

## RÉSUMÉS

Michelle PERROT, *Women have a history*, p. 25-35.

The enterprise of the *Histoire des femmes en Occident* has been the intellectual adventure of an informal group of historians, anthropologists, sociologists that, in the 1970s', gathered together to discuss women's history, feminism and social sciences, but it has been possible only thanks to the foresight of the Italian publisher Laterza, who had the idea to propose to Georges Duby, who had directed, with Philippe Ariès, the *Histoire de la vie privée*, to write the history of "the woman". This article looks back to the origins of women's history in France and more generally in Europe, its exchanges with the American historiography, and the debates around the category of 'gender', after the publication of the famous article by Joan Scott. It highlights the evolution of this field of study in relation, on one hand, with the feminist movement in France and with the 'école des Annales' and the French 'nouvelle histoire'. The work started in 1987 and in 1990 the *Storia delle donne in Occidente* was published by Laterza in Italy, while the French edition, by Plon, was published in 1991. It has been an immediate success, it was published in ten languages and discussed, and also criticized, in several international conferences and reviews. Would the same enterprise be possible today, in a world that has become more complicated and less safe for women?

Pauline SCHMITT PANTEL, *Classical Antiquity*, p. 39-46.

The first volume of the *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, at the crossroad between history and anthropology, was conceived as the part of an ensemble and its aim was to understand the foundations of ways of thinking and values that the volumes on later periods would then develop and analyse. The first volume was organized in three sections, the first one discussed the female models in ancient Greece and Rome; the second one compared social rituals with women's practices and the third one offered an historiographical overview of a women's history that was becoming, at that time, a gender history of Antiquity. What has changed since then? First of all, the evolution of archaeological researches allows new interpretations of gender roles that question the alleged gendered separation of public and private spaces. Then the researches on the representations continue to propose new hypothesis on women's and men's cultures, for example in the studies on theatre and on mythology. Another very important topic still is the study of the body, and of sexual practises.

Christiane KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *Middle Ages*, p. 47-50.

The volume on the Middle age period begins with the discourses on women, by theologians, philosophers, moralists, physicians, economists, and rulers who decided how women should behave, what dresses and jewels they should wear. Those discourses are the first and richest sources that historians of the Middle Ages are confronted with, long before the economic or social sources, much more difficult to find and to study. This chapter deals also with the third volume of the *Histoire des Femmes en Occident* that unfortunately is not represented in the book as the two directors, Arlette Farge and Natalie Zemon Davis could not come to the conference. The authors of the volume on the Early Modern Age made different choices: it starts with the 'reality' of women's life, their work and their everyday life and continues with the representations and the 'dissidences'. Each volume has its autonomy, and reflects the choices of each author. Among the themes that are absent from the second volume, the religious minorities, that were part of the urban societies during the Middle Ages and the eating habits and taste of the populations have been widely studied in the last decades.

Françoise THÉBAUD, *Le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle : un ouvrage novateur, un livre inscrit dans son temps*, p. 51-56.

This intervention focuses particularly on the last volume of the *Histoire des femmes en Occident, Le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, and on the two questions asked by the organisers: its innovative nature at the time of its production and the way it would be written today. First of all the volume included into the historical narrative the new research objects promoted by twenty years of women's history: women's work, motherhood, abortion, everyday life, private life, family relations, feminisms but provided also a rereading of the great events of the twentieth century - wars, Russian revolution - and the political regimes. Following the relational approach of the *Histoire des femmes*, it also discussed the notion of a "gender system", conceived as a set of socio-sexual roles and a system of thought and representation defining the masculine and the feminine. Therefore, it made it possible to answer the question, put forward by the researchers of the time, of a feminine chronology and to emphasize that the turn of the century is not, in this respect, 1945 but the 1970s. Twenty-five years later, it should be built around an enlarged geography, including small states such as Belgium, Switzerland or Greece and Central and Eastern Europe but also colonial empires. Moreover, new themes and approaches, such as transnational and connected history, circulations, transfers and local forms of adaptation, migrations, international organizations, colonialism and colonisation, masculinities, sexualities including sexual violence in war, gender identities including transgender identities. Lastly, it would be conceived in a more interdisciplinary way, open especially towards sociology and political sciences, recently enriched as they have been by new gendered approaches.

Gabriella ZARRI, *Religion, women and the history of Italy*, p. 57-67.

The volume on *Women and Faith* was the first of the series of *the History of Women in Italy*. It focused on the relationship between women, Church institutions and beliefs which was something that militant feminists were not particularly interested in. Philosophers and women theologians developed a feminist thought in the field of religion, while feminist historians chose to shed light on the forms of religious dissent from orthodoxy and ecclesiastic institutions. The volume offered a synthesis of the ongoing national and international research and I will point first to its lacunae, and secondly to its high points. Its main shortcoming is the absence of minority religions in Italy, and especially the lack of attention for Jewish communities, the only ones on which there were some significant studies. Today's interest for "other" religions beyond Catholicism measures the changed intellectual landscape that separates us from the Nineties. Owing to the fruitful encounter between Italian and North American scholars, *Women and faith* integrated religious history into the wider institutional, social and cultural history. In 1999 it was translated and published by Harvard University Press and had a deeper influence on religious studies in the US than in Italy. The emerging new theme of the book are nuns viewed in their refusal or acceptance of the religious profession, in their daily life inside important Italian convents in major cities, and within family strategies that allocated daughters to the marriage market or to the convent. The crucial role of convents in promoting women's intellectual and artistic production is an important feature of the volume which offers a diachronic overview of religious female movements in Italy.

Angela GROPPi, *Women's work twenty years later*, p. 69-77.

The volume on *Women's work* (1996) offers a synthesis of the studies on the gendered norms, culture and practices that shaped the profile of working women and on their multiple fields of activity in Italy from the Middle Ages to the modern period. In this perspective, the book analyzes trades, professions and artisan production, but takes also into account patrimonies and sexuality, as men and women used and brought into the labor market a set of resources that constituted their "social capital". The importance attributed to female property was an innovative feature of the volume. Recent research on citizenship rights shed light on the laws that barred women from accessing property mainly in the form of legacies and dowries rather than salaries, and on the ways in which they were discriminated in the labor market owing to gendered values connected to the figure of the male breadwinner and the cult of domesticity. *Women's work* has opened new areas of research connecting the private and the public sphere: female economic and financial protagonism among minority religious groups (Jews and Protestants); individual profiles of artists, entrepreneurs and business women. The category of gender enables us to view the long-standing limitations of women's access to work and to professional careers in ways that offer a historical perspective to present day inequalities, such as

lower wages, a heavy load of care work and a persistent difficulty in the work-family balance.

Marina D'AMELIA, *Rethinking the history of motherhood*, p. 79-87.

In Italy the 1990's was one of the most vibrant periods in the reflection on motherhood within the feminist movement. The impact of women's right to choose if, when and how to be a mother influenced gender relationships and exchanges among the generations. Feminist thought on motherhood took different paths, stressing the symbolic authority of femininity, female genealogies and the importance of the maternal bond as a new paradigm for the organization of a society open to the care of others. The journal *Memoria*, the first intellectual experiment on women's and gender history in Italy was one of the networks that shaped *The History of Motherhood* (1997). The volume explored an under researched theme, and expressed a transition in the political subjectivity of the generation active in the Seventies. The volume was shaped by a political context in which the desire and production of knowledge on motherhood took place. It also preserved the diversity of approaches and perspectives related to the study of maternity with an emphasis on the modern and contemporary periods, offering a synthesis that did not take for granted the linear paths of emancipation and modernity. Among the inevitable lacunae, I must acknowledge a lack of visual sources. Despite an initial academic diffidence, *The History of Motherhood* has in the long run contributed to the growth of a field of investigation. New questions and new sources have shed light on family and patrimonial strategies, access to welfare, single and working mothers, associations, and rights not only among the élites, but among the less privileged. Recent research on the maternal body, reproduction and birth from antiquity to the new reproductive technologies opens the field to new questions and future investigation, challenging conventional chronologies.

Elena BORGHI, *Women and gender history in India. Between scholarship and militancy*, p. 91-104.

The paper reflects on the historiography on Indian women and gender, tracing its journey up to the present time. It discusses the turns that have characterised the field and the main authors and texts, which have made it a rich and influential branch of both South Asian and Women's and Gender History. Moreover, the paper seeks to analyse the close relationship the field has always maintained with the Indian political context, placing scholarly trends and turns within that scenario, and showing the 'militant' side of this academic enterprise.

The field of Women's History gained prominence in India especially from the mid-1970s, fuelled by a wave of social protest and political ferment, which for the first time questioned optimistic views about postcolonial India, and laid bare its unfulfilled promises. The publication, in 1974, of *Towards equality*, a report commissioned by the Indian government on the

status of women in India, was particularly significant for scholars and activists interested in women. Evidence of unaltered gender norms within postcolonial Indian society, and of women's exclusion from the enjoyment of the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution, helped to catalyse a new wave of research, setting the agenda for emerging Women's Studies programs. This moment sealed the intimate relationship between feminist politics and Women's History, an alliance that has remained the backbone of the historiography on Indian women and gender up to the present time. As members of the protest movements, women historians who first contributed to the professionalization of the field have ever since understood writing women's history as political activism.

Odile GOERG, *Histoire des femmes et perspective de genre en Afrique: essai de synthèse*, p. 105-125.

To deny the role of women as historical agents, marginalizing the studies dealing with them is now impossible. For many years, if not decades, the history of women in Africa has bloomed in such a way that one cannot provide a full bibliography any more. Africa is therefore no exception. Nevertheless, including women first as objects of research and then as active subjects always happens within a particular historiography. This is also the case for the African continent. Yet writing African history did not follow the same path as for the Western World, itself differentiated by national trends. The autonomy of women's history and the way gender is understood derive from them. At the same time, African history is not separate from a larger historiographical context, in which political, economic and narrative history tend to be replaced by social and cultural history. At the same time, subaltern and postcolonial studies, the gender perspective, globalization or intersectionality have also impacted the writing of African history.

Producing its own paradigms, the history of women in Africa underwent successive changes, characterized by dominant topoi: the effort to counteract negative discourses produced by colonizers or missionaries; emphasis upon the collusion between colonial policies and local patriarchal societies; not to mention the impact of contemporary preoccupations upon the choice of research themes... This does not mean that colonization should be placed at the center of historical analysis. Rather, colonization can be used as a heuristic tool. This contribution aims at analyzing these entangled phases, while showing the complexity of the approaches. These orientations draw material from various national trends, in a vast and immensely diverse continent.

Paola PADERNI, *Engendering China: gender as a category of analysis in the historiography on China over the last twenty-five years*, p. 127-137.

Women, family, and kinship, have always been important topics in the scholarly field of sinology. The idea of the separation of the sexes was an integral part of classical Chinese political thought that considered it the

foundation of heaven and earth, and of all human relationships. Most of the studies regarded imperial China as a time of unchanging subordination of women. According to this narrative, it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that, thanks to the influence of the West, Chinese women became protagonists of a new cultural, social and political revolution. Since the 90s, the category of gender has been important to revise and move away from what had been defined "The May Fourth Story", i.e. a portrayal of a victimized woman of old China liberated by reformers and revolutionaries. The most important body of research on women and gender in late imperial China has mainly focused on elite women of the most economically and culturally advanced region in China at the time. Since the end of the 90s, thanks to the opening of archives and libraries in the 80s, and the access to new kinds of sources, the subject broadened to include women *and* men from all social strata. The article will consider recent contributions arguing that research on women and gender is not a marginal area in the field of sinology, but encourages a revision of the most basic interpretative categories questioning Chinese social relations, institutions, and cultural productions. As Euro-American historical scholarship differs from that in the People's Republic of China, the article will consider especially the difficulties of translating analytic terms, such as *gender*, born in a different intellectual context.

Anna VANZAN, *Women, gender and sexuality in historiography of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa)*, p. 139-153.

My presentation aims to show how the MENA historiography has been impacted by both feminist and queer theoretical challenges that have emerged in the last 25 years. In this period there are some major events and factors that have triggered interest for women and gender issues and for their history, in particular: the Islamist parties' increasing power and women's reactions to it; the 9/11 tragic event and its consequences; the chain of "Islamist" terrorist attacks. An important role in the construction of this new historiography has been played by the researchers' new consideration of the legacy of Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978). Both women and men working on MENA issue have acknowledged this legacy, so much so that their work is almost always framed in the critique of the "neo-Orientalism" paradigm. Last but not least, the global activism around gender and human rights developed in these decades has contributed to form a new mentality and to imbue the research with new inspiration. One of the issues I will discuss is how the multidisciplinary approach has proved to be crucial in order to write contemporary history. Scholars in many disciplines, from literature to the visual, have contributed with their own work to the construction of a new historiography. For example, some of the most important theoretical breakthroughs have been provided by anthropologists and sociologists: suffice it to remember the Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi whose work explores the relationship among sexual ideology, gender identity, sociopolitical organization, and the status of women in the Muslim societies. I will not only discuss English language

research on MENA women but also some of the major works in the area languages: in this way, I'll try to show how, side by side with the general -and sometimes affected by neo-Orientalism- literature on women in the Middle East, there is a growing local scholarship that has both academic and political values.

Jocelyne DAKHLIA, *Female mobilities and crossed belongings within the Mediterranean*, p. 157-171.

At the time of the publication of the *Histoire des femmes en Occident*, historiography of the Mediterranean world was very different from what it is today. Visible dynamics in terms of circulation, and mobility, were essentially European. They were also male. Thus historians began to be interested in the phenomenon of European defectors in Islam ("renegades") on the assumption that women could have in these contexts no other fate but of captives, that is of a passive and unique destiny. As for Muslim women, they imagined them even less able to afford mobility in Europe. Global history or connected history, and more widely the changes in the historiographical research in the direction of greater mutual interaction of societies in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, have led to reconsider completely the topic of circulation in the Mediterranean world, including the perspective of gender. This paper will highlight some recent historiographical issues giving some bibliographic prospects and suggesting research paths still little explored in this Mediterranean history.

Silvia SALVATICI, *Gender, history and the refugee studies*, p. 173-186.

In her 1999 work entitled *Engendering forced migration. Theory and practice* anthropologist Doreen Indra reflected on the relevance of the category of gender in refugee studies pointing to the potentials that had already emerged through the scholarship and those that still remained to be explored. This article looks at Indra's ideas and especially at the scholarship from the English speaking world. It aims to: trace the role played by a gender approach in re/defining refugee studies; determine the place occupied by historical scholarship in this process of re/defining; attempt to understand – by looking specifically at the period following the second world war – whether and to what extent gender became one of the analytical categories in the recently emerged field of refugee history. In pursuing these aims the article shows how an approach adopting the perspective of gender contributed significantly to opening several avenues of enquiry within the field of refugee studies, especially when the work on refugees crossed paths with scholarship that focused specifically on the experiences of men and women. In the more specific area of historical research, the perspective of gender helped greatly to reconstruct the lives of displaced persons in Europe's post-war camps, especially when attention was given to Jewish women refugees and when the research became interested in aspects of gender connected to the Shoah and its memory. Altogether gender has been

very important in showing how complex the category of “refugee” is, in questioning a scholarship that is limited to a mere study of institutions, and in encouraging a bottom up approach that saw refugees as actors and agents. And yet in spite of this, it appears that a gender based perspective is struggling to receive due recognition and that it may end up disappearing entirely from the great historical syntheses of refugees and in works on methodology. Questioning the legitimacy of the “tendency to talk in genderless, universal terms” remains a crucial challenge if gender is to become an essential component of refugee history at the very time it is being redefined.

Raffaella SARTI, *From household to household. The circulation of servants and domestic workers, a crucial issue from local to global level*, p. 187-214.

The question of the gendered dimension of migrations is a topic that for some decades has involved a growing number of scholars – both historians and social scientists – in a sense, it is a theme that shows the gulf between the current approaches and the historiographical landscape where the (albeit innovative) *History of Women* edited by Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot was conceived, written and published. Out of the five-volume work, only the one on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, edited by Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot themselves, included a specific section on migrations and travels (written by Perrot). Since then, growing numbers of studies have focused on female mobility and migrations and their features compared to male ones in the twentieth century and today as well as in medieval and modern times. The problematic presence of massive migration flows in today’s world has indeed prompted the interest in the mobility and migrations of the past. In this context, research on the circulation of female and male domestics over both short and long distances has played a rather important role. On the one hand, entering into service in someone else’s household has turned out to be a privileged channel for mobility and migration. On the other hand, servants and domestic workers constituted and constitute a key component among people flows on short, medium and long distances. This had and has significant implications for the subjective identity of the servants and domestic workers themselves, the experience of the (more or less socially and culturally distant) families where they work(ed), cultural circulation, cultural exchanges and conflicts, the accumulation of goods, the flows of resources, marriage patterns, urbanisation, colonisation, imperialism, the development of trans-national families, etc. My article will review these studies on servants and domestic workers, focusing on the themes they deal with, the results they have achieved and future research perspectives.

Nancy L. GREEN, *Women, gender, migrations : historiographies on the move*, p. 215-226.

In migration studies, research has moved, over the last four decades, from a history initially conceptualized largely as a story of male workers, to the “discovery” of female migrants to a questioning of gender relations and

sexuality in the context of mobility. “Finding” immigrant women meant not only questioning their roles as wives, mothers, or single migrants, but it meant looking at different segments of the labor market not previously included in migration studies (light industry in addition to heavy industry; more recently, the importance of services and the “care industry”). Women’s public and private roles, their productive and reproductive work are just part of the story. A gendered history of migration has shifted the focus to patterns of migration (and labor) that are not just different for men and women, but which imply understanding the different ways in which gendered migration roles have been constructed by: states, labor markets, and the actors themselves. Focusing on the United States and France, as two major historical sites of labor immigration to which immigrants have moved from all over the world over the last two centuries, I aim to ask questions of both the history and the historiography. Migration is both the result of and then in turn affects sex ratios, family roles, and sexuality. The point of my comments will be to sketch how women and gender roles have been perceived by state, society, and ... historians.

Violaine SEBILLOTTE CUCHET, *Other political rights : male and female citizens in Ancient Greece*, p. 229-245.

The notion of political rights did not apply to Greek antiquity. Even the concept did not exist. The question we have to ask is whether women had any active place in the community and if so, if we can call this participation in public affairs a political participation. I propose to discuss the words ancient Greeks employed when they spoke of citizens and citizenship. We can also consider the words they employed to bar bad people from political activity. I will indicate how the male/female differentiation operated in these different linguistic practices. So, the point is to understand what politics, as we know it today, meant for ancient Greeks at that time and how different it was from our present day conception. In underlining the differences we might be able to understand how other societies like the ancient Greek one should be understood without anachronistic lenses. In a way, putting women back into the question helps us to understand that Greeks had indeed a very different concept of citizenship and of political rights.

Simona FECCI, *If the law builds the history of women*, p. 247-263.

The article examines some relevant issues about the relationship between women and their legal status which may increase the research and methodological discussion: in particular, the nature of the legal sources, the investigative potential of legal feminism, the comparative approach and the global perspective. It highlights the very important role of researches on women’s rights in the specific context of Italian historiography on women and gender of the Middle Ages and Early modern periods. In particular, the topic of the dowry and of the property rights of women, on one hand,

and the topic of the legal and religious regulation of marriage have been at the core of Italian researches, that have tried, using mainly legal and notarial sources, to highlight women's 'agency', with the risk, in some cases, to get to conclusions that can be too optimistic. The agenda for further researches must put at the centre a comparative approach, not only in the Italian context, but more generally in the European one. The different legal traditions of European regions gave rise to specific legal contexts, in which gender relations and identities developed in different ways.

Raffaella BARITONO, *Rethinking "politics": gender and public sphere in the political history of the United States*, p. 265-283.

The US historiography in women's and gender history is so huge that it is impossible to synthetize it. Therefore, in my article I will focus on three major points. First of all, what I would like to emphasize is the rise of a political women and gender history which has exercised a crucial influence on political history as such. Women and gender history have played an important role in criticizing the so-called presidential synthesis by underlining the importance of an approach bottom-up even in the political field. Secondly, I would like to point out how one of the most interesting trends of US women and gender history is the focus not only on American women movements, i.e. the suffrage movements or the second-wave feminist movements, but also on benevolent and civic women associations that not always could be defined as feminist. Focusing on those associations helps us to have a more complete view of how, in many cases, the language of rights, on the one hand, and the maternalist and moral languages, on the other, instead of being in mutual opposition, have been interrelated with the concrete activism of women associations. In this context, a more complex view on the relationship between white and Afro-American women has been offered by historiography. The third and last point concerns the ongoing attention towards transnationalism as a category useful to understand American women's activism from the Revolution period on.

Sylvie JOYE, *Paterfamilias. An authoritarian but 'nourishing' father between Late Antiquity and Middle Ages*, p. 287-299.

The father figure is such an important cultural and symbolic object in our society that it is quite difficult to question it even when it seems to be socially or morally unacceptable or indefensible. Therefore, since the 19th century it has remained a reference point for psychoanalytic studies as for a large part of social analyses devoted to family. In the public imagination, the Roman *paterfamilias*, who has the ability and the power to kill or to let live, and detains a sacred authority, is generally assumed as the epitome of the paternal authority. Nevertheless, that figure has been strongly questioned these last years by scholars. The contemporary questioning about parents' rights and duties have brought to rethink the various facets of paternal authority, since too long considered as eternal and immutable. Following

scientific work which proved that the transformations of the Roman world were more progressive than people have conceived of, specialists of Late Antiquity tried to highlight the changes about marriage and inheritance, or even the changes concerning the restructuring of family linked with the Christianization. This last process allowed the Roman household to survive, even if deeply transformed.

Sylvie STEINBERG, *Gender identities in question(s), (Early Modern Period)*, p. 301-321.

Identity has played a special role in the historiography surrounding the history of women and gender. In the third volume of *A History of Women in the West* (sixteenth through eighteenth centuries: *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*), the emphasis was placed on the multiplicity of women's identities, with special attention to age, marital status, social condition, religious belief, ties of dependency, and finally the body and physical beauty. Since the book's publication in 1991, however, research into gendered identity has been greatly expanded and developed, and the concept of identity has itself been the focus of much scientific study. This interest was however accompanied by doubts about its relevance, in particular because it could be seen as opening the way to naturalizing discourses about gender, while ignoring both the multiplicity and the instability of the identities. Seeking to consider the contours of gendered identities, while avoiding over-rigid categorization, and to take into account the theoretical contribution of gender studies, while historicizing its ideas, historical research has brought its expertise to bear on all these debates. In this paper, in particular, three main themes are tackled: the formation of gendered identities, the boundaries between these identities, and the relation between gendered identities and sexualities.

Domenico Rizzo, *The history of masculinity, beyond plurality*, p. 323-334.

The paper first dwells on the successful category of «hegemonic masculinity» developed by sociologist Raewyn Connell, highlighting some of its heuristic pitfalls, such as the difficulty in conceptualizing complexity and internal contradictions of masculinities. A similar limit is highlighted in the approach of historian George Mosse and his followers.

A proposal is then submitted to the readers: the heuristic value of “fragility” as a long lasting multifaceted dispositive in the history of Western masculinities, in contrast to the adoption of the historiographical category of “crisis”, which is almost common sense in contemporary societies.

Nadia M. FILIPPINI, *Body and motherhood: facets and trajectories of the European historiography*, p. 335-350.

Italian and French women historians have been the first in Europe to launch a research project about bodily maternity. This issue was deeply

connected with the political thinking and claims of Feminism. It could not be otherwise, as maternity not only crosses women's personal and social biography but also constitutes the cultural power that determines both the representation of femininity and its control. The symbolic value of this representation is crucial especially in the Catholic world. To take on the issue of the "fertile body", of its pregnancy and delivery has brought to the dismantling of the disciplinary boundaries among anthropology, legal sociology and the history of medicine; it has created new categories and instruments and challenged the chronology borrowed from history. In this respect, the research on maternity has contributed to renovate both the contents and the methodology of traditional historiography. This paper aims to retrace the research itineraries of the last 20 years, by emphasizing the most innovative issues, the research paths, the European networks and the new questions on the floor.

Ida FAZIO, *The economic resources of women: a view from Italy*, p. 353-370.

Since the early 1990's, the Italian women's historian Angela Groppi suggested that the issue of women's work could be improved, asking a number of new questions. Women's wealth, their opportunities to access welfare institutions, the circulation of goods, the central role they played in urban businesses (although marginalized by the guild system) needed to be taken into consideration in terms of overall resources that women were able to manage in early modern and modern times. When the second volume of the *Storia delle donne in Italia, Il lavoro delle donne*, edited by Groppi, was published, an amount of fresh research in this perspective provided new insights into female strategies in the economic sphere. In the following years, a lot of research has been carried out in Italy, and even more in a broader context with a comparative, transnational approach. My talk aims to outline just a couple of issues that seem to me quite promising for further new results, especially from an Italian standpoint. The first one deals with the position and strategies of women as economic actors on the marketplace in formal and informal economies, and between licit and illicit trades. The second one takes into account women's investments in (micro) financial activities.

Carmen SARASÚA, *Becoming mainstream? Placing women's work in economic history*, p. 371-383.

Women's work is a useful vantage point to understand the evolution of Women's and Gender or Feminist History, as well as the differences between these and Social and Economic History. This paper is intended as a reflection on how women's work has evolved as a historical subject, and to what extent it represents the transformations of our field. Important contributions to the history of women's work had been made when the post 1960s wave of feminism arrived, of which Women's History as an academic field would be part of. Beginning by Alice Clark's *Working life of women*

*in the seventeenth century*, published in 1919. Work was wage work for these first authors, whose main contribution was probably to write about *all women*, showing the common ground all they shared, paving the way for our modern concept of gender. The paper draws on my own research on 18<sup>th</sup> century women's work and participation rates in Spain, and discusses four ideas on women's work that have been widespread in scholarship until recently: women's work as unskilled, women's domestic work as for family consumption and not for the market; women's work not possible to know due to lack of historical sources; women's work informal, seasonal, and thus wages irrelevant for families' wellbeing.

Alexandra SHEPARD, "*Active agents*" and "*history makers*": *women in the early modern economy*, p. 385-396.

This paper reviews recent scholarship on the economic lives of women in western Europe between 1500 and 1800. In particular, it focuses on a historiographical shift in approaches to female economic agency away from an emphasis on constraint, drudgery and marginalisation (on the one hand) to an alertness to women's centrality in the early modern economy (on the other hand). Rather than approaching 'the behaviour of women in terms of conformity, manoeuvrability, and... resistance' (as advocated by Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge in their introductory contribution on 'Women as Historical Actors' to Volume III of *A History of Women in the West*), historians are increasingly recovering the myriad ways in which women's economic activity confirmed their status as 'history makers' during a significant period of change. This paper will mostly focus on north-western Europe (drawing on my own research on early modern Britain and my involvement in an International Network funded by the UK's Leverhulme Trust on 'Producing Change: Gender and Work in the Early Modern Europe').

Elise VAN NEDERVEEN MEERKERK, *Gender and empire. Postcolonial perspectives on women and gender in the 'West' and the 'East', 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries*, p. 397-416.

This paper aims to give a bird eye's view on developments in postcolonial gender and women's studies over the past 25 years, especially from the point of view of social and economic history. It will look at how recent historiography has addressed questions such as: How can the voices be uncovered of indigenous women who, being 'natives' *and* women, rarely surface in the colonial archives? What role did gender play in the hybrid environments of colonial frontiers, in which different cultures both collided and intermingled? How 'national' is national in the context of empires, which most larger western countries had, and how does it relate to the notion of women's citizenship both in colony and metropole? And, equally important, how did colonial connections affect women's identity and gender

relations in the metropole? By highlighting these issues, I wish to show how the postcolonial perspective has enriched women's and gender history, also for those who work exclusively on the history Western women.

Irene BARBIERA, *Material culture, gender and the life cycle in early medieval Europe*, p. 419-436.

The practice of grave good depositions in early medieval cemeteries has been interpreted with different approaches which were developed in different historical periods, often reflecting the cultural and social climate of the moment. Between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, early medieval funerary rituals were interpreted in an ethnic perspective: different artefacts, styles and decorative motives were linked to different tribes mentioned in the written sources. From the 1970's a new approach was developed which considered artefacts as an expression of social status, thus different degrees of complexity in the disposition of graves were interpreted as a reflection of rank. Both these approaches however did not take into account the gender dimension of early medieval funerary rites, although it is a striking aspect of grave assemblages of this period. Gender archaeology developed only starting from the '90s. One of its most important contributions is to show that gender is fluid and so can be its representation through grave good display: not all graves contained the same amount and the same types of gender characterized artefacts. As a consequence of these considerations new approaches were developed from the end of the twentieth century. One of the more interesting aspects represented in early medieval cemeteries, is the relationship between gender symbols and the life-cycle. In my talk I will consider these aspects in greater detail.

Jane HAMLETT, *Gender and material culture in modern Britain and beyond*, p. 437-458.

The material world is often created by gendered power structures and used to express gendered identities. In this paper, I will offer an overview of the historiography of gender and material culture in the modern period. The first half of the paper will focus on studies of modern Britain. I will take a long view of the development of the history of gender, considering its relationship with cultural history, and why the study of material culture is useful to historians working in this area. I will then explore how historians of gender have recently used material culture, focusing on three main areas: gendered responsibility for purchasing goods; the use of material things to shape and create ideas of gender, and in particular new work that focuses on the construction of masculinity through everyday objects and practices; and the way in which historians of the family and emotional life have started to use the material world, especially in work on fatherhood. I will also reflect on recent criticisms of the study of gender and material culture, and how and where the field might usefully develop in the future. The second half

of the paper will focus in on the material culture of the home. Narrowing the focus of discussion will allow me to open up the geographical remit of the paper to explore how we might use the study of gender and material culture in a transnational context.

