

Oppian law

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The Oppian Law The Romans were defeated terribly by Hannibal during the Cannae battle. Many men perished leading to daughters and wives inheriting their property. The state passed the Oppian law to tap into the riches held by women in order assist in repaying the losses incurred during the war. The oppressive law limited amount of gold in women's possession, and all the funds single women, widows and wards deposited with the state. No woman was permitted to wear dresses with a purple trim, a mourning color that reminded the state of its loss. In this essay, we are going to discuss Livy's account of Roman women demonstrating against Oppian law and Baldson's view of the Roman women in relevance to the Oppian law (Bauman 30). According to Schroeder (80), women's demonstration and persistence enabled them to obtain repeal against the Oppian law despite facing opposition from various consuls who supported the law. Such consuls included Marcus, Publius, among others. The matrons blockaded every entrance to forums, as well as streets in the city. They neither cared about the orders from the counsel and husbands nor the shame since Roman women were prohibited from participating in forums and politics. The women wanted to have their luxurious lives back arguing that the state was thriving. They also wanted to take part in forums. The number of demonstrating women grew in numbers from towns to villages. They tried to solicit magistrates, consuls and praetors to join them in their course. Consul Cato did a marvellous representation that encouraged more women crowds on the streets, and this led to their victory with the repealing of the law. In Livy's writing, we see that women have evolved from being submissive to fearless and bold individuals. They dared to go against their men's wishes and came out in large numbers to fight for what they wanted.

According to Bauman's (53), women have changed since the 1960s. In the ancient Rome, women were assigned specific roles, such as giving birth, spinning, weaving, managing domestic arrangements, and not wandering in the streets or attending festivals. They were not allowed to uncover their heads, unless in the presence of their husbands alone. They often got married when young; thus, they had little time to have a good time to enjoy life. They were not exposed to contraceptives, and so they underwent crude and unclean ways of abortion. The rich women were overtaxed with the aim of taming them. The modern Roman woman is more confident and aggressive in fighting for liberty through promoting literacy. Rich and empowered women wrote poems that condemned oppression and encouraged women to stand up against oppression.

In the two secondary sources, we see that the ancient Roman woman was extremely oppressed. They had no voice in the society. Education was not a priority since women were subjected to early marriages. The women suffered because of lack of empowerment and oppression from powerful men. The number of men who died in the war was close to the number of women who died during childbirth, but the state felt the loss for the death of men, unlike women. The Oppian law was formulated to frustrate women and tap their inherited wealth to be managed by the state. Both authors bring the evolution of modern Roman women and their struggle to get liberated. In conclusion, the Roman woman is a changed woman as seen from the discussion. They are more independent and less submissive. They have improved their literacy and are struggling to get their opinions heard.

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