Sapere lavoro e potere in Roma antica by Italo Lana
Review by: Olivier Hekster
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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: Mycænae, 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 Cælius 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: '[vicariae et coniugi]'); M. makes the interesting point that 'official' vocabulary, eg. in the imperial household, imposes hierarchy upon personal relationships (154 f). 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).

University of Nottingham

Thomas Wiedemann

Italo Lana: Sapere lavoro e potere in Roma antica. Napoli: Jovene 1990. XVI, 539 S. (Collezione di opere giuridiche e storiche. 3.) 60 000 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 Mazzà'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 es-
say, 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 1987.¹

An unfortunate result is that the book lacks a distinctive central argument. Those ex-
pecting 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 assem-
bled here confirm L.’s status as one of Italy’s most interesting classical scholars. His maste-
ry 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 ‘univer-
sality’ and ‘good government’. L. gives much attention to Christian literature and its in-
fluence. 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 be-
 tween 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 cultu-
ra 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 be-
 tween 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 con-
 tinuing 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 it-
self, 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 relation-
ship between culture, intellectuals and power would do well to read it. It will almost cer-
tainly 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, espe-
cially since it is in dealing with these authors that L. makes his most important comments.
University of Nottingham/Brasenose College, Oxford  

Olivier Hekster

¹ 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-christiana (Turin 1987).