



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The Roman world of work : social structures and the urban labour market of Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD

Groen, M.J.

Citation

Groen, M. J. (2017, May 24). *The Roman world of work : social structures and the urban labour market of Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/49229>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/49229>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/49229> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Groen-Vallinga, M.J.

Title: The Roman world of work : social structures and the urban labour market of Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD

Issue Date: 2017-05-24

THE ROMAN WORLD OF WORK

Social structures and the urban labour market of
Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD

Miriam Johanna Groen-Vallinga

Cover, layout and printing: Optima Grafische Communicatie, Rotterdam
ISBN: 978-94-92683-26-7

© Miriam J. Groen-Vallinga, 2017

THE ROMAN WORLD OF WORK

Social structures and the urban labour market of
Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 24 mei 2017
klokke 13.45 uur

door

MIRIAM JOHANNA VALLINGA
geboren te Spijkenisse
in 1984

Promotor

Prof. dr. L. de Ligt

Copromotor

Dr. L.E. Tacoma

Promotiecommissie

Prof. dr. M.L.J.C. Schrover

Prof. dr. K. Verboven (Universiteit Gent)

Dr. L. Foubert (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)

In memory of Sven

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is part of the larger research project “Moving Romans. Urbanisation, migration and labour in the early Roman principate”, funded by the Dutch National Research Organisation (NWO). The collaboration with Luuk de Ligt and Rens Tacoma in the project has been invaluable. I could not have wished for more inspiring and supportive supervisors. I have also enjoyed the epigraphy-sessions with Rens, Rolf Tybout and Egbert Koops.

The Leiden Institute of History has been a stimulating work environment. Jorrit and Camila, my roommates of 1.71b, provided much-needed laughter and support during the process of doing a PhD. Thanks are also due to the Royal Dutch Institute at Rome (KNIR) and the Dutch Institute at Athens (NIA) for their hospitality at various times during the project.

Over the years I have benefited greatly from the discussion with other colleagues in the field. Thank you for listening, for your constructive criticism and for sharing your own ideas. I am grateful for the opportunities to share my thoughts with a larger audience, and I wish to thank everyone who kindly made available their published and unpublished work.

My friends and my family (the latter in its extended meaning as used in this thesis), thank you all. Thanks are due to the girls from BOE! and Maggie, for not even pretending to understand what any of this is about. To Roel: you are so much better than you think. I thank my parents for standing by me through the best and worst of times. My sister Sandra, you mean more to me than you know.

My dearest Wouter, without your selfless love and support there would be no start or finish to this thesis. There would also be many more mistakes in translations of Greek and Latin. Should any errors remain, I probably neglected your advice (sorry). Thank you for sticking with me every step of the way. I promise you will get to enjoy a proper holiday this year. Finally, our son Dorian, you are a joy to be around and I cherish every single second with you.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Sven.

Nothing has ever been the same since you came along.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	7
1. Introductory chapter: aims, methods and sources	13
Introduction	15
Outline	16
Method	18
Setting boundaries	19
<i>Labor omnia vicit improbus</i> : Conceptualizing labour and work	21
The discourse on work: the Roman elite	24
The dignity of work: the non-elite	25
Occupational inscriptions	26
Reliefs	33
Literature, law, and material remains	35
Urbanisation	37
The urban population	39
Rome and the rest	40
Urbanisation and labour differentiation	41
The Roman economy and New Institutional Economics	44
The knights who say NIE	45
Discovering the Roman family	46
Non-familial labour collectives: private associations	49
Conclusion	51
2. The urban labour market	53
Introduction	55
Chapter outline	56
The Roman economy	57
The Roman market economy	58
The Roman labour market	61
Labour mobility	63
Market integration and labour market segmentation	68
Labour supply and demand	78
Living standards and the working population	78
Economic insecurity and fluctuating demands	81
Conclusion	83

3. Family economics: nonelite households	87
Introduction	89
Chapter outline	91
Demography of the family: family structure	94
Family form	95
Slaves and freedmen in the family	98
Dynamics of demography: the family life cycle	99
Marriage	102
Children	104
Other additions to the family	109
Human capital	112
Arts and crafts	114
Family matters: economic strategies	127
Male labour: Occupational pluralism and seasonal labour	128
Female labour	130
Child labour	141
The hereditary nature of jobs	144
Patrons and freedmen: the freedman economy	146
Conclusion	152
 4. Family economics: elite <i>domus</i>	 155
Introduction	157
Chapter outline	159
Demography: the servile presence in elite households and free hired labour	160
Slave labour and the city	161
Freedmen	164
Free hired labour	168
The dynamics of demography within large slave-owning households	175
The sources of slaves	176
Changing slaves to freedmen: Manumission	192
Human capital	194
Household schools and household schooling	196
Arts and crafts	200
The evidence from columbarium tombs	205
Epigraphic evidence for elite <i>domus</i> from the <i>columbaria</i>	206
Occupational differentiation	212
Occupational structure	215
Conclusion	223

5. Non-familial labour collectives	227
Introduction	229
Chapter outline	230
Formal organization and variation	230
Hierarchies and civic life	234
Membership composition	236
Urbanism and association	249
The social phenomenon of substitute families	256
The economics of association: professional <i>collegia</i> as trade guilds, unions, or unique to Rome?	263
Occupational clustering	265
Trust networks	266
Financial benefits	269
Trade unions?	271
Conclusion: Intersecting axes of reference	274
 6. Conclusion: Social structures and the urban labour market of Roman Italy	 277
Introduction	279
The general argument	280
The urban labour market	280
Family	282
Human capital	285
Non-familial labour collectives	286
The contribution of the Roman case to global labour history	287
Roman labour relations	289
 Appendices	
Appendix 1: Catalogue of job titles	297
Appendix 2: Apprenticeship contracts	314
Appendix 3: Taxonomy of labour relations	316
 Bibliography	 317
Dutch Summary	345
Curriculum Vitae	353

