

# Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno CIV, Maggio-Agosto 2020, Fascicolo II

## Abstracts

MADDALENA BETTI, *Sull'uso del titolo di Senatrix. Strategie di definizione e di rappresentazione di una parentela a Roma nel X secolo*

*In many eighth and ninth century papal letters the word Senatus was used to mean the Roman families who traditionally provided the main officials in the papal administration, in order to enhance papal prestige and authority. The idea of the ancient Roman senate became a significant tool for the construction of family identities in the tenth century, when Theophylact and his descendants monopolize the titles of senator or senatrix. This article discusses the use of the title of senatrix from the beginnings. The title appears in fifth and sixth-century sources to praise the Christian matrons but it is also associated with the contradictory cultural constructions on the role of women in the private and public sphere. The image of the senate of women nourishes the controversy on the alleged authority exercised by late antique Roman women on the popes and on the whole city of Rome. The title of senatrix is rediscovered and reused by the feminine descendants of Theophylact and his wife Theodora. This article attempts to explain the senatrices' representations provided by the sources (especially Liutprand of Cremona and Eugenius Vulgarius). It also gives account of their self-representations. The main argument will be that their extraordinary status was enabled by the dynasty-building strategies of Theophylact's relatives.*

Keywords:

*Early medieval Rome*

*Old aristocracy*

*Kinship*