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

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# Chapter 3

**Family economics: nonelite households**



## INTRODUCTION

More often than not we have little or no knowledge of the context of an occupational inscription: we do not know the monument it was part of, and it is often unclear precisely where or when the text was set up. Many of these inscriptions probably belonged to the modest environment of the nonelite household. Naturally, some will have been a little less modest than others. The *aurifex brattiarius* from Rome whose statue base is now in the *Galleria delle Statue* of the Vatican, can hardly be considered modest.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the conspicuous monument to the famous baker M. Vergilius Eurysaces, still standing at the Porta Maggiore in Rome today, shows that he was not exactly modest, nor of modest means.<sup>2</sup> Their households may have contained a significant number of slaves and freedmen, but were not comparable to the sizeable elite *domus* of T. Statilius Taurus or Livia Augusta, whose domestic staff members were buried in large *columbaria*.

What is the nonelite household? For want of a better distinguishing criterion, I would define 'nonelite households' broadly as family units in which family members contributed their labour power for the wellbeing of the collective. In the cities of Roman Italy, the nonelite household generally consisted of a household head, the nuclear family, plus any slaves or freedmen in their power. I refer to these family units as nonelite households, or small families, to draw an explicit contrast with the large elite *domus* of chapter 4, where the principal family could afford not to get their own hands dirty and have others perform all kinds of work necessary. The nonelite made up the vast majority of the total population of Roman Italy.<sup>3</sup> Because my definition concerns such great numbers, it includes a noticeably broad range of nonelite families: they came in many shapes and sizes, ranging from Eurysaces' successful business to a street vendor and his family. A nonelite family of freedmen may also have originated from an elite *domus*. There was not just a great variety of family forms, but individual households also changed over time in a life cycle of their own.

This chapter starts out from the hypothesis that the dynamics of the family are key to understanding the Romans' engagement with the labour market. That includes the dynamics of demography and family structure, as well as the fluctuations in family economics. My aim is to illuminate how these factors interlinked to eventually determine the economic strategies that a Roman family adopted.

1 CIL 6. 9210.

2 On the monument see Mayer (2012) 112-14; Petersen (2003); the inscription preserved on three sides of the monument is CIL 6. 1958a.

3 Scheidel and Friesen (2009) 76 table 6, estimate ca 1.5% of households belonged to the economic elite (senators, *equites* and *decuriones*), leaving no less than 98.5% nonelite households.

Economic analyses of the family in early modern Europe generally consider the pre-industrial family as “the unit of production and consumption and the household the locus of work and residence”.<sup>4</sup> This model of convergence of supply and demand within the family, is called the ‘family economy’. This premise is also implicit in studies on the Roman family.<sup>5</sup> Agricultural families are thought to have been largely self-sufficient, for example.<sup>6</sup> In the context of urban commerce and production, the family economy model is met by the widespread view that small-scale *tabernae*/workshops were the dominant production units in the ancient Roman economy.<sup>7</sup> It will become clear throughout this chapter that this perception of the family can explain much – though not all – of the ancient evidence.

The Industrial Revolution profoundly changed the nature of the family economy. A new model was introduced to accommodate the fact that many workers were now employed as wage-workers in large-scale factories: the new nineteenth-century standard was labeled the ‘family wage economy’. Although this model has firm origins in historical analysis of the Industrial Revolution, even in preindustrial families the family is not necessarily the locus of work, and hiring out labour outside of the family was also a very real possibility. The model of a family wage economy could perhaps be detached from its industrial origins and be applied to earlier societies. In Rome and Ostia, large production facilities have been recovered archaeologically, even if they are only attested sporadically.<sup>8</sup> But we shall see that wage-labour in general was more widespread and that there were many wage-earning families in Rome.

The historical demographer Richard Wall felt that both the family economy and the family wage economy could not account for the historical data he found for his research into nineteenth-century Colyton, and so he came up with a new model: the ‘adaptive family economy’.<sup>9</sup> The adaptive family economy model allows for diversification of labour and for flexible strategies of the family, both inside and outside the confines of the house, with the aim of maximizing “economic well-being”.<sup>10</sup> Flexibility is key.

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4 Wall (1986) 265.

5 Or explicit, as in the case of Saller (2011), (2007) 87, where he opens his paper with “In the Greco-Roman world the household was the basic unit of production as well as consumption”, and Saller (2003) 189.

6 Implicit in e.g. Dyson (2011), a sweeping overview of scholarship on rural families.

7 Loane (1938) 63; Händel (1985) 499; Holleran (2012) 27, 125; most elaborately the recent work of Flohr (2017).

8 E.g. Flohr (2007) on the differences between Pompei and Ostia; Saller (2013) considers the large *domus* as productive units – but they are also unique to Rome, at least in an urban context.

9 Wall (1986) 265; and see Groen-Vallinga (2013) for an earlier introduction of the adaptive family economy to the ancient Roman evidence for female labour.

10 Wall (1986) 265.

Virtually the same solution was reached through scholarly endeavors into the concept of 'family strategy':<sup>11</sup> the study of strategy was the natural result of a scholarly shift from investigating structural functionalism to individualism and agency.<sup>12</sup> In other words, families became historical actors with an active contribution to make to the course of history, rather than objects whose life-course was determined solely by external circumstances. As with the adaptive family economy, the addition of 'adaptive' to family strategies emphasises flexibility in the way that families may 'adapt' to their circumstances.<sup>13</sup> The focus in this chapter therefore lies on 'family adaptive labour strategies': a family's actions on the labour market.

Family strategy is the outcome of a process of decision-making within the family. That process is guided by internal power structures on the one hand, and by the larger cultural, social, and economic factors in society on the other. The decision-making process itself is fundamental in understanding subjects like marriage, investment in human capital, or labour allocation, and will be brought in whenever appropriate.<sup>14</sup> Out of necessity, on the lower end of the scale household strategies were directed primarily towards the modest goal of staying alive. As a result, in the nonelite household motivations were chiefly economic and choices were relatively limited.

### Chapter outline

Families had various economic strategies open to them in theory, the range of which varied according to the situation they were in. Can actual forms of economic strategy be detected in the ancient sources, and how does it help to interpret and explain the ancient evidence?

Economic strategies of the family can be divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative strategies. The quantity of the family concerns the demographic make-up of the family. Family demography to a large extent was a conscious choice, as in the case

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11 For a conceptual approach to family strategy, see especially the research program on family and labour of the NW Posthumus Institute (the Dutch National Research School for Social and Economic History); the results of the research group were published in special volumes: *Economic and social history in the Netherlands* 6 (1994); *History of the family: an international quarterly* – special issue 'Structure or Strategy?' (1997) and *History of the family* 9 (2004) – special issue 'Labor strategies of families'. Contrast, e.g., the loose application of family strategy in Judd (2010) on contemporary rural west China, or Ornstein and Stalker (2013) on modern Canadian families.

12 E.g. Engelen (2002) 453–4.

13 Moen and Wethington (1992).

14 By incorporating the decision-making process, and structural factors into the decision-making process, this analysis counters the most fundamental points of critique of 'family strategy' that led Theo Engelen to suggest we abandon it altogether, Engelen (2002) esp. 464; Engelen came back from that, however, see Engelen (2004a).

of marriage, or buying a slave. However, the conscious decisions about the structure of the family can go much further: it starts with the choice whether to raise a child, or not. The quality of the family encompasses decisions concerning the labour allocation of the various family members, and the related matter of investment in education and the family's collective stock of human capital.

#### *Family structure and the family life cycle*

The typical family in the United Kingdom in 2006 consisted of a conjugal couple, 1.8 children and half a dog; they drove a Ford Focus and owned a mortgaged house and a computer, and they earned on average 32,779 pounds a year.<sup>15</sup> Obviously that does not mean that the Ford Focus was the only car to be seen driving along the M1: there is a considerable diversity to be found in cars. Even more apparent is that there is no such thing as a 0.8 child. Thus, this typical family merely represented the dominant family type in the UK in 2006, which is helpful for a more general analysis of the population. That does not preclude the fact that there was in reality a wide variety of family forms.

In a similar way, the first section of this chapter investigates what we are actually talking about when talking about 'the Roman family'. For all the scholarly attention that has been devoted to the subject over the last decades, there has been no clear answer to this question. It will be argued that there is such a thing as a dominant family form for the cities of the early Roman empire, despite its various manifestations. An awareness of the particularities of the urban Roman family could prove to be helpful in determining the parameters for family labour supply and demand. Matters to be investigated are different from those in the UK in 2006, of course: some Roman families may have owned a dog (as indicated by the *cave canem* mosaics in Pompeii), but a significant proportion of them included one or two slaves, and potentially also freedmen.

The very family dynamics that have made the Roman family such an intangible concept, are key to our understanding of the family unit. Families come in all shapes and sizes, and because the make-up of a family is always in flux, that family's economic needs and abilities also change over time. This so-called household cycle, or family life cycle, is a great influence on economic choices of the family. Although we usually do not have the data to follow a historical family over the life cycle, many of the demographic parameters can be modelled. The section on the dynamics of demography therefore focuses on the life-changing events of marriage, the birth of a child, and non-kin additions to the family. Marriage forged important bonds, and also made for the most efficient economic cooperation. Children were considered to be an economically valuable asset to the family. Family ties were unstable, however, and in skilled work in particular the family firm often extended itself with one or two slaves.

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15 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7071611.stm>, accessed 16-8-2016.



*Human capital and the allocation of labour*

If labour was the most important production factor in Antiquity, as it is widely assumed to have been, it follows that significant profit could be gained principally through investment in population quality, that is human capital. Human capital is a convenient term for the combined characteristics of a worker. Such characteristics may include age, sex, health and physique, and innate ability, as well as levels of education, and possibilities for migration. Significantly, then, human capital concerns more than schooling – although, to my mind, education remains its most powerful aspect. Human capital theory breaks down the production factor labour into more specific components, in order to give due credit to personal ability and output of labourers – which can then be taken into consideration when calculating profit and investment. Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* was the first to mention “a capital fixed and realized, as it were, in his person”.<sup>16</sup> As an economic concept, however, human capital was developed fully only in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

The application of human capital theory to Roman history is relatively new. Of necessity it must remain very basic.<sup>18</sup> It is my contention that it is precisely these basic principles that may help understand the predominantly qualitative evidence for investment in human capital. Physical well-being and health are important to economics, and this subject receives increasing attention from ancient historians.<sup>19</sup> Life expectancy, general unhealthy urban environments and the Antonine Plague have been briefly referred to in the previous chapter. In the context of the labour market, however, it seems justified to focus on education and the acquisition of skills.

In human capital theory, “[t]he individual is assumed to maximize the present value of future expected lifetime net earnings, where net earnings are take-home pay (...) minus any direct human capital investment costs incurred, such as the costs of training”.<sup>20</sup> The expectation of private returns differs per person: men, for example, would expect to spend more active time in the labour market than women in many historical periods: women often dropped out of the labour force upon marriage or just before the birth

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16 Smith (1776).

17 Eide and Showalter (2010) is a useful introductory piece on human capital. Key works are Schultz (1961) and (1980), and Becker (1964) and (1985).

18 Pioneering works by Hawkins (2016) and (2006), Saller (2013) and (2007), and Verboven (2012a). Human capital in Roman agriculture is the subject of Stringer’s working paper (2012). For an indication of the full complexity of human capital in economics see, e.g., the handbook by Burton-Jones and Spender (eds) (2011).

19 E.g., Scheidel (2012c); Jongman (2007); Laurence (2005).

20 Bosworth e.a. (1996) 35.

of a first child.<sup>21</sup> Future expected earnings are dependent on market demands as well. Labour demand is a derived demand, in that it depends upon product demand – which will have influenced the choice for an occupation.<sup>22</sup> For example, there is no reason to train a child as a scribe when the current local scribes have years ahead of them, and when there is a strong demand for potters in the city. The resulting balance predicts that investing in human capital also has social returns: effects that benefit society, like the security of having enough doctors to service everyone.

## DEMOGRAPHY OF THE FAMILY: FAMILY STRUCTURE

The demography of the family has been steadily gathering ground in ancient history.<sup>23</sup> Family and family structure have become integral to the subject of ancient demography.<sup>24</sup> The parameters of high mortality and high fertility are well-known<sup>25</sup>; the effects of high mortality on the population and the reality of high fertility are only measurable in the context of the Roman family. Conversely, demography will have affected Roman family life and the social and cultural preferences surrounding it. This section deals with the preferred family structure in the cities of Roman Italy. In a similar undertaking for Roman Egypt, Hübner has expressed well what is at stake.

Decisions about the marriage of a daughter, a new family enterprise, the purchase of more land, sending a son away for an apprenticeship, and provision for old age and death did not affect only one individual, but all the family members who lived together. The timing of those decisions was the response to the opportunities or needs that arose from certain household constellations. On the other hand, certain cultural patterns of predominant living form influenced decision-making to achieve the household form that was considered the ideal for traditional and economic reasons. Household composition also affected the way an individual or family coped with situations of crisis, the death of a spouse, divorce, orphanhood, or childless old age.<sup>26</sup>

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21 The literature about women and human capital is extensive, but see e.g. Schultz (ed.)(1995), Becker (1985), Mincer and Polachek (1974).

22 Eide and Showalter (2010) 283 "Observed outcomes in the Marketplace will be the result of an equilibrium process where the demand for specific skills and abilities is balanced with its supply".

23 Parkin (1992); Scheidel ed. (2001a); Holleran and Pudsey (2011).

24 Holleran and Pudsey (2011) 2.

25 E.g. Scheidel (1996), (2001a), (2001b), Parkin (1992).

26 Hübner (2013) 31.

Family form therefore must have had economic implications as well. The addition of slaves and freedmen in the household will also have had important consequences in view of the family labour supply.

### Family form

In search of what the Roman family generally looked like, ancient historians turned to household structure and family typology. A classic progress paradigm was proffered by early modern historians, with the nuclear family at its apex.<sup>27</sup> Before industrialisation and modernisation, the extended family was thought to have been the norm. The hypothesis predicts that in ancient Rome most families would have consisted of two or more generations of conjugal couples. However, with the work of Peter Laslett and the widely influential *Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure*, it was argued that the nuclear family, also termed the 'stem family' or 'simple family household', had in fact been the most important family focus as far back as AD 1300.<sup>28</sup> Ancient historians readily picked up on this. A leading article published by Saller and Shaw in 1984, shifted consensus towards the supposition of a dominant nuclear Roman family system. They demonstrated a clear predominance of nuclear family ties in commemorative inscriptions.<sup>29</sup>

The ideal of the nuclear family was indeed valued greatly in Rome.<sup>30</sup> Marriage appears to have been mainly neo-local, which means that the newlyweds set up their own household after the wedding. It is suggestive that the wedding ceremony consisted of a procession with which the bride would leave her birth home and enter the marital home.<sup>31</sup> It is possible that there sometimes were economic reasons to start out married life in the household of the groom's father instead; however, I know of very little evidence for such arrangements outside of Roman Egypt, where patri-local marriage appears to have been the norm.<sup>32</sup>

27 LePlay (1871), who deserves credit for being the one who established research into family typology. Cf Saller (1997) on the parallel discussion on the Roman concept of kinship.

28 Laslett and Wall (eds)(1972). Saller and Shaw (1984) on the predominance of the nuclear family in Rome.

29 For a critique of their work see Martin (1996); Scheidel (2012b); See also Gallivan and Wilkins (1997) for regional differences in family structure.

30 For the focus of sentimentality on the nuclear family, Dixon (1991) *passim* and at 111: "[The ideal] ignored the reality that family life frequently included people beyond the nuclear, idealized group".

31 Hin (2013) 186-190 cautions against the assumption that neo-local marriage was universal (the argument was made for the second and first centuries BC but has relevance for the imperial period); On the wedding ceremony see, e.g., Dixon (1992) 64-5.

32 Economic reasons, cf Hin (2011) 113; On Roman Egypt see Hübner (2013) 48-50.

Ideal and reality are not quite the same thing, however.<sup>33</sup> Keith Bradley discovered that families were often of a composite nature, and included others besides the nuclear triad of father, mother and children. Composite families were shaped by death, birth, marriage, divorce, and remarriage.<sup>34</sup> The implications are profound in a society familiar with high fertility and high mortality rates. The servile component of the family only adds to the changeability of the Roman family.

Roman epigraphy offers a great many illustrations of what the family could look like at a fixed moment in time. In funerary epigraphy that moment is marked by the death of a family member. *CIL* 6. 18404 is a good example of a household tomb.<sup>35</sup>

### ***CIL* 6. 18404**

D(is) M(anibus) / Flaviae Primae fecit / T(itus) Flav(iu)s Daphnus vern(a)e / suae  
q(ui) v(ixit) a(nnos) XII m(enses) VIII d(ies) XXV / et sibi et Flaviae Eufrosyne  
coniuigi suae et L(ucio) / Laberio Hermeti cogna/to suo et Cassiae Synethe  
/ amic(a)e optim(a)e et liber(t)tis libertabusque / suis posterisque eorum / h(oc)  
m(onumentum) h(eredem) n(on) s(equetur)

To the divine spirits. Titus Flavius Daphnus [set up this monument] for Flavia Prima, his *verna* who lived 12 years and 25 days; and for himself and Flavia Eufrosyne his wife, and for Lucius Laberius Hermetus his kinsman, and for Cassia Synethe best of friends, and for his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. This monument shall not go to the heirs.

The example shows a conjugal couple (as yet) without children, in whose household lived a freed girl, Flavia Prima, a *verna* whose death at age twelve was the incentive to build the tomb, a male relative (*cognatus*) and a female friend (*amica*). The formula *libertis libertabusque suis posterisque eorum* is a commonplace that can occur in a variety of similar forms; it allows a place in the tomb for any up until now nonexistent offspring,

33 Hübner (2011) 78.

34 Bradley (1991). In this light LePlay's terminology for the nuclear family – he calls it the “unstable family” – is actually very much to the point, although he elected to name it unstable rather because the family dissolved when children moved out and the parents died: LePlay (1871) 17.

35 This particular example of a household tomb was brought to my attention by Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 295–296, who at 296 notes that “all these persons did not necessarily live in the same house”. Sigismund-Nielsen at (2006) 202 suggests that the term household tomb is used too widely (“despite the scarcity of close kin”), but my interpretation of the Roman family does the opposite and argues that a ‘household inscription’ like the one cited here, provides clues about who should be included in our understanding of the Roman family.

as well as all freedmen of the family.<sup>36</sup> I would classify this example as an extension of the simple family, where 'extended' is a relatively elastic notion.

The Cambridge typology may provide a useful way to characterise a family at a fixed point in time, but it does not allow for changes in family structure.<sup>37</sup> Regional differences in family form can be significant and need to be taken into account. Moreover, Hübner cautions against the value of inscriptions for the analysis of household structures: her comparison of Roman Egyptian inscriptions on the one hand, and the census documents on the other, show wholly different patterns, and Hübner implies that the census documents are to be preferred over the epigraphic evidence. By analogy, she argues that family structure in the Roman West is virtually impossible to reconstruct, since there are only inscriptions and no census documents to work with.<sup>38</sup> Hübner, however, is also the one who demonstrates most clearly that Roman Egypt is not Roman Italy – particularly in matters of the family.<sup>39</sup>

Roman Egypt shows a clear preference for a multiple family form. However, the urban context of the *metropoleis* shows a marked preference for simple families. Significantly, the pattern of smaller households and simple family forms in the city is not restricted to Roman Egypt, but recurs everywhere throughout history.<sup>40</sup> It appears that urbanisation is the dominant determinant of the prevalent family form. The sources therefore suggest to me that the predominant family form, in the cities of Roman Italy at least, was the nuclear family, regularly extended by co-resident kin or slaves and ex-slaves. There is a considerable variety in the attestations, because of the dislocation and re-composition as well as the element of extension. In my view, it is precisely this variety that characterizes the Roman family, more than any family in a non-slave society after the demographic transition. The likelihood that many urban families were of the simple family type, but with extensions, matches the model of the family economy, the idea of the small workshops where an artisan worked with the help of his nuclear family and one or two slaves. However, it can also account for more divergent family strategies. The composition of the family reflects its livelihood.

36 Crook (1967) 136 suggests that the *liberti*-clause is not mere generosity, but should also be understood as a disguised commission to maintain the monument.

37 Pudsey (2011) 82: "The evidence reveals that the Cambridge typology of households is particularly useful to the extent that it categorises a household at a particular point in its life course"; Hübner (2011) 78: "It must be stressed here that these different types of household forms – solitary, nuclear, extended or multiple – should not be seen so much as alternatives rather than as stages in a household cycle reflecting the age and reproductive status of its members".

38 Hübner (2011) 90; cf Hübner (2013) 31–57.

39 This to me is the essence of Hübner (2013).

40 Hübner (2013) 32–3 with references, cf Hin (2013) 188–189.

### Slaves and freedmen in the family

Rome was a slave society<sup>41</sup>, and so the Roman family often included slaves. Slaves are part of the household in the legal definition of *familia*, which encompassed everyone under the power of the *paterfamilias*.<sup>42</sup> Slaves generally lived in with their masters. A well-known example from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is the servant-girl Photis, the girl who tells the protagonist about her mistress's magic – an event that eventually leads to Lucius' metamorphosis into an ass. Non-fictional instances can be found in epigraphy, as in *CIL* 6. 12366:

#### **CIL 6. 12366**

D(is) M(anibus) / Cn(aeo) Arrio Agapeto / Arria Agapete mater / et Bostrychus  
pater / et Helpis mamma et / Filete(?) nutrix filio / pientissimo b(ene) m(erenti)  
f(ecit) / vixit a(nnis) III diebus / XXXXV

To the spirits of the dead. To Cnaius Arrius Agapetus, their well-deserving, dutiful son. He lived three years and 45 days. Arria Agapete his mother, and Bostrychus his father, and Helpis his *mamma* and Filete his wet-nurse set up [this monument].<sup>43</sup>

A nurse and a second child minder (labelled *mamma*) are given a prominent place in a family commemoration of a three year old boy. Their inclusion in the inscription makes it probable that both these women lived in with the family, and it can be assumed from their single names that they were slave women.<sup>44</sup>

Bagnall and Frier's analysis of the Roman Egyptian census data shows that metropolitan households were more likely to own slaves than agricultural families.<sup>45</sup> It may well be that this was also true for Roman Italy; the majority of slaves in Roman Italy lived in cities and not all of them were employed by the elite *domus*.<sup>46</sup> It is quite likely that many

41 As opposed to a society with slaves, see Bradley (1994) 12.

42 *Dig.* 50.195.16.1-4 (Ulpian). In a *sine manu* marriage there could be two *familiae* in the family: the slaves of the husband, and the slaves of the (legally independent) wife which, as Edmondson (2011) 343 notes, adds to the complexity of the family unit.

43 See Bradley (1991) 76-102 on *Tatae* and *Mammae* in the Roman family. The reading of 'Filete' is uncertain.

44 The father of the boy, Bostrychus, appears to be a slave as well.

45 Bagnall and Frier (1994) 48-9, 70-1.

46 Edmondson (2011) 339-40; he does not extend his paper on 'slavery and the Roman family' much beyond the elite families; Harper (2011) 49-53 is insightful for subelite slaveholding in late antiquity.

households owned one or two slaves. The frequency of the formulaic *libertis libertabus posterisque eorum* is further evidence of that.

Hawkins has argued that entrepreneurs were likely to employ slaves rather than hire free labourers in the small permanent workforce of their family undertaking.<sup>47</sup> He offers various reasons for this: whereas the Romans may not have calculated the actual cost-effectiveness of having a slave rather than hiring labour, they would know that educating their slave greatly enhanced his or her value, and that it would ensure them of skilled labour in a labour market where such skilled labour was not in ample supply. If the cost of maintenance became too high, manumission could alleviate, if not fully abolish, this cost item – an attractive option since the freedman's labour might still be available (see below).<sup>48</sup> The slave presence in the household thus supports the idea of a small workshop-based economy in the Roman cities and thus the family economy, but it also underlines the importance of flexibility – adaptive family strategies – in the face of economic change.

## DYNAMICS OF DEMOGRAPHY: THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

Family structure changes over time as the family goes through its own 'family life cycle'. The concept works differently with regard to the labour force of elite households and nonelite families, because whereas the elite *domus* were reliant chiefly on dependent labour, nonelite families were actively engaged in the labour market. As a result, in the elite *domus* structural changes in family structure and the family labour force took place mainly in the larger slave segment of the family, but for the nonelite household, economic relevance lies primarily in the demography of the freeborn family members.

The economic actions and decisions of the family are influenced greatly by family structure, and vice versa. What the family looks like at any one point is determined by the family life cycle, and this in turn affects the range of options open to a family when they choose whether or not, and how, to employ the various family members. Moen and Wethington argue for a life course approach of family strategies:<sup>49</sup>

47 Hawkins (2017) 51ff.

48 Hawkins (forthcoming). This is in line with Scheidel (2005b) 13 who postulates that Roman slaves were relatively expensive compared to free labour. Therefore there had to be other reasons why so many still preferred to employ slave labour.

49 A life course approach of family strategies is implemented by e.g. Paping (2004) and Knotter (2004) for later periods.

Families move in and out of positions that make it possible to mobilize effectively in the face of external and internal threats. Their spheres of control, and their corresponding repertoire of strategies, shift over the life course, along with shifts in household composition, family needs, and family resources as well as external supports, demands, constraints, and opportunities.<sup>50</sup>

In other words, at various stages in the family life cycle, family demands change as well as its collective supply of labour. Demand for sustenance increases when young children are born into the family, for example, and labour power increases as these children start to contribute to the family income. The changeability of the family structure means that labour power of the family could differ greatly over time and that expectations of prospective earnings and future time allocations were governed by “internal threats”, that is uncertainties of their supply of labour, through illnesses for example, as well as by “external threats”, such as uncertainties in labour demand in the market. The family life cycle was not just governed by threats, however. It is significant that a deliberate alteration in family structure, through marriage for example, also provided economic opportunity, and could add to capital, status, and networks.<sup>51</sup>

The standard family life cycle automatically induces a number of life cycle squeezes, when there are more mouths to feed than there is income.<sup>52</sup>

At three points in the life cycle of a household, tensions emerge between the income of the male head and household expenditure: when the family is being established, in the years when the children are not yet generating income, and as the parents reach old age.<sup>53</sup>

A life cycle squeeze necessitates additional forms of income, such as additional family members starting to do paid work, and/or resorting to the grain dole, loans, etcetera. It is clear that in Rome high mortality, particularly the potentially early demise of the *paterfamilias* and the resulting loss of the main income, would present a major life cycle squeeze for many young families. Under these circumstances, it may be expected that children were put to work as soon as possible. In many ways, therefore, it can be seen

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50 Moen and Wethington (1992) 246-7.

51 Cf Broekaert (2012) 42.

52 E.g. Knotter (2004) who identifies a pattern for families of Amsterdam (casual) dockworkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The term life cycle squeeze appears to have been coined by Wilensky (1963).

53 Engelen e.a. (2004a) 128, with reference to Oppenheimer (1974)(1982).



that the family life cycle determined the individual life course of family members and vice versa.<sup>54</sup>

The variability of family structure to a large extent can be connected with a number of set events. These structural factors that govern the family life cycle can be predicted, as they are either biologically determined or governed by cultural convention. Think of culturally determined neo-local marriage practices, the self-evidence of a slave presence in the household, and demographic factors such as mortality, marriage ages, and fertility, which are, in part, also culturally determined. The demographics of the family life cycle can be modelled: at least potentially, then, it can be a powerful tool of analysis.

A life course approach has compellingly found its way into ancient history.<sup>55</sup> The problem is that the evidence is generally inadequate to follow a Roman family through the family life cycle. There are some examples in the census documents from Roman Egypt and in Roman Egypt, too, some family archives were found;<sup>56</sup> in Roman Italy, conversely, we are fairly well informed on the life of a few well-known (but not very representative) families such as that of Cicero, but there is not much else to go on.<sup>57</sup> The ancient evidence provides snapshots, frozen moments in time that reflect the family situation at a specific moment. Most occupational inscriptions thus are a snapshot of the family at the death of a family member.

The closest thing we have to following a family over time perhaps is a micro-simulation of the Roman population that was presented by Richard Saller.<sup>58</sup> Saller's micro-simulation gives an overview of chances of survival and the chance for an individual at

54 Cf. Dixon (1992) 6: "Hareven (1987) insists that *life course* is more appropriate than *life cycle*, which presupposes that each generation eventually repeats the pattern of earlier generations, but there is a sense in which household composition does go through a fairly predictable cycle"(her italics), reference to Hareven (1987) xiii.

55 Various of the contributions to Harlow and Larsson Lovén eds (2012), e.g. Laurence and Trifilò (2012); Parkin (2011), Pudsey (2011), Laurence (2005), Harlow and Laurence (2002). Note that the basic notion of a family life cycle was already included in Dixon (1992) 133–159 and Rawson's introduction to her influential edited volume of 1991, 5: "...the family in their household must have been differently constituted at different times – not because of life-cycle changes due to the changing age of parents and children but also because of death, divorce, remarriage, and adoption or (more likely in the lower classes) fostering of young children".

56 Scheidel (2012d) = working paper (2007) 19: "empirical data on household composition are limited to Greco-Roman Egypt, where we encounter a substantial range of levels of complexity – from solitary households to those formed by conjugal, extended, or multiple families – and significant differences between urban and rural settings". For Greco-Roman Egypt, see Bagnall and Frier (1994), Pudsey (2011) on eight recurring families in the census returns from Roman Egypt, and Hübner (2013).

57 E.g. Bradley (1991) chapter 8: "A Roman family", on the Tullii Cicerones.

58 Saller (1994) with the help of James Smith and his CAMSIM simulation programme.

a certain age of having a living grandfather, sister, uncle, niece, and so on: the result is a tabulated blueprint for the demography of the family life cycle. The kinship universe of the simulation is restricted, and some of the parameters used can be questioned, but the simulation offers a valuable insight into family structure and the implications of a high mortality regime that has not been possible before.<sup>59</sup> However useful, tables, numbers and chances without context tell us little about the implications of changes in family demography. Rather than sketching out the myriad possible life courses of the family, it is more sensible for my current purposes to focus on specific transition points in family formation and the economic implications that come with it. Marriage is one of those benchmarks in the development of the family, as is the birth of a child, or the addition of other individuals to the family through adoption for example. A transition point of the life cycle that significantly does not occur in the Roman life cycle, is institutionalized retirement.<sup>60</sup>

## Marriage

Marriage is crucial to family formation: Roman marriage *is* the formation of a family. It was already mentioned that Roman marriage was largely neo-local. Thus, in Rome the new household unit was established on the wedding day. Conversely, the ending of marriage through death or divorce equals the dissolution of the family.<sup>61</sup> The event of a girl's first marriage signified her transition into adulthood.<sup>62</sup> What the family looked like at any one point in time can best be extrapolated from what it looked like at the beginning.

The age at which the Romans married is much debated in spite (or because) of the relatively rich evidence for it from epitaphs, legal sources, and literature. The estimates for age at first marriage vary, from roughly 15-20 years for women, and 20-30 years for

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59 Saller is right to emphasize though that changing parameters, like age at marriage, does not significantly alter the general patterns that the simulation brings forth. However, these parameters do change the life course of individuals considerably.

60 Ehmer (2014) for this transition point in the economic life cycle. Parkin (2003) 234–5 for its absence in Rome, even if he connects that to a supposed absence of wage-work with which I disagree. His conclusion on p. 235 holds: “When a person’s failing state of physical and mental health led to total inability to be self-supporting, then, in the absence of effective medication (...), dependence on others may have been short-lived anyway”. There was one type of retirement: for soldiers.

61 Noted also by Pudsey (2011) 64.

62 Harlow and Laurence (2002) ch. 4.

men.<sup>63</sup> The dominant marriage pattern can have important consequences. A significant age-gap between spouses seems likely, which will have led to a large number of relatively young widows, who can be expected to have participated in the labour market more extensively than married women.<sup>64</sup> It may not seem like such a great difference whether a girl married at age 15 or at age 20, but it is exactly those years that would allow or preclude an education or apprenticeship (see below). In this context it is significant that the attestation of early marriage ages for both men and women has been explained as evidence for the existence of an elite pattern of early marriage, as opposed to a more general later marriage pattern for the nonelite.<sup>65</sup> If girls were commonly married in their late teens rather than in their early teens, the time constraint to women's job-training is thereby removed. Moreover, marriage may have been costly, which is especially true for neo-local marriage, so some may have chosen to postpone it until finances were sufficient.<sup>66</sup> This accounts for a later age at marriage for males, who were generally expected to be the family breadwinner.

Marriage was a family matter. In general the union was arranged by the *paterfamilias* in quasi-formal consultation with his own family, and the family of an eligible bachelor(-ette).<sup>67</sup> Marriage, divorce, and remarriage have long been recognized as strategies of the elite to forge political alliances.<sup>68</sup> Conversely, for the majority of the population there may well have been economic motives in marriage policies: the lack of a male heir or a suitable candidate to take over the family business, or a need for economic allies may all have guided the choice of marriage partner. "Marriage extended familial ties: on divorce or bereavement, remarriage was expected by other blood relatives to ensure that their collective network of affinity and kinship was maintained".<sup>69</sup> Marriages could consolidate business connections or forge local or supra-local economic networks, and sometimes allowed for socially upward mobility.<sup>70</sup> The desire to prevent fragmentation and keep the property within the family, for example, was a major incentive for the formation of

63 The debate is ongoing, mostly on the basis of epigraphic data. Scheidel (2007b); Lelis, Percy and Verstraete (2003) with review by De Ligt (2005); Saller (1994) 25-41; Treggiari (1991) 39-43 for legal sources; Saller (1987) for men; Shaw (1987a) for women; Syme (1987) for elite males; Cf Bagnall and Frier (1994) 112-3 for Roman Egypt; Hopkins (1964/5), a follow-up on the efforts of Harkness (1896).

64 Young widows: Tacoma (2016) 111-12; Pudsey (2011) 61.

65 Saller (1994) 37; Shaw (1987a).

66 Hin (2011) 112.

67 Cantarella (2005) 28-9; Bradley (1991) 112-3; Dixon (1992) 62-4 and index s.v. *consilium*.

68 Corbier (1991).

69 Harlow and Laurence (2002) 104.

70 Most elaborately Broekaert (2012); briefly noted by Cantarella (2005) 28.

consanguineous unions in Roman Egypt.<sup>71</sup> The potential of marriage alliances underlines the hypothesis that despite a cultural ideal of the 'one-husband woman' (*univira*), remarriage of women after divorce or the death of a spouse will have been quite common in the pre-Christian Principate.<sup>72</sup>

Economic theory offers additional reasons why it is economically rational to form a marriage bond. Simply put, two can produce more than one, three more than two, and so on.<sup>73</sup> However, the bond of marriage is not the same as simply putting together two (or more) individuals. A family unit has "a double advantage over a non-family household with comparable membership and resources".<sup>74</sup> Through the intimate and long-term familiarity with each other's capabilities, immediate availability and bonds of trust, a family firm saves on transaction costs for finding labour. Within this theoretical framework, an internal division of labour allows the conjugal couple to benefit even more from their respective comparative advantages.<sup>75</sup> The argument is quite nuanced, but crudely speaking it can be read to predict that one partner will take up full responsibility for the unremunerated domestic work if their wage in the labour market is lower than that of the other. That said, the ideal of preserving separate domains for husband and wife must have been largely an elite prerogative, as in many instances the additional income of women was vital to the family.<sup>76</sup> Another economic privilege of marriage is that the expectancy of a stable, long-term liaison allows the family to engage in "lengthy production processes", such as raising a child.<sup>77</sup> Children are an important structural addition to the family.

## Children

Once it has been initiated through marriage, the natural way of expanding a family is through having a child. Children ensured continuity: the importance of children had

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71 Hübner (2013) chapter 7 and idem (2007) on the likelihood that the brother-sister marriages concern adoptive children and biological children, contra Remijsen and Clarysse (2008), Rowlandson and Takahashi (2009).

72 On *Univira*, see Lightman and Zeisel (1977).

73 Cigno (1991) 37–8, and chapter 5. The economic benefit of growth in household size is not infinite.

74 Cigno (1991) 38.

75 Cigno (1991) part I, e.g., 24, 41–2.

76 Groen-Vallinga (2013) 295; Hemelrijk (2015) 9–12 for a brief overview with references on the fluid notions of the public versus the private domains of men and women (or perhaps rather, as she puts it, *forum/domus*); cf Scheidel (1995) 205–6.

77 Cigno (1991) 37.

everything to do with passing on the family name and the family assets.<sup>78</sup> The birth of a biological child to the *paterfamilias* was not the only way in which infants came into the family, however, nor was it the only manner to beget heirs, or the only means of passing on the family name.<sup>79</sup> The family could also be expanded through adoption, fosterage, and care for foundlings.

#### *Raising and killing children*<sup>80</sup>

In western developed countries today, when a couple thinks about the possibility of having children, economic considerations regularly play a part in the decision to try and go for it or not, but also in the timing, spacing, and number of children they would like. Many potential parents want to be able to provide for their children, covering primary needs such as food and clothing, but also secondary needs like a college education. This decision-making process must have been comparable in ancient Rome, even if it was informed by very different socio-cultural and demographic circumstances. Moreover, the actual element of 'choice' was limited, considering the lack of reliable methods of contraception.

When a child was born to the freeborn couple at the head of the household, that child had much to offer. Emotions and affection must have had a large part to play.<sup>81</sup> Quite apart from being heir in name and property, necessary for the continuity of the family line, an infant also had economic potential. The son or daughter would become a labourer who could supply the family with additional income or who could increase production. An extra pair of hands could make all the difference in some families. A correlation between income and the number of children in a family – the poorer the family, the more children – is not unlikely, though virtually impossible to substantiate for the Roman empire.<sup>82</sup> A child may also have meant insurance against the possible economic hardships of old age, which is one of the life cycle squeezes identified earlier.<sup>83</sup> "Even a rough understanding of ancient Mediterranean demography suggests that (...) women

78 E.g. Rawson (2003) 108: "The political, social and inheritance value of a child, especially a son, is clearest for the upper classes". Informed overviews on the various types of children in the Roman family are Rawson (1986b) and (2003), Dixon (1992) 98–132, and more recently Sigismund-Nielsen (2013).

79 Manumission would also continue the family name, see below.

80 A reference to the title of Shaw (2001).

81 The locus classicus is Golden (1988).

82 Knotter (2004) 235 with references to early modern examples of this pattern.

83 Old age came with economic as well as social hardship. Cf Hübner (2013) for Roman Egypt; Parkin (2003) esp. 203–35; Rawson (2003) 108, Harlow and Laurence (2002).

and children were important potential sources of labor", writes Saller.<sup>84</sup> It was therefore economically beneficial in many ways for the family to raise a child.

Various scholars have nuanced the importance of economic motivations for having children, however.<sup>85</sup> They point out that having children is a decision typically governed by cultural norms rather than economic rationality. Certainly a Roman marriage was contracted with the ideal of reproduction in mind.<sup>86</sup> Girls were expected to marry, and bear children. For Roman women, motherhood was clearly valued over occupation: a preference for commemorating familial roles rather than economic contribution surely is one of the reasons why occupational inscriptions of women are relatively rare (see below).

The birth of a child is another life cycle squeeze: a raise in costs, and a drop in income. The 'break-even point', that is the moment that the total income generated by a child starts to outweigh the costs incurred in his or her upbringing, was possibly never reached in a society with a life expectancy at birth that may not have exceeded 25.<sup>87</sup> Bringing up an infant required substantial investment in food and shelter, and potentially in education as well. As childcare would limit the parents' (or rather: the mother's) time working, a lower-class family that already had a number of children may not have been able to feed another mouth. A wealthy, higher-class family, conversely, may not have wanted to raise another heir at the risk of having to split up the family property any more than necessary.<sup>88</sup> It is not too difficult to think of other reasons, such as divorce, adultery, or a pregnancy out of wedlock, why an unborn child was less than welcome.<sup>89</sup> For all these reasons the Romans may have wanted to exercise some form of family planning one way or the other, either to stimulate or to prevent further births in the family.

Contraception was not unheard of in ancient Rome, but the methods used were not always safe or reliable.<sup>90</sup> Continued breast feeding ensured only partial protection (and there is some discussion as to whether Roman women generally breastfed their own infants or not), a kind of condoms made of sheep's bladders were expensive, and the herbs that were used as abortifacients were inefficient at best, and could also be danger-

84 Saller (2007) 87.

85 Hin (2011), spec. 100–4; De Ligt (2004) 750–1.

86 E.g. Dixon (1992) 61–2.

87 Hin (2011) 101. Significantly, on page 102 she suggests that perhaps an urban environment is the one place where children could find the employment that would earn enough to break even.

88 The Romans endorsed partible inheritance, so all children male and female inherited equally from their parents; Rawson (2003) 114; cf Champlin (1991) 114–7 for the fact that Roman wills show a tendency to bequeath the bulk of an inheritance to one son.

89 E.g. Evans Grubbs (2013) 84–92 for motivations that might lead to exposure of an infant. Many of these arguments hold for slave babies, too (p. 89), though it is likely that slave births were less common in smaller families than in elite households.

90 Contra Riddle (1992), see e.g. the critique by Frier (1994) and Hin (2011).

ous to the mother.<sup>91</sup> Many of these forms of contraception may have been reserved for the elite.<sup>92</sup> As a result, there were Romans who turned to other, more secure, methods of family planning: infant exposure and infanticide.

The Roman practices of infanticide and exposure have been accentuated in scholarly literature, because they go directly against contemporary norms and values.<sup>93</sup> It is likely that a number of Roman infants was indeed exposed, abandoned or in a few extreme cases even killed shortly after birth, but the exact numbers cannot be known. However, I would argue that this was not so much a sign that there was a large number of 'unwanted children': the Romans could be ruthless, but that did not preclude emotional attachment to their living offspring.<sup>94</sup> Many of the newborns who were abandoned were swaddled for protection. They were sometimes provided with some kind of token, indicating the parents' hope to reclaim their child when they had the opportunity. Moreover, it seems plausible that in Rome, as in later historical periods, infants were regularly left in a public place where they stood a very real chance of being found – that is to say, the parents did not wish for them to die.<sup>95</sup> This points to a predominantly economic motivation behind exposure. Infanticide seems to have been rarely applied.<sup>96</sup>

The 'social birth' of the infant, that is its acceptance into the family, took place after eight (in case of a girl) or nine days (for a boy).<sup>97</sup> The decision to raise a child presumably lay with the *paterfamilias*. It has long been thought that the father would literally raise the child (*tollere/suscipere liberum*) up from the ground to indicate his willingness to raise the newborn. The fact that the existence of this particular ritual acceptance of the child is now seriously in doubt, probably does not change the father's influence in this matter.<sup>98</sup>

91 Contraception: Bracher (1992); On a possible low level of breastfeeding Parkin (2013) 52, and at 53: "In preindustrial societies, to feed an infant unpasteurized animal milk was tantamount to manslaughter" – but wet-nurses were also common in Roman society; on the dangers involved for the woman, most vividly Ov. *Am.* 2.13.

92 Hin (2011) 108–9.

93 Evans Grubbs (2013); Garnsey (1991), Harris (1994), Corbier (2001), Shaw (2001).

94 Cf the popular *Horrible histories: The Ruthless Romans* (2003).

95 Corbier (2001) 69, taking into consideration what she considers a good chance for the exposed infant to survive, writes: "Roman parents probably did not consider exposure a form of 'infanticide'". Cf also her references to literary recognition scenes, and legal texts relating to the possible continued influence of the biological father over a child exposed at birth and raised by another.

96 Evans Grubbs and Parkin (2013) on page 1 bring to mind that DeMause as recently as 1974 (his page 51) still classified "Antiquity to the Fourth Century AD" as the "Infanticidal Mode", a notion that has long since been refuted. When infanticide did occur, it may have been for reasons of serious health problems and deformity, although some disabled infants were brought up, see Laes (2013) 129–31; O'Hara (1998) 211.

97 Hänninen (2005) 56–59.

98 Köves-Zulauf (1990), Shaw (2001) 32–56. It is, however, certain that the decision remained with the *paterfamilias*, says Corbier (2001) 58.

If he chose not to bring up the newborn infant, we may presume that the child would be exposed or perhaps even killed. It has been convincingly argued that this is the context in which we should read the *paterfamilias*' power of life and death (*ius vitae necisque*), where the power of death was probably acted out sporadically, and then predominantly in the case of serious health problems that would complicate life for the newborn.<sup>99</sup>

With all this talk of exposure and infanticide, it should not be forgotten that most children were treasured in Roman society.<sup>100</sup> Where for some a child had become a difficulty that ultimately led to exposure or abandonment, for others it was crucial to beget a child. "In a society where childbearing and the passing on of property were considered the primary purposes of marriage, women were under enormous pressure to produce a healthy heir."<sup>101</sup> And that may not always have been easy.<sup>102</sup>

The *Laudatio Turiae* is a famous funerary text for an infertile woman who allegedly offered to divorce her husband so that he might have children with another.<sup>103</sup> Roman society, like many preindustrial populations, was characterized by high fertility rates on the one hand, and high mortality on the other.<sup>104</sup> Mortality was particularly high during infancy and early childhood, and mortality rates were raised by the unsanitary circumstances of the larger cities.<sup>105</sup> Raising a child until maturity was not guaranteed.

The wish for a baby or the need for an heir might theoretically lead Romans to turn to 'non-natural' methods of begetting a child, such as adopting, or taking up a foundling. Neither of these options appear to have been very common in ancient Rome, however. Foundlings could be picked up and raised as one's own. However, it is significant that as far as it can be known, most foundlings were raised as slaves.<sup>106</sup> There is a distinct possibility that the evidence does not explicitly identify a foundling brought up as a natural son or daughter. Even more likely to go undetected when successful, is supposition. Evans Grubbs notes the possible supposition of babies, who might also be foundlings.<sup>107</sup> If only because of its highly specific requirements, however, – an infant of the same age

99 Cf n.96 above, with reference to Laes (2013) and O'Hara (1998); for a different explanation of the *ius*, see Shaw (2001) 56–77.

100 Dixon (1991) 109–111.

101 Evans Grubbs (2013) 87.

102 Corbier (1991) 67; Hänninen (2005) 49 on the very real danger of the death of the child, mother, or both in childbed.

103 Right-hand column, lines 25–50; Hemelrijk (2004), (2001a), (2001b) with Dutch translation and commentary.

104 Parkin (2013) 44: "Children in classical antiquity were a very large proportion of the population, and a lot of them were dying."

105 Parkin (2013).

106 Corbier (2001) 66–7. For more on foundlings as a source of slaves, see chapter 4.

107 Evans Grubbs (2013) 87.



available at just the right time through just the right channels to ensure secrecy – supposition is unlikely to have been common.<sup>108</sup> Adoption of infants was legally recognized, but it was rare.<sup>109</sup> Corbier thinks that the childless ‘Turia’ and her husband may have considered adoption of a baby girl, but that was only after the husband decided that the apparently more customary response to infertility, divorce and remarriage, was not an option for him.<sup>110</sup> It is in fact characteristic of adoption in Roman society that adoption typically took place at a later age.<sup>111</sup>

### Other additions to the family

It was already emphasized that many Roman families consisted of a free and a slave segment. It is known that at least some urban households in addition also contained lodgers. Both house-owners and lodgers can be identified in the Egyptian census data; these lodgers are mainly male adults.<sup>112</sup> If a similar pattern existed in Roman Italy, the rent will have been a welcome addition to the family income. The evidence does not permit me to conclude any more on this strategy, however. Two other categories of family members, however, do deserve to be mentioned in somewhat more detail. It is likely that there were more children in the house than the children we just considered. The elusive category of *alumni*, or foster-children, contains some who were raised in the household from birth, and others who found a temporary home there. More secure family ties were constructed by adoption. Adoption could be an effective family strategy, at least for free citizens.<sup>113</sup> It was a means to transfer an adult into another family in the eyes of the law, as a natural son or grandson.<sup>114</sup>

108 Corbier (1991) 65: “Precautions would be taken at the time of a widow’s confinement to prevent the substitution of the child”, with reference to *Dig.* 37.9.1.15 (Ulpian).

109 Lindsay (2009) 69–70 briefly considers adoption of minors.

110 Corbier (1991) 63; but Lindsay (2009) 153 disagrees.

111 Lindsay (2009) makes extensive use of cross-cultural comparisons, spec. chapter one p. 4–28. An earlier, more pointed version of this chapter was published as Lindsay (2001), with 201–4 specifically on ancient Rome. See Hübner (2013) for the significant differences with the practice of adoption in the ancient eastern Mediterranean.

112 Pudsey (2012) 167: “Lodgers were a feature of households in the large towns and metropoleis”, and in n. 22 she gives the example of Bagnall and Frier (2006): 103–Ar–1 (9 lodgers).

113 An excellent, concise account of adoption as familial strategy, is Corbier (1991). I have not been able to access Corbier ed. (1999). The technicalities of adoption by life or testamentary adoption, and adrogation are deliberately left out of my discussion. These aspects do not change the nature of the resulting kinship bond, that is decisive for adoption as a family strategy. For those interested in these details, I recommend Lindsay (2009) esp. ch. 4 and 5.

114 For the adoption of a grandson, Lindsay (2009) 66; Corbier (1991) 67–8.

*Alumni*

*Alumni* were children who were raised from infancy by people who were not their biological parents.<sup>115</sup> This much can be said, as well as the fact that the term *alumnus/-a* professes affection and quasi-familial bonds.<sup>116</sup> Other than that, they make for a heterogeneous and complex group that defies direct definition. Some were raised as slaves, others were free; despite obvious similarities with children who were exposed or abandoned, *alumni* may or may not have been foundlings.<sup>117</sup> It is their status that was fundamentally different from foundlings who were adopted as a natural child: free *alumni* were not legally kin. The designation *alumnus* may merely indicate that the child was literally 'nurtured' by a wet-nurse. There is some evidence to suggest that sometimes its meaning comes closer to apprentice than to nursling, however, as in the following inscription from Puteoli.<sup>118</sup>

**CIL 10. 1922**

D(is) M(anibus) / G. Atilius Fortu/natus faber in/testinarius q(ui) v(ixit) / an(n)is  
XXXI f(ecit) Iulius Felicis/simus alum(no) mere(nti)

To the spirits of the dead. [Here lies] Gaius Atilius Fortunatus, inlayer/cabinet maker, who lived 31 years. Iulius Felicissimus set up [this monument] for his well-deserving student.

Fortunatus died relatively young, at the age of thirty-one. At that time he was fully educated as a *faber intestinarius*. He was commemorated by one Iulius Felicissimus. Therefore, it appears that Felicissimus either raised Fortunatus or taught him the trade of fine carpentry, or indeed a combination of the two: the term *alumnus* can point in both directions. The lack of any mention of other family bonds suggests that Fortunatus was unmarried, and that his biological parents were out of the picture. Perhaps Felicissimus was indeed a surrogate father to Fortunatus. Both their *cognomina*, Felicissimus and Fortunatus, are names that suggest a servile background. Although the *duo* and *tria nomina* could technically also indicate freeborn status, it would not be surprising that libertination is not explicitly mentioned if Fortunatus were a lunian Latin, since lunian

115 Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 289. On *alumni*, see especially Sigismund-Nielsen (1987), Bellemore and Rawson (1990).

116 Dixon (1992) 129: "The term *alumnus* and its cognates are less likely to be employed of an adult than of a child, which suggests that the special relationship might vary over the life cycle."

117 Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 289 argues that they were not.

118 Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 289 mentions this option, but with reference to the rather unconvincing examples of CIL 6. 10158, CIL 6. 8454, and CIL 6. 8697 (in this last case no *alumnus* is mentioned).

Latins were not allowed to boast libertination. His age – he was 31 – suggest that he may well have been manumitted before the legal minimum age of 30. This would also explain why Fortunatus was not formally adrogated by Felicissimus, a fact that can be gathered from the dissimilarity of the *gentilicia*. As an ex-slave, Felicissimus was legally able to adrogate (though not technically adopt) another citizen, but Iunian Latins were not considered to be citizens. In this instance it appears that Fortunatus was raised to be Felicissimus' successor in the business, which was expressed in the inscription by the term *alumnus* as a replacement for formal adrogation. At other times apprentices were taken in temporarily to master a trade, only for them to return to their family of birth – an investment of the birth family that will be dealt with in detail below.

### Adoption

The main motive for adoption in Rome appears to have been the need for an heir. It generally concerned adult males who were adopted in the event that no heir was present. Adopting when a (male) heir existed, or even when the adopter was still under 60 – which was the age before which he might reasonably expect to still beget children of his own according to the law – was frowned upon.<sup>119</sup> Close relatives were the preferred choice for adoption, but it was also possible to adopt the child of a friend for example.<sup>120</sup> In theory, the adopted son became heir to his new family. In practice, ties with the family of origin were simultaneously recognized. This enabled the procedure to function as a way of strengthening the bond between two families. A patron might choose to adopt a freedman, to solidify a claim to the freedman's wealth for example.<sup>121</sup> For the freedman himself, his new status as a 'natural' son to his patron did not remove the practical consequences of the freedman stigma, however. Apparently even adoption could not change that. Corbier illustrates that the possibilities to rearrange lineage provided by adoption were virtually endless; the practice "recognized [the] right of a father to reshape his relationships".<sup>122</sup> The evidence is heavily biased towards the imperial elite, however, and even then adoption does not appear to have been very common.<sup>123</sup> There is no way of knowing whether a legal construct like this was ever exploited by the rest of the population, though the benefits of adopting a particularly talented apprentice to continue the family business, to name but one possibility, are obvious.

119 Corbier (1991) 66–7.

120 Corbier (1991) 67.

121 Lindsay (2009) 132–6 offers a very brief account that mostly raises questions rather than answers them. He only hints at the possibility that freedmen may have wanted to use adoption to bring together their natural family born in slavery.

122 Corbier (1991) 76.

123 Lindsay (2009) 2–3 mentions a few estimates by previous scholars that range from 2 to 9 per cent.

## HUMAN CAPITAL

Just like many other life-changing events such as marriage, investment in a child's human capital was decided on by the family.<sup>124</sup> If decisions on raising a child or buying a slave concern the quantity of the family labour supply, investment in human capital involves the quality of the family.

Modern economists have demonstrated that there is a direct correlation between years of schooling and income.<sup>125</sup> This correlation appears to be equally valid for ancient Rome, although we have few numerical data on wages in Rome.<sup>126</sup> The example of Diocletian's *Prices Edict* of 301 AD illustrates that skilled labour typically brought in two times the unskilled daily wage, or more.<sup>127</sup> This points to significant returns on education. Why then did not everyone attempt to obtain an education for themselves, their children or their slaves?<sup>128</sup> Economic theory predicts that "[i]n principle, we would expect all individuals to be grouped at the highest educational level, to benefit from the increased income opportunities".<sup>129</sup> This is obviously not the case today, and it was not in ancient Rome – quite the reverse. Several possible answers can be found in modern economic theory. Investment in schooling can be restricted through high child mortality, financial constraints, and what is called 'intergenerational persistence'.

Intergenerational persistence refers to the fact that a poor family regularly could not afford job-training for their children, so that the next generation remained poor, in perpetual self-confirmation; conversely, skilled workers earned more and hence they could more likely afford their children's education; and so on.<sup>130</sup> In the calculations of Scheidel and Friesen, close to 90 per cent of the population lived at or under subsistence levels, which surely means that these people did not have the resources to ensure an education for themselves or their children.<sup>131</sup> Family background mattered. The fact that job-training was not available to everyone in the freeborn population therefore largely

124 Bradley (1991) 112-113; and see introduction.

125 E.g. Checchi (2006) 5-10.

126 Szilágyi (1963); Mrozek (1975); Corbier (1980); and see Szaivert and Wolters (2005) for the literary wage data. Roman Egypt: Johnson (1936), Drexhage (1991).

127 Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2017) 113-4, 118-122 with references. Rathbone (2009) 214 for two to threefold differentials, and the suggestion that the latter was more common in urban contexts. Bernard (2017) 83 points out that the Roman skill premium is normal in comparative perspective.

128 Similarly, Saller (2013) 76-7: "If an apprenticeship (...) doubled his daily wage (...) why did more parents and slave masters not apprentice their sons and slaves. (...) I have no answer." This section is an attempt to answer the question.

129 Checchi (1995) 10.

130 Checchi (1995) chapter 7 on intergenerational persistence.

131 Scheidel and Friesen (2009) 82-8.

is the result of intergenerational persistence, although the same principle also implies that freeborn skilled labourers were a continuous presence.

The comparatively high mortality rate in the Roman empire meant that on average, there were relatively few years left to reap the benefits of an education, or to develop human capital further through experience. In other words, investing in any kind of training did not always pay off. As a result, high (child) mortality probably was an additional limiting factor on investment in, and accumulation of, human capital.<sup>132</sup>

Specific to Rome is the fact that much skilled work was carried out by slaves, thereby restricting job opportunities for freeborn skilled workers. Since investment in human capital correlates with expectations of prospective earnings, the competition of slave labourers in the market has a direct effect on the time, effort and money spent on education by the freeborn population. Hawkins concludes that apprenticeship was not easily affordable and, on the assumption that employers were more likely to hire or buy slaves than the freeborn to do their skilled work, “those who could afford to pay for such training probably did so with an eye to establishing their sons as independent producers rather than as wage workers”.<sup>133</sup>

Even without slave competition, general labour demands predict that there cannot have been an unlimited demand for skilled labour, and that there was a definite need for menial labour as well. For many it was more profitable to step in where there was work in the unskilled sector, rather than to be trained for unemployment.

It is likely that such factors had a limiting effect on the total amount of time and effort spent by the free population on acquiring occupational skills in ancient Rome, and as a result skilled hired free labour became harder to come by.<sup>134</sup> Despite these limiting factors, aggregate investment in human capital in the Roman world was far from negligible, even if it was not in any way comparable to the modern western world.<sup>135</sup> There were opportunities for slaves as well as the freeborn, both boys and girls, to receive some kind of basic education. Although there was no formal schooling system, let alone an educational program set up by the government, in theory the class of the *ludimagister*

132 And vice versa: it has been demonstrated that at least in the late twentieth century, lower-educated people had a lower life expectancy as well, Checchi (1995) 18 with references; Cf Saller (2013) 76: “In order to derive the greatest return on the investment in training, it should be provided at that developmental moment after the ravages of childhood diseases when the children have the physical and mental capacity to learn the skills and pull their weight in the workshop”.

133 Hawkins (2017) 46-8, quote at 48.

134 On the scarcity of skilled labour, see also Hawkins (2017).

135 Saller (2013) 71-2; Verboven (2012a) 95 suggests that “freedmanship may have been the decisive factor explaining the significantly higher investment in human capital in the Roman empire than would be seen for a thousand years to come”.

was open to all from about age seven.<sup>136</sup> Rates of literacy for Roman Italy were unprecedented, especially taking into account basic literacy or craft literacy.<sup>137</sup>

### Arts and crafts

Some children went on to learn a trade. Many of them will have eased into the business, learning by doing in the household, taking up more tasks as they grew older and stronger.<sup>138</sup> If the parents were master artisans, they were well capable of teaching their children to become master artisans themselves. The benefits of educating a child at home are simple: there would be virtually no loss of labour input – no forgone earnings – while building human capital. Specialist job-training was not necessarily based in the household, however, and it remains to be seen just how many children followed in their parents' footsteps (below). Just like a basic primary education, a job-training regularly was obtained elsewhere: children, both slave and free, could be apprenticed out. The boundaries between formal apprenticeship, and arrangements to have a child trained in the household of birth, or that of a relative or friend, are not clear-cut. Formal apprenticeship contracts might a priori be considered a relatively straightforward source for investment in education, but as it will turn out these documents provide evidence for much more varied investment strategies.

#### Apprenticeship

Formal job-training is relatively well-attested for the Roman empire, particularly in apprenticeship contracts from Roman Egypt. The contracts provide a valuable insight into the considerations of investing in human capital, and it is well worth taking a closer look at these documents here.<sup>139</sup> There are no apprenticeship contracts from outside Roman Egypt, however, and one may wonder whether they present a picture that is representative of Roman Italy as well. Scattered references in Roman law, literature and epigraphy suggest to me that the practice was not reserved to Roman Egypt.

Ulpian mentions a rather unfortunate apprentice in *Digest* 9.2.5.3:

A shoemaker struck with a last the neck of a freeborn apprentice (*puero discenti ingenuo filio familias*), who did not do what the shoemaker instructed well enough. The boy's eye was knocked out.<sup>140</sup>

136 Laes (2011a) 107–147, which is actually most illustrative of what we do *not* know about Roman (primary) education; Laes and Strubbe (2008) 75 ff.

137 Woolf (2002) provides a useful overview of the debate on literacy.

138 Saller (2013) 73–75 assumes that this kind of informal learning was the way most Romans gained their skills, certainly in agriculture but also in the arts and crafts.

139 For a general overview, most recently Bergamasco (1995); see also Zambon (1935).

140 Ulpian takes the example from Julian. *Sutor [inquit] puero discenti ingenuo filio familias, parum bene facienti quod demonstraverit, forma calcei cervicem percussit, ut oculus puero perfunderetur.*

In epigraphy the rare attestations include a medical apprentice from Pula:<sup>141</sup>

### CIL 5. 89

D(is) M(anibus) / P(ublio) Coesio Ortensi[a]/no medico / ann(or)um XVIII(?) / Miluso Primo / discipulo

To the divine spirits. To Publius Coesius Ortensianus, doctor, who lived 18(?) years.  
To Milusus Primus, his student.

Lucian recounts his brief experience as an apprentice sculptor in his 'autobiography', *The Dream*.

### Luc. *Somn.* 1

Ἄρτι μὲν ἐπεπαύμην εἰς τὰ διδασκαλεῖα φοιτῶν ἤδη τὴν ἡλικίαν πρόσηβος ὢν, ὃ δὲ πατὴρ ἐσκοπεῖτο μετὰ τῶν φίλων ὃ τι καὶ διδάξαιτό με. τοῖς πλείστοις οὖν ἔδοξεν παιδεία μὲν καὶ πόνου πολλοῦ καὶ χρόνου μακροῦ καὶ δαπάνης οὐ μικρᾶς (5) καὶ τύχης δεῖσθαι λαμπρᾶς, τὰ δ' ἡμέτερα μικρά τε εἶναι καὶ ταχεῖαν τινὰ τὴν ἐπικουρίαν ἀπαιτεῖν· εἰ δέ τινα τέχνην τῶν βαναύσων τούτων ἐκμάθοιμι, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εὐθύς ἂν αὐτὸς ἔχειν τὰ ἀρκοῦντα παρὰ τῆς τέχνης καὶ μηκέτ' οἰκόσιτος εἶναι τηλι- (10) κοῦτος ὢν, οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν δὲ καὶ τὸν πατέρα εὐφρανεῖν ἀποφέρων ἀεὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον.

No sooner had I left off school, being then well on in my teens, than my father and his friends began to discuss what he should have me taught next. Most of them thought that higher education required great labour, much time, considerable expense, and conspicuous social position, while our circumstances were but moderate and demanded speedy relief; but that if I were to learn one of the handicrafts, in the first place I myself would immediately receive my support from the trade instead of continuing to share the family table at my age; besides, at no distant day I would delight my father by bringing home my earnings regularly.<sup>142</sup>

The passage is highly instructive of the possible considerations involved for the family when deciding on an apprenticeship. Among the 'friends' present is Lucian's uncle, a sculptor – and indeed it is decided that Lucian should be apprenticed out to him to

141 Schulz-Falkenthal (1972) collects references for *discipuli* and *discentes*.

142 Luc. *Somn.* 1; translation Harmon (1913, Loeb Classical Library).

become a sculptor too. The arrangement is economically motivated: there is no money for higher education. Through an apprenticeship Lucian would no longer burden the family income ("continuing to share the family table") – he would even contribute to it ("bringing home my earnings regularly"). It may also be significant that sculpting runs in the family, with two uncles and his grandfather in the trade. The example is from second-century Syria, but it will become clear that it is representative of a wider context in many respects.

Even the job of hairdresser (*ornatrix*) apparently required a training of at least two months to qualify, judging from *Digest* 32.65.3 – it states that only those who have trained with a *magister* at least two months qualify as legated hairdressers. The women in this text are clearly slaves.<sup>143</sup>

From these examples I conclude that even in the absence of apprenticeship contracts from Roman Italy, it can safely be assumed that a similar apprenticeship system existed in Roman Italy.<sup>144</sup> As far as can be ascertained, it seems that the contracts come from an urban context: the majority come from Oxyrhynchus. This underlines the relevance of these documents to the present inquiry into the Roman urban labour market.

The number of Egyptian apprenticeship contracts currently known lies around 50 for the early Roman empire, but the list is ever expanding.<sup>145</sup> They refer mostly to apprentice weavers, which appears to be the result of coincidence rather than a reflection of any particular aspect of the weaving trade. The majority of the contracts that have survived were set up for freeborn children: roughly 40 out of 50 contracts. These numbers strongly suggest that job-training was not reserved exclusively for slaves, and that the freeborn did have a chance to receive an education. So what considerations for investing in job-training can be gathered from apprenticeship contracts?

Because of the nature of the documents we are well informed about the cost of apprenticeship. None of the master artisans receives an instruction fee for a freeborn apprentice. Even for slave apprentices, only in two instances does the master artisan

143 *Dig.* 32.65.3: *Ornatricibus legatis Celsus scripsit eas, quae duos tantum menses apud magistrum fuerunt, legato non cedere, alii et has cedere, ne necesse sit nullam cedere, cum omnes adhuc discere possint et omne artificium incrementum recipit: quod magis optinere debet, quia humanae naturae congruum est.*

144 Bradley (1991) 112-6; Laes (2015a).

145 See appendix 2 for a catalogue. The most recent collection is Bergamasco (1995) who lists 42 documents (Ptolemaic and Roman), to which should be added *SB* 24. 16186 (Bergamasco 2004), *P.Col. Inv.* 164 (Bergamasco 2006b), *P.Oxy.* 67. 4596 (Bergamasco 2004), *P. Mich. Inv.* 4238 (Eckerman 2011). Bergamasco has announced that work on a new collection of the apprenticeship contracts and apprenticeship registrations is currently under way, Bergamasco (2004) 31 n.1 and (2006b) 207 n.1.



receive a fee for the instruction.<sup>146</sup> In BGU 4. 1125 from Alexandria, 13 BC, a certain C. Iulius Philios pays 100 drachmae to have his slave boy Narkissos instructed in the art of flute-playing over the course of a year. And in AD 155 a certain Apollonius from Oxyrynchus receives 120 drachmae to have his son teach the slave boy Chairammon shorthand writing in 2 years.<sup>147</sup> In all likelihood this can be related to the type of employment: the pupil of a flute player or stenographer cannot perhaps be put to work as easily as an apprentice weaver.

Economic theory suggests that the main expense of education, however, is not so much the instruction fee as forgone earnings: the income not collected during the time spent in training. In Roman Egypt, forgone earnings were mitigated by the fact that the apprentices were usually paid for their efforts – in accordance with Lucian's remark: "at no distant day I would delight my father by bringing home my earnings regularly".<sup>148</sup> This could be either in the form of a lump sum to be paid at the beginning or the end of the contract, or in the form of a monthly wage. The master craftswoman Aurelia Libouke pays the lump sum of 60 drachmae for a year in return for the efforts of a slave girl apprentice, in a third-century document.<sup>149</sup> When a monthly wage is specified, sometimes the contracts take account of the fact that a student accumulates ever more skills over time. For example, the slave girl Thermoution from late second-century Oxyrynchus earns 8 drachmae a month in the first year of her apprenticeship, but this modest figure is raised to 12 in the second year, 16 in the third year, and to 20 drachmae a month in the final year when she earns quite a respectable monthly wage.<sup>150</sup> In most instances the master artisan also met the cost for food, clothing, taxes and all other expenses related to the trade – again, just like Lucian: "I myself would immediately receive my support from

146 This difference in remuneration caused a desire to separate the apprenticeship contracts analytically into two groups, cf Bergamasco (1995) 100–4 for the various typologies that have been applied; e.g. *Lehrvertrag und Unterrichtsvertrag* (Adams 1964), or *Lehrvertrag and Lehrlingsvertrag* (Berger 1911).

147 *P.Oxy.* 4. 724.

148 See also Hengstl (1972) 92–5. Payment is not always specified, since not all documents are complete. In *P. Mich.* 5. 346a the apprentice is fed and clothed by the master, but she does not receive a wage; Cost or payment is unknown for *St. Pal.* 22. 40.

149 *P. Mich. Inv.* 5195a.

150 *P.Oxy.* 14. 1647. Cf Drexhage (1991) 425–9 for monthly wages attested in contracts on papyrus. 20 drachmae appears to be about the average monthly wage for unskilled work in the first 2 centuries AD; a similar regular wage-increase can be observed in *P. Oxy.* 41. 2977 (AD 239). *PSI* 3. 241 (3<sup>rd</sup> c.) documents a contract where the apprentice does not receive a wage for the first six months, which is a different way to account for her inexperience at the outset. These examples are all for slave apprentices, but the principle is no different for free boys and girls, e.g. *P. Oxy.* 4. 725 (5-year contract for a weaver's apprentice; wages of 12 rising to 24 drachmae a month from the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year onwards).

the trade instead of continuing to share the family table at my age”.<sup>151</sup> Having a child or a slave in job-training would thus seem to be an economically sound investment.<sup>152</sup> It would have been attractive for parents/carers or masters because as a rule the child was fed and clothed, brought home wages, and learnt a trade, which would bring in more money than menial labour at a later age.

Apprenticeship could be a compelling option for another reason. Freeborn children were sometimes apprenticed out in connection with loans contracted by their parents or relatives. It appears that the labour of the apprentice was a security pledge that the advanced sum would be repaid, that it was traded for the interest on the loan, or perhaps both. A good example is *P. Tebt.* 2. 384 (AD 10).

***P. Tebt.* 2. 384, 15–25**

[Α]ρμιῦσις καὶ Παπνεβ[τῦ]νις οἱ δο(\*) Ὀρσενούφι[ος Πέρσαι]  
 τῆς ἐπιγονῆς ὁμολογοῦμεν ἔχειν π[αρὰ Πασώ-]  
 νιος τοῦ Ὀρσενούφιου ἀργυρίου δραχμάς [δεκά-]  
 ἐξ [καὶ] ἀντὶ τῶν τούτων τόκων καὶ [τρο]φ[είων](\*)[ καὶ]  
 ἱματισμοῦ καὶ λαογραφίας κώμης Ὀξυρύνχω[ν καὶ]  
 τέλους γερδίων καὶ τῶν τούτων μισθῶ[ν παρ-]  
 ἐξόμεθα τὸν ἀδελφὸν ὑμῶν(\*) Πασίωνα π[αραμέ-]  
 νοντα αὐτῷ ἐνιαυτὸν ἓνα ἀπὸ τοῦ τε[σσε]-  
 ρακοστοῦ ἔτου[ς] Καίσαρος ἐ]ργαζόμενον [κατὰ τὴν]  
 γερδιακὴν τέχνην καὶ ποιοῦντα τὰ ἐπ[ιταχθη-]  
 σόμε[να] πάντα

... We, Harmiysis and Papnebtynis, both sons of Orsenouphis, Persians of the Epigone, acknowledge that we have received from Pasonis, son of Orsenouphis,

151 Lucian *Somn.* 1, quoted above; Bergamasco (1995) 149 on remuneration; *P. Oxy.* 67. 4596 even specifies that the apprentice receives food and clothing from the master artisan “instead of wages” (l. 15, ἀντὶ μισθῶν). A slave apprentice often moved in with the master, e.g. *P. Mich.* 346a (13 BC), *P. Oxy.* 41. 2977 (AD 239).

152 *P. Wisc.* 1. 4 is the one exception that proves the rule. The apprentice’s father provided the master artisan with fourteen drachmae for clothing, and five silver drachmae a month for food. No other costs or wages are specified. Pace Hawkins (2017), who adduces *P. Oxy.* 4. 725 as an example of the assumption that the cost of apprenticeship was considerable (his n. 32). Although the parents pay for food, and the apprentice starts earning wages only after two years and four months, the master still pays for clothing. It is also the single most unfavourable example from the parents’ perspective; therefore I believe the actual costs generally were less substantial than Hawkins suggests.

16 drachmas of silver, and in return for the (remission of) interest upon this sum and the boy's keep and clothing and poll-tax at the village of Oxyrhyncha and weavers' tax and wages will produce our brother Pasion to stay with Pasonis for one year from the 40th year of Caesar and to work at the weaver's trade and perform all that he is bidden...<sup>153</sup>

In this text, two brothers 'hand over', or 'entrust' (the verb is a form of *parechomai*, commonly used for 'apprenticing out') their brother Pasion to a master weaver, Pasonis, for the duration of one year, in exchange for a loan of 16 silver drachmae; Pasonis in return will charge no interest on this sum, and see to Pasion's food and clothing as well as the weaver's tax. The advantages to the family are evident: Pasion's brothers save the expense of his keep, and they stand to gain not only from the remission of interest on the silver drachmae, but also from their brother's (unspecified) wages.

There are other such instances. It appears that Hermaiskos, son of Herakleides, was apprenticed out to the nailsmith Nilus in return for a loan of 100 drachmae, made out to his father and a certain Taurion. This we learn from *BGU* 4. 1124 (Alexandria, 18 BC), a document specifying the annulment of the teaching contract (that has not been preserved), because Herakleides and Taurion had paid off their debt with Nilos.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, *P. Oxy.* 67. 4596 (AD 264) is an apprenticeship contract for four years, where the instruction takes place in return for a loan of 400 drachmae to be returned – explicitly without interest – at the conclusion of the contract.<sup>155</sup> In this contract, a girl is to be educated as a weaver.<sup>156</sup> The text adds the significant clause that the father "is not allowed to take away his daughter within this period nor after the end of this period until he repays the four hundred silver drachmae in full".<sup>157</sup> An apprentice as surety for a loan therefore seems to me the more conclusive reading of these particular texts.<sup>158</sup> These loans have sometimes been explained the other way around, that is, as caution money ensuring

153 Translation by the editors of *P. Tebt.* 2.

154 In my opinion this document is about a loan, not a return of an advance payment of wages, as (very) tentatively suggested by Sijpesteijn (1967) in his commentary of *P. Wisc.* I. 4, lines 9–10. Compare *BGU* 4. 1154 (Alexandria, 10 BC) which demonstrates a similar construction, the *synchoreisis* explicitly drafted to pay back a loan. *P. Oxy.* 31. 2586 also includes the sum of 400 drachmae from master to father, to be returned at the end of the contract; unlike the other examples, however, this contract also specifies wages for the apprentice.

155 See J. David Thomas' 2001 edition of the papyrus, and Bergamasco (2004) 35–38 for its date.

156 An interesting detail is that she is taught in the weaving trade by an overseer (*histonarches*) rather than a weaver, on which see Migliardi Zingale (2007) 207–8.

157 Lines 21–25: οὐκ [ἐξόντος αὐ-] τῷ ἐντὸς τοῦ χρόνου ἀποσπᾶ[ν τὴν θυ-]γατέρα αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ μετὰ τὸν χρόνον [-ca.-?] πρὶν ἂν ἀποδῶ τὰς τοῦ ἀργυρ[ίου] δ[ραχμὰς] [τετρ]ακοσ[ίας πλήρη]ς. Translation David Thomas, editor.

158 Compare Pudsey (2013) 503–4 for pledging of children, with references in n.20.

that the master craftsman fulfilled his obligations to the parents/carers. The clause of *P. Oxy. 4596* is clear, however. The explanation of caution money does not clarify the early termination of Hermaiskos' teaching contract either (*BGU 4. 1124*).

In line with this interpretation, it may be pointed out that the master artisan had most to lose in case of an early termination of the contract, not the parents or carers: the students' labour input becomes more valuable after some time of training. The implication may be that artisans were not always keen on accepting apprentices. However, I believe that apprenticeship was actually appealing for craftsmen, too, because it added a relatively cheap pair of extra hands in the workshop. There is no other way to explain why Pasonis, for example, would agree to bear all the costs for Pasion in a relatively short-term contract.<sup>159</sup> The fact that many apprentices, Pasion included, receive wages from day one is a clue that their labour was valuable – even if their wage usually only increases with time spent in training.<sup>160</sup> As an extra precaution, there usually is a monetary penalty set to the parents or owners in case they should take the child away before the contract ends.

The cost of apprenticeship may therefore have been relatively low compared to the benefits. The exception seems to lie in the luxury trades on the one hand, as exemplified by the slave apprentice flute player, which fits in nicely with our understanding of the concept of conspicuous consumption. The stenographer on the other hand may perhaps be seen as an investment in a highly skilled slave that may fetch a nice price on the market or prove his worth in the household itself. The non-economic, social benefits of apprenticeship should not be underestimated either.<sup>161</sup> But there were still restrictions in access to job-training. One of them was the availability of positions and the social network to get in; the other was gender.

### *Pausiris*

The relative abundance of documentary papyri results in the added advantage that we can sometimes trace the same person in several documents over time. Four first-century documents pertaining to apprenticeship mention the same man: Pausiris, son of Ammonios, who lived in the Cavalry Parade Quarter of Oxyrynchos.<sup>162</sup> This set of documents

159 Unless of course Pasion was already experienced to a degree, continuing the apprenticeship he started elsewhere with Pasonis. Hermaiskos the nail smith's apprentice (*BGU 4. 1124*) whose contract was terminated would also have to engage in another apprenticeship to finish his training, so this is a possible scenario.

160 *P. Oslo Inv. 1470*; *PSI 10. 1110 verso 1*; *P. Oxy 14. 1647*; *P. Oxy. 38. 2875*; *P. Oxy. 31. 2586*; *PSI 3. 241*.

161 Liu (2017) 219; Munck, Kaplan and Soly (2007) 5.

162 The family archive of twenty-three documents, referred to as the archive of Pausiris Jr, son of Pausiris, is the subject of Gagos, Koenen and McNellen (1992). The documents are listed in their appendix II on pages 201-204. There is a family tree on page 181. On page 181-2 they announce their work on a forthcoming text-edition.

offers an interesting insight in economic family strategy over (part of) the life cycle. One is an apprenticeship contract, the others concern apprenticeship registrations – apparently for tax purposes, since two texts are explicitly addressed to the *ekleptoreis gerdiôn*, tax farmers of the weavers' tax. Let us take a closer look at Pausiris and his family.

In *P. Mich.* 3. 170 from AD 49, Pausiris asks for registration of his eldest(?) son, Ammonios, as the apprentice of Apollonios, master weaver. Because it concerns a registration, the particulars of the contract itself, other than the year it commenced, are unknown. It is specified, however, that both Pausiris and the master artisan are based in the same part of the city. Four years later, an apprenticeship contract (*P. Wisc.* 1. 4) testifies to the fact that Pausiris sends another son, Dioskous, to the same master artisan, Apollonios. The boy is to learn from Apollonios "the whole weaver's trade, as he also knows it himself".<sup>163</sup> Apparently Dioskous stays with Apollonios for the year of his apprenticeship despite their physical proximity, because the master is compensated by Pausiris for the boy's maintenance.

So far there is little that is unusual about these arrangements. As it turns out, however, Pausiris is a master weaver himself.<sup>164</sup> *P. Mich.* 3. 171 (AD 58) is a copy of a letter to Panechotes and Ischyron, farmers of the weaver's tax. It is a request from a certain Helen to register her orphaned nephew, Amoitias, as apprentice to Pausiris. And in AD 62, Pausiris writes to register a third son, Pausiris junior, as apprentice in the weaver's trade. This time, however, Pausiris entrusts his son not to Apollonios, but to Epinikos son of Theon – the aforementioned Helen's husband (*P. Mich.* 3. 172).

It is clear that Pausiris had his sons trained in the weavers' trade, presumably to succeed him in the family business when the time came. But if Pausiris was a master weaver, why did he not instruct his sons himself? Similarly, why did Epinikos not take on his wife's nephew as an apprentice, rather than entrust him to Pausiris?

Reputation and quality control have been suggested as reasons not to train one's own child.<sup>165</sup> There is no denying that the proposition makes good sense. The suggestion that some sort of minimum standard was upheld, would be corroborated if the apprenticeship contracts offered evidence for something like a final exam to assess the acquired skills – as scholars have tentatively suggested that they do.<sup>166</sup> However, a closer look at the four texts adduced by Bergamasco in this context, illustrates that the passages are at the very least ambiguous and in need of careful reconsideration.

163 Line 5-7: ὥστ[ε μ]αθηεῖν τὴν γερδιακὴν τέχνην πᾶσ[αν αὐτὸ]ν ὥ[ς] καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπίσταται. Translation Sijpesteijn (1967) 13.

164 This can also be gathered from *P. Mich.* 10. 598 from AD 49, which is a receipt for four installments of Pausiris' payment of the weaver's tax.

165 Laes (2011a) 191; see also Schulz-Falkenthal (1972) 210.

166 Bergamasco (1995) 133-4; Laes (2015a) 476 and idem (2011a) 191. Laes also adds *P. Oxy.* 2. 275, but in it I see no references to the apprentice undergoing a test.

In *P. Fouad*. 1. 37 (AD 48) the master writes in ll. 7-8 that he will present (ἐπιδείξομαι) the apprentice weaver to his father “before [*vel sim*] three colleagues” (ἐπὶ ὁμοτέχνων τριῶν). It may be that a similar wording recurs in *SB* 22. 15538 (13 BC), where a slave boy is to be taught how to play the flute. The heavily damaged text is reconstructed as [... ἐξετασθήσεται ὑφ’ ὁμοτέχ]νων τριῶν (l. 10), in which case the boy would “be examined by three colleagues”, but the reference to an examination remains conjectural.<sup>167</sup> The *epideixis* – demonstration – of *P. Fouad*. 1. 37 could of course refer to an exam. But both phrases may just as well have been included to prevent favouritism from the master. If what is meant in these two texts therefore is not an exam, but the simple clause that the apprentice is to be treated equally to the other apprentices, there is an unambiguous example which illustrates that this is a good possibility: this principle is also known from *P. Oxy*. 4. 725.<sup>168</sup> The other two texts that may indicate the existence of a master exam, are difficult to interpret for other reasons. The apprenticeship contract for a slave girl in *P. Mich*. 5. 346a (AD 13) states the consequences for the master “if she is judged unfledged” (ἐὰν ... κρίνηται μὴ εἰδυεῖαι, l. 9-10).<sup>169</sup> Bergamasco concedes that *krinetai* here does not necessarily refer to an official judgment, but may merely mean that the owner is dissatisfied with the slave’s progress.<sup>170</sup> The last possible reference to a master exam is *P. Aberd*. 59, which is not only a late example (late fifth, early sixth century AD) but which is also extremely fragmentary. I am hesitant to use this text to substantiate any argument.<sup>171</sup>

The attestations are few, and at least two of them refer to slave apprentices. While it is therefore difficult to exclude the possibility of a master exam altogether, I do not believe that it was very common, or that the quality control it exemplifies could be the reason to apprentice out a son to another weaver.

Perhaps part of the answer to why Pausiris did not tutor his own sons, should rather be sought in fluctuations in labour supply and demand.<sup>172</sup> In the household of Epinikos and Helen, for example, Helen’s nephew probably was an unexpected addition to their family when Amoitās’ father suddenly passed away. It is therefore not unlikely that Epinikos

167 = *BGU* 4. 1125 line 1-15.

168 AD 183; this similarity was pointed out by Scherer, the editor of *P. Fouad*. 1. 37. In *P. Oxy*. 4. 725 the possibility of an exam is unlikely because of the context. It should be noted, however, that unlike myself and (in his view) contrary to *P. Oxy*. 4. 725, Scherer believes that *P. Fouad* 1. 37 does refer to an exam of sorts.

169 Interestingly, the penalty is to pay what he has received, but an instruction fee is not specified.

170 Bergamasco (1995) 134.

171 For the date, see *BL* 5, page 1; cf below, n.189.

172 The main point of Hawkins (2016), (2006) is that the lives of urban artisans in Rome are governed in large parts by such fluctuating demand; cf Saller (2013) 75-76: “Apprenticeship was a mechanism that allowed labor to be moved from the natal family to a household where it was needed and could be supported with food”.

already had apprentices and labourers under contract at that time, which is why for them it was more profitable to apprentice out their nephew Amoitais.<sup>173</sup> Although we do not have such contextual evidence in the documents concerning Pausiris, if he, too, had sufficient men (or women) at work in his workshop, it might have been a reason to send his sons elsewhere to learn the trade. We can at least infer that when Pausiris took in Helen's nephew, Pausiris junior was still too young to add anything to the weaving business: He must have been under 10 years of age in AD 58, because he was still referred to as a minor (in Roman Egypt that means under 14 years of age) in his own registration as an apprentice in AD 62.<sup>174</sup>

Alternatively, having a son apprenticed out to another weaver might refer to different types of weaving, which points to specialization and diversification of the weaver's trade, partly to preclude competition.<sup>175</sup> This suggestion cannot be substantiated, however. To my knowledge only one apprenticeship contract casually refers to a specific type of weaving: *P. Fouad* I. 37 speaks of 'horizontal' weaving.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, the history of another family of weavers suggests that it is legitimate to speak of a family business, regardless of whether a son was educated in the craft at home or not.

Whereas these explanations may all be true to some extent, I believe that the most convincing explanation is in socio-economic networks. Recently there has been considerable attention for guilds as professional networks, and the social and familial ties of guild members, all of which are relevant here.<sup>177</sup> It is obvious that the exchange of apprentices between Pausiris and Apollonios on the one hand, and Pausiris and Epinikos on the other hand, indicates the existence of social and economic bonds between the weavers of Oxyrhynchus.<sup>178</sup> This does not preclude the interpretation that these documents offer glimpses of the professional network provided by guilds, through which the weavers found each other and which helped to minimize production costs and transaction costs. In the case of Pausiris and Apollonios, we may presume that weavers in the same part of town knew each other well; as we have seen both were from the Cavalry Parade Quarter.<sup>179</sup> It should, however, be emphasized that there is no explicit reference to *collegia*.

173 This may be the reason that orphan apprentices are relatively prominent, a pattern that is more often attested historically (Lemerrier for 19<sup>th</sup>-century France); however, Laes (2015a) 476 points out that the percentage of apprentices without a father is in line with the expected percentage of boys without a father at that age.

174 *P. Mich.* 3. 172, l. 8.

175 Hawkins (2006) 176-7; also Sijpesteijn (1967) 14 in his commentary on *P. Wisc.* 1. 4; Biscottini on the Tryphon-archive (1966) 65 ff.

176 Sitting down as opposed to standing up.

177 Liu (2017); Hawkins (2006) 125-133, spec. 132, idem (2012); Venticinque (2010). See also chapter 5.

178 Liu (2017) 217-221; Venticinque (2010) 291.

179 Hawkins (2006) 126-33; Liu (2017) 217-224 with figure 10.1 on p. 218.

### Tryphon

The weaver Tryphon was born in 8/9 AD; like Pausiris and his family, this family lived in the first century AD. It is a stroke of luck that much of the family archive has survived.<sup>180</sup> It tells us that Tryphon's grandfather, Dionysios, was a weaver, and so were his father, also named Dionysios, his uncle, and one of his two brothers (who were both younger than he). Therefore, it comes as no surprise when we learn that Tryphon's eldest son started paying the weaver's tax from age 10.<sup>181</sup> For Tryphon himself, and for his eldest son, however, there is no apprenticeship contract. Therefore, it is possible that in this family we have two instances of the eldest son learning the trade at home, from his father.

For the other weavers in the family, an apprenticeship contract was recorded. By the time Tryphon's younger brother Onnophris was of an age to start his apprenticeship, in AD 36, Tryphon's father may have passed away: the contract, *P. Oxy.* 2. 322, was drawn up by their mother, with Tryphon acting as a guardian. Tryphon was now of an age to take on apprentices of his own (27–28 years old), yet it was decided that Onnophris should be apprenticed out to another weaver.<sup>182</sup> In AD 66 Tryphon's second son, Thoonis, was apprenticed out (*P. Oxy.* 2. 275). This decision may have had to do with Tryphon's advancing age, or the fact that he lost part of his eyesight some years before.<sup>183</sup> Other considerations unknown to us may have played a part as well: the network theories outlined above with the more elaborate example of Pausiris are evocative. It appears that some learnt their trade within the family, and others were apprenticed out – but all save one remained in the family business.<sup>184</sup> Perhaps the simplest solution is also the most elegant: whenever a son was his father's apprentice, there was no apprenticeship contract. But absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

The archives of Pausiris and Tryphon give evidence for two or more generations of weavers each; and although there usually is very little evidence for what happens between generations, here at least we can point to intergenerational persistence ensuring the next generation's entry into the weaving trade.

180 Piccolo (2003); Pestman and Clarysse (1989) 74–80; Vandoni (1974); Biscottini (1966); Brewster (1927).

181 *P. Oxy.* 2. 310, 56 AD, cf Brewster (1927) 147 chart B.

182 It is not specified at what age artisans could take apprentices, which in any case had to do with skill not age, but the master carpenter in *P. Mich. Inv.* 4238 is 25 years old, and the master weaver of *P. Tebt.* 2. 385 is about the same age as Tryphon was here.

183 Brewster (1927) 140 suggests that it is because of his incapacitation. However, Biscottini (1966) 64–5 points out that Tryphon can nevertheless be seen actively involved in the weaver's trade, as his purchase of a new loom dates still later than the accident.

184 According to Brewster (1927) 138, Tryphon's other brother (Thoonis) left the district "without trade and without means" in AD 44 – with reference to *P. Oxy.* 2. 251.



### Freeborn female apprentices

Slave apprentices concern both boys and girls, in roughly equal numbers.<sup>185</sup> Most of the freeborn apprentices, however, were boys. But not all. Bradley's often-cited conclusion that there were no freeborn female apprentices should therefore be qualified, as Van Minnen attempted to do in 1998.<sup>186</sup> At the time, Van Minnen's publication failed to convince many scholars, but the publication of a new papyrus from Oxyrhynchus has added another persuasive example of a freeborn female apprentice.

In *P. Heid.* 4. 326 (AD 98), included by Van Minnen, the girl Syairûs is apprenticed out by her parents Ischyrras and Didyme to another married couple, Isidorus and Apollonari-on.<sup>187</sup> The document is extraordinary in many ways. The text does not state explicitly that we are dealing with an apprenticeship contract, nor does it say anything about wages, or about what exactly the girl is to be taught. The information we need comes from another contract, dating to a year later: AD 99. In this contract, *P. Heid.* 4. 327, the son of Ischyrras' deceased (?) brother Nikanor is apprenticed out by Ischyrras (this time without mention of Didyme) to Apollonari-on (the wife) to learn the *somfiake techne*, an unknown art which appears to be the work of an undertaker. In lines 35-39 they refer to their previous arrangement.

### *P. Heid.* 4. 327, 33-40

ἐπὶ δὲ τούτοις καὶ τὴν Ἀπολλ/  
 λ[ωνά]ριον μη[δ]ὲν παραβῆν[α]ι  
 ἢ ἔ[νοχ]ος ἔσται τῷ [Ἰ]σῳ ἐπιτίμῳ, με-  
 νο[ύ]σης κυρί[ας ἧ]ς ἔχει ἡ Ἀπολλω-  
 νά[ρι]ον τοῦ [Ἰ]σχυρᾶδος ἐτέρας  
 συ[γχω]ρή[σεως] διδασκαλείας  
 [τῆς θυγ]ατρὸς ἀ[ύτ]οῦ Συαιρ[ο]ῦδος.

Unter these terms, Apollonari-on will be bound not to trespass or she will be subject to the same penalty, while the other teaching agreement remains applicable, [the one] Apollonari-on holds from Ischyrras, concerning his [i.e. Ischyrras'] daughter Syairûs.

The connection between 326 and 327 seems to be a safe one: Syairûs is a name that we hear of more often, but it is only spelled like this twice – in our documents. Therefore we

185 Laes (2015a) counts 12 slave-contracts of whom 6 were girls; appendix 2 has 11 (5 girls).

186 Voiced by Bradley (1991) 108-9. Van Minnen (1998).

187 This text and its connection to *P. Heid.* 4. 327 is also explained in Van Minnen (1998).

may presume that *P. Heid.* 4. 326 was indeed a *synchoresis didaskaleias*, the term used in *P. Heid.* 4. 327 (l. 38) to refer to the earlier text: an apprenticeship contract for a freeborn girl.

Another girl is now also securely attested in *P.Oxy.* 67. 4596 (AD 264), a relatively recent discovery:<sup>188</sup> Aurelia Aphrodite is the daughter of Aurelios Polydeukes (line 7) and apprenticed out to learn the weaving trade. Their name (Aurelius, -a) is a clear indication of citizen status, so there is no doubt that Aphrodite was born free.

In addition to female apprentices, there are a few female master artisans.<sup>189</sup> That fact also suggests some form of job-training for women.<sup>190</sup> The woman Apollonarian was already referred to in my description of two apprenticeship contracts (*P. Heid.* 4. 326-7). A master weaver, Aurelia Libouke, features in the apprenticeship contract *P. Mich. Inv.* 5191a = *SB* 8. 13305. Finally Aria, a master of unknown trade writes a letter (*P. Mich. Inv.* 337) to her son about the financial problems she has to support her (male) apprentice.<sup>191</sup>

The scarce attestation of freeborn females in the apprenticeship contracts is likely not coincidental. That does not mean that women necessarily were without an occupation, however. Van Minnen suggested that girls were more likely to learn a job at home to preserve their chastity: "That was safer".<sup>192</sup> Girls could be married in their early teens at an age when other children, that is mainly boys, began their apprenticeship.<sup>193</sup> The age of most apprentices is unfortunately lost to us, but apprenticeships seem to commence shortly before age 14.<sup>194</sup> The marriage pattern of Roman Egypt was perhaps not all that different from that of Roman Italy: nonelite girls seem to have started marrying from age 12 onwards, but with a similar peak in the (mid and) late teens as their counterparts in Roman Italy.

Human capital theory would nevertheless suggest that investment in human capital for girls was less extensive than investment in boys, based on the expectation that women's future earnings were lower than what could be expected in the case of men. That is not just because of the expectation that a girl would be married soon, and that

188 *P. Oxy.* 67. 4596 was already briefly referred to above in the context of loans and apprenticeship.

189 I hesitate to include the fragmentary example of *P. Ross. Georg.* II. 18. 450 (AD 140) that merely hints at an apprenticeship contract for a girl; it has the occurrence of some form of the verb *manthanein* in connection with the accusative *auten*. Nor am I inclined to bring in the late example of *P. Aberd.* 59 (late 5<sup>th</sup>–early 6<sup>th</sup> c.) which is also very fragmentary. Van Minnen names two others besides *P. Mich.* 4. 326: on pages 202–3 he suggests a conjecture through which *P. Mich. Inv.* 5191a = *SB* 8. 13305 would also include a freeborn girl, but the suggestion has not been widely accepted; he also refers to an eight-century Coptic text far outside of the scope of my research (*KSB* 1. 045).

190 Van Minnen (1998) 201 pointed me to the existence of female artisans in the contracts as evidence of job-training for women, though again he did not have all the texts we have now and has to resort to a late example.

191 On *P. Mich. Inv.* 337 = *SB* 11588, see Bergamasco (2006a).

192 Van Minnen (1998) 203 and *passim*.

193 For the Egyptian marriage pattern, Hübner (2013) 48-50; Bagnall and Frier (1994) 110-16.

194 Bradley (1991) 107-8; Van Minnen (1998) 201.

she could therefore spend less time in the labour market. There was a strong gender bias on the labour market as well. Women had fewer job opportunities and because of that they probably earned less, as was the case in many historical periods. Though Roman women are sporadically attested in all types of jobs, there seems to have been a limit to female labour participation, and the apprenticeship contracts suggest that this may have limited investment in their human capital through formal apprenticeships.<sup>195</sup>

## FAMILY MATTERS: ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

All business was family business, if not always in the literal sense. There were of course family businesses in a literal sense: they were mostly entrepreneurial families working together in a workshop. Other, wage-earning, families hired out their labour in a necessarily more diversified approach to the labour market.

The urban population of Rome was dense, hence unskilled labour was probably in ample supply in the Roman cities and wages were accordingly low; and though skilled labour was more exclusive and the work paid good money, securing a job as a skilled wage-labourer may have proven difficult. In most nonelite households, therefore, it is likely that all family members – men, women, and children – were required to contribute their labour power merely to maintain, or to rise above, subsistence level.<sup>196</sup> Skilled work was the most important differentiating factor that had the potential to lift the family up from the poorer masses. Even for skilled artisans and craftsmen, however, fluctuating demand in the urban economy necessitated the availability of a flexible work force.<sup>197</sup> The most flexible work force, and the cheapest place to find additional labourers when business was good, was one's family. Conversely, when demand was low, family members were also the labourers whose time was most easily redirected towards the more rudimentary tasks in and around the house.<sup>198</sup> Labour allocation among family

195 See introduction s.v. human capital and chapter two s.v. gender. Cf Saller (2007) 106: "the effect of the ideology may have been to limit the training or human capital of freeborn women".

196 See chapter two on living standards and skilled labour; Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2017) section 4; Scheidel (2010a) 454: "Since wages for adult male workers were often so modest, labor force participation by both adult women and minors must have been high in order to fend off starvation".

197 Hawkins (2016); (2013).

198 Cf. Hawkins (2017), (forthcoming) who names this as an advantage of slaves in the permanent work force; In my view, this holds equally well for non-slave family members; Knotter (1994) 68 on the sudden growth of the cloth-production in the Dutch Republic of the nineteenth century: "Gezinsarbeid is een voor de hand liggende oplossing voor gebrek aan arbeidskrachten".

members, and between domestic work and the labour market, therefore, is the most basic form of family adaptive strategy.

### Male labour: Occupational pluralism and seasonal labour

It is interesting to note that the ideology surrounding male labourers has received little scholarly attention, certainly when compared to studies into contemporary views about Roman women. That presumably has to do with the fact that literary sources were written from a male perspective in a patriarchal society, by elite men who concerned themselves with putting women in their place.<sup>199</sup> The elite views about artisans and craftsmen outlined in the introduction to this thesis, for example, are implicitly about male labourers. There is very little material in terms of an ancient discourse about labour allocation between husband and wife. A passage of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* in which a farmer called Ischomachos recaps at length a conversation with his wife on how the gods as well as the law viewed the tasks of husband and wife. He concludes: "for to the woman it is more admirable to stay in the house than to be in the open air, but to the man it is more shameful to stay in the house than to attend to the work outside."<sup>200</sup> In other words, male labour was allocated to the non-domestic sphere one hundred per cent, be it on the farm as in the case of Ischomachos, in the workshop, or in the form of wage labour; the women, conversely, were allocated to the domestic sphere.

This extreme labour division between husband and wife is still common, even if it is no longer the only option available. The ideal has prevailed for a long time and has blended into reality, even if adhering to a labour division was regularly impossible to adhere to, because of the vital contribution women's income was to the family finances. I suspect that the prevalence of this labour pattern until the later twentieth century is one of the reasons why scholars never felt the need to explicate it for ancient Rome. Economic theory even predicts that it is often economically rational, on the assumption that women have a comparative advantage in the home.<sup>201</sup> It may be safely concluded that Roman men were expected to be the bread-winners of the family, as head of a workshop, as merchant, wholesaler or wage-labourer. Male wage-labourers were expected to find an income through a job, or when there was none, through other means. An unfortunate *faber* from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, for example, finds himself without work and without pay unexpectedly one day, and decides to sell a *dolium* so that he

199 See chapter 2.

200 Xen. *Oec.* 7. 30-1: τῇ μὲν γὰρ γυναικὶ κάλλιον ἔνδον μένειν ἢ θύραυλεῖν, τῷ δὲ ἀνδρὶ αἴσχιον ἔνδον μένειν ἢ τῶν ἔξω ἐπιμελεῖσθαι.

201 See introductory chapter s.v. male and female labour for this ideal of separate domains, with reference to Hemelrijk (2015) 9–12; and for economic theory with reference to Cigno (1991) part I, e.g., 24, 41-2.

can afford a meal in the evening.<sup>202</sup> Apuleius' carpenter seems to have had a relatively steady job with his boss for the time being. As a result of the male-female labour division, adaptive strategies for men were not concerned with the division of their time between home and work, but they were aimed particularly at battling unemployment and economic insecurity.

An interesting historical example of adaptive strategy is my grandfather. Born in 1920, my grandfather Wim was a house painter, before he was drafted to serve in the royal navy during World War II. After the war, he found work in a butcher's shop, and then as an overseer in the mines of Limburg. Two things are relevant about this historical case. The first is that as one of twelve children to a farmer, Wim only received a relatively basic education. House painter and butcher are both job-titles we might consider (semi-) skilled, but he was self-taught (the navy and the mining corporation provided additional training). Although this is just one modern case, it puts into perspective the ways in which much of the human capital may have been accumulated in the Roman world. Strategic adaptations like these must have been a general occurrence in the Roman world as well, but they are virtually impossible to trace. Perhaps the fact that there are relatively few occupational inscriptions also has to do with the fact that there were few Romans who identified with only one particular job. Specializing too far makes for less flexibility. Of course the circumstances were highly specific after the second World War, the ruins of which increased labour demand and decreased labour supply. My grandfather's career switches were responses to that demand. But the Roman world was not devoid of stochastic shocks either.

A certain flexibility was necessary to find employment. The seasonal and cyclical changes in demand for labour in the Roman world were considered in the previous chapter. The agricultural calendar, the building trades and the shipping trades all contributed to seasonal labour migration flows between town and country, and it was pointed out that recurring circumstantial factors such as the political calendar at Rome, religious festivals and even the weather also influenced a cyclical demand for luxury and other goods in the urban market.<sup>203</sup> Seasonal fluctuations in labour-intensive trades are most likely to have impacted larger numbers of unskilled labourers. As a result, many unskilled male wage-labourers performed more than one different job during the year: an adaptive strategy termed occupational pluralism. Similarly, in the nineteenth century the shipyard workers of Nova Scotia were often part-time farmers or lumberjacks.<sup>204</sup> If a worker was unemployed for part of the year, however, the alternative historical example of early twentieth-century

202 Apul. *Met.* 9.5-6, also cited in chapter 2.

203 Chapter 2; See especially Erdkamp (2016) and (2008) for seasonal labour migration and Hawkins (2016) for unstable demand.

204 McCann (1999).

Dutch dockworkers shows wives (or children) going out to find temporary work instead.<sup>205</sup> This is a useful reminder that the contribution of the other family members should also be considered. It should be kept in mind that in a high mortality regime like Rome, there may not have been an adult man in the home to be the bread-winner, and even if there was, he may not have earned enough money to sustain the family.

### Female labour

A persistent traditional view of the woman in the household envisages her movements as limited to domestic work and raising children. That was the Roman ideal as well – in practice, however, women must have contributed a lot more than unremunerated domestic work.<sup>206</sup> Women stepped in when the family income was insufficient, or when labour demands were high. In the family life cycle women's monetary contribution was the greatest in the year(s) before the birth of any children. Presumably their input went up again from the moment that older children could start looking out for their younger siblings.

There were no serious legal restrictions to do business with female shop-owners, saleswomen, or artisans, nor were there any legal obstructions for hiring women. Having said that, a perception of female weakness did uphold the system of *tutela*, or legal guardianship.<sup>207</sup> In practice, however, it is questionable that the male guardian had anything to do with business transactions, unless they were related to a woman's patrimony – which is true only for a restricted number of goods, such as land, houses, and slaves.<sup>208</sup> A woman was equal to a man in the labour market, at least according to the law.

In practice, when Roman women entered the labour market, their options were nevertheless restricted by the prevailing gender biases.<sup>209</sup> Looking at the occupational inscriptions, the range of jobs open to women was far less wide than that for men: my catalogue of job titles contains 549 entries of jobs for men, and 62 for women, of which 47 are attested for men and women alike. There are a mere 15 solely for women.<sup>210</sup> These figures illustrate a clear pattern, though the biases in the material should caution us not to take them at face value. Historically, women's work was (and is) sometimes recorded

205 Knotter (2004) 222.

206 Cf Scheidel (1995) for an extensive argument about women's contribution in agricultural (wage-) labour.

207 Dixon (1984).

208 Gardner (1995) 378.

209 See chapter 2 on engendered dual labour markets.

210 See appendix 1. Cf Treggiari (1979a) 66; Harris (2002) for a similar gender pattern in classical Athens.

in broader terms than men's.<sup>211</sup> A lack of differentiation in the (census) records therefore need not mean that women's jobs were less differentiated than men's to the same extent in reality; although for all the reasons mentioned before, a smaller range of occupational possibilities should surely be assumed. Epitaphs for Roman women in general were less numerous than those for men.<sup>212</sup> Women were perhaps also even less likely to have a stable job – with a specific job-title to record – than men. Moreover, it was common to give prevalence to family relations in the image constructed on the epitaph for a woman, to the exclusion of occupational titles. When occupation is mentioned alongside family relations, however, it is generally placed *before* familial bonds, as in *CIL* 6. 9616:

***CIL* 6. 9616**

D(is) M(anibus) / Terentiae / Niceni Terentiae / Primaes(!) medicas li/bertae fecerunt / Mussius Antiochus / et Mussia Dionysia / fil(ii) m(atri) b(ene) m(erenti)

To the divine spirits. To Terentia of Nicaea, doctor and freedwoman of Terentia Prima. Mussius Antiochus and Mussia Dionysia her children set up (this monument) to their well-deserving mother.

As this epitaph demonstrates, Roman women and their next of kin were not always devoid of a sense of female occupational pride.<sup>213</sup>

In line with Roman views of femininity, most of the professions recorded for women in occupational inscriptions are 'feminine' jobs, in the service sector or otherwise in the domestic sphere. The one occupation that is most frequently attested is *nutrix*, wet-nurse, second is *ornatrix*, or hairdresser; not surprisingly a broad spectrum of

211 Ann Ighe talking about the development of the Swedish census, 18<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> century, at the European Social Science and History Conference 2012.

212 Hopkins (1966), (1987).

213 But see Dixon (2001a) 9 for two examples where the women of the family seem to be identified primarily by their familial role and the men by occupation.

wool-work, spinning and weaving in particular, is also well-attested.<sup>214</sup> The domestic and service sector, particularly flexible hours working as a cleaning lady, laundry lady, or seamstress, is where women turned for unskilled casual work in other pre-industrial periods. In Rome, many of the occupational inscriptions in this line of work attest to female slaves and ex-slaves, however. If the predominance of servile women is a reflection of reality, the chances for a freeborn woman to find work in the service sector were severely limited. However, since we know that occupational inscriptions over-represent the servile population by a wide margin, the dominance in this sector need not have been as pronounced as the epigraphic record suggests. There is every reason to believe that women were not only engaged in the service sector. Charting the possible family strategies and checking them against the evidence makes it possible to paint a much broader spectrum of women's work in Roman society.

#### *Women involved in family business*

Cooperation of husband and wife in a business is an obvious efficiency drive.<sup>215</sup> Actual attestations of informal cooperation between spouses, however, are difficult to identify in the Roman world. Women working with their husbands are easily obscured. There are historical examples for the fact that when husband and wife shared the same occupation, it was only recorded for the man, for example.<sup>216</sup> Within the sample of occupational inscriptions, if husband and wife are both named, and the husband is recorded with job, his wife generally is not.<sup>217</sup> In the rare inscriptions that record an occupation for both partners

214 E.g. Günther (1987) 40–137 discusses occupations by sector (only for freedwomen); The job of *ornatrix* took (at least) three months of training, which can be inferred from *Dig.* 32.65.3 (Celsus apud Marcianum), but cf Forbes (1955) n. 50: "Other jurists disagreed with this". Barber's 1994 monograph on wool-working has the telling title *Women's work: the first 20 000 years: women, cloth and society in early times*. Larsson Lovén (1998) correctly demonstrated that wool-work in Rome could be a byword for the virtuous matron, though there is very little epigraphic evidence for the use of *lanifica* or *lanam fecit* solely in praise of domestic virtue (in *CIL* 6 I can think only of *CIL* 6. 10230, 11602, 15346, and 37053). In most instances the text strongly suggests that wool-work was a money-earning activity, like *CIL* 6. 6339 which simply reads *Acte quasillaria*: "Acte, spinner". Cf Dixon (2001b) 117.

215 Well-attested also in pre-industrial Europe: Holderness (1984) 425. Cf Van den Heuvel (2008) 218 on commerce in the Dutch Republic: "Scholars generally assume that in commerce wives helped their husbands in the shop, doing the necessary business administration or filling in during their absence"; Van den Heuvel goes on to nuance that view by illuminating various forms of spousal cooperation in retail.

216 This problem pervades sources for early modern England, see Erickson (2008) 282–3 on the lists of women taking apprentices from Christ's Hospital in eighteenth-century London: "The wife's occupation was not recorded in addition to her husband's if the two were identical".

217 There is a handful of instances where a woman is recorded with job and her husband is not.



in a marriage or *contubernium*, husband and wife usually do not share the same job and one or both are engaged with gendered work (see below). On a significant number of funerary monuments, a trade is only represented through an image of tools of the trade.<sup>218</sup> The deceased are then referred to by means of a portrait bust and/or the accompanying inscription. Although it is tempting to interpret the tools as the husband's in these cases, the possibility that a family business is indicated should at least be left open.<sup>219</sup>

Two reliefs in particular have been adduced to illustrate the probability of an 'unequal' division of labour between men and women within the household business. One funerary relief shows a butcher at work, while his wife sits on a chair holding what look like a stylus and wax tablet – as if she is doing the administration.<sup>220</sup> In this particular instance, however, I believe Zimmer is correct in suggesting that the stylus and the wax tablet refer to the wife's education; the relief proudly advertises that the butcher's wife was so well provided for that she did not have to work.<sup>221</sup> The other example is more convincing, however. It is a funerary relief from the Isola Sacra necropolis showing a husband and wife in a smithy: he is hammering away at the anvil to the right, and the woman on the left appears to be engaged in selling the products.<sup>222</sup> Holleran has argued that since retail requires little skill or training and is compatible with childcare, "[f]or unskilled women who married skilled artisans, retailing the products produced by their husbands may have been the easiest way for them to contribute to the household income".<sup>223</sup> Two or three reliefs from Ostia support the idea of Roman women in retail, and the epigraphic evidence also attests to the non-negligible presence of saleswomen.<sup>224</sup> This type of labour division between men and women may well be true for many historical cases, and there is no doubt in my mind that it was a common feature of Roman society. But it does not account for all the evidence, so we must look at the possibility of other strategies as well.

218 See introduction.

219 Zimmer consistently interprets the tools of the trade to refer to a man's profession, Zimmer (1982) 13.

220 Zimmer (1982) cat. nr. 2, p. 94–5; Kampen (1981) cat. nr. 53, p. 157 thinks that the wife is a book-keeper. More recently, Broekaert (2012) 47 has argued for a similar division of labour.

221 Zimmer (1982) 63; cf Dixon (2001b) 9.

222 Isola sacra, tomb 29; Zimmer (1982) cat. nr. 123, p. 185–6; D'Ambra (1988) discusses the funerary monument and the artistic program on the reliefs and sarcophagus.

223 Holleran (2013) 321. Cf Van den Heuvel (2008) 218 on commerce in the Dutch Republic: "Scholars generally assume that in commerce wives helped their husbands in the shop, doing the necessary business administration or filling in during their absence"; Van den Heuvel goes on to nuance that view by illuminating various forms of spousal cooperation in retail.

224 Kampen (1981) cat. nr. 2, 3 and 4, pp. 138–9 are also part of the six reliefs at the heart of her discussion. I deliberately write 'two or three' because the vegetable seller (nr 4) is not always identified as female; Herfst (1922) 36 suggests that women in classical Athens also must have played a large part in commerce, despite the scarcity of the evidence.

There is evidence to suggest that some women developed skills in arts or crafts equal to those of their husbands. Some did so through formal apprenticeship, as we have seen, but a wife could presumably also acquire skills as an informal apprentice first to her parents, then to her husband, learning by doing.<sup>225</sup> Through ongoing practical engagement with the trade, a woman eventually created her own occupational identity.

A few inscriptions stress the professional equality of both partners by the explicit use of both the male and the female form of their profession.<sup>226</sup> This is the case for Venusta, who married a freeborn nailsmith:

### **CIL 5. 7023**

V(iva) f(ecit) / Cornelia L(uci) l(iberta) / Venusta / clavar(a) sibi et / P(ublio) Aebutio  
M(arci) f(ilio) Stel(latina) / clavar(a) Aug(ustali) vir(o) / et Crescenti libertae et /  
Muron(i) delicatae

While she was still alive Cornelia Venusta, freedwoman of Lucius, nailsmith, set up [this monument] for herself and for Publius Aebutius of the Stellatine tribe, nailsmith, Augustalis, and for Crescens her freedwoman and Muron her delicata.

As a freedwoman, Venusta may, of course, have picked up the tricks of the trade earlier in her life during slavery in the service of a certain Lucius Cornelius, in which case her trade might have made her an attractive match for P. Aebutius. It is also possible, however, that she became a nailsmith under her husband's guidance. The *conditarii* in CIL 6. 9277 provide another telling example.<sup>227</sup>

### **CIL 6. 9277**

[Aul(ia)] Mercurian{e}<a> fecit paren/[tibu]s su{bu}<i>s Aul(io) Maximus(!) / [con]  
ditarius de castris pra/[etor]i{bu} <i>s Aul(iae) Hilaritas(!) condita/ria(e) e{o}<i>s  
in pace // ]unt / [

225 This was probably the case in eighteenth-century London: Erickson (2008) 288. Contra Hawkins (2006) 184, who presents "some of our literary and legal evidence (...) [implying] that women did not enjoy any more access to specialized craft training in 'male' occupations within their natal or conjugal households than they did outside of the household".

226 Contrary to inscriptions such as CIL 6. 37781, where a man and freedman, but not the female dedicator, are explicitly indicated as *aurifices*; with Hawkins (2006) 185–6.

227 Other couples in the same trade: CIL 6. 9211 (*brattiarum*); 6963 (*brattiarum*); 9934 (*turarii*); 370820 (*purpurarii*); 370826 (*vestiarum tenuarii*, quoted in this chapter below); with Holleran (2013) 315–6 and Groen-Vallinga (2013) 306.

Aulia Mercuriane set this up for her parents Aulus Maximus, dealer in preserved foods at the *castra praetoria*, and Aulia Hilaritas dealer in preserved foods. May they rest in peace.

Maximus and Hilaritas were freedmen, but the inscription suggests to me that they had subsequently set up their own independent family. Hilaritas, too, probably learnt her profession as a slave. Most examples of men and women working in the same business concern freedmen, but we shall see shortly that the same holds true for couples with distinct job-titles: most of the occupational inscriptions represent ex-slaves, and the evidence for conjugal couples conforms to this pattern.<sup>228</sup>

Work within the family business was the most acceptable alternative to domestic work in line with gender ideals of domesticity and feminine jobs. Whereas it is very likely that many women did help out in the family business – in line with the model of the family economy, in which the family is the unit of production – the examples just presented demonstrate that caution is necessary towards the often implicit assumption that they did so “on unequal terms”.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, such an assumption fails to explain those instances of independent women, that is women with a job different from that of their husband, or women without a husband – but with a profession.

#### *Independent women*

Women who are attested with a job different from that of their husbands must have been engaged in the Roman equivalent of a double-business household, or have worked as independent wage-labourers hiring out their labour. Such scenarios go beyond the family economy, or even the family wage economy, and represent a wider range of adaptive family strategies.

The occupational inscriptions show a noticeable pattern for non-slave couples belonging to this category. Many attestations of men and women with a distinct job-title appear to be of independent freedmen. It is significant that both husband and wife can generally be traced back to an elite household: they were ex-slaves, who were either still part of the elite household after manumission or who subsequently established a nonelite household of their own and are therefore part of the current analysis.<sup>230</sup> The example of *CIL* 6. 9824 shows a conjugal couple who probably were manumitted by members of the same family:

228 Cf Broekaert (2012) 46.

229 Saller (2007) 105–6.

230 In fact, most attestations are for slaves or freedmen from a *columbarium* in Rome, in which case the couple was probably still employed in an elite household at the time of their death, e.g. *CIL* 6. 33794; 6342 cited in chapter 4.

**CIL 6. 9824**

Critonia Q(uinti) l(iberta) Philema / popa de insula / Q(uinti) Critoni |(mulieris) l(iberti) Dassi / scalptoris v(as)<cu=UC>lari(i) / sibi suisque poster(isque) / eor(um)

Critonia Philema, freedwoman of Quintus, cookshop owner, [set up this monument] for Quintus Dassus, freedman of a woman, carver of vessels, for herself, and for their dependants and their descendants.

Philema was set free by a Quintus Critonius, and Dassus was manumitted by a woman; that woman must have been related to Q. Critonius to give Dassus his *nomen*.<sup>231</sup> Even if there is some discussion as to what *popa* may mean, as well as about the correct reading of *vascularii*, it is clear that these two people did not share the same business.<sup>232</sup> It is very well possible that in slavery, both Philema and Dassus had been employed in an elite family in very different activities. They may well have formed a family there, and retained their separate jobs after their manumission upon forming their own family unit. A similar insight explains an altar, with three inscriptions collected as CIL 6. 37469.<sup>233</sup>

**CIL 6. 37469**

Nostia |(mulieris) l(iberta) / Daphne / ornatric de / vico Longo //  
M(arcus) Nerius M(arci) l(ibertus) / Quadratus / aurifex de / vico Longo //  
Nostia / Daphnidis l(iberta) / Cleopatra / ornatric de vico / Longo

Nostia Daphne, freedwoman of a woman, hairdresser from the Vicus Longus.  
Marcus Nerius Quadratus, freedman of Marcus, goldsmith from the Vicus Longus.  
Nostia Cleopatra, freedwoman of Daphne, hairdresser from the Vicus Longus.

231 Alternatively, one may have freed the other (either way around is possible, judging from their nomenclature). Manacorda (2005) suggests that Philema's patron may be the Cretonius from Juvenal's 14<sup>th</sup> Satire (vv. 86–95); Richardson Jr (1992) 209 hazards a suggestion on the identity of Dassus as the owner of an *insula* Q. Critoni.

232 For *popa* = *popinaria*, compare CIL 14. 3709 (Tivoli); *vascularii* has been supplemented as *vir clarissimi* in CIL 6, which I would think unlikely because of his libertine status. The variant reading "*ocularius*" has also been proffered. *Scalptor* has not been doubted, however, so it is clear that Dassus was a carver of some kind.

233 CIL 6. 37469 combines ILS 9426 with CIL 6. 9736 and 3895; see Di Giacomo (2010) for the most recent edition with CIL 6. 9736. Contra Solin (2000) 168 who argues that Daphnidis does not refer to Daphne. Treggiari (1979a) 75 already suggested the connection with CIL 6. 9736.

Nostia Daphne and M. Nerijs Quadratus, judging by their names, are freedmen who probably originate from two different households. The monument does not state explicitly that Daphne and Quadratus are husband and wife, but it is a distinct possibility. Slave unions crossing household boundaries are not unheard of; alternatively the marriage may have been formed only after manumission.<sup>234</sup> Husband and wife have very different jobs, but the shared monument suggests that the newly formed family set up shop together in the Vicus Longus. Cleopatra is Daphne's freedwoman, of the same occupation.

Virtually all of the rare instances of a conjugal couple holding different occupations, outside of the *columbaria*, can be similarly explained by them maintaining a job learnt in their former household or households.<sup>235</sup> Having said that, it should also be noted that as a general rule one or both of the spouses held an exclusively female or exclusively male job, which may also have prompted the commemoration of both professions: there is no male equivalent to the *ornatrix* or *popinaria* for example, and no female *aurifex* or *scalptor* is attested. In such instances this may help to explain why both professions were recorded. Even in the case of spouses holding gender-specific jobs, however, a joint enterprise is possible. *CIL* 6. 37811 shows a couple of freedmen who ran what looks like a barbershop together.<sup>236</sup>

#### ***CIL* 6. 37811**

Pollia C(ai)/ (mulieris) l(iberta) / Urbana ornat(rix) de / Aemilianis ollas II/ M(arcus)  
Calidius M(arci) l(ibertus) to(n)sor/ Apoloni(us) de Aemilianis

Pollia Urbana, freedwoman of a woman, hairdresser from the Aemiliani, two urns. Marcus Calidius Apolonijs, freedmen of Marcus, barber from the Aemilian district.

#### *Widows*

Roman Italy, particularly its cities, suffered from high mortality rates. It was argued above that most women got married at a relatively early age, and that there was probably a significant age-gap between spouses. These factors predict the existence of a relatively

234 See chapter 4; cf also *CIL* 6. 9732; 9775.

235 Same household: *CIL* 6. 8958; 8711 (imperial); 8554 (imperial); other households: *CIL* 6. 37811, perhaps also 9792.

236 A "uni-sex establishment" was suggested by Treggiari (1979a) 75 with n. 47.

large group of young widows in Roman society.<sup>237</sup> Even without an age-gap, women who survived were likely to be widowed at some point in their lives.

The loss of a husband did not just have an emotional impact, but also had economic consequences. In some instances this was solved by the dissolution of the nuclear family: Hübner illustrates that in the extended family in Roman Egypt, the widow generally went back to her natal family, while the children remained in the house of their father's family.<sup>238</sup> Because it is likely that the nuclear family was the dominant family form in an urban environment, however, the situation may have been different in cities. The widow had become the new household head, who had to deal with the life cycle squeeze that was the structural loss of the family's main income, and who now carried sole responsibility for possible children. The widow may therefore have needed to find additional income, and if she was not employed in a money-earning occupation already, this was the time to start looking for a job.<sup>239</sup>

Widowed female household heads were freed of male supervision and freed from the 'stigma' attached to the maiden, had greater liberty in society, and implicitly also in the economy. Widows' economic endeavours were probably based on their employment during marriage. Widows could of course continue their independent jobs or work as a wage labourers; an artisan's widow may have taken over from her husband.<sup>240</sup> It should be stated that a widow would not inherit the household or the business in intestate succession: in the common variant of *sine manu* marriage the wife was not legally part of the family, thereby excluding her from a share of the inheritance. What survives of Roman testamentary practice indicates, however, that spouses were generally accounted for in wills.<sup>241</sup> It is therefore not unlikely that widows would have access to a workshop or other property. If an artisan rented rather than owned a workshop, that would facilitate continuing the family business.

237 Pudsey (2011) 61; Hübner (2013) 94-5 for a similar pattern in Roman Egypt. Saller's micro-simulation is not helpful for percentages of surviving husbands, since he presupposes universal marriage and universal remarriage until the age of 50 for women and 60 for men in accordance with Augustan marriage legislation: Saller (1994) 46.

238 Hübner (2013) 99, 103.

239 Cf Tilly and Scott (1978) 51; Wall (2007); Pudsey (2012) 167 has five examples in Roman Egypt of a male adult lodger living in with a single woman (widows?).

240 Unlike in early modern times, there were no guild restrictions to taking over. A widow was not always a full member of the guild, although she was often allowed to continue the workshop and take on apprentices of her own: Erickson (2008) 290, Prior (1985) 103, 105 for early modern England; the 'widow's right' in the Dutch Republic ensured she could continue the business if there was a master journeyman to accompany her, Schmidt (2001) 146-54, (2007) 273.

241 Champlin (1991) 112-13, 120-26, especially 124.

It is difficult to find attestations of working widows. Treggiari suggests that because a husband was also the prime commemorator, a young widow who had taken over her husband's shop or workshop was perhaps less likely to receive commemoration in an epitaph.<sup>242</sup> Occupational inscriptions include only a few women with job-title who may have been widows. Claudia Trophime in *CIL* 6. 9720 was a midwife who died age 75, and who is commemorated by her son and grandson. Her age, the fact that she has a son and grandson, and the absence of a husband among the dedicators, make widowhood the most plausible hypothesis for Claudia Trophime. The example of *CIL* 6. 9498 is a little less straightforward.

### ***CIL* 6. 9498**

D(is) M(anibus) / Iuliae Soteridi / Ianipendae v(ixit) a(nnos) LXXX / fecerunt / M(arcus) Iulius Primus / Iulia Musa Iulia Thisbe / Iulia Ampliata Iulia Roman(a)

To the divine spirits. For Iulia Soteris, wool-weigher, who lived eighty years. Marcus Iulius Primus, Iulia Musa, Iulia Thisbe, Iulia Ampliata and Iulia Romana set this up.

The inscription is open to various interpretations. It specifies names, but not the relationship between the recorded individuals. The epitaph may have been set up by five children of Iulia Soteris. It is also possible that M. Iulius Primus was not a son, but her husband. If the four Iuliae were daughters of Soteris, their father must after all have been a Iulius, too. Iulia Soteris' advanced age makes it implausible, though not impossible, that the father of her children was still alive, however. Finally, the epitaph could also be interpreted as a monument set up by her freedman and –women. Based on these scenarios, it is highly likely that this wool-weigher who died at the respectable age of eighty was a widow.

Two final examples are a *resinaria* (*CIL* 6. 9855) and a shoemaker (*sutrix*, *CIL* 14. 4698); both inscriptions are accompanied by a relief that depicts the profession. From the fragmentary image we gather that Iulia Agele, the *resinaria*, was not just a dealer in resin, but also seems to have performed beauty-treatments with it.<sup>243</sup> The inscription was set up by her freedwoman. The inscription for Septimia Stratonice, *sutrix*, was set up by a friend "because of her benefactions towards him", *ob benefacta ab ea in se*. In these last two cases, it appears that there was no family (left) to commemorate these women. They appear to be truly independent, and relatively well-off at that. Treggiari is right to point

242 Treggiari (1979a) 77.

243 Zimmer (1982) 204–5.

out that “[w]omen who appear on epitaphs alone may of course be in trade in their own right. But they may also be carrying on the business of a dead husband.”<sup>244</sup> However, carrying on the business of a dead husband is not very likely in the case of the midwife, the wool-weigher, or even the *resinaria*;<sup>245</sup> and the shoemaker at least shows no evidence of it. These examples incidentally illustrate the various social networks that a widow could depend on: the bond with her children, her freedmen, or a ‘friend’.<sup>246</sup>

“The chaste widow who refrains from remarriage after her first husband’s death is a nearly universal paradigm of female virtue across societies.”<sup>247</sup> We saw that Rome, too, subscribed to the ideal of the one-husband woman, the *univira*. It is equally universal across societies that the nonelite could not afford to keep up with this ideal and that of economic necessity many widows remarried sooner or later.<sup>248</sup> Despite marriage ideals, the emperor Augustus implanted a law stating that all Roman women were to be married, and it stipulates explicitly how long a widow could, or should, mourn before remarriage.<sup>249</sup> We can therefore expect remarriage to have been a fairly common economic strategy, especially for younger widows.

The benefits of marriage ties to the family economy have been outlined above. The widow of an artisan who had access to his workshop may have been a particularly well-desired match. In early modern England a widow’s new spouse, if he had the proper training, was allowed entry into the profession and into the guild; hence the stereotypical image of the widow marrying an apprentice.<sup>250</sup> Even if the guild restriction was not an issue in the Roman period, widows with substantial capital are likely to have been desirable marriage partners, and if she inherited a workshop, that certainly qualified as substantial capital. It may also have been in the widow’s interest to remarry within the business. Widows were not always able to continue the business on their own because they did not have the skills or the resources, or lacked both.<sup>251</sup> By analogy with the stereotype of a widow marrying an apprentice, Roman widows may have married their

244 Treggiari (1979a) 76.

245 The male equivalent for *obstetrix* and *resinaria* is to my knowledge not attested. There are several male *lanipendi* from elite *domus*: *CIL* 6. 3976; 3977; 6300; 8870; 9495; 37755; Herfst (1922) 53 notes a similar preference of the assistance of midwives rather than male medics in classical Athens.

246 Cf Müller (2010).

247 Hübner (2013) 92.

248 Goody (1990) 202. Even in Roman Egypt: Hübner (2013) chapter 6, contra Bagnall and Frier (1994).

249 Even though this law is thought to have been most effective in the upper classes, it is saying something that the period of ten months is based on the period in which a child of the deceased husband could still be born – the suggestion is that if it were not for a possible pregnancy, a quicker remarriage was better.

250 E.g. Brodsky (1986) 142 London, contra Todd (1985) 70-1 Abingdon.

251 Cf Hawkins (2006) 186.



freed slaves, particularly if they themselves did not have the skills to continue the family firm.<sup>252</sup>

This is not to say that all widows remarried. Especially in the case of wealthy widows, it was in the interest of their birth family to keep them from remarrying and preserve their property, including a workshop, or tools, within the family – witness the lawsuit filed against Apuleius by the children of his new wealthy wife Aemilia Pudentilla.<sup>253</sup>

To sum up: Women evidently assisted in the family economy in various ways, despite the existence of pervasive gender biases. Gender ideals seem to have guided the first choice in labour allocation within the family. Thus, it was considered appropriate for women to engage in housework and childcare, which from a theoretical point of view can be seen as an economically profitable form of labour differentiation. Women who engaged in the labour market were employed mostly in feminine jobs, or participated in the family business in various ways – in administration, retail, or the arts/crafts – under the leadership of their husbands, which was an acceptable alternative to domestic work. When necessary, however, it can be seen that women stepped up: on the death of their husband they would take over as the new household head, which illustrates that in many instances the wife's skills were probably no less than the husband's. Freedwomen (and freedmen) sometimes continued their earlier job, as shown by the various examples of double-business households.

### Child labour

The Romans did not have a clear concept of child labour: it appears to have been self-evident that children would contribute to the family economy to the best of their abilities. As a consequence, child labourers are seldom explicitly mentioned. This may be the reason that scholarship on child labour in Antiquity is relatively limited.<sup>254</sup> Child labour must nevertheless have been commonplace, for the simple reason that it often was economically indispensable. In many historical societies, from a certain age onwards children's labour was preferred over the mother's labour. The gender patterns in early imperial Rome discussed above presumably led to a situation where many women earned less than their children outside the household.<sup>255</sup>

252 This is suggested by Temin (2004a) 529 with reference to Garnsey (1998) 30–37; cf Broekaert (2012) and Treggiari (1979a) tentatively suggesting marriage to men in the same business.

253 Fantham (1995). This story is but one example of the Romans' fear of inheritance hunters.

254 The 2013 *Oxford handbook on childhood and education in the Roman world*, for example, includes no paper focussing on child labour, although it features in some of the papers. For child labour, see especially Laes (2011a) 148–221, Petermandl (1997), and Kleijwegt (1991); Bradley (1991) 103–24 ('Child labor in the Roman world') deliberately focuses on apprenticeship contracts. For Late Antiquity, see Laes (2015b), Vuolanto (forthcoming).

255 Hawkins (2006) 193; Knotter (2004) 225–6 with references.

If the Romans did not have a clear concept of child labour, they did display a general awareness of 'childhood'.<sup>256</sup> For many, both slave and free, their childhood jobs were probably more like chores. This is reflected in the fact that responsibilities assigned to children appear to have been adjusted to what they could do at their age. Columella for example signals bird keeping and weeding as children's work (*puerilis opera*).<sup>257</sup> Herding chickens and other animals, and taking care of younger siblings are all known activities for children. Even if they could not make a full contribution to the household income yet, the children will have ensured that the adults had more time on their hands for productive work. "Child labor was a function of people's basic struggle for survival, a means of acclimatizing children to the common realities of material life around them".<sup>258</sup>

The economic contribution of children to the family economy could take various forms. An artisan with his own workshop, as we have seen, may have instructed his children in the trade or apprenticed them out. Holleran has argued that children (like women) may also have taken to retailing the produce from the workshop, a job that required little training.<sup>259</sup> Gaius notes that many (*plerique*) left boys and girls in charge of *tabernae*.<sup>260</sup> Children from poorer families could also turn to vending, if they were not scavenging the streets begging and searching for food. In nineteenth century London, "child sellers tended to hawk cheap products that required little capital outlay, such as oranges, apples, or watercress; girls also sold flowers", and child hawkers are still common among the poor in many places today.<sup>261</sup>

Children were also judged on their individual merits, being singled out for a number of individual occupations. They were popular performers, and are attested as actors, mimes, dancers, acrobats and musicians; there were also child athletes who competed in agonistic festivals. In the mines, too, collecting rubble from the narrow mineshafts was specifically reserved for children, who were relatively small and agile. If comparative evidence is anything to go by, on the low end of the poverty scale children might also end up in prostitution.<sup>262</sup> A late antique legal case from Hermopolis suggests prostitution

256 See, e.g., Evans Grubbs and Parkin (2013) on the history of scholarly recognition that there was a concept of childhood in Antiquity.

257 Petermandl (1997) 119 with reference to Colum. RR 2.2.13 (weeding, *quod vel puerile opus*, "work that is surely child's play"); 8.2.7 (for bird keeping as suitable to old ladies or children (*anus sedula vel puer*)), among other examples.

258 Bradley (1991) 118.

259 Holleran (2012) 224, (2013) 316.

260 Dig. 14.3.8 *Nam et plerique pueros puellasque tabernis praeponunt*.

261 Holleran (2012) 220; The number of children hawking on the street in contemporary Nigeria, to name but an example, is increasing, see e.g. Ojo (2013), George (2011), Umar (2009), Oyefara (2005) – in this research there is a particular focus on the risks involved for girls.

262 Laes (2011a) performers 195-197; sports 197-200; the poor 200-206; mines 212-216

provided a necessary income for some families in the Roman Empire: mother Theodora sues a councillor involved in the death of her (adult) daughter, a prostitute. The prefect assigns to her a substantial sum of money, for the sole reason that with the death of her daughter, she had lost her main source of income.<sup>263</sup>

Only a small number of young children with a job title can be identified in funerary epigraphy. In large part that is a result of the nature of the evidence. It is not very often that age is commemorated, and it is not very often that a profession is recorded: as a result, children are especially unlikely to be represented with an occupation. Moreover, children were not always assigned a particular occupation, when they were too young to have picked up a trade. And especially in the case of very young children, it is likely that familial bonds preceded ties of labour in their epitaphs. Nevertheless some of the occupational inscriptions were set up for young children. Their jobs range from unskilled to highly specialized occupations. A boy of four years old was commemorated as a tailor of fine clothing (*vestiarius tenuarius*); in this case I am inclined to think it was the job he was expected to take up later in life rather than a current occupation, although he may well have participated in the labour process in some small way.<sup>264</sup> Another, twelve-year-old boy is commemorated by his sister as a shoemaker (*sutor*); he, too, was probably a shoemaker in training.<sup>265</sup> In most cases, however, it is likely that the (semi-)skilled work was actually performed by the young employees themselves. Nine year old Viccentia was a gold spinner (*auri netrix*) for example, and we know of a few hairdressers (*ornatrices*) who were still quite young.<sup>266</sup> And a boy named Pagus was commemorated for his skills as a jeweller or goldsmith (*gemmarius*) in an elaborate epitaph:

#### CIL 6. 9437

D(is) M(anibus) / quicumque es puero lacrimas effunde viator / bis tulit hic senos  
primaevi germinis annos / delictumque fuit domini spes grata parentum / quos  
male deseruit longo post fata dolori / noverat hic docta fabricare monilia dextra  
/ et molle in varias aurum disponere gemmas / nomen erat puero pagus at nunc  
funus acerbum / et cinis in tumulis iacet et sine nomine corpus / qui vixit annis XII  
/ mensibus VIII diebus XIII ho(ris) VIII

263 BGU 4. 1024. 6-8 exc. G; discussed by Bagnall (1996<sup>4</sup>) 196-8, with n. 87 refuting the comment that the text may be fictional; Compare Crobyle sending her daughter Corinna to become a courtesan in Luc. *DMeretr.* 6.

264 CIL 6. 6852.

265 CIL 6. 10546; cf *Dig.* 9.2.5.3 quoted earlier in this chapter for an unlucky apprentice cobbler.

266 *Aurinetrix*: CIL 6. 9213, *ornatrices* CIL 6. 9726 (12 yrs), 9728 (13 and 19 yrs old), and 9731 (9 yrs).

To the divine spirits. Whoever you are, traveller, shed your tears for this boy. Two times six years he carried the years of budding youth. He was the love of his master, the thankful hope of his parents, who did not deserve to mourn long after the end. He knew how to make intricate bracelets and to gently set various gems in gold. The name of this boy was Pagus, but now his ashes lie in a tomb, after a premature demise, a corpse with no name. He lived for 12 years, 9 months, 13 days and 8 hours.

It is evident that the labour input of children was of vital importance to the family. Their contribution started at an early age, with simple tasks. Like Pagus, however, young children with an actual job title generally appear to be of servile descent. The four-year-old boy tailor mentioned above, too, was commemorated as a freedman.<sup>267</sup> Viccentia, the gold spinner, is likely to have been a slave girl because of her single name, though this is not stated explicitly. Many of these young slaves would have been trained within wealthy elite households, which seem to have catered to their own slaves' education.<sup>268</sup> As we have seen, however, there are clear indications that freeborn boys and girls also had access to job-training, and it is likely that children adapted their labour power to the family economy in whatever way they could.

### The hereditary nature of jobs

Based on the foregoing discussion, many Roman children may be expected to have followed their parents in their choice of career. Informal learning in the households was identified as one of the most economical solutions to build up human capital. That strategy automatically confers the family trade onto the next generation. The examples of formal apprenticeship also showed continuity of profession within the family, even if children were sometimes apprenticed out rather than taught by their father, as illustrated by the weaver families of Pausiris and Tryphon. Indeed, family ties occasionally are proudly stated in occupational inscriptions, as in that of the two brother carpenters of *CIL* 6. 9411 (*duo fratres tignuarii*), or that of the brother painters of *CIL* 6. 9796 (*fratres pigmentarii*). Presumably the brothers were involved in a family trade. At other times a family business is not stated, but can fairly securely be inferred.<sup>269</sup>

267 It is suggested in chapter 4 that this is probably a case of death-bed manumission.

268 See chapter 4. Laes (2011a) 184-189; Saller (2013).

269 As in *CIL* 6. 33809, discussion in Groen-Vallinga (2013) 307; A spectacular instance of family continuity that falls outside the scope of my current research is the mention of a *bapheus* from Thyatira, "the sixth of his line to head the shop", ἐπισητάμενον τοῦ ἔργου ἀπὸ γένους τὸ ἕκτον, *IGR* 4. 1265; translation MacMullen (1974) 98 with n.23 p 188.

Continuing in the line of work of one's parents does not equal working in the household of birth. In his analysis of 'commemorative links' in the occupational epitaphs from the city of Rome, Cameron Hawkins found that artisans were rarely commemorated by their sons or daughters – ties of dependency between patrons and slaves or freedmen are much more common.<sup>270</sup> On the plausible assumption that the commemorator frequently was also heir to the deceased, Hawkins concludes from these findings that few Romans inherited a (household) business from their parents, which seems to have fallen to freedmen instead. Hawkins deserves credit for stressing the importance of freedmen as heirs to the household business. This finding might well be related to the predominance of freedmen in the arts and crafts: combined with the fact that the freed had relatively few freeborn children, their own freedmen became the natural successors.<sup>271</sup> But Hawkins' conclusion that children who did not inherit invariably had a different occupation from their parents does not hold; Hawkins himself points out that when fathers and sons were demonstrably active in the same trade, they were often working in separate workshops. That observation actually sits nicely with the outcome of my discussion of family form above, which suggests that in an urban context sons as well as daughters as a rule moved out to constitute their own economic household unit upon marriage.

Thus, Hawkins' analysis should not be taken to mean that children generally did not follow in their parents' footsteps, or that family labour was inconsequential when compared to servile labour in the household.<sup>272</sup> The evidence for family ties in occupational inscriptions, in my view, is inconclusive about the frequency of inherited occupations. Occupational inscriptions are rare, and rarer still among those with family ties to commemorate: a preference for recording familial bonds rather than profession is the main reason why freedmen and slaves are overrepresented in the occupational inscriptions to such a high degree.<sup>273</sup> Family labour therefore is easily obscured. Likewise, the theory of intergenerational persistence does not require that persistence to be in the same job, but it would have been the obvious choice. It is reasonable to presume that inherited jobs were more frequent than the sources suggest, even if their actual share must remain unknown.

There is evidence both for continuity and diversification of occupation. Both are often implicit in the same source. Thus, Richard Saller adduces as evidence for informal learning at home Vitruvius' remark that architects used to train their own children on the

270 Hawkins (2006) 147-159 and 269-271. Only 10% of the artisans in his sample were commemorated by their children, p. 157.

271 De Ligt and Garnsey (2012) 85-90, and see below.

272 As e.g. Laes (2015a)(2015b) seems to suggest.

273 Joshel (1992).

job.<sup>274</sup> Vitruvius' reference to past practice may still have been valid during the Principate, but he could also be reminiscing about times long gone in a silent complaint that sons were not trained as architects anymore.<sup>275</sup> Legal texts attest to fullers who engaged both sons and apprentices in their workshop.<sup>276</sup> The census documents from Roman Egypt provide a handful of examples of extended households that record the employment of adult males from different generations, where some sons hold the same occupation as their father, and others have a different job.<sup>277</sup> Lucian initially started out in the family trade of sculpting, before he made a career switch to writing. Pausiris and his sons were all weavers, but Tryphon is known to have also had a brother who was not a weaver. Finally, there are some indications for family bonds within professional associations, but the evidence is scanty and very rarely indicates more than one generation.<sup>278</sup>

In an urban context, as we have seen, the Romans needed to be flexible enough to adapt to the fluctuations in the market, which is one explanation for some children not following an inherited vocation.<sup>279</sup> Successful entrepreneurs will have continued their business, though, and it is likely that some of them did so through their children. The adaptive family strategies of continuity or diversification both evidently were possible during the Principate, and both strategies were actively employed. Market forces seemed to have functioned well to fulfil labour demands for a long time: it was only in the fifth century that the emperor Honorius felt the need to coordinate the process of continuity of trades: he made membership of the professional organizations hereditary, in what reads like an attempt to tie artisans' families to their job.<sup>280</sup>

### **Patrons and freedmen: the freedman economy<sup>281</sup>**

The Romans had a wide spectrum of options available for continuing the family name, and the family business. Biological children could or did not always take over, for various reasons. Adoption of an heir presented the Romans with an alternative, but to find the preferred choice of an adult male relative who was of the right age, as well as educated

274 Saller (2013) 75; Vitruvius 6 pr 6.

275 Cf Hawkins (2006) 146.

276 Flohr (2013) chapter 2.

277 Bagnall and Frier (1994) 72–4, with some discussion by Hawkins (2006) 144–5.

278 See chapter 5; Venticinque (2010) 279–82; Liu (2009) 181–3. Hawkins (2006) 143 notes that “because most members of professional associations appear to have been independent artisans who ran their own enterprises, fathers and sons who held contemporaneous memberships in the same association were arguably proprietors of separate workshops rather than co-workers in a family business”.

279 Hawkins (2006). Briefly touched upon by MacMullen (1974) 98–99.

280 *Cod. Theod.* 14.3.21, 403 AD; Waltzing, vol. 2 (1896) 306–7.

281 This refers to the title of Verboven (2012a).

in the right trade (see above), may have been more complicated than looking to the trusted and experienced slave labourers of the household and setting them free. A manumitted slave became quasi-family, and was family in name because the *nomen gentilicium* of the patron was bestowed on the freed slave.<sup>282</sup> Manumission thus seems to have been at the heart of a particularly Roman form of family business, made up of patron and one or more freedmen, or of *colliberti*.<sup>283</sup> This phenomenon is well-attested in epigraphy, and it is noteworthy that the patron when recorded regularly was a freedman himself – which led to a pattern of multiple generations of freedmen. If, as has been argued, freedmen had few children of their own, that explains their choice for this inheritance strategy.<sup>284</sup>

Verboven would go so far as to say that “slavery was a passing phase necessary to produce [skilled] freedmen”.<sup>285</sup> The number of freedmen with skilled jobs and responsible positions recorded in occupational inscriptions does suggest that the presence of such freedmen in the family business was fairly common. Their role in the family firm could vary: “Probably some freedmen (...) were branch-managers, some had separated from the parent firm, some may have inherited businesses from their patrons”.<sup>286</sup> Others will have stayed with their patron under the same roof.

Many of the separate nonelite, freedmen households must have originated from larger elite *domus*. Others were set up by the freed slaves of nonelite patrons. The connection between patrons and freedmen could take various forms, but the bond was never completely severed. It has recently been argued that the entire institution of manumission in fact depended on the continued guidance of freedmen by their former master. Patrons (or his/her heirs) could rely on a number of informal and formal ways to ensure their freedmen’s loyalty.<sup>287</sup>

In terms of labour economics there was a distinction between slaves who bought their own freedom, and slaves who were freed: those who were granted their freedom remained in the debt of their patron. These freedmen owed their patron a certain amount of labour input called *operae libertorum*. *Operae* were a legal obligation that was generally specified as a number of working days, for which a patron could call on his or her

282 Mouritsen (2011a) 36–51.

283 Mouritsen (2011a) 218–9.

284 Notably in the demographic model for Herculaneum by De Ligt and Garnsey (2012) 85–90; cf Garnsey and De Ligt (2016) 83 n. 38.

285 Verboven (2012a) 88.

286 Treggiari (1979a) 72; cf Verboven (2012a) 93.

287 “[D]efined in vague terms of *obsequium*, *reverentia*, and *pietas*”, Mouritsen (2011a) 51–65 (‘controlling freedmen’) at 57. Mouritsen in this chapter stresses the importance of social discourse, and the (limited) options in Roman law, for keeping freedmen ‘in their place’; cf Hawkins (forthcoming).

freedmen (who, in turn, could subcontract these working hours). Hawkins stresses the importance of these *operae fabriles*, particularly in the case of skilled work. In his view, manumission was a powerful tool to battle the risks of fluctuating demand that was characteristic of Roman society. The labour of freedmen could be called upon whenever the patron chose; such a flexible workforce of freedmen saved much in transaction costs in times of high labour demand.<sup>288</sup> This interpretation of freedmanship as a solution in times of fluctuating demand is based on a majority of freedmen moving out, so that they did not need maintenance but could be drawn upon as a labour force.<sup>289</sup> The subject of *operae* looms large in the juristic literature, although it remains to be seen how widespread *operae* were.<sup>290</sup> However, *operae* were not the only method of economic cooperation between patron and freedmen.

Verboven envisages the bonds between patrons and freedmen as “trust networks”, where freedmen benefited from the funds and economic advocacy of their patron; they in turn promoted their patron’s interests, as agents or business partners for example.<sup>291</sup> It is likely that economic benefits for both sides would have resulted from the economic bond.

Funerary monuments set up by freedmen to their patron provide convincing evidence for economic cooperation after manumission, as in this example of two axle-makers from Rome.<sup>292</sup>

#### **CIL 6. 9215**

M(arcus) Sergius M(arci) l(ibertus) / Eutyclus / axearius sibi et / M(arco) Sergio  
M(arci) l(iberto) / Philocalo / axeario patron(o).

M. Sergius Eutyclus, freedman of Marcus, axle-maker [set up this monument] for himself and for M. Sergius Philocalus, freedman of Marcus, axle-maker, his patron.

288 Hawkins (forthcoming); (2006) 214 ff.

289 Hawkins (forthcoming). He acknowledges that some freedmen could and did remain in the household, for which see Mouritsen (2013) and my chapter 4.

290 On the possible marginality of *operae*, see Mouritsen (2011a) 224–6. When a slave bought his/her own freedom, he/she was not liable for *operae*; Hopkins (1978) 128–9 believed this was the majority of freedmen.

291 Verboven (2012a) 98–100; see also Mouritsen (2011a) 213 on the “practical economic opportunities for the new freedman”. For associations as trust networks, see chapter 5.

292 CIL 6. 9215. Joshel (1992) 128–145, specifically 136–7 for the example of the axle makers.



There is no doubt about their relative positions or occupations. Another example is a little more complex, but illustrates a similar situation.

**CIL 14. 2721 = 2722**

P(ublius) Licinius P(ubli) l(ibertus) / Philonic[us] // P(ublius) Licinius P(ubli) l(ibertus) / Demetrius patrono fecit<sup>293</sup>

[For] Publius Licinius Philonicus, freedman of Publius. Publius Licinius Demetrius, freedman of Publius set up [this monument] for his patron.

This text is inscribed on a relief with two portrait busts (*figure 3.1*): presumably Philonicus is the younger man on the left, and Demetrius the older man on the right (their names are written under their portraits). In its shape it conforms to the well-known type of family portrait groups of *liberti*, signalling that Demetrius meant to represent their bond as a family unit. The portraits are lined by prominent motives: *fascēs* on the left, the tools of a carpenter on the right and on the tympanon. In my view, this must mean that Demetrius set up this relief for his patron Philonicus, and that they were bound by a shared occupation as carpenters.<sup>294</sup>

293 CIL 14. 2721 = CIL 14. 2722, photograph: Clauss-Slaby database. I have added the square brackets for Philonic[us], and the word *fecit* in accordance with the text in George (2006) n.24, though they are lacking in the Clauss-Slaby transcription. Photos clearly show that this is justified. The meaning of the text or even the names of the Licinii were never in doubt, however.

294 George (2006) 22-3 believes that they are *colliberti* and that Demetrius set up this or another monument for their (common) patron. It is my contention that *patrono fecit* here must refer to the monument itself, and that therefore the younger man on the left, Philonicus, also a freedman (not coincidentally the one with the *fascēs* by his side, hence possibly a *sevir augustalis*) is the patron of Demetrius on the right. The structure of the text incidentally is an exact parallel of CIL 6. 9215 above.



*CIL* 6. 37826, finally, records no less than four ‘generations’ of freedmen in one epitaph.

#### ***CIL* 6. 37826**

[Camer]ia L(uci) l(iberta) Iarine fecit / [L(ucio)] [Cam]erio L(uci) l(iberto) Thrasoni  
patrono / [et] L(ucio) Camerio L(uci) l(iberto) Alexandro / patrono eius et / [L(ucio)  
C]amerio Onesimo lib(erto) et / [vi]ro suo posterisque omnibus / [vest]iariis  
tenuariis de vico Tusc(o)

Cameria Iarine, freedwoman of Lucius, set this up to Lucius Camerius Thrasonus her patron, freedman of Lucius, and to Lucius Camerius Alexander, freedman of Lucius, his [i.e. Thrasonus'] patron, and to her own freedman and husband Lucius Camerius Onesimus and all their descendants, fine tailors from the Vicus Tuscus.

The text indicates the freedmen’s working relationship in a workshop (or workshops – plural?) located in the Vicus Tuscus in Rome. The text records that Lucius Camerius Alexander was the one who freed Thrasonus, who in turn manumitted Iarine, who freed

(and married) Onesimus. Because L. Camerius Alexander, who is at the top of the pyramid in this epitaph, was himself a freedman, we know that there was in fact at least one more L. Camerius (...). Their shared profession and shared location suggests that they were probably working closely together. Trying to maximize the information from this text, it could be argued that even the marriage between Cameria Iarine and L. Camerius Onesimus was part of an economic strategy.<sup>295</sup>

If economic ties between master and slave were regularly maintained after manumission, then what about the independent freedman? Garnsey has argued persuasively for the economic independence of the rich freedman: with wealth came autonomy.<sup>296</sup> In this view, the freedmen made up a new class of self-made men that fulfilled a particular, prominent position as traders and craftsmen in the Roman economy. Garnsey's views have been widespread in the historiography of freedmen as the *nouveaux riches*. That there was some competition between the new freedmen and the established patron is evident from the fact that the jurists consider extensively the possibility that a patron would object to his freedman exercising the same trade as he, in the same place. If a patron did object, the law prevented him to do anything about it.<sup>297</sup> More recently, however, Mouritsen has postulated that it generally was the economic support of a patron, and thus dependence rather than independence, that brought forth the wealthy freedman.<sup>298</sup> Even if the death of the patron de facto secured a freedman's independence, the legacy of having worked for that patron may have remained influential. The *familia Veturia*, for example, appears to have brought forth many freedmen who had mastered the art of purple dying: *purpurarii*.<sup>299</sup> Doubtlessly these freedmen learnt the trade as slaves in the household. They were rewarded with manumission and the opportunity to set up shop themselves, presumably aided by the financial support as well as the name

295 Cf Broekaert (2012) 46 "We can therefore imagine that Roman businessmen tried to encourage inner-family marriages between freedmen with the same specialization as some kind of guarantee for prolonged cooperation."

296 Garnsey (1998) 28–44 = Garnsey (1981), with d'Arms (1981) 144–8, specifically on Augustales in Ostia and Puteoli.

297 *Dig.* 37.15.11 (Papinian) for a freedwoman(!); *Dig.* 37.14.2 (Ulpian); *Dig.* 37.14.18 (Scaevola); The jurists are quite resolute in their protection of freedmen rights, but see *Dig.* 38.1.45 (Scaevola), "Can a freedman of a cloth merchant exercise the same trade in the same society and the same place as his patron – who does not want this? He responded: 'I can profer nothing, why he should not, if the patron experiences no damage from it'", *Libertus negotiatoris vestiarii an eandem negotiationem in eadem civitate et eodem loco invito patrono exercere possit? Respondit nihil proponi, cur non possit, si nullam laesionem ex hoc sentiet patronus*. Cf Verboven (2012) 96; Mouritsen (2011a) 212 n 28.

298 Mouritsen (2011a) 228–247, e.g. at 234: "Since the one advantage which the freedmen enjoyed was their familial background and patronal connection, an 'independent' freedman would generally have been a disadvantaged freedman".

299 Dixon (2001b) collects the evidence: *CIL* 6. 9498 and 37820; *CIL* 14. 2433; *NS* 1922, 144.

of their patron(s), which appears to have become a distinguished purple-dyers' brand: *Veturius*.

In sum, the occupational inscriptions suggest that freedmen constituted "extended *familiae*".<sup>300</sup> Economic family ties, it should be added, ran horizontally between *colliberti* as well as vertically between patron and freedman.<sup>301</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The family lay at the heart of Roman society. It was crucial in determining the life course of an individual in every way, ranging from their birth, to investment in education and participation in the labour market. This chapter attempted to show the importance of the family in economic decisions.

The Roman family was ubiquitous. It was constituted upon marriage, and for free-born Romans and for Roman women in particular, marriage was virtually universal. A largely neo-local marriage pattern was identified in the city, which means that every marriage constituted a new economic family unit. The family itself was characterized by the dynamics of demographic and cultural determinants: the prevailing cultural norms were that the couple would have children; the prevailing high mortality regime predicted that the marriage would not necessarily last very long. The urban family generally started out as a conjugal couple and expanded with children, with the possible addition of slaves or freedmen. In an urban context, it appears that the dominant family structure was the simple family, with extensions of slaves, freedmen and/or relatives. That should not obscure the fact that the family changed quickly over time as it fell apart, and was subsequently reconstituted.

The family changed over time in a natural life cycle as well. The demographic life cycle presented economic restrictions to the economic contribution of individual family members: a mother's labour opportunities were restricted by childbirth and the care of young children; very young children were not yet able to contribute (much), even if they were put to work from a very early age onward. This chapter underlined the fact that the money-earning activities of women and children were vital to the family. The economic benefits of family cooperation are clear. In this context it is significant that in the Roman empire, the family included servile labour. Servile labour is not restricted by demographic restrictions to the same extent as free labour of family members is. Where the adaptive element of the early modern family largely consisted of women and

300 Extended *familiae*: Verboven (2012) 99.

301 *Dig.* 17.2.71.1 (Paul) mentions a *colliberti societas*. For more examples of inscriptions with *colliberti*, see chapter 4.

children, therefore, the slave component made the Roman family more versatile and capable of adapting to the market. Slaves could be bought, educated, hired out, sold, or manumitted, all according to needs. Children could only be educated or hired out. Even in the continuity of the family business, substitutes for biological children in the form of foundlings, adoptive children and freedmen were not uncommon.

An interpretation of Roman society on the basis of the family economy model would expect to find predominantly small workshops or artisans and craftsmen in the city: family businesses with one or two slaves and/or apprentices. That does not explain all of the sources, however. There were variations to the theme of 'family business', notably because of the significant role that freedmen played in the economy: freedmen were part of the extended family and were therefore included in family ties. Sometimes they even made up an economic unit of *colliberti* with or without their patron. The evidence attests to a complex web of labour relations that extended beyond the household. Household businesses are most likely to explain the situation of artisans and craftsmen – not surprisingly also the group that is best attested in the occupational inscriptions, but not everyone was an artisan or craftsman. The pull of the city must have attracted large numbers of unskilled workers as well, seasonal workers as well as permanent migrants. Particularly in the city the importance of skilled and unskilled wage-labour should therefore not be underestimated.

