

Abstract: A widow holds Emperor Trajan's stirrup to prevent him from leaving, and take to trial her only child's murderer. At first, Trajan suggests to postpone the trial; then, persuaded by the woman's reasonings, he gets down from his horse and administers justice. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that this legend, though a figment of the imagination, is built on a solid and correct legal structure, based on Roman procedural and substantive laws: the type of trial presided over by the Emperor, *cognitio extra ordinem*, the woman's legitimacy to take legal action and the typical crime type, *homicidium*.

Keywords: Traian, Widow, *Cognitio extra ordinem*, Roman law, Homicide.