, Clodia, Servilia, Terentia, Tullia, Publilia, Fulvia, the woman of the *Laudatio Turiae*, Livia, Octavia and Antonia.<sup>16</sup> As could not be otherwise, they were all members of the top political elite of the Republic and as such much more likely to appear in the sources. The only exception is the anonymous woman, usually called “Turia”, known from a funerary inscription, who lived during the Triumviral period. Despite the fact that she belonged to the elite, she was not prominent enough to play a political role. Some of these biographies (Clodia Metelli, Fulvia and Turia) are included in the series *Women in Antiquity* (Oxford University Press).<sup>17</sup> In a similar vein, Hemelrijk has addressed the issue of the education of upper-class women, their role as patronesses of literature and learning and their presence as writers of both poetry and prose.<sup>18</sup>

---

13 Schultz 2006.

14 DiLuzio 2016.

15 Mowat 2021. Although, as Mowat rightly notes, any attempt to impose the gender binary on this topic may be reductive (for further considerations along these lines, see especially Chapters 3 and 4).

16 Cornelia: Dixon 2007. Clodia: Skinner 2011; Agnelotti 1991; Hejduk 2008. Servilia: Treggiari 2019. Terentia, Tullia and Publilia: Ermete 2003; Treggiari 2007. Fulvia: Fischer 1999; Schultz 2021. *Laudatio Turiae*: Osgood 2014; Fontana 2020. Livia: Gross 1962; Bartman 1999; Barrett 2002; Perkounig 1995; Mudd 2005; Kunst 2008; Braccisi 2016. Octavia: García Vivas 2013. Antonia: Kokkinos 1992. These works include references to the large number of papers and book chapters on these individual women.

17 Liverpool University Press has also announced the series *Women in Ancient Cultures*.

18 Hemelrijk 1999 (for both the Republic and the Empire).

Since Evans' pioneering study, Roman imperialism has not usually been associated with gender. Nevertheless, the aim of a recent collective monograph edited by Cornwell and Woolf has been to illustrate the close relationship between both.<sup>19</sup> Albeit without focusing exclusively on the Republic, the monograph's chapters attempt to bridge that gap and to "place women in the narratives that conventionally contain only men, and to thereby disrupt them".<sup>20</sup>

Socioeconomic issues are particularly important for gaining a deeper understanding of the public role of women. *Tutela* took many different forms: what might have been a burden for many (especially freedwomen) was perfectly tolerable for others in the Republic, before the Augustan laws on *tutela* were enacted.<sup>21</sup> Following Dixon's and Treggiari's groundbreaking research, the ins and outs of Roman families have been studied for decades.<sup>22</sup> From his pioneering study in 1984 to his most recent work, Peppe has enquired into the socioeconomic role of Roman women, arguing in favour of their agency and the importance of female citizenship.<sup>23</sup> For its part, the forthcoming edited volume *Women, Wealth, and Power in the Roman Republic* contains a number of chapters whose subject matter encompasses the study of female patrons, women's property rights, *tutela mulierum*, female wealth and the role of women in moments of crisis.<sup>24</sup>

Lastly, focusing on the public history of women during the Roman Republic, the virtual exhibition "250 mujeres de la Antigua Roma" ("Two-hundred and Fifty Women of Ancient Rome"), curated by Pavón, describes the lives and achievements of 40 women who lived during the Republic, both elite and commoners, with a summary of the sources and a bibliography.<sup>25</sup>

So, drawing from these premises and the latest historiography, this book offers an overview of the public role and citizenship of Roman women revolving around the idea, already proposed by Sherwin-White, that suffrage and the right to hold public office were never defining traits of Roman citizenship.<sup>26</sup>

---

19 Evans 1991; Cornwell and Woolf 2022.

20 Cornwell and Woolf 2022: 1. On bridging gaps and breaking silences, see Richlin 2014.

21 With respect to the *tutela mulierum*, see Watson 1967; Zannini 1976 and 1979; Medici 2013. On women and law, see Gardner 1986.

22 Dixon 1985 and 1992; Treggiari 1991 and 2007.

23 Peppe 1984 and 2016.

24 Steel and Webb forthcoming.

25 <https://grupo.us.es/conditiofeminae/index.php/250-mujeres-de-la-antigua-roma/>.

26 Sherwin-White 1973: 264-265.

In her brilliant study, Gardner called attention to the many groups of people who were considered as citizens but were excluded from the predominant conception of the adult male citizen *sui iuris*, including freedmen, adults under the *patria potestas* of their fathers, women, people of disrepute (*infames*) and the disabled.<sup>27</sup> Further studies of such restrictions have brought to light the fact that Roman law was fully aware that a person could be a citizen but without having full rights and duties.<sup>28</sup>

The citizenship of some Roman citizens was restricted in several ways, but scholars have considered some of those strictures to be more relevant than others. Why should the spotlight be placed on suffrage and not on property ownership or management, for instance, which was more relevant for daily life?

With an eye to clarifying this issue, the goal of Table 1.1 is not to explore in depth all the different aspects of Roman citizenship but to call attention to the fact that these were extremely nuanced and by no means limited to the enfranchisement/disenfranchisement dichotomy, which is the approach taken in this book. One of most important differences in rights and duties was whether a person (be it a man or a woman) was *sui iuris*, that is, legally independent, which occurred upon the death of the father. For women, to this requisite should be added that they could not be married *cum manu*, since that would mean that they fell under the *auctoritas* of their spouses. The growing popularity of marriages *sine manu* as of the second century BCE led to an explosion in the number of *sui iuris* women. As the table shows, there are no noteworthy differences between *sui iuris* men and women with respect to property management. Adult men who were under the *potestas* of their fathers, and were thus not *sui iuris*, could not legally own property, make a will or engage in litigation (unless they were emancipated).<sup>29</sup> In contrast, *sui iuris* women could legally own and sell houses, estates and *instrumenta*, including slaves, engage in litigation, marry and divorce at will and inherit property. As regards military service, *proletarii* were not regarded as not being Roman citizens because they were not called to arms.<sup>30</sup> Notwithstanding the

---

27 Gardner 1993.

28 As to citizens with disabilities, see, for instance, Laes 2017 and 2018; Castán Pérez-Gómez 2019. On *infames*, Bur 2018.

29 (Ulp. 46 *ad ed*) *Dig.* 50.16.195.2: *cum pater familias moritur, quotquot capita ei subiecta fuerint, singulas familias incipiunt habere.*

30 For an essential study of the armies of the Roman Republic, see Cadiou 2018; see also Machado 2023.

TABLE 1.1  
CATEGORIES OF CITIZENS IN REPUBLICAN ROME

	<i>Suffrage</i>	<i>Right to hold public office</i>	<i>Payment of taxes</i>	<i>Military service</i>	<i>Potestas</i>	<i>Property management</i>
Adult man <i>sui iuris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓ (depending on his estate)	✓	✓
Adult woman <i>sui iuris</i>	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓ (only over slaves)	✓
Freedman (civil)	✓	✗	✓	✗ (except the army and garrisons)	✓	✓
Freedwoman	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓ (only over slaves)	✓
Adult man under the <i>potestas</i> of his father	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗ (only <i>peculium</i> and with legal restrictions)
Adult woman under the <i>potestas</i> of her father	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Boy <i>sui iuris</i> (orphan)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓ (with a tutor)
Girl <i>sui iuris</i> (orphan)	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓ (only over slaves)	✓ (with a tutor)
Vestal	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓ (only over slaves)	✓

fact that Roman women were not allowed to vote or hold magistracies, Broughton included the Vestals on his list of Roman magistrates, for female priestesses held public office. In sum, Roman women were indeed citizens, even though they did not possess full political rights, as occurred with other groups of citizens.

Moving on to the book's structure, it is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the question of citizenship.

In the opening chapter, Susan Treggiari performs a specific analysis on Roman women as citizens. Drawing from the testimonies of Livius and Gaius, the author shows that even though women did not conform to the legal criteria that defined Roman citizen men, they did indeed have other duties that defined their citizen status. Similarly, the fact that the expression *civis Romana* very rarely crops up in non-legal texts does not mean that women did not form part of the Roman citizenry, since the term *civis* referred to both sexes. To argue her case, in the first part of the chapter Treggiari stresses that the principal civic duties of a Roman woman, namely, the marital duties of giving birth to legitimate children and motherhood, were not regulated by Roman law but by *mos maiorum*.

Aglaia McClintock's chapter explores the concept of citizenship by going beyond the traditional vision associated exclusively with the (male) prerogatives to hold public office and to perform military service, discussing the concept as an instrument encompassing the community as a whole and its protection. Through an etymological study of the term *civis*, she underscores two important aspects of Roman citizenship, such as the openness to foreigners and the visibility of women, the latter having played a primary role since the very foundation of Rome. McClintock draws parallels between these two aspects using as an example the Roman abduction of the Sabine women, who were both foreigners and the first Roman citizens.

Estela García Fernández's chapter concentrates on a different type of citizenship, to wit, the kind linked to the granting of *ius Latii* to the Latin women. Specifically, the author attempts to shed light on the large group of women who possessed that Latin status and who are often invisible in both the ancient sources and modern scholarship or confused with other expressions of Latin law. After proposing an idea of citizenship that has nothing to do with political participation but with the possibility of engaging in the common law system, García Fernández investigates this group of women with *ius Latii* and their possible connections with the acquisition of Roman citizenship at a local level characterised by the existence of dual citizenship.

Carla Rubiera Cancelas focuses on the path that *libertae* had to tread to achieve freedom and acquire citizenship. Through the analysis of the three prerogatives according to which an enslaved woman could be manumitted (biological reproduction, production capacity and personal relationships), the author discusses how *libertae* were far from being a subordinate social group, for their new status was expressed dynamically through informal ways of participation, linked above all to the ritual and religious sphere, thus enabling



them to do their bit indirectly at moments of political and military tension traditionally managed by men. Rubiera Cancelas shows how the change in status led not only to the possibility of acquiring citizenship but above all to the chance to gain access to a new system of female values typical of matrons, which fully integrated *libertae* into the community of Roman citizen women.

Amy Russell's chapter provides an opportunity to understand the multiple ways in which women experienced citizenship employing a concept just as multifaceted as that of *populus Romanus*. As it is impossible to provide a single, clear definition of *populus*, the author identifies three different conceptualisations of this collective entity: *populus* as an abstract form, as institutional practices and as lived experiences. In each of these three spheres of action, Russell identifies the visible traces of female participation through civic contributions and exemplary behaviour at crucial moments in the history of Rome, concrete expressions of citizenship and the presence of women in the informal spaces of political life, concluding that, although in a different way than men, they also formed part of the *populus*.

Next, Giulia Vettori examines the concept of dowry as a tool for investigating female citizenship during the middle and late Republic. In the first part, the author focuses on the causes behind the partial or complete loss of a dowry (adultery, sexual misconduct or drinking wine), as well as on the mechanisms adopted to protect dotal assets. Cases like those of Fannia and Licinia reveal not only that Roman women could take legal action to claim their dowries but above all the importance of dotal assets as an essential means of expressing their belonging to the civic community and their social respectability as citizens. Furthermore, Vettori analyses the impact that dowries could have on families, particularly in relation to the financial and social position of husbands, showing how the goods brought by wives into marriages could contribute to support their spouses' political careers, thus having an indirect influence on Roman public life.

The main thread of the second section is political agency. The intention of Kathryn Welch's chapter is to hunt for lost traces of female history through the analysis of the modern reception of Livy's story of Verginia. The author, who supports the view that the Roman historian recognised and welcomed the public role that women played in Rome, demonstrates this through the reaction of the Roman matrons to Verginia's desperate plight and death and through the subsequent reception of this episode in Florentine Renaissance art, in which Botticelli's visual art mirrors the image (and role) of those matrons as described by Livy. Along these lines, Welch reflects on how this

and other references to women in Livy's work are conspicuous by their absence in Theodor Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte*, where the spotlight is turned exclusively on men, fully in keeping with the German historian's nineteenth-century (patriarchal) context.

Examining female speech in the republican period, Henriette van der Blom discusses specific examples of women addressing public audiences, organising the different accounts by the venues where they took the floor, including courts, the Senate and *contio*, plus informal places of debate. On the basis of those testimonies, the author briefly describes some of the traits of these public speakers, including their high social status (and therefore what they symbolised for the community as a whole), their ability to speak in public (i.e. their possible education and training in oratory and rhetoric) and the circumstances of their speeches, which might have affected their personal life or the government of the state. Throughout the chapter, moreover, van der Blom highlights issues, such as (male) social expectations as regards female speech, and how these testimonies have been exploited by (also male) authors in Antiquity.

Lovisa Brännstedt explores the topic of Roman citizen women from a legal perspective, in light of the evidence of trial proceedings involving them, in order to shed light on their legal status. In the first of three sections, the author discusses the group prosecutions and mass trials against *matronae* during the early and mid-Republic. The following section focuses on the trials against the Vestal Virgins, in which the charges, which fell within the scope of the religious participation of women, now had to do with violating the rules of religious chastity and *incestum*. In the final section, however, Brännstedt turns her attention to women appearing before regular criminal courts during the late Republic.

Kit Morrell explores some of the ways in which Roman women could participate in processes of legal change during the Republic. From a wide range of accounts illustrating models and possibilities of female intervention in a fundamentally male legal-political field, the author addresses two types: collective and individual intervention. On the basis of a number of case studies, Morrell offers an account of women who attempted to push through or block legal changes, as well as those of women who intervened behind the scenes in the own or their relatives' interests.

Cristina Rosillo-López addresses a topic that has been generally denied and consigned to oblivion: the taxation of Roman women during the

Republic. Following a methodological approach that not only considers literary but especially epigraphic sources, she shows that women paid taxes and were also considered as taxpayers in the Roman dominions. Specifically, the author investigates several cases, such as non-Roman citizen women and Roman citizen women in the provinces, as well as in Rome and Italy. In all three cases, the epigraphic legal sources (especially *senatus consulta*) strongly suggest that women were indeed subject to taxation. From the perspective of global ancient history, Rosillo-López also widens the scope to include other historical-geographical realities which demonstrate that women were also taxed in Ptolemaic Egypt and Han China.

Elena Torregaray Pagola analyses the role of women in Roman diplomacy from the foundation of Rome to the Julio-Claudian dynasty, covering both the sending and receiving of embassies, as well as informal diplomatic channels. Through the analysis of the historical and literary sources, the author identifies several accounts of the capacity of Roman women for mediation, exchanging information and persuasion in the field of Roman diplomacy.

Pilar Pavón offers a sociopolitical overview of the period between the end of the third century and the end of the second century BCE through the biographies of three matrons whose proactive attitude was as visible in their “domestic” roles of wives, mothers and sisters as it was beyond the walls of the *domus*, in the political, social and even diplomatic spheres, revealing that they were no strangers to matters pertaining to the *res publica*. The author examines Aemilia Tertia, the wife of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus; Cornelia, not only as the mother of the Gracchi but also in the active role that she played as adviser to her children in their political dealings; and Sempronia, the sister of the Gracchi.

Frédéric Hurlet’s chapter fits into the wider context of recent studies of the informal political role of matrons between the late Republic and the Empire, exploring a moment – and a woman – that has never been previously approached from this angle, namely, the transition from one era to another, through the case study of Aemilia Lepida, accused of multiple crimes and condemned to exile by the Senate in 20 CE. Through an analysis of the individual charges, the author reveals how Aemilia Lepida’s prosecution and conviction went way beyond matters of adultery, deception, attempted murder and the practice of magic: it was rather down to the financial clout of a *matrona* who had attracted the – also economic – interest of imperial power and the emperor himself. Through the case study of Aemilia Lepida, Hurlet

shows the role that aristocratic women played not only at home and in the city but also in financial management.

The final section of the book, which focuses on spaces, memory and community, starts with Ana Mayorgas' chapter, which delves into the nature and transmission of women's memory from archaic Rome to the late Republic, identifying a specific regime of memory in each period. The author also identifies the reasons behind the changes, from the limits of oral tradition, through a masculine memory that favoured the recollection of wars and political milestones, to the recognition of the political and social prominence of elite women, as well as their greater economic power.

Francesca Rohr Vio scrutinises the different ways in which female citizenship was conceived in Rome depending on whether the topic is approached from a legal or socio-anthropological point of view. The author uses the references appearing in Plautus' comedies and the historical sources to define the civic identity of free women during the Republic, supporting this with the use of legendary episodes as a tool for fathoming the historical period under consideration. Through this analysis, Rohr Vio identifies several expressions of female citizenship including motherhood as a vehicle for transmitting citizenship, religious duties and behaviour (e.g. fidelity and chastity), those occasions when women were expected to make financial contributions and, finally, the symbols defining status and the sense of belonging to the community.

Lewis Webb analyses the *ordo matronarum* as a matronal corporate body that contributed to build the civic identity of married citizen women, thus enabling them to perform their civic duties. Through a review of the literature, the author traces the history of this group of Roman women from its definition to its impact on female citizenship, before examining the criteria for belonging to the *ordo* to demonstrate that it was a group of wealthy, high-status, married matrons or widows, as well as turning his attention to matronal privileges and symbols. Lastly, Webb employs historical examples to study matronal meetings, attesting to the performance of civic duties recognised by the Senate, magistrates and priests, while presenting evidence of matronal meetings and activities in the Italian communities.

In the final chapter, Lidia González Estrada performs a study on the civic participation of Roman women, *ingenuae* or *libertae*, through religion (*sacra*) outside Rome, in other areas of the Italian peninsula, during the republican period. The intersection of epigraphic and historical-literary sources has

allowed the author to collect interesting data. In the first part of the chapter, González Estrada focuses on the presence of priestesses of the cults of Ceres and Vesta, before identifying and analysing alternative ways in which women participated in the religious sphere, such as public rituals, ceremonies or offerings to deities. This sort of participation was monopolised by organised groups of Roman matrons who leveraged their civic identity and wealth to contribute to bolster local identity and the *pax deorum*.

The book ends with Carmen Alarcón's conclusions regarding future trends and challenges of the topic.

In conclusion, one of the goals of this book is to gain a firmer understanding of the citizenship of Roman women and their role in the community beyond simplistic considerations, still occasionally found in popular and academic books, which merely state that men were citizens and women were not or, at best, were second-class citizens. It attempts to include a variety of perspectives, discourses and nuances regarding the question of how women acted as citizens, in order to work towards what has been called "a mixed history" (*histoire mixte*) of ancient Rome.

"Mixed history" can be defined as a historical discourse that places men and women on an equal footing, considering the latter as historical actors as relevant as the former, and which incorporates gender issues into the narrative.<sup>31</sup> It is high time to discard the kind of historical narratives that use supposedly ungendered language but which in fact employ generic masculine pronouns and only contemplate women separately and as an afterthought.<sup>32</sup> The use of masculine terms to include women has made and still makes them invisible. As historians, we have a duty to paint a picture of ancient Rome that is as complete as possible, for which reason half of the population cannot be left out of the narrative. It is both a professional and ethical duty towards our readers and students, towards the past and towards society as a whole.<sup>33</sup>

---

31 On "*histoire mixte*", see Dermenjian *et alii* 2010; Sebillotte Cuchet 2018a and 2018b.

32 This kind of narrative is not new, for it was exactly how Roman jurists expressed themselves: Gardner 1995; Saller 1999.

33 This book is the result of the conference entitled, "Ciudadanas: las mujeres romanas en la República", held at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide in Seville in October 2022. The conference and the book have been funded by the university and by the research project, "El censo romano en época monárquica y republicana" (PID2019-103973GB-I00, Agencia Estatal de Investigación, Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación) and the PAIDI research group HUM 545 ("Religión y pensamiento en el mundo antiguo").

## Bibliography

- Agnelotti, Giancarlo (1991) *Clodia: La nemica di Cicerone*, Florence.
- Barrett, Anthony A. (2002) *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*, New Haven.
- Bartman, Elizabeth (1999) *Portraits of Livia: Imaging the Imperial Woman in Augustan Rome*, Cambridge.
- Bauman, Richard A. (1992) *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, London.
- Boatwright, Mary T. (2011) "Women and Gender in the Forum Romanum", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 141, 105-141.
- Braccisi, Lorenzo (2016) *Livia*, Salerno.
- Bur, Clément (2018) *La citoyenneté dégradée. Une histoire de l'infamie à Rome (312 av. J.-C. – 96 apr. J.-C.)*, Rome.
- Cadiou, François (2018) *L'armée imaginaire: les soldats prolétaires dans les légions romaines au dernier siècle de la République*, Paris.
- Castán Pérez-Gómez, Santiago (2019) *Discapacidad y Derecho Romano. Condiciones de vida y limitaciones jurídicas de las personas ciegas, sordas, mudas, sordomudas y con discapacidad psíquica, intelectual y física en la Roma Antigua*, Madrid.
- Cid López, Rosa María (2006) "Joan Scott y la historia de las mujeres en España. El caso de los estudios sobre la Antigüedad", in Cristina Borderías Mondejar (ed.), *Joan Scott y las políticas de la historia*, Barcelona, 61-94.
- Cornwell, Hannah and Woolf, Greg (2022) *Gendering Roman Imperialism*, Leiden.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1991) "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color", *Stanford Law Review* 43.6, 1241-1299.
- Culham, Phyllis (1987) "Ten Years after Pomeroy: Studies of the Image and Reality of Women in Antiquity", in Marilyn Skinner (ed.), *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity*, Lubbock.
- Dermenjian, Geneviève et alii (2010) *La place des femmes dans l'histoire. Une histoire mixte*, Paris.
- DiLuzio, Meghan J. (2016) *A Place at the Altar: Priestesses in Republican Rome*, Princeton.
- Dixon, Suzanne (1985) "Polybius on Roman Women and Property", *The American Journal of Philology* 106(2), 147-170.
- Dixon, Suzanne (1992) *The Roman Family*, Baltimore.
- Dixon, Suzanne (2007) *Cornelia: Mother of the Gracchi*, London.
- Ermete, Karen (2003) *Terentia und Tullia – Frauen der senatorischen Oberschicht*, Frankfurt.
- Evans, John K. (1991) *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*, Abingdon.
- Fischer, Robert Alexander (1999) *Fulvia und Octavia: die beiden Ehefrauen des Marcus Antonius in den politischen Kämpfen der Umbruchszeit Zwischen Republik und Principat*, Berlin.
- Fontana, Laura (2020) *Laudatio Turiae e propaganda augustea: quando anche la morte è politica*, Milan.
- García Vivas, Gustavo (2013) *Octavia contra Cleopatra. El papel de la mujer en la propaganda política del Triunvirato (44-30 a.C.)*, Madrid.
- Gardner, Jane F. (1986) *Women in Roman Law and Society*, London.
- Gardner, Jane F. (1993) *Being a Roman Citizen*, London.
- Gardner, Jane F. (1995) "Gender-role assumptions in Roman law", *Échos du monde classique = Classical Views* 39(3), 377-400.

- Gross, Walter Hatto (1962) *Iulia Augusta*, Göttingen.
- Hallett, Judith P. (1984) *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society: Women and the Elite Family*, Princeton.
- Harders, Ann-Cathrin (2008) *Suavissima Soror. Untersuchungen zu den Bruder-Schwester-Beziehungen in der römischen Republik*, München.
- Hejduk, Julia Dyson (2008) *Clodia: A Sourcebook*, Norman.
- Hemelrijk, Emily A. (1999) *Matrona docta: Educated Women in the Roman Elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna*, London.
- Hölkeskamp, Karl-Joachim (2010) *Reconstructing the Roman Republic*, Princeton.
- Kokkinos, Nikos (1992) *Antonia Augusta: Portrait of a Great Roman Lady*, London.
- Kunst, Christiane (2008) *Livia: Macht und Intrigen am Hof des Augustus*, Stuttgart.
- Laes, Christian (2017) *Disability in Antiquity*, London.
- Laes, Christian (2018) *Disabilities and the Disabled in the Roman World: A Social and Cultural History*, Cambridge.
- Machado, Dominic (2023) *Voluntas militum: Community, Collective Action, and Popular Power in the Armies of the Middle Republic (300-100 BCE)*, Zaragoza/Seville.
- Medici, Chiara (2013) *Ricerche sulla tutela mulierum*, PhD diss., Milan.
- Mowat, Chris (2021) *Engendering the Future: Divination and the Construction of Gender in the Late Roman Republic*, Stuttgart.
- Mudd, Mary (2005) *“I, Livia”: The Counterfeit Criminal. The Story of a Much Maligned Woman*, Victoria.
- Osgood, Josiah (2014) *Turia: A Roman Woman’s Civil War*, Oxford.
- Pepe, Leo (1984) *Posizione giuridica e ruolo sociale della donna romana in età repubblicana*, Milan.
- Pepe, Leo (2016) *Civis Romana: forme giuridiche e modelli sociali dell’appartenenza e dell’identità femminili in Roma antica*, Lecce.
- Perkounig, Claudia-Martina (1995) *Livia Drusilla – Iulia Augusta: das politische Porträt der ersten Kaiserin Roms*, Böhlau.
- Pomeroy, Sarah B. (1975) *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, New York.
- Richlin, Amy (2014) *Arguments with Silence: Writing the History of Roman Women*, Ann Arbor.
- Richlin, Amy (2021) “The Woman in the Street”, in Ronnie Ancona and Georgia Tsouvala (eds.), *New Directions in the Study of Women in the Graeco-Roman World*, New York, 213-230.
- Rohr Vio, Francesca (2019) *Le custodi del potere: Donne e politica alla fine della Repubblica romana*, Rome.
- Rohr Vio, Francesca (2022a) *Powerful Matrons: New Political Actors in the Late Roman Republic*, Zaragoza/Seville.
- Rohr Vio, Francesca (2022b) “*Matronae* and Politics in Republican Rome”, in Valentina Arena and Jonathan Prag (eds.), *A Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic*, Hoboken, 362-373.
- Rosillo-López, Cristina (2022) *Political Conversations in Late Republican Rome*, Oxford.
- Saller, Richard P. (1999) “*Pater familias, mater familias*, and the gendered semantics of the Roman household”, *Classical Philology* 94(2), 182-197.
- Schmitt Pantel, Pauline (1991) *Histoire des femmes en Occident, I: L’Antiquité*, Paris.



- Schultz, Celia E. (2006) *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic*, Chapel Hill.
- Schultz, Celia E. (2021) *Fulvia: Playing for Power at the End of the Roman Republic*, New York.
- Scott, Joan W. (1986) "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", *The American Historical Review* 91.5, 1053-1075.
- Sebillotte Cuchet, Violaine (2018a) "Gender studies et domination masculine: les citoyennes de l'Athènes classique, un défi pour l'historien des institutions", *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 28, 7-30.
- Sebillotte Cuchet, Violaine (2018b) "Épilogue. Pour une histoire mixte", *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* supplément 18, 297-307.
- Sebillotte Cuchet, Violaine (2022) *Artémise. Une femme capitaine de vaisseaux dans l'antiquité grecque*, Paris.
- Sebillotte Cuchet, Violaine and Noûs, Camille (2020) "Les études de genre dans le domaine de l'Antiquité. Les archives de la *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* (2000-2020)", *Genre & Histoire* 26 (online article): <http://journals.openedition.org/genrehistoire/5554>.
- Sherwin-White, Adrian N. (1973) *The Roman Citizenship*. 2nd ed., Oxford.
- Skinner, Marilyn (2011) *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune's Sister*, New York.
- Sosin, Joshua D. (1997) "A Word for Woman?", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 38, 75-83.
- Steel, Catherine and Webb, Lewis (forthcoming) *Women, Wealth and Power in the Roman Republic*.
- Treggiari, Susan (1991) *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*, Oxford.
- Treggiari, Susan (2007) *Terentia, Tullia and Publilia: The Women of Cicero's family*, London.
- Treggiari, Susan (2019) *Servilia and Her Family*, Oxford.
- Watson, Alan (1967) *The Law of Persons in the Later Roman Republic*, Oxford.
- Zannini, Pierluigi (1976) *Studi sulla tutela mulierum*, vol. 1, Turin.
- Zannini, Pierluigi (1979) *Studi sulla tutela mulierum*, vol. 2, Turin.



*CITIZENSHIP*



*CIVIS ROMANA SUM:*  
ROMAN WOMEN AS CITIZENS<sup>1</sup>

Susan Treggiari

## 1. Introduction

When Cristina Rosillo-López asked me to give a paper and explained what the conference was about, she told me:

Lately I have asked some colleagues if they consider that women were citizens during the Republic and, to my surprise, some of them answered no. Some even said that well, maybe during the Empire, but not during the Republic.<sup>2</sup>

I was shocked, since it had not occurred to me to doubt that republican women were citizens. It is impossible to conjecture an enfranchisement in the Principate. What a stir it would have caused if Augustus or some Julio-Claudian had introduced such a radical innovation!

Cristina suggested that part of the reason for this misconception is that Nicolet's influential book of 1976 focused on male citizens.<sup>3</sup> The indexed English edition has no entries for "women" or "marriage", though the Voconian law is mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 I am grateful to Cristina Rosillo-López and to all the participants for making the conference so pleasant and stimulating. Thanks to Kathryn Welch for help with the final draft. My paper is lightly edited. I have kept bibliography brief.

2 Email 28/10/2021. Treggiari 1996, intended to represent scholarly consensus at the time, includes women as citizens (873-875) but omits the *ordo matronarum*.

3 Contrast Gardner 1993.

4 1980: 37 = 1976: 57, 1980: 72 = 1976: 101. 1980: 389 "male citizen" perhaps gives a hint that women were *cives* too, but the original 1976: 516 "tout homme" does not and the

*Este libro se terminó de imprimir  
en los talleres del Servicio de Publicaciones  
de la Universidad de Zaragoza  
en junio de 2024*

**ROMA**

This book goes beyond simplistic considerations, still occasionally found in popular and academic books, which merely state that, in Rome, men were citizens and women were not or, at best, were second-class citizens. Roman women *were* citizens and their civic roles and public presence are essential for gaining a better understanding of the Roman Republic. This monograph offers nineteen studies on Roman citizen women during this period, their roles in the public sphere and their place in the community and the *res publica* to which they belonged. It includes a variety of perspectives, discourses and nuances regarding the question of how women acted as citizens, in order to work towards a historical discourse that places men and women on an equal footing, considering the latter as historical actors as relevant as the former, and which incorporates gender issues into the narrative.



### **Cristina Rosillo-López**

is Professor in Ancient History at the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville (Spain). She specialises in the political culture of the Roman Republic, social and economic history of the Roman world and history of gender. Her publications include the monographs *Public Opinion and Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *Political Conversations in the Late Republican Rome* (Oxford University Press, 2022). She is the coordinator of the national Network of Excellence “*Libera res publica: foro de historiadores españoles de la República romana*”.

### **Silvia Lacorte**

holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Humanities (2017) and a Master’s Degree in Scienze Storiche e della documentazione storica (2020), both earned at the University Aldo Moro of Bari (Italy). She is currently a PhD student in Ancient History at the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville (Spain). Her line of research focuses on political history and political culture of the late Roman Republic; her scholarly pursuits delve into the nuanced exploration of political practices and ideological confrontations during the early decades of the late Republic.