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Sapere lavoro e potere in Roma antica by Italo Lana

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sions for under-slaves within a general discussion of slaves controlled by or subject to other slaves in a range of other sources and societies apparently defined only by the fact that they are in the domain of traditional classical studies (Ch. 1: Mycenae, Homer, Greek philosophical and rhetorical texts; Ch. 2: Plautus, the elder Cato and Cicero). These chapters are largely derivative, but more seriously, M.'s cursory interpretation of literary texts – like her title – leaves the reader with the impression that her argument is that ancient slavery enabled owners to use one exploited person to exploit another (hardly specific to ancient slavery as opposed to other slaveries, and indeed hardly unique to slavery), and with very little feeling that there is a fundamental difference between privileging slaves by putting one slave in charge of another, and the ascription to certain Roman slaves (*ordinarii*) of limited rights of ownership over other slaves (*vicarii*) within the legal framework relating to *peculium*. It is in chapters 3, 4 and 6, examining the reported utterances of jurists up to Labeo, from Fabius Mela to Caelius Sabinus, and in the Hadrianic jurists Celsus and Julian respectively, that M. explores the implications of the legal recognition of *vicarii*, and how these became clearer over time (giving some justification to a discussion by chronological periods which rather jars with that according to types of evidence). Problems were particularly likely to arise when a case related to more than one legal institution (eg. the rights of the *dominus*' creditors, the *dominus*' legal responsibility for the delicts of his slaves, fugitives, joint ownership, the ban on gifts between husbands and wives, or manumission). Some of these issues (eg., that the death of a *vicarius* comes to be judged a loss to the *ordinarius*, not to his *dominus*) are easier than others to subsume under the proposition that law objectifies the exploitation inherent in the principle of property. Interestingly, the protection of an *ordinarius*' *peculium* from his owner does not appear to have extended to protecting the *vicarius*' against the *ordinarius*; there might have been more discussion of the disadvantages of being another slave's slave (indeed, M. gives the impression of being more at home with, if not more interested in, traditional juristic problems of textual reconstruction or harmonising the apparently incompatible rulings of different jurists than in looking at the social implications of the evidence).

Of course jurists' utterances draw attention to particular and sometimes exceptional situations, those brought to the attention of jurists by those with the financial interests and resources to do so. M. does not discuss whether the epigraphic evidence she considers in ch. 5 gives us a more balanced picture of the range of functions which the ownership of slaves by slaves served in Roman society – most strikingly, as a mechanism by means of which 'families' (ie. long-standing partnerships, parents and children) could be brought through the transition from slavery to freedom. It is also striking that recorded deceased *vicarii* included children of 4 or 5. There are unanswered questions here about how the institution of *vicarii* functioned for the fostering, upbringing and training of slave children, and how it masked social relationships such as marriage (eg. ILS 7369; '*vilicae vicariae suae*', and explicitly in CIL 6.9687: '*vic[ariae] et coniugi*'); M. makes the interesting point that 'official' vocabulary, eg. in the imperial household, imposes hierarchy upon personal relationships (154f). The epigraphical evidence hardly bears out the emphasis on exploitation which re-appears in her conclusion; but M. has done an excellent service in assembling that evidence in two appendices (189–208).

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**Italo Lana:** *Sapere lavoro e potere in Roma antica*. Napoli: Jovene 1990. XVI, 539 S. (Collezione di opere giuridiche e storiche. 3.) 60000 L.

This is the third volume in Franco Casavola's 'Collezione di opere giuridiche e storiche', a series which also contains Casavola's own 'Giuristi Adriani' and Mazza's 'Le maschere del potere. Cultura e politica nella tarda antichità'. L.'s work shares with these books its focus on 'Kulturgeschichte', but treats a broader range of topics and covers a by far wider timespan. This is due to the fact that 'Sapere lavoro e potere in Roma antica' is a collection of

nineteen of L.'s articles, published previously over the last thirty-five years. The oldest essay, on Sestian philosophers and their indifference towards the state (pp. 169–227), appeared as early as 1953, while 'Ideal city, dream city, city to construct' (3–7), with which the present volume opens, was written as recently as 1987.<sup>1</sup>

An unfortunate result is that the book lacks a distinctive central argument. Those expecting a coherent discourse on the relationship between knowledge, work and power will be disappointed. But that is not to say that the book has little to offer. The essays assembled here confirm L.'s status as one of Italy's most interesting classical scholars. His mastery of literary sources from the early Republic to the late Empire is impressive. In his 'presentazione', Casavola rightly stresses L.'s distinctive style and methodology: «essendo egli uno storico della letteratura, ha un dominio delle fonti letterarie più esteso».

The structure of the book is a clear one. It is divided into three sections. In the first ('Premesse') L. sketches the development in Roman literature of concepts such as 'universality' and 'good government'. L. gives much attention to Christian literature and its influence. Indeed, the relationship between the pagan and the Christian world is crucial to his thought, and his ideas on the subject are outspoken: 'I would suggest that the Greek-Roman-Christian ancient world should be considered in all of its aspects and from all points of view as a single bilingual civilisation' (58–9).

The second section ('Gli intellettuali e il potere') is in many ways the central part of the book. It is by far the longest (87–381), with ten of the nineteen articles forming part of it. It is also the most coherent section. All the articles deal explicitly with the relation between culture and power in Rome during the period from the late Republic to the middle of the second century; «il rapporto tra cultura e potere in Roma, tra i portatori della cultura e i detentori del potere» (89). In this section, too, L.'s command over the sources shows itself at its best. Especially in discussing ancient authors' attitudes to the relationship between culture and power, L. makes valuable points. In his essay on Quintilian's theoretical approaches to the collaboration between intellectuals and those in power (279–309), for instance, L. notes the author's ambiguity, his 'telling and not telling, alluding and continuing for ulterior motives'. He explains this as a sign of unease, caused by the discrepancy between the theory Quintilian put forward in his writing, and the harsh reality he could not escape from (302). He takes the same approach in his analyses of 'I filosofi Sestiani e l'indifferenza di fronte allo stato' (169–227) and 'Il proemio della *Guerra civile* di Lucano' (229–253).

One may well wonder whether the second section on its own would not have made a better book. The third section ('Lavoro, scienza e tecnica') is interesting enough in itself, but does not really examine the relation between 'work' and 'power', as would be expected. The five articles that make up this section explain the use of the concept 'work' in Rome and by authors such as Pliny the Elder (453–502) and St. Augustine (503–525).

This volume is a collection of valuable articles. Anyone interested in the relationship between culture, intellectuals and power would do well to read it. It will almost certainly give rise to thought. Yet the book does not quite live up to its title. Furthermore, the lack of a separate index of the authors and literary sources discussed is unfortunate, especially since it is in dealing with these authors that L. makes his most important comments.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Lana, *I filosofi Sestiani e l'indifferenza di fronte allo stato*, *RivFil* 1953, 1–26, 209–234; I. Lana, *Città ideale, città di sogno, città da costruire*, introduction of: R. Uglione (ed.), *La città ideale nella tradizione classica e biblico-cristiana* (Turin 1987).