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Lungarno Pacinotti, 43

56126 Pisa

Tel. 050 2212056 – Fax 050 2212945

info-plus@edizioniplus.it

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Manager

Claudia Napolitano

Editing

Francesca Petrucci

Informatic assistance

Michele Gasparello

Labour and Identity in the Roman World. Italian Historiography during the Last Two Decades

CARLA SALVATERRA
University of Bologna

L'antichistica ha sviluppato un interesse poliedrico alla dimensione del lavoro, che tocca sia le strutture dell'economia, della produzione e l'organizzazione delle società, sia le rappresentazioni culturali e simboliche. La dimensione del lavoro nell'antichità ha ricevuto una specifica attenzione come un luogo della rappresentazione simbolica e dell'espressione dei valori delle società greca e romana, sia nella sfera individuale e privata che in quella pubblica e politica. La natura stessa delle fonti antiche, più che gli sviluppi interni alla disciplina nelle varie storiografie nazionali e più del dibattito internazionale sulla centralità del lavoro, sulla crisi del movimento dei lavoratori nella società contemporanea, sulla destabilizzazione delle professioni ha infatti determinato gran parte degli indirizzi di ricerca e dei paradigmi interpretativi.

In questo contributo mi propongo di analizzare come nella storiografia recente sul mondo romano, con particolare riferimento alla tradizione storiografica italiana, sia stato affrontato il tema del lavoro e della professionalizzazione come ambito utile alla comprensione dei processi di definizione dell'identità personale e collettiva nelle società antiche.

SOCIAL HISTORY, HISTORY OF LABOUR, AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES: HOW ARE THEY CONNECTED IN CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP?

Although human labour in the ancient world is a popular subject of study in scholarship on classical antiquity, it does not comprise an autonomous field of study nor can it be defined as a specific discipline. Developing a parallel with the emphasis on labour as the central concept of industrial society, contemporary thinking has defined some tools and methodologies and applied them to periods well prior to the industrial revolution, yet it has not carved out any clearly defined, epistemologically specific areas in classical scholarship. The broad division into 'industrial' and 'pre-industrial' has meant that ancient societies are lumped together in the monolithic category of 'pre-industrial' without enough attention to the stages through which that long period evolved.

The history of labour has developed via a plurality of approaches and research paths, being promoted not only by historians of economics and of law, but especially in research on social and cultural history, the history of mentality, and historical anthropology.

In this setting, the dimensions of labour in antiquity have mainly been analysed as an instance of symbolic representation and expression of values in Greek and Roman societies, whether on an individual and private level or a public and political level.

The lines that research has taken and the paradigms it has used in its interpretations have largely been dictated by the nature of ancient sources themselves. This has counted for more than specific developments within the various national historiographic movements or the internal debate on the centrality of labour, the crisis of the worker movement in contemporary society or the destabilization of the professions. What classical scholarship has done is to shift the central focus of attention onto the concept and patterns of labour as transmitted from antiquity to western culture.

Such a broad approach to labour – involving the structure of the economy, production, and the organisation of society, but also its cultural and symbolical expression – has provided a basis for classical scholarship in its turn to study the interaction between labour, gender role definition, civil and family development and the surrounding symbolical background on a par with investigations being carried out in other historical periods. Yet for all the exploration of research avenues and interpretative models, for all the application of new categories and paradigms, theory and historiography have figured less prominently in classical studies than in other areas of the historical disciplines.

In the present chapter, with its special reference to the Italian historiographic tradition, I shall be looking at how recent historiographical research on the ancient world has tackled the theme of labour and the developing professions and how useful the area proves to be for our understanding of personal and collective identity as defined in classical societies.

- It will first be necessary to specify how the concepts of labour, skills and roles, professionalization and social identity have been used in research on antiquity.
- Some definition and explanation will also be needed for the timescale and geographical area chosen, not to mention the decision to take such a broad and ill-defined canvas as 'the Roman world', instead of using the consolidated cultural periods and geographical areas: the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, Late Antiquity (and the various geographical sub-headings within each of these).
- There will then be a section illustrating how labour in the Roman world – especially professional skills and roles – has been studied, the angle being how social and gender identity have been built up, together with a discussion of the state of the art in this field and an analysis of certain specific contributions from Italian historiography.
- Lastly there will be an attempt to understand what innovative trends there have been in the field of social history and gender history.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘LABOUR’, ‘HISTORY OF LABOUR’, ‘PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND ROLES’, AND ‘SOCIAL IDENTITY’ IN THE ANCIENT WORLD?

The first requirement is to distinguish the value these terms had in the Roman world and the role they have played as interpretative categories in modern historiography.

On the first point, it has been amply shown that the classical world lacked any clear broad concept of ‘labour’ to compare with our understanding of the term. This can already be inferred from the absence of any blanket term in Greek or Latin covering the range of meanings of our own word ‘work’¹.

The idea of social identity comes in for equally broad historiographical treatment. In the ancient world this was built up on a mixture of co-ordinates, prominent among which were ‘order’ and ‘status’. The notion of *status* as a category for analyzing non-modern societies according to Max Weber’s definition (*ständische Lage*) engaged the attention of classical scholarship mainly as a result of the interpretative model proposed by Moses I. Finley for the study of ancient economics: a chronologically broad-ranging model designed to capture the “dominant types, the characteristic modes of behaviour of the whole Greco-Roman Mediterranean from 1,000 B.C. through to 500 A.D.” It was through the works of Finley that the analytical categories of ‘status’ and ‘order’ were introduced into the debate as alternatives to the conceptual category of class². ‘Status’ is felt to gather social groups according to lifestyle and social recognition (hereditary charisma, appropriation of political or hierocratic powers), though the notion contains a considerable psychological content. In gauging social location in antiquity, there was thus a plurality of hierarchies based on wealth, economic position, hereditary or acquired prestige (rank), but also juridical status (free, freedman, slave, as well as all the forms of personal dependency) and the roles performed. What a person did was only one such factor, and one can hardly claim it was decisive in creating any broad social awareness of unity with respect to the rest of society. It is nonetheless possible to explore how far the ancient world had a psychological perception of professional function and what a person’s job was, decisive features in assembling a social identity or the awareness of one’s own location and role in society – though we must obviously bear in mind that such phenomena belong to widely divergent contexts, whether geographically or socially. That is the specific area of enquiry which will be assessed in the present chapter³.

Concerning the studies published over the last twenty years on subjects relating to labour, professional skill, and more generally human occupation as a feature for constructing social identity (including some possible attention to the category of gender), one should bear in mind the following points which cannot be gone into in any depth here, though they have been widely debated in relatively recent historiography, sometimes embracing the Roman world within the wider framework of the ‘ancient world’:

- The existence of a wide range of activities, including what we now consider as work activities, but not exhaustively so. Among the various occupations that deserve special attention are those that presuppose the possession of precise technical and scientific knowledge in the field of exact or life sciences. For this type of profession, two aspects should be taken into account: for individuals

who devoted themselves full time to a position requiring specialized knowledge there was no procedure to standardize qualifications and no control by a public body to regulate admission to the profession, although this last may have conferred status and some particular privileges (e.g. fiscal exemptions). Add to this the fact that the distinction between specialized and amateur professions could be very hazy so that not just this distinction but other issues of identity, purpose, methodology and definition vis-à-vis other disciplines formed an important part of how the role of the professional was perceived. A third important feature of professional scientific activity regards the codification and transmission of knowledge, the institutions concerned with training and the relationship between theory and applied knowledge⁴. On this last point recent studies have shown the existence of specializations that can be inferred from the documentation, even though no ancient specialistic treatises have filtered into literature or come down to later times. This calls for new and innovatory research to be done on specialistic branches of knowledge. Such a field would be particularly relevant to our argument since in ancient times it was specialization that created a meaningful link between work and professional identity.

- The value of labour-related activity in antiquity (and thus its importance in identifying a person's place in the social scale) depends to a great extent on its relation to public affairs. In this specific sphere, the gender perspective takes on greater relevance in studies because of the strong masculine and feminine connotations attached to various activities: high regard for the political profession, for positions in the army and state defence, or generally for services rendered to the polis or the *res publica*, – exclusively masculine activities – is matched by high regard for other exclusively feminine parallel activities such as rearing children, domestic work and strictly household economy⁵, which were likewise seen as 'public', in so far as they were functional to the prosperity of the state⁶. In this contribution I will not deal with the professional aspects connected with the army, as the question of framing social identity of soldiers and officers in the Roman world has its own distinctiveness as a specific field of study.
- From the points mentioned above, it becomes clear why in the Roman theorization the value of work as such, i.e. the ways in which a person assures his or her own subsistence, also depends on the amount of free time the various activities left for contribution to the public good. Thus the most appreciated male profession – at least in ancient theory – would have been landownership, and for women domestic science. Alongside this main point, numerous others should be considered within the system of traditional values of the Roman world. For instance, the connection between individual interests and ethics, or the opposition between honest and dishonest acquisition of wealth.
- Another important area according to ancient theory is the degree of dependence that a profession entailed. No work was considered humiliating when it was done for one's own self. If on the other hand the same work was done on commission or with a view to sale on the market, the artisan who created the goods found himself tied to dependency on the buyer. According to Roman theoretical writings this not only brought with it an unacceptable degree of economic uncertainty for the producer at the mercy of the market, but above all the artisan producing goods for a third party was not selling his labour – since, as stated before, the ancient world failed to isolate the abstract concept of labour – but was rather selling him/herself, and in this way was putting him/herself on the same level as the lowest stratum of society, the slaves. It should be stressed however that the 'value system' expressed in ancient theoretical writings and presented here did not always coincide with the actual perception and praxis of the various components of ancient societies. The existence of different attitudes and of complex interrelations among them, that can be highlighted through the analysis of different sources and by the use of different methodologies, will be discussed below.
- One last point to consider is the non-exclusive nature of individual jobs – a typical feature of any 'ancien régime' society, above all in the rural environment. This again hints that profes-

sional identity is largely to be explored in the sphere of specialization, whether entailing technical skill or relating to trades requiring specific theoretical training, or forms of specialization shaped by the requirements of urban environments.

DELIMITATION OF TIME AND SPACE: THE PROBLEM OF ANCIENT SOURCES

Documentation on the phenomenon of labour in antiquity is by no means lacking: there are thousands of inscriptions in Greek and Latin where a professional activity is remembered, many references to trade in classical literature and numerous labour contracts preserved on Egyptian papyri dating from times of Greek and Roman rule, not to speak of the wealth of objects of material culture by ancient artists and artisans that archaeological surveys have uncovered and continue to uncover. Nevertheless the plethora of documentation leaves at least two gaps that condition research into labour as a factor in the construction of social identity. The first is the lack of any organic or systematic reflection on working activity: the Greek and Roman civilization that gave rise to political and military historiography is largely devoid of theoretical treatises on economic and social history. One notable exception to this, albeit a partial one, is the various Roman treatises on agricultural labour from Cato to Palladio and the texts of technical literature. Research has tended of late to stress the need to sift the attitudes and nuances let drop by Greek and Roman intellectuals and to delve into the insights provided by such forms of writing as technical literature, the social and economic impact of which has generally received only limited attention⁷.

The second gap stems from the silence of the protagonists; the most eloquent classical disquisitions on labour are those of philosophers and politicians such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca, or poets like Hesiod, all of them spokesmen for an ideology which was not only that of the ruling class, but whose writings were largely designed for the ruling classes. It is thus reasonable to insist on the importance of the fact that reconstructing work as an element of identity means 'listening to silence'.

Such considerations lead to another issue which is the delimitation of time and space adopted by the present chapter. As Andrea Giardina observed, studies on ancient trades and representation thereof suffer from a series of epistemological hiatuses since the problems and the documents selected tend to be framed according to the periodisations most consolidated in political history or the old and new partitions devised by academic teaching⁸. This common adherence to period does little justice to analyses, over longer periods which are potentially better suited to the study of social values, and obstructs the appreciation of the stratification of continuity and change. It becomes impossible to evaluate which factors have caused radical changes and where more gradual evolutions or phenomena of fleeting duration are to be discerned.

For this reason in this brief contribution I have chosen as my field of interest studies on the Roman world from the Republic through to the Imperial period and that of Late Antiquity. I have tried to include studies on the 'peripheral' areas of the Roman world⁹. It was not possible to provide a complete survey of work done on the 4th-7th

centuries A.D. (and in some cases also the following century), that is to say the studies devoted to Late Antiquity, although I shall be covering the debate on the change that was brought about by the appearance of Christianity¹⁰. The historiographical assumption whereby the advent of Christianity caused a radical and global change in the theoretical elaboration of values and the construction of social identity is picked up in rich and fruitful discussions concerning the historical setting and dating of Late Antiquity, whether seen as an autonomous epoch or as a transition phase between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and concerning the subsequent chronological limits within which they must be understood. This period turns out to be one in which reflection on ancient themes of labour, social identity and professionalization has acquired a relatively lively tone.

In light of this view we must recall that the Italian historicist tradition stresses the need for evaluating phenomena of a cultural nature within a period frame based on analyses of various structures (economical, political, social) and their interrelations – and based on the order prevailing in a society in a well-defined period, as may have been the case with Late Antiquity – yet not forgetting that other phenomena show aspects of continuity, change, conflict, and evolution which manifest themselves at a different pace¹¹.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF SCHOLARSHIP CONSIDERED IN THIS PAPER

In planning this short review of the historiographical output of the past twenty years, the starting point is the middle of the 1980s, a significant moment both from an international and from a specifically Italian point of view. The ten years covering the period from the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties were actually very important for the introduction of gender as a category in social and cultural history of the ancient world. In the preface (November 1994) to the published proceedings of a seminar held at Oxford in 1993 (the first international conference on ‘Women in the Ancient World’ to be held in the UK¹²) Richard Hawely and Barbara Levick note that “The theme of the conference – New Assessment – had two sources: the changes that a theme naturally undergoes when it is treated over a number of years and our own awareness that the emphasis of the seminar¹³ was also changing, and rightly, away from ‘women’ towards ‘gender studies’”.

In the introduction to a volume of collected essays: *Matriarchatstheorien der Altertumswissenschaft*¹⁴ 1992, Beate Wagner Hase noted that research into ancient forms of family and parental systems considering time and space differences and above all taking account of gender as a structural feature of ancient society, is “only just starting”. She recalled that, in reference to the historical debate on the category of gender (especially the seminal work by Joan Scott¹⁵), only five studies on antiquity were published between 1984 and 1989, and went on to label their chosen models of historical-social research – with reference to models developed by Moses I Finley – as not entirely unproblematic (*nicht ganz unproblematisch*) in view of their generalizing and levelling tendencies with regard to historical differences.

The academic field, ‘women in antiquity’, had a different development in the USA, as can be seen in the discussion of its links with feminism and women’s studies scholarship, in Barbara Mc Manus¹⁶. A survey of trends in research on the history of women and the introduction of the category of gender in the work of classicists up to 2000, with special attention to the German situation, can be found in the critical review by Tanja Scheer¹⁷. Bibliographical updates for the references quoted can be found on line on the website “Diotima Materials for the Study of Women and Gender in the Ancient World”¹⁸. Of special interest here, though it is largely confined to the Roman world and the imperial stage of Late Antiquity, is the bibliography by Antti Arjava, *A Bibliography on Women and the Family in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (2nd to 7th centuries)*, published in the section on Late Antiquity in ORB: on-line Reference books for Medieval Studies, edited by Steven Muhlberger¹⁹.

In Italy the decade between the 1980s and 1990s marks an important moment in the debate on economic and social history of the ancient world, again with explicit reference to the work of Finley. This period saw the important appearance of the academic journal ‘Opus’ in 1982 with its express aim of ‘filling a gap’ and becoming an instrument for promotion of and debate on research into ancient economic and social history in the broadest sense. It was founded by the Italian historian of Ancient Greece Carmine Ampolo and the archaeologist Giuseppe Pucci, who set out to develop a political culture of international collaboration and to instil previous scientific experience in the journal favouring the integration of such diverse disciplines as history and archaeology; the two pointed out the aptness of combining theoretical elaboration with concrete research as matured among the group of ancient historians from the Gramsci Institute, as well as from the encounter with Moses Finley: “Those scholars have succeeded in identifying fundamental questions in the field in which we wish to work”. (Thus the editorial statement in the first volume of the Journal). The experience of ‘Opus’ was intense and lent its tone to Italian research in this direction for eleven years up until 1992.

The middle of the eighties thus saw the introduction of the category of gender into historiography, though this was not immediately accepted by scholars of economic and social history of classical antiquity – at that time coming into collision with theoretical works on economic and social history using Finley’s proposed interpretative models. In Italy special importance is attached to the experience of the Gramsci Institute group who from the mid-seventies promoted a specific theoretical and methodological model of interdisciplinary work for studies on ancient economic and social history²⁰. Within the field of women’s history in Italian historiography Eva Cantarella’s research, which originated from the field of the history of law and institutions and developed along the line of cultural history, produced significant innovations. Her contributions, beginning with her first book on the topic²¹ have enjoyed wide international acknowledgment.

IN WHAT WAY HAS THE STUDY OF LABOUR IN THE ROMAN WORLD – ESPECIALLY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND ROLES – BEEN APPROACHED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND GENDER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION?

The theme of professional skills, and more generally of labour as an element in the framing of social identity, has received particular attention in the work of Sandra Rae Joshel²², which may be considered an interesting example of how social identity, work and gender have been dealt with in a specific case study. The book belongs to the history of mentality rather than to social or economic history. It aims essentially to understand how labour formed an element in the construction of an identity, to which end it studies inscriptions referring to trade from the city of Rome. Sandra Joshel expressly built up her case in the preface to her volume on research into unrepresented categories. However, her primary objective, which was to “give voice to the silent Roman”, encountered difficulties of accuracy in interpreting and contextualizing the historical documents on which the research is based, viz. inscriptions (mainly epitaphs and dedications) from the city of Rome, from which only those where an individual mentions his/her own trade were selected. The book sets out to sift the evidence as to forms of expression and representation of identity by slaves, freedmen and the free, and above all what role work had in framing an identity. Based on over one thousand epigraphs dating from the Early Empire, the study is a significant example of how general methodological questions (especially the problems of epistemology of ‘muted groups’ discussed by feminist scholars and experts in critical ethnography²³) can be combined with textual and statistical analyses based on epigraphic evidence. Examining the epigraphic, literary and juridical texts in connection with the authors’ gender and social role, Joshel tries to assess the human experience of working and understand what representation of this reveals about social relations and the way of viewing oneself and others, and how men and women of ancient times conceptualized themselves via the mention of their own jobs. Sandra Joshel’s aim was also to set up a precise link between work and juridical status; that is, how the framing of a social identity for categories of persons with varying juridical status (free, freedman, slave) or belonging to limited groups (imperial slaves or slaves in great aristocratic families) answered the psychological purpose or need of coping with the depersonalization entailed by slavery. The interpretative model and the way the work is planned have met with broad acclaim, as it has the merit of being the first to explore a hitherto little-known area, the role of work experience among various social categories. Criticisms have however been voiced as to the way the model was applied to Roman inscriptions (especially in view of the weakness of using a statistical approach based on a few random samples), the lack of proper context given to the documents studied, the inadequacies of the comparative method and the categories of analysis as developed in the sections studying gender and ethnography, which served no doubt as a source of inspiration but were not sufficiently applied to the case in point. A similar verdict of inadequacy was passed on her evaluation of the expressive codes governing the language of the epigraphic, but also literary, texts considered²⁴.

The opportunities opened up by Joshel’s work and stressed by reviewers – e.g. extending the model to studies on iconographic representation of work on ancient monuments

– have so far met with limited response²⁵. The study on the relationship of status, with its many possible meanings and representation of workers had been explicitly addressed at the beginning of the 1980s by Natalie Kampen²⁶. Natalie Kampen, from her perspective as an art historian, had been the first to direct attention to the questions concerning the representation of working women, starting from the methodological question of status and art²⁷. In her book she suggested that it is possible to trace developments in Roman art, which show the existence of interdependent but separate cultures in the Roman world. According to her analysis, the images of work stem from attitudes and values of the different social groups for which they were made.

The theme of professional competence and identity has received further attention in subsequent years, even if the specific link between skills, social and gender identity construction highlighted in the work of Sandra Joshel has not been further taken up as a central object of study. Among the many contributions devoted to professions it is possible to define some major trends.

The new emphasis put forward by scholarship on the economic independence of women and their wealth and power has produced a variety of studies, among which we can mention here two examples.

The first is the outcome of the research of a team of Finnish scholars engaged in the analysis of the ways in which women's wealth and power interrelate in the social fabric and cultural context during the Roman Empire. Concerning the theme of professional identity their contribution has been particularly valuable in the analyses of the economic influence of women in the economic life of Rome on all its social levels, and more specifically in the study of engagement in business and administration of (inherited) property as a special activity, which requires specialized skills and can give evidence to the professionalism of women²⁸. A similar approach had been adopted by Suzanne Dixon²⁹, who discussed women's active role in the world of work and commerce, underlying the importance of social-financial networks and familiar patrimony and inheritance practices. By linking women's social roles to specialized skills and to the ability to transmit them, the author suggests a new way of looking at the transmission of economic skills (appropriate to the different social groups) as interesting evidence of the social power of women.

The second trend to be mentioned here is represented by the research on work, training and profession, which arise from studies dedicated to household, family, slaves and the socio-juridical aspects of labour relations and of female work. In this field important contributions can be found in the essays published in the USA by Susan Treggiari in the 1970s and 1980s, by Rosmarie Günther in Germany, and by numerous scholars both in Europe and America³⁰. Their main focus on the female occupations had the advantage of highlighting gendered aspects in the study of occupations and the importance of labour in the study of households and families.

Another important research trend is the study of intellectual professions, of the social role of specialized and trained personnel and of the ways of knowledge and specialized skills

were transmitted³¹ This seems one of the most promising areas in which the issue of 'professional' identity can be analysed. The framing of identity could be better understood by further assessing the features that marked the difference between the professional and specialized aspect with respect to the non-specialized one, the difference in the consideration for professionalism and expertise in the private and in the public sphere, given the very vague boundary that existed in antiquity between the two areas. The means and methods of circulation of technical competence, the places, occasions, levels of skilled culture's circulation, including the implications of applying knowledge in practice and of empirical experience in daily practice, still need further investigation in a comparative perspective.

DISCUSSION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITALIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY TO THE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND WORK/SOCIAL GROUPS

An important stage in the emerging study of the relationship between social identity and labour in Italian historiography is marked by the work of the Roman Law scholar, Francesco M. De Robertis. His contributions are of an essentially juridical nature but interwoven with economic and social history. He sets out to evaluate the social rating of labour in the Roman world. His studies on the social dimensions of history published in the 1960s refer to earlier research on the association phenomenon, arising in a climate of interest in corporatism which was characteristic of fascist Italy³²: According to the ideas developed in De Robertis' work³³, epigraphy provides precise data with which to complete and correct the outline given by literary sources: his study tends to single out an 'aulic' sphere³⁴ of leading Roman classes, to which the literary sources lend expression, showing broad disparagement for the majority of labour-related professions. On the opposite side there is the attitude of the 'vulgar' sphere, i.e. the inferior classes and provincials³⁵, which we find illustrated in epigraphic documents and papyri. In this sphere – which involved most of the population of the empire – labour was actually a reason for personal pride and a source of social prestige, as demonstrated in the records of professions referred to in sepulchral inscriptions and various other references to trade from many parts of the Roman world.

This line of research no doubt had the merit of evaluating evidence usually overlooked or considered of minor relevance by those studying labour in the ancient world (e.g. epigraphical sources), and of showing that the attitude of the ancients toward labour was anything but uniform. But it also reveals two limitations: firstly, there is the risk of over-simplification, positing a single coherent ideology of the upper class as opposed to a coherent ideology of the popular class; secondly, it ends by considering the explicit conceptions of ancient authorities as the result of abstract speculation by certain aristocrats completely divorced from the problems and values of real life³⁶.

A discussion of the positions expressed in classical historiography regarding the value and interpretation of various kinds of sources can be found in the first part of a book by Alessandro Cristofori³⁷. It also includes an attempt at a more efficient application of the framework outlined by De Robertis and subsequent discussions.

The interest shown by Italian historiography of the ancient world in these types of problems is evident from economic-social research, in studies focusing on cultural and ideological aspects, in works of a more documentary character (like the field of epigraphy and papyrology), and – among traditional Roman studies – in research on labour-related legislation, especially of Late Antiquity.

I will refer to some of the more recent works as examples of the diversity of approaches or by way of useful reflection and summary on the main research themes developed by historiography of the ancient world.

The interest in ancient professional associations – as mentioned above in connection with the studies of De Robertis – has been an important trend in Italian historiography, and many scholars have contributed to defining the aims and roles played in the economic and political lives of ancient communities by professional associations such as found in imperial and late ancient Roman society. Lellia Cracco Ruggini³⁸ points to the gradual shift in the connotation of *association* from a ‘social’ to a more ‘economic’ meaning³⁹. Mario Mazza⁴⁰, investigates the political significance of professional associations. Lastly, the summary by Guido Clemente⁴¹, based on his important previous research into *collegia* in the Roman Empire, points to the social relevance of professional associations, but also identifies an important economic and political role at a local level⁴².

We have already mentioned the historiographical trends developed by the group of classical scholars at the Gramsci Institute, which culminated in two works: *Società Romana e Produzione Schiavistica* (1981) and *Società Romana ed Impero tardoantico* (1986). In an intellectual context, where attention was given to modes of production and the role of social groups, especially when related to the theme which interests us here (*viz.* the role of labour in the creation of a social identity), we must mention first and foremost the contributions by Andrea Giardina.

His article on *Lavoro e storia sociale; antagonismo e alleanze dall’Ellenismo al tardoantico*⁴³, based upon an analysis of sources and studies on social urban rebellion and labour conflict, particularly ‘organized refusal’, provides a comprehensive evaluation of various aspects of social relations, the history of mentality and economic and ideological reasoning emerging from surveys on the transition between Antiquity and Late Antiquity.

This critical contribution has raised some interesting points, including certain particular aspects of professional identity in antiquity that are of interest for the present survey, e.g. the solidarity among people who worked in fields that required a particular kind of specialization. In the contribution published in ‘Opus’ by Andrea Giardina, a central point is the investigation of the relation between labour and social values, based on the formulation of a passage in Cicero’s *de Officiis* (1, 150 sgg.) which is crucial for the appraisal of attitudes towards human activities in the ancient world, and especially attitudes towards commerce⁴⁴. These suggestions were developed in subsequent contributions, amongst which one deserves special attention: Giardina’s *Il mercante*⁴⁵, an article in a collective volume by the same author, volume in which he offers a portrait of Roman society by

means of a series of sketches of a number of representative figures: the citizen, the priest, the lawyer, the soldier, the merchant, the bandit, the craftsman, the slave and the farmer. In this volume a number of sources and various methodological approaches are applied in order to arrive at a multi-dimensional depiction of social types. It has been noted that all the figures selected are male (as implicit in the Italian title of the work, which is lost in the English translation⁴⁶) even if there is no explicit theoretical position taken with regard to gender in the overall plan of the volume⁴⁷.

The study of social values and the representation of labour was recently discussed in two essays that pay special attention to ideology (in the transition to Late Antiquity) and to relations between mentality and socio-economical factors: Andrea Giardina⁴⁸ interest in Late Antiquity and Christian and pagan ideology is also treated in studies that derive their methodological outline from literary rather than historical or historiographical analyses, and in which we can discern the same orientation, though by other means, as that initiated by Andrea Giardina, i.e. the need to discuss the commonplaces relating to the break-up of paganism and Christianity, and to analyse the period divisions and ideologies by breaking down the various levels on which mentalities and representation can occur. See for instance, the studies by Elena Giannarelli, in which there is a marked attention to the female world and the possibility of using the category of gender in the analysis of ancient Christian literary texts. In the same collective volume see also the chapter by Danilo Mazzoleni⁵⁰. Among the writings of Elena Giannarelli see also the ones dedicated to the concept of work and to women in Late Antiquity⁵¹; special attention to the iconographic analysis of labour illustrations in ancient funerary contexts is to be found in Fabrizio Bisconti's work⁵².

When it comes to the study of ancient literature and cultural studies, a special interest in the category of gender and the tools used in anthropology and cultural studies has been the driving force behind the interdepartmental centre of Anthropology and Culture at the University of Siena, which was established in 1986 and which aims to "promote scientific collaboration between classical scholarship and anthropology and develop a common line of research between these two disciplines that shows the cultural continuity and evolution between Antiquity and Modernity, coordinating an anthropological perspective on historical, archaeological and philological-literary studies on the ancient world, developing or connecting research-projects on material culture and on social organisation with studies of cultural models derived from texts and literary documents". Noteworthy research has been done by Maurizio Bettini by whom we may mention two illustrative contributions: the first⁵³ is not immediately relevant to professional identity but contains important methodological considerations that take their inspiration from methods of anthropology and sensitivity to narrative. It specifically illustrates the need to connect social and cultural information found in ancient texts with the narrative character of the text: "its plot, its style, its contents, its assumptions", especially if the need arises to reconstruct social history from texts with a mythical or legal content. The second example is directly related to the topic of professional identity and represents Maurizio Bettini's view as to the role of the midwife in Greek society, based on an extensive study of myths relating to birth and motherhood.

Special attention is given here to the symbolical universe and analysed by means of anthropological models and comparative analysis⁵⁴. On some of the pages of this essay we find references to the characteristics of women assisting with childbirth in the ancient world: professional midwives possessing some medical training, and traditional midwives, i.e. women within the family circle or who assisted at the moment of childbirth. This also highlights the difficulty of a strict demarcation between different persons as well as making comparisons and parallels with cultural manifestations at places and moments from a distant past. The interesting fact about this study is the attention paid to the symbolical and mythical universe that accompanies this particular professional activity and its differing perceptions and representations in the culture of the ancient world. Until now this type of study has made little impact on Italian studies specifically devoted to the medical professions in antiquity, male or female, which have been undertaken from a different angle, whether documentary or legal.

Coming to juridical studies, a number of published contributions are specifically geared towards analysis of the 'intellectual professions' e.g. the work of Luigi Capogrossi Colognesi⁵⁵, or Giovanna Coppola⁵⁶, alongside studies of a more sociological nature aimed at showing the relation between functions performed and personal status⁵⁷, and traditional research into the study of professional associations in the Roman world. Questions of social relevance and consideration of the medical professions have also been studied in Italian historiography, with a specific interest in the evaluation of diverse sources through which it is possible to reconstruct not only the development of medical knowledge but also the concrete practice of the medical profession and aspects of ideological representation and social standing within the profession. An important contribution among recent Italian publications is that by Isabella Andorlini and Arnaldo Marcone⁵⁸, conducted from a wide chronological and geographical perspective, and illustrated by means of an annotated review of the most wide-ranging sources which are useful for reconstructing significant moments and features in the development of medical knowledge in theory and in practice. Notable among studies of the medical profession in ancient times is the work by Alfredo Buonopane⁵⁹ who starts from a consolidated tradition by studying doctors from epigraphical documents and goes on to focus on evidence stemming from northern Italy as to economic status, aspects of social promotion, and accounts from the Western Roman world concerning the role of women in the medical profession. Evaluation of documentary, epigraphical and papyrus sources for the study of professions and social roles in the ancient world is – as mentioned above – one of the specific historiographical areas which prefers the preliminary phase of editing and social-historical comments on single documents or on homogenous groups of documents rather than particular theorization along the lines of historiographical research⁶⁰.

In the field of papyrology, Italian scholarly tradition can count on the pioneering studies by Orsolina Montevicchi: between 1935 and 1950 she carried out an important series of research ventures, published as: "*Ricerche di sociologia nei documenti dell'Egitto greco-romano*". In the framework of this project she collected groups of documents useful for reconstructing economic and social history of the family and other social structures.

Her contribution to the analyses of work, professions and female roles can be gauged particularly from the study of labour contracts⁶¹ and the corpus of nursing contracts⁶². On the ancient view of the nursing ‘profession’, extracted from literary texts, we can refer to the article by Francesca Mencacci⁶³.

Among the wide range of studies devoted to ancient inscriptions – besides the above-mentioned works on Christian epigraphy – we may mention the proceedings of the conferences promoted by Francesca Cenerini and Alfredo Buonopane⁶⁴ – not least because of the specific attention given to the female dimension. The specific intention was to provide the scientific community with concrete analyses of epigraphic documents, which may be useful aids to rethinking the condition of women in antiquity (mainly Roman) in relation to the sectors of labour or city life or associations. The interest in epigraphic documents has also raised a more general debate on the identity of various components of ancient society, as can be seen from the outline to the conference: “Ceti Medi in Cisalpina”⁶⁵, where we also find a more explicitly historiographical discussion⁶⁶. Though not specific products of Italian historiography – but open to debate with Italian historiography – we include here the miscellaneous publications of the Centre de Recherches sur les Civilisations Antiques (C.R.C.A.), which have as their main focus the study of local élites in an interdisciplinary perspective with links to a comparative study of medieval and modern phenomena; they also contain interesting studies on the definition of social roles and forms of identity construction⁶⁷.

WHERE DO INNOVATIONS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL HISTORY COINCIDE WITH THOSE IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR AND GENDER STUDIES?

By way of concluding this survey we may recall some of the innovative sectors in research on this specific topic, which establish a relation between the sphere of labour and the construction of social identity. In light of the works discussed it becomes evident that studies to date have demonstrated the existence, not of a unique or coherent conception of labour in antiquity, but rather of a plurality of conceptions, which nevertheless show some common points, together with divergences and contradictions. We may therefore ask ourselves if it is justifiable to talk of ‘value systems’ for such a fragmentary and incomplete conceptual framework, the data of which cover a wide period of time and a vast physical territory. Even though labour-related activities did not constitute a characteristic aspect of the life of a great number of people in antiquity, it is nevertheless interesting to see how the dimension and representation of labour can be studied on different levels and from various methodological perspectives.

After the work conducted on professional categories and classes of documentation, there is now a need for a synthesis of the roles the various professions may have had in the ancient economy, society and political organisations, as well as an evaluation – if possible with a wider use of the category of gender – designed to create specific knowledge of ancient culture and ways of thinking.

NOTES

Abbreviations of periodicals are according to the standard reference of the *Année Philologique* [w.p. <<http://www.annee-philologique.com>>] [visited on 9.2.2006].

- ¹ The Greek view (following in outline the work of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Nicole Loraux) is summarized in S. von Reden, *Arbeit und Zivilisation: Kriterien der Selbstdefinition im Antiken Athen*, "MBAH", 11, 1992, pp. 1-31. For Italian historiography of the Marxist school see A. Schiavone, *Sul lavoro dello schiavo*, "Opus", 1, 1982, pp. 191-193, which discusses the volume by M.I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, London 1980, dealing with the abstract concept of labour, and recalls the merits of modern political economy in the "conquest of this typically modern and capitalist abstraction [...] reflecting the development of the capitalist organization of labour in the West. The abstraction of the concept is the real abstraction of modern labour". The same author later returned to the subject in greater detail: A. Schiavone, *La struttura nascosta. Una grammatica dell'economia romana*, in *Storia di Roma*, vol. 4, Turin 1989, p. 11, here with specific reference to studies in historical psychology by J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs. Etudes de psychologie historique*, Paris 1966² (collection of essays originally published between 1952 and 1957), pp. 185-247 and especially p. 197 and M.I. Finley, *Ancient Economy*, London 1973, p. 81.
- ² M.I. Finley wrote a series of articles on various aspects of Greek slavery between 1959 and 1965, with the aim of defining the social location of slavery; in 1973 he published his famous: *Ancient Economy*, a book length exposition of his model of the history of the ancient world as the history of the construction of status groups. See P. Cartledge, *Greek civilisation and slavery*, in T.P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress. Essays on Ancient Greece and Rome*, New York 2002, pp. 247-262; M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, updated edition with a Foreword by I. Morris, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1999², Foreword pp. XIII-XXI. A useful and concise historiographical survey of social differences in ancient societies can now be found in S. Roda, *Classi medie e società altoimperiali romana: appunti per una riflessione storiografica*, in A. Sartori - A. Valvo (eds.), *Ceti medi in Cisalpina*, Atti del colloquio internazionale, Milano 14-16 settembre 2000, Milan 2002, pp. 27-58. The article contains a reflection on the constraints and opportunities offered by the use of modern sociological concepts in the study of Classical Antiquity (focusing on the early Roman Empire).
- ³ At the conference of the Society of Italian Historians in 1986, several scholars pointed to the shift of historiographical interest (in the area of social and economic history) from the analysis of economic formations and the study of structures to a new kind of approach based on the perception that the ancients themselves had of social and economic phenomena and of the standards and interpretative criteria offered by the ancient world as a means of understanding itself. See the following contributions published in the proceedings of the conference: M. Liverani, *L'Oriente antico*, D. Musti, *La storia greca*, M. Mazza, *La storia romana*, E. Lepore, *La storia economica del mondo antico*, in L. De Rosa (ed.), *La storiografia italiana degli ultimi vent'anni. I: Antichità e Medioevo*, Rome-Bari 1989, pp. 3-34; 35-66; 67-125, 167-184.
- ⁴ For a recent survey of the transformations between the 4th century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D. in the field of professionalization of science, see G.E.R. Lloyd, *La professionalizzazione delle scienze*, in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci. Storia Cultura Arte Società. 2.3: Una storia greca. Trasformazioni*, Turin 1998, pp. 681-704.
- ⁵ A typical example might be spinning and weaving, with their high symbolic value as female virtues. These activities have been the subject of wide debate and a high number of scholarly articles in the area of women's history. Here we recall two contributions with different backgrounds and aims: E. Specht, *Lanam fecit: war die Wolllarbeit von Frauen otium oder negotium?*, in E. Sigot (ed.), *Otium - Negotium: Beiträge des Interdisziplinären Symposions der Sodalitas zum Thema Zeit Carnuntum*, 28.30.8. 1998, Vienna 2000, pp. 160-168, with special focus on the exchange value assigned to textiles produced within the household; L. Larsson Lovén, *Lanam Fecit: Woolworking and Female Virtue*, in L. Larsson Lovén - A. Strömberg (eds.), *Aspects of Women in Antiquity*. Proceedings of the first Nordic Symposium on Women's Lives in Antiquity. Göteborg 12th-15th June 1997, Jonsered 1998, pp. 85-95, a contribution on the ideal notion of spinning/woolworking in the Roman world as a prominent symbol of female work and a hallmark of the virtuous Roman matron.
- ⁶ On the 19th-century ideological framing of a public/male and private/female dimension see B. Wagner-Hasel, *Das Private wird politisch. Die Perspektive "Geschlecht" in der Altertumswissenschaft*, in U.A.J. Becher

- J. Rüsen (eds.), *Weiblichkeit in geschichtlicher Perspektive*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, pp. 1-50; C. Sourvinou Inwood, *Männlich und weiblich, öffentlich und privat, antik und modern*, in *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, Princeton, NJ 1995, pp. 111-120. On the concept and terminology of 'separate spheres' and the sexual division of labour as used by early feminist historians and on the subsequent theoretical debate and developments see N. Sorkin Rabinowitz, *Introduction*, in N. Sorkin Rabinowitz - L. Auanger (eds.), *Among Women. From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the ancient World*, Austin 2002, pp. 15-18. Roman women played a fundamental public role in bringing-up adolescent and young adult sons: E. Cantarella, *Passato prossimo. Donne romane da Tacita a Sulpicia*, Milan 1996, pp. 133-146 sees this role as the main element of the 'agreement between sexes', which led Roman women to self-identification with division of gender roles and male social identity models, even at a time when the historical and political settings – much more favourable than those faced by e.g. Athenian women – could allow such roles to be questioned. Interesting ideas on the use of categories such as 'public' and 'private' in the study of Ancient Greek economics (with no reference to gender) are to be found in Musti, *La storia greca* cit. (above, note 3), pp. 50-53.
- ⁷ See for example Andrew Wilson's article, *Machines, Power and Ancient Economy*, "JRS", 92, 2002, pp. 1-32 and the important miscellaneous volume: *Les Littératures techniques dans l'antiquité romaine. Statut publique et destination, tradition*. Introduction de Claude Nicolet, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, 42, Fondation Hardt, Geneva 1996, and for Italian historiography above all: G. Traina, *La tecnica in Grecia e Roma*, Bari 1994.
- ⁸ A. Giardina, *Il tramonto dei valori ciceroniani (ponos ed emporia tra paganesimo e cristianesimo)*, in *Continuità e trasformazioni fra Repubblica e Principato. Istituzioni, politica e società*. Atti dell'incontro di Studi, Bari 27-28 gennaio 1989, Bari 1991, pp. 275-295, p. 276.
- ⁹ One of the most dynamic areas of research in this specific field is the study of the Graeco-Egyptian society, thanks to the rich amount of documents in Greek and in demotic (not to mention the other languages of the Near East which have come to light with the discoveries in the Judaean Desert). These studies have been taken into account since they bear constantly on the interaction between indigenous and Greek and Roman cultures and civilizations. A specific survey on the impact of gender studies and a multicultural perspective in Papyrology is now in M.G. Parca, *Papyrology, Gender, and Diversity: A Natural ménage à trois*, in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *Gender and Diversity in Place: Proceedings of the Fourth Conference on Feminism and Classics May 27th-30th, 2004 University of Arizona Tucson, Arizona*, w.p. <<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/fc04/Parca.html>> [visited on 9.2.2006]. The chapter by J. Rowlandson, *Gender and cultural Identity in Roman Egypt*, in F. McHardy - E. Marshall (eds.), *Women's influence on Classical Civilization*, London-New York 2004, pp. 151-166 is a good recent example of this debate and shows how different attitudes to gender occurred in the cultural mix which existed in Roman Egypt.
- ¹⁰ The recent debate on Late Antiquity has been one of the liveliest areas of theoretical reflection on period-setting among scholars of classical antiquity. The idea of a 'long Late Antiquity' has been associated with a specific flourishing of cultural studies and has been seen as a typical Anglo-American feature connected with the dominance of the 'linguistic turn': see A. Cameron, *The 'long' Late Antiquity: a late twentieth century model*, in T.P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in progress. Essays on ancient Greece and Rome*, New York 2002, pp. 165-191, p. 190. See also E.A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text. Historians and the linguistic turn*, Cambridge-London 2004, pp. 156-185.
- ¹¹ The Italian debate (which forms a substantial part of the international discussion on this theme) has been fully assessed in the papers by E. Lo Cascio, G.W. Bowersock, L. Cracco Ruggini, A. Marcone, A. Schiavone, A. Giardina, presented at the conference: *Gli 'spazi' del tardoantico*, Capri, 11th October 2000, now published in "Studi Storici", 45, 2004, pp. 5-46.
- ¹² R. Haweley - B. Levick (eds.), *Women in Antiquity. New assessments*, London-New-York 1995, pp. XIII-XIV.
- ¹³ The 'seminar' here referred to is the seminar "Women in Antiquity" which has been run at Oxford since 1986. The starting point for the theoretical and methodological debate on Women Studies and the Ancient World is usually identified with the publication of S.B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, whores, wives, and slaves: women*

- in *Classical Antiquity*, New York 1975. See the reprint New York 1995, with a new preface by the author. It is interesting to recall here that the Italian edition was published by Einaudi, Turin 1978 with the title: *Donne in Atene e Roma*.
- ¹⁴ Darmstadt 1992, p. 11 and p. 13, note 6.
- ¹⁵ J. Scott, *Gender: a Useful Category of Historical Analysis*, "AHR", 91, 1986, pp. 1053-1075.
- ¹⁶ B. Mc Manus, *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics*, New York 1997, pp. 15-19.
- ¹⁷ T. Scheer, *Forschungen über die Frau in der Antike. Ziele, Methoden, Perspektiven*, "Gymnasium" 107, 2000, pp. 143-172, esp. pp. 166-170.
- ¹⁸ <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/biblio.html> [visited on 17.1.2006].
- ¹⁹ <http://www.nipissingu.ca/departement/history/MUHLBERGER/ORB/arjava3.htm> [visited on 17.1.2006].
- ²⁰ An overview of Italian historiographical trends in the twenty years between 1966 and 1986 can be found in the proceedings of the conference of the Society of Italian Historians quoted above, note 3: *La storiografia italiana degli ultimi vent'anni. I: Antichità e Medioevo*, see esp. the essay by Mazza, *La Storia Romana* cit., pp. 67-126, esp. pp. 75 sgg.
- ²¹ E. Cantarella, *L'ambiguo malanno. Condizione e immagine della donna nell'antichità greca e romana*, Rome 1981 [Eng. trans.: *Pandora's Daughters: the Role and Status of woman in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Baltimore 1987].
- ²² S.R. Joshel, *Work, Identity and Legal Status in Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions*, Norman-London 1992. Some preliminary thoughts on this theme, with special reference to the social group of freedmen in the Roman world are in P. Garnsey, *Independent Freedmen and the Economy of Roman Italy under the Principate*, "Klio", 63, 1981, pp. 359-371, esp. p. 359; P. Kneissl, *Zur Wirtschaftsstruktur des römischen Reiches: das Beispiel Gallien*, in P. Kneissl - V. Losemann (eds.), *Alte Geschichte und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag*, pp. 234-255, esp. p. 239; H.-J. Drexhage, *Zum Selbstverständnis arbeitender Menschen im Imperium Romanum*, "Humanistische Bildung", 14 (1990), pp. 7-40, esp. pp. 13-14.
- ²³ *Ibid.* pp. XI-XII and pp. 8-15.
- ²⁴ See above all the critical reviews by J.-M. Carrié in "Annales (ESC)", 50, 1995, pp. 1107-1110; Diana Delia in "AHR", 98, 1993, pp. 1216-1217; H.S. Nielsen, "JRS", 84, 1994, pp. 258-259.
- ²⁵ See the critical review by K.R. Bradley, "CJ", 90, 1994-1995, pp. 445-450, esp. pp. 447-449. Interesting contributions focusing on iconography have been published about the Greek world see e.g. A. Kosmopoulou, *'Working Women'. Female Professionals on Classical Attic Gravestones*, "ABSA", 96, 2001, pp. 281-319 and more general on homosocial women space: Younger, *Women in Relief: "Double Consciousness" in Classical Attic Tombstones*, in *Among Women* cit. (above, note 6), pp. 167-210. Considerations on the relationship between inscription and iconographic representation of work are now in F. Feraudi-Gruénais, *Sepulkrale 'Selbstdarstellung' von Unterschichten: Beobachtungen zu Inschriften in stadtrömischen Grabmonumenten der Kaiserzeit (Vorbericht)*, in G. Alföldy - S. Panciera (eds.), *Inscriptliche Denkmäler als Medien der Selbstdarstellung in der römischen Welt*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 121-124.
- ²⁶ N. Kampen, *Image and Status, Roman working women in Ostia*, Berlin 1981; Ead., *Römische Strassenhändlerinnen*, "AW", 16, 4, 1985, pp. 23-42.
- ²⁷ The work by Natalie Kampen was based on the methodological trends suggested by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli and others, namely the idea of interaction of social stratification and art, see *Introduction* to her book pp. 18-19 and below note 35 on Bianchi Bandinelli.
- ²⁸ See e.g. P. Setälä, *Female Property and Power in Imperial Rome*, in L. Larsson Lovén - A. Strömberg (eds.), *Aspects of Women in Antiquity* cit. (above, note 5), pp. 96-110 and the collective volumes by P. Setälä - R. Berg - R. Hälikkää - M. Keltanen - J. Pölonen - V. Vuolanto, *Women, Wealth and Power in the Roman Empire*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, 25, Rome 2002. Of the same research group see also the *Preface* in P. Setälä - L. Savunen (eds.), *Female Networks and the Public Sphere in Roman Society*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, 24, Rome 1999, pp. VII-XII. The family networks and familiar property are the main factors that explain the

- evidence for women appointed to holding civic offices: J. Nollé, *Frauen wie Omphale? Überlegungen zur 'politischen' Ämtern von Frauen im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, in M.H. Dettenhofer (ed.), *Reine Männersache? Frauen in Männerdomänen der antiken Welt*, Cologne-Weimar-Vienna 1994, pp. 229-259.
- ²⁹ S. Dixon, *Exemplary housewife or luxurious slut. Cultural representations of women in the Roman economy*, in F. McHardy - E. Marshall (eds.), *Women's influence on classical civilization* cit. (above note 9), pp. 56-74. Of the same author see also: *Reading Roman Women. Sources, Genres and Real Life*, London 2001, pp. 115-116.
- ³⁰ S. Treggiari, *Jobs in the Household of Livia*, "PBSR", 30, 1975, p. 58; Ead. *Jobs for Women*, "AJAH", 1, 1976, pp. 91-92; Ead., *Urban Labour in Rome: mercenarii and tabernarii*, in P. Garnsey (ed.), *Non-Slave Labour in the Greco-Roman World*, Cambridge 1980, pp. 48-64; in M.R. Lefkowitz - M.B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*, London 1982, pp. 161-172; J. Maurin, *Labor matronalis: aspects du travail féminin à Rome*, in E. Lévy (ed.), *La femme dans les sociétés antiques*. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (mai 1980 et mars 1981), Strasbourg 1983, pp. 139-155; R. Günther, *Frauenarbeit - Frauenbindung. Untersuchungen zu unfreien und freigelassenen Frauen in den stadtrömischen Inschriften*, Munich 1987, pp. 40-137, esp. pp. 40-44; H. Wilsdorf, *Die werktätige Frau in der Antike*, in M. Kunze (ed.), *Die Frau in der Antike. Kolloquium der Winkelmann-Gesellschaft*, Stendal 1985, Stendal 1988, p. 33; K.R. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family. Studies in Roman Social History*, Oxford 1991, pp. 13-36 (on *nutrices*) and 103-24 (on child-labor); J.F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, London 1986, pp. 233-255 and the extended chapter *War and Working Women* in John K. Evans' book: *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*, London-New York, 1991, pp. 101-165 and appendix pp. 210-218. More recently see J. U. Krause, *Witwen und Weisen im Römischen Reich 2. Wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Stellung von Witwen*, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 123-220; J. Pérez Negre, *Esclavas, semilibres y libertas en época imperial: aspectos sociojurídicos*, in C. Alfaro Giner - A. Noguera Borel (eds.), *Actas del Primer Seminario de Estudios sobre la mujer en la antigüedad (24-25 Abril, 1997)*, Valencia 1998, pp. 146-147 and the collected essays both on the Greek and Roman world in S. Murnaghan - S.R. Joshel (eds.), *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*, London-New York 1998.
- ³¹ See below note 56 and E. A. Hemerlrijk, *Matrona docta. Educated women in the Roman élite from Cornelia to Julia Domna*, London-New York 1999.
- ³² See L. Cracco Ruggini, *Le associazioni professionali nel mondo romano-bizantino*, in *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*. XVIII. Artigianato e tecnica nella società dell'alto medioevo occidentale. 2-8 aprile 1970, I, Spoleto 1971, pp. 59-193, esp. pp. 59-64, for a discussion on European historiographical trends between '800 and '900 in the research on associations.
- ³³ F.M. De Robertis, *Sulla considerazione sociale del lavoro nel mondo romano*, in *Problemi economici dall'antichità ad oggi. Studi in onore del prof. Vittorio Franchini nel 75° compleanno*, Milan 1959, pp. 54-70, esp. 61-63; Id., *Ancora sulla considerazione sociale del lavoro nel mondo romano (II: l'ambiente aulico)*, in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, I, Milan 1962, pp. 3-37; these two articles were reworked in the monographic study: *Lavoro e lavoratori nel mondo romano*, Bari 1963, pp. 21-47 and 49-95. For the international contemporary debate on this theme see the following reference works: R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 BC to 284 AD*, New Haven-London 1974, pp. 114-120, esp. 120; E. Mikhailovna Staerman, *L'esclavage dans l'artisanat romain*, "DHA", 2, 1976, pp. 103-127, esp. p. 104; M. Reddé, *Les scènes de métier dans la sculpture funéraire gallo-romaine*, "Gallia", 36, 1978, pp. 43-63, esp. pp. 52-53; T. Schleich, *Überlegungen zum Problem senatorischer Handelsaktivitäten. I: Senatorische Wirtschaftsmentalität in moderner und antiker Deutung*, "MBAH", 2.2, 1983, pp. 65-90, esp. 86-87; I. Lana, *L'idea del lavoro a Roma*, Turin 1984, p. 48; L. Neesen, *Demiurgoi und artifices. Studien zur Stellung freier Handwerker in antiken Städten*, Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York-Paris 1989, pp. 253-273, esp. 272-273; H. Pavis D'Escurac, *Origo et résidence dans le monde du commerce sous le Haut-Empire*, "Ktema", 13, 1988 [1992], p. 68; M. Prell, *Sozialökonomische Untersuchungen zur Armut im antiken Rom. Von den Gracchen bis Kaiser Diokletian*, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 146-150, esp. 150.
- ³⁴ The notion of 'aulic sphere' in De Robertis is defined against the notion of 'vulgar sphere' and indicates all those who participated in the same mentality: besides the *honestiores*, the intellectuals but also the urban plebs who could share the same kind of prejudices as the élites: see De Robertis, *Ancora sulla considerazione sociale* cit., esp. pp. 3-4.

- ³⁵ The expression 'vulgar sphere' was suggested to De Robertis by other disciplinary areas such as Roman law, linguistic, art history and archaeology. See: *Sulla considerazione sociale del lavoro*, cit. (above note 33), esp. pp. 55-56 (note 7). During the Sixties in Italy there was a deep innovation in the studies on ancient art history and archaeology; particularly meaningful were the research trends pursued by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli with the Journal "Dialoghi di Archeologia", influenced by the Marxist approach to classical studies and published between 1967 and 1992. In this journal he aimed to connect research in art-history with economic and social history and to look at the ideology of élites and lower strata in artistic production (the concept of 'plebeian art'), thus promoting new interdisciplinary methods. See M. Barbanera, *L'archeologia degli italiani. Storia, metodi e orientamenti dell'archeologia classica in Italia*, Rome 1998, pp. 158 sgg.
- ³⁶ De Robertis has been criticized for his schematic dualism: see e.g. D. Nörr, *Zur sozialen und rechtlichen Bewertung der freien Arbeit in Rom*, "ZRG", 82, 1965, pp. 67-105, esp. 70-73.
- ³⁷ A. Cristofori, *Non arma virumque. Le occupazioni nell'epigrafia del Piceno*, Bologna 2004, pp. 79-103.
- ³⁸ L. Cracco Ruggini, *Stato e associazioni professionali nell'età imperiale romana*, in Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik München 1972, Munich 1973, pp. 272-311, esp. p. 272-273.
- ³⁹ See the important scholarly contributions by the same author: L. Cracco Ruggini, *Le associazioni professionali nel mondo romano-bizantino* cit. (above, note 32), pp. 59-193 and Ead., *Collegium et corpus: la politica economica nella legislazione e nella prassi*, in G.G. Archi (ed.), *Istituzioni giuridiche e realtà politiche nel tardo impero (III-V sec. d.C.)*. Atti di un incontro tra storici e giuristi. Firenze, 2-4 maggio 1974, Milan 1976, pp. 63-94.
- ⁴⁰ M. Mazza, *Sul proletariato urbano in epoca imperiale. Problemi del lavoro in Asia minore*, in *La fatica dell'uomo. Schiavi e liberi nel mondo romano*, Catania 1986, pp. 88-94.
- ⁴¹ G. Clemente, *Arti, mestieri, vita associativa, collegia*, in S. Settis (ed.), *Civiltà dei Romani. Il potere e l'esercito*, Milan 1991, pp. 85-91.
- ⁴² Some innovative perspectives in the study of professional identity within associations have been introduced in the debate thanks to systematic analysis of the documents from the Oriental part of the Roman Empire, see P. Van Minnen, *Urban Craftsmen in Roman Egypt*, "MBAH", 6, 2, 1987, pp. 31-88 and O.M. van Nijf, *The civic world of professional associations in the Roman East*, Amsterdam 1997.
- ⁴³ A. Giardina, *Lavoro e storia sociale; antagonismo e alleanze dall'Ellenismo al tardoantico*, "Opus", 1, 1982, pp. 115-146.
- ⁴⁴ In the rich literature on the topic, see the following articles produced by Italian scholars (the first two are critical discussions of the important book by J.H. D'Arms, *Commerce and social standing in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge Mass. 1981. John D'Arms had already discussed methodological questions and interpretation models: see J.H. D'Arms, *M. I. Rostovtzeff and M.I. Finley. The status of traders in the Roman world*, in J.H. D'Arms - J.W. Eadie (eds.), *Ancient and modern. Essays in honor of Gerald F. Else*, Ann Arbor 1977, pp. 159-179); E. Narducci, *Commercio e status sociale in Cicerone e in Petronio (a proposito di un recente libro di J.H. D'Arms)*, "QS", 19, 1984, pp. 229-253; G. Pucci review in "Opus", 3, 1984, pp. 208-218; E. Narducci, *Valori aristocratici e mentalità acquisitiva nel pensiero di Cicerone*, "Index", 13, 1985, pp. 93-125; M. Pani, *La polemica di Seneca contro le artes (Ep. 90). Un caso di sconcerto*, in *Xenia. Scritti in onore di Piero Treves*, Rome 1985, pp. 141-150 now reprinted in *Potere e valori a Roma fra Augusto e Traiano*, Bari 1992, pp. 99-112; L. De Salvo, *Il giudizio sulla mercatura nel mondo romano*, "AFLM", 20, 1987, pp. 9-32.
- ⁴⁵ A. Giardina (ed.), *L'uomo romano*, Rome-Bari 1989, pp. 269-298.
- ⁴⁶ A. Giardina (ed.), *The Romans*, translated by L.G. Cochrane, Chicago-London 1993. It has to be mentioned however that the English translation of the title was misleading. The same editor, Laterza, published a sort of companion, that looked at individual women both as themselves and as representatives of types: A. Fraschetti (ed.), *Roma al femminile*, Rome-Bari 1994, translated by L. Leppin as: *Roman Women*, Chicago, 1999.
- ⁴⁷ A critical note on this development, focusing on the lack of female figures rather than on the analytical tools used in the study, can be found in a review essay by Keith Bradley in which the English version of the

- volume is discussed together with work by Sandra Joshel and a third book, not related to labour but to values expressed in Roman literature, by C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immortality in Rome*, Cambridge UP 1993: K. Bradley, *History and Fiction: a Review essay*, "CJ", 90, 1995, pp. 445-450, p. 446: "Women appear so infrequently in *The Romans* that it is almost as if they did not exist in antiquity".
- ⁴⁸ Giardina, *Il tramonto dei valori ciceroniani* (ponos ed emporia tra paganesimo e cristianesimo) cit., pp. 275-296; Id., *Il commercio romano fra utopia e realtà*, in *Optima Heredita. Sapienza giuridica romana e conoscenza dell'ecumene*, Milan 1992, pp. 203-222.
- ⁴⁹ E. Giannarelli, *La tipologia femminile nella biografia e nell'autobiografia cristiana del IV secolo*, Rome 1980; Ead., *Il tema del lavoro nella letteratura cristiana antica: fra costruzione ideologica e prassi letteraria*, in S. Felici (ed.), *Spiritualità del lavoro nella catechesi dei Padri del III-IV secolo*, Rome, 1986, pp. 213-224.
- ⁵⁰ Mazzoleni, *Il lavoro nell'epigrafia cristiana* cit., pp. 263-271, now reprinted in *Epigrafi del Mondo Cristiano antico*, Rome 2002, pp. 39-48.
- ⁵¹ E. Giannarelli, *Il concetto di lavoro nel monachesimo antico: temi e problemi*, "CodAqui", 5, 1991, pp. 31-53; *La donna nella tarda antichità cristiana: temi e problemi negli studi italiani degli ultimi venti anni*, "Agenda. Società Italiana delle Storiche", 16, 1996, pp. 9-15.
- ⁵² F. Bisconti, *Mestieri nelle catacombe romane. Appunti sul declino dell'iconografia del reale nei cimiteri cristiani di Roma*, Vatican City 2000.
- ⁵³ M. Bettini, *The Metamorphosis of 'texts' into 'sources' in Roman Social History. Some examples from Richard Saller's Roman Kinship: structure and sentiment*, "QS", 56, 2002, pp. 199-226.
- ⁵⁴ M. Bettini, *Nascere. Storie di donne, donnole, madri ed eroi*, Turin 1998, esp. pp. 283-322: *Wilde Frau, osterica selvaggia*.
- ⁵⁵ L. Capogrossi Colognesi, *Il lavoro dell'intellettuale come professione*, in M. Garrido-Hory - A. Gonzalès (eds.), *Histoire, espaces et marges de l'Antiquité. Hommages à Monique Clavel-Lévêque*, 1, Besançon, 2003, pp. 19-26.
- ⁵⁶ G. Coppola, *Cultura e potere. Il lavoro intellettuale nel mondo romano*, Milan 1994 (see also Ead., *Il lavoro intellettuale nell'ideologia costantiniana*, "Studi Tardoantichi", 6, 1989 [1995], pp. 289-304. Interest in the 'liberal arts' and the social status of individuals with special skills and professions is extremely lively among classicists. As examples of the last twenty years' classical scholarship in the medical profession, see: F. Kudlien, *Die Stellung des Arztes in der römischen Gesellschaft; freigebozene Römer, Eingebürgerte, Peregrine, Sklaven, Freigelassene als Ärzte*, Stuttgart 1986 (of the same author: *Der griechische Arzt im Zeitalter des Hellenismus*, Mayence 1979); M. Hirt, *Le statut social du médecin à Rome et dans les provinces occidentales sous le haut-empire*, in VIII^{èmes} Rencontres internationales d'archéologie et d'histoire d'Antibes. Archéologie et médecine, Juan-les-Pins 1987, pp. 95-107; J. André, *Être médecin à Rome*, Paris 1987, pp. 33-39; R. Jackson, *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire*, London 1988, esp. pp. 56-60; P. Cordes, *Iatros. Das Bild des Arztes in der griechischen Literatur*, Stuttgart 1994; H.W. Pleket, *The Social Status of Physicians in the Graeco-Roman World*, in P.J. van der Eijk - H.F.J. Horstmannshoff - P.H. Schrijvers (eds.), *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context*. Papers Read at the Congress Held at Leiden University 13th-15th April 1992, I, Atlanta 1995, pp. 27-34; R. Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women. Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen*, Oxford 2000, pp. 44-45; 50-57; C. Schulze, *Christliche Ärztinnen in der Antike*, in C. Schulze - S. Ihm (eds.), *Ärzt Kunst und Gottvertrauen. Antike und mittelalterliche Schnittpunkte von Christentum und Medizin*, Zürich-New York, 2002, pp. 90-115. É. Samama, *Les Médecins dans le Monde grec. Sources épigraphiques sur la naissance d'un corps médical*, Paris 2003; N. Massar, *Soigner et Servir. Histoire sociale et culturelle de la médecine grecque à l'époque hellénistique*, Paris 2005.
- ⁵⁷ U. Agnati, *Alcune correlazioni tra mestiere e status libertatis nella Roma tardo-repubblicana e imperiale*, "RAL", s. IX, 7, 1996, pp. 601-624.
- ⁵⁸ I. Andorlini - A. Marcone, *Medicina, Medico e Società nel Mondo Antico*, Florence 2004.
- ⁵⁹ A. Buonopane, *Medicae nell'occidente romano: un'indagine preliminare*, in A. Buonopane - F. Cenerini (eds.), *Donna e lavoro nella documentazione epigrafica*. Atti del I Seminario sulla condizione femminile nella docu-

- mentazione epigrafica, Faenza 2003, pp. 113-130 and of the same editors, *Donna e vita cittadina nella documentazione epigrafica*, Atti del II Seminario sulla condizione femminile nella documentazione epigrafica. Verona, 25-27 marzo 2004, Faenza 2005.
- ⁶⁰ See R.S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History*, London-New-York 1995, pp. 1 sgg. (Introduction: history and papyri) on the positivistic attitude of papyrologists and on the limited debate as to the use of papyri in historical reconstruction: "Only a minority of those who work with papyri have the combination of energy and interest to go beyond the work of editing and criticizing texts to that of using them for wider historical investigation, and hardly any of these have taken the further measure of stepping outside the role of historian to look at the character of the enterprise itself" (p. 2). See also the remarks by J.G. Keenan, *The new Papyrology and Ancient Social History*, "Ancient History Bulletin", 5, 1991, pp. 159-169; P. van Minnen, *The century of Papyrology (1892-1992)*, "BASP", 30, 1993, pp. 5-18 and A.K. Bowman, *Documentary Papyrology and Ancient History*, in I. Andorlini - G. Bastianini - M. Manfredi - G. Menci (eds.), Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia. Firenze, 23-29 agosto 1998, V. I, Florence 2001, pp. 137-145.
- ⁶¹ O. Montevecchi, *I contratti di lavoro e di servizio nell'Egitto greco-romano e bizantino*, Milan 1950.
- ⁶² M.A. Manca Masciadri - O. Montevecchi, *I contratti di baliatico*, Corpora Papyrorum Graecarum, I, Milan 1984, with special attention to a typical female profession. It would be impossible to record even the most illustrative examples of the wide-ranging papyrological studies on social identity, professions and gender roles. I will mention only four contributions differing in layout and outline, which allow one to go back to the most important literature on the various topics: H.-J. Drexhage, *Feminine Berufsbezeichnungen im hellenistischen Ägypten*, "MBAH", 11.1, 1992, pp. 70-79, is a study on the specific language used to define female professions in the documents from Graeco-Roman Egypt; as a development of this kind of studies one could point to the contribution of P. Van Minnen, *Did Ancient Women Learn a Trade outside the Home?*, "ZPE", 123, 1998, pp. 201-203. He discusses the evidence for freeborn women in Egypt to be involved in learning and teaching crafts for business purposes. The third text is the sourcebook edited by J. Rowlandson, *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt*, Cambridge 1998, esp. pp. 155-217 on "status and law" and 218-280 on "economic activities". The aim of this collection of annotated sources (in English translation) is facilitating access to documents useful for the understanding of male and female social identity in a complex society, distinguished by interaction among different cultures: "one of the strengths of the sources collected in this book is that throughout women are shown not in isolation, but interacting with others, male and female, in contexts ranging from the immediate family to society at large" (*Introduction*, p. 2). The fourth contribution to be recorded here is the proceedings of an international congress, promoted by the International Research Network: *Society and Administration in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, in H. Melaerts - L. Mooren (eds.), *Le rôle et le statut de la femme en Égypte Hellénistique, Romaine et Byzantine*, Actes du colloque international. Bruxelles-Leuven 27-29 novembre 1997, Paris-Leuven-Sterling 2002. In this volume several studies with different chronological timeframes express innovative thoughts on how to investigate social identity and work using papyrus documents and paying attention to the cultural contacts and to the interaction between social dynamics and the intervention of state and administrative ruling forces.
- ⁶³ F. Mencacci, *La balia cattiva: alcune osservazioni sul ruolo della nutrice nel mondo antico*, in R. Raffaelli (ed.), *Vicende e figure femminili in Grecia e a Roma*. Atti del Convegno. Pesaro 28-30 aprile 1994, Ancona 1995, pp. 227-235.
- ⁶⁴ A. Buonopane - F. Cenerini (eds.), *Donna e lavoro nella documentazione epigrafica* cit. and by the same editors: *Donna e vita cittadina nella documentazione epigrafica* cit. (above, note 59).
- ⁶⁵ The proceedings are now edited as *Ceti medi in Cisalpina*. Atti del colloquio internazionale, Milano 14-16 settembre 2000, cit.
- ⁶⁶ See article by Sergio Roda (above note 2).
- ⁶⁷ See the recent volumes: M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni - L. Lamoine (eds.), *Les élites et leurs facettes. Les élites locales dans le monde hellénistique et romain*, Rome-Clermont Ferrand 2003 and M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni - L. Lamoine - F. Trément (eds.), *Autocélébration des élites locales dans le monde romain. Contextes, images, textes* (2. s. av. J.-C./3. s. ap. J.-C.), Clermont-Ferrand, Centre de Recherches sur les Civilisations Antiques, 2004.

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