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Work and Care of Women. The Case of Two “Manifatture” (Factories): The San Michele a Ripa Factory and the Italian Tobacco Factory

Travail et attention des femmes. Le cas de deux « Manifatture » (manufactures) : La manufacture de San Michele a Ripa et la manufacture italienne de tabac

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Résumés

English Français

This paper is part of the history of gender economics, adopted a microeconomic approach to study household economic decisions, labor, extended by the new discipline of gender economics in order to study gender differences and their economic implications, especially in the labor market. The present contribution intends to examine how the gender difference and the wage difference were present in the modern age and, in this regard, we want to deepen an emblematic case in the heart of Italy, that of the eighteenth-century Manufacture of San Michele a Ripa Grande and that of the nineteenth-century Italian Tobacco Factory. The two case studies have been identified because, even if in different periods, they represent for the Roman case, two important examples for the work of women in industry, because they represented, in the long term, the two most important manufactures and industries in Rome (which compared to the European capitals has never been an important industrial center). The sources used were found in the State Archives of Rome and little-used economic sources were also used, as well as the sources used for the Tobacco Factory found in the library of the Ministry of Finance are original.



Cet article est une contribution à l'histoire de l'économie du genre, il adopte une approche microéconomique pour étudier les décisions économiques des ménages, leur travail, en prolongeant cette approche grâce à la nouvelle discipline de l'économie du genre, afin d'étudier les différences entre les genres et leurs implications économiques, en particulier sur le marché du

travail. La présente contribution entend examiner comment les différences entre les genres et les salaires étaient présentes à l'époque moderne et, à cet égard, nous voulons approfondir un cas emblématique de l'Italie, celui de la Manufacture de San Michele a Ripa Grande du XVIIIe siècle et celui de la manufacture italienne de tabac du XIXe siècle. Les deux études de cas ont été choisies car, même si elles se situent à des époques différentes, elles représentent, pour le cas romain, deux exemples importants du travail des femmes dans l'industrie, et car ces deux manufactures ont constitué, sur le long terme, les deux plus importantes manufactures de Rome (qui, en comparaison à d'autres capitales européennes, n'a jamais été un centre industriel important). Les sources utilisées proviennent des archives d'État de Rome ; des sources économiques peu traitées dans la littérature ont également été utilisées ; les sources utilisées pour la manufacture de tabac proviennent de la bibliothèque du ministère des Finances et sont originales.

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : travail des femmes, salaires, 18e siècle, 19e siècle, écart entre les genres

Keywords: women work, wages, 18th century, 19th century, gender gap

Texte intégral

- 1 Working in the modern age was rarely a choice, an emancipation, a career but, very often it was above all fatigue, pain, constraint in a world where the social ideal was the rentier, head of the family and his servants, who lived on income and he did not exercise mechanical arts (Hafmeester and Moll-Murata, 2011; Arnoux, 2012; Bellavitis, 2016, 16-30). As for women, the most common female trades, such as spinning, did not require a lot of physical strength and therefore could be carried out until very advanced ages, even by men, who often, in hospices, dedicated themselves to this type of occupation for keep. The charity systems of the old regime, moreover, did not provide for people hospitalized in hospices or orphanages to remain idle, but had to contribute by working for their own maintenance (Groppi, 2010). Some occupations were considered more suitable for women than others and there are some activities that can only be exercised by female individuals. However, the very notion of "women's" and "men's" professions was neither predictable nor immutable, as it is not today. But a recent literature is bringing to light how far from episodic was the presence of women engaged in areas and jobs considered to be predominantly male (Di Sante and Turriziani, 2017). At the end of the sixteenth century, the Lateran canon Tommaso Garzoni paid homage to all the professions in the world and, among female activities, Garzoni had no qualms only towards laundresses and spinners, noble and necessary arts, while he gave a description not at all flattering. As Angela Groppi and Anna Bellavitis have well pointed out, the real and symbolic value of work has changed from one society to another and from one era to another, but women's work has long been underestimated (Groppi, 1996; Bellavitis, 2016, 10).
- 2 Crafts, domestic service and retail trade were the most common female occupations in urban realities: many women worked as employees of municipal and religious institutions but recent studies document that the presence of women, anything but episodic, was also to be found in construction sites (Zanoboni, 2016, 91-97; Davis, 1991). However, working for a living was for the woman, in the countryside as in the city, a daily and ancient necessity. Women's activities were often defined not on the basis of being but on the basis of doing (Bellavitis, 2016, 25; Groppi, 1996; Feci, 2004; Di Sante and Turriziani, 2017). The tendency not to define work as an identity that structures the person but as an accessory and occasional fact is found in the definitions that women gave of themselves (Bellavitis, 2016, 25). The literary texts of the fourteenth century naturally hint at this condition of the woman who, young or married, in the city as in the countryside, earned a living by spinning wool (Ortaggi Cammarosano, 1997, 109-171). This paper is part of the history of gender economics, adopted a microeconomic approach to study household economic decisions, labor, extended by the new discipline of gender economics in order to study gender

differences and their economic implications, especially in the labor market (Fuster and Birulés, 2021). This contribution wishes to contribute to deepening the work of women, from an economic point of view, in modern and contemporary Europe through two case studies: San Michele a Ripa and the Tobacco Factory, in Rome. Why the choice of these two institutions in two different eras? Why Rome?

1. The Sources and the Background

3 From the point of view of sources, women were hidden from quantitative ones, in particular in tax sources and censuses (Travaglini, 1999, 294); unlike men, they were almost always identified on the basis of their role in the family, as daughters and wives or widows, rather than in relation to the activity exercised and this was particularly true in the case of married women (Bellavitis, 2016, 24).¹ It should be emphasized that many people, men and women, practiced various poorly specialized professions throughout their lives, and a professional identity was the privilege of a relatively small part of society.

4 In this case specific one was used remarkable literature that has been enriched with important ones level contributions international but also national and in particular on Rome.²

5 How long it concerns the case Roman sources archival used they are by nature economic and social and are concentrated, for the case of San Michele a Ripa, at the State Archives of Rome while for the second case the Memories and reports of the Ministry of Industry and Finance were used. With regard to quantitative aspects, such as wages, reports and censuses edited by the Ministry of Industry and Finance were used, kept in the library of the Ministry of Finance. Further information for the eighteenth century has been found in the Archive of San Pietro. The two cases that will be presented can be interpreted as economic changes in women's work within two of the most significant Roman manufacturing companies, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The elements, which we are going to highlight in this analysis which is by no means to be considered exhaustive, should be read by referring not so much to other Italian or European production realities as to the specificity of the Roman case, to a development model that is in many ways atypical and yet capable of incorporating innovative ideas and to offer opportunities for social mobility. In a city that, in the sixteenth century, had seen Pope Sixtus V work to increase manufacturing, spinning, carding and weaving continued in the nineteenth century to be the traditional occupation of the poor. Not only in Rome the wool industry and in particular the Manifattura del San Michele a Ripa was felt by the ruling class as a remedy for pauperism but the concern to employ the greatest number of workers in this city was more than elsewhere and longer than elsewhere, an element of primary importance for determining the general lines of government interventions.

6 In the eighteenth century there was a tendency towards a mercantilistic culture in central government. In this regard it is necessary to make some brief clarifications regarding the reformism of the ecclesiastical state and the various trends that ended up influencing, even if not completely, the central government. In general, there was talk of impotent reformism of moderate proposals which fell into thin air by the economists of the time (Nuzzi, 1702; Pascoli, 1733; Belloni, 1755; Venuti, 1750). The failed reform attempts have been discussed several times with Pope Lambertini, Benedict XIV. Only with Pope Braschi, Pius VI, these attempts aroused a public debate but, once again, there was different resistance in the various sectors, especially the agricultural one, where the pope's attention had been greatest. In reality, the reformism of these two popes cannot be defined as mercantilistic or liberal but their politics is characterized by a mixture of mercantilistic and liberal elements which, even if belatedly, demonstrate the need for the government to investigate the new trends. Some turn-of-the-century reformers, such as Corona (1795), referring to Adam Smith's theories that now ran

throughout Europe, advocated a moderate free-trade. The hopes of a moderate renewal were, however, unlikely, above all because the strength of the interests linked to property was considerable in the State, so much so that the physiocratic reforms were replaced by traditional mercantilist programs, proving, however, ineffective (Dal Pane, 1978, 360). The particular administrative structure of the Papal State led to a notable dispersion of competences and a lack of coordination between the bodies appointed to legislate on the subject of the economy. During the time taken into consideration here, the sacred Economic Congregation and the Cardinal Camerlengo were particularly important. The latter was the highest magistrate in charge of temporal affairs and was the head of the Apostolic Reverence Chamber, the central organ of government. In 1847 the organization by public affairs ministries was introduced in the Papal State: the powers of the General Treasurer fell within those of the Ministry of Finance and most of those of the Camerlengo were attributed to the Ministry of Commerce and Fine Arts and Industry. Furthermore, during the eighteenth century a large part of the story of the Roman corporative system is consummated and, in this respect, the eighteenth century represents an observation point suitable for grasping the transformations of the institution from its apogee which can be placed around the middle of the eighteenth century, up to the questioning of the complex binding system that regulated the Ancien Régime market and of which the arts were protagonists. The questioning of the corporate institution would have gained weight during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century and found nourishment for structural and superstructural reasons. The corporations, however, would be able to safeguard their interests by appealing to the values of tradition. Only with the advent of the Roman Republic, even before the provisions of Pius VII, would the almost painless end of the corporate system (Travaglini, 1999, 278).

2. The "San Michele"

- 7 San Michele a Ripa Grande was the largest center of public manufacturing which, for over two centuries, thanks to the presence of a supported workforce, managed to operate in Rome.
- 8 Built between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, it is today one of the most impressive buildings in the capital. It extends for about three hundred and fifty meters along the banks of the Tiber, following the ancient Aurelian walls up to Porta Portese. San Michele a Ripa represents the realization of a precise political line through which the popes wished to solve two problems: public assistance and industrial growth (Toscano, 1996, 30-44).
- 9 In a state that suffered from endemic economic crises, which suffered from lamentable financial shortcomings in public debt and budget deficits, there was a tendency to highlight assistance, to show care for the poor and needy as a primary objective of the Church, strengthened by the positive exercise of temporal power. The centrality of charitable works in the method of governing the capital in some way exalted its organizational diversity from any other contemporary capital and potentially widened its distance from sovereign choices and measures that marked the first implementations of the Enlightenment reforms elsewhere (Piccialuti, 1994, 19). Monsignor Carlo Tommaso Odescalchi,³ in the eighteenth century, carried out numerous welfare activities aimed in particular at the hospitalization of orphaned children and the needy as well as finding them employment. Work was used as a tool to fight sin and teach self-discipline but above all, as a means of obtaining as much manpower as possible (Zamagni, 2000). To increase the number of people assisted even further, Odescalchi bought a piece of land in Ripa Grande and in 1693,⁴ had a large building constructed that represented the first nucleus of the future Apostolic Hospice. Born as a welfare center for orphaned and needy children, over time it would become the largest public manufacturing center in the capital thanks to the presence of

a supported assisted workforce. Over the centuries, the Apostolic Hospice incorporated the "spinsters spinners" of the Lateran Palace, the "old men and women" of the Ponte Sisto Hospice and the "cherubs" of the Casa del Letterato.

10 It was not a question of a forced recruitment of the poor to form a workforce to be allocated to the productive apparatus of the capital, something comparable with what happened in Elizabethan England, but the hypothesis must place the analysis into an enlarged projection that takes account of the political sensitivity of the rulers, in the early years of the eighteenth century, to the need for changes in the organization of production.⁵

11 It can be said (Nasto, 1994), that from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the old hospice model entered a new phase as the rulers of almost all of Europe began to demand that the work of inmates produced a profit or was at least sufficient to maintain them.

12 The French model of institutionalized charity instituted by Louis XIV and adopted by the members of the congregation in charge of Rome, at the time of Innocent XII, in order to address this type of problem, could explain both the creation of this large assistance center that was capable of welcoming all the poor of Rome and the openness of the exponents of the papal government towards the organizational module of French centralized manufacturing. Drach (1842) again underlines the particularity of this papal manufacturing industry, unique of its kind in Europe for its ability to combine religious life with economic life.

13 San Michele a Ripa was the most significant example of a company in Rome that was able, in the long term of its activity, to guarantee the production of those goods that were intended to satisfy public demand. The Papal State provided huge funding and instituted the "privative" (a private monopoly) in order to ensure that the products of the San Michele wool mill were sold exclusively to the Apostolic Palaces and to the militias of the entire State.

14 The main activity of San Michele a Ripa centered on the large wool mill in which, in periods of greater productivity, up to eight hundred and fifty people were employed, also recruited from outside the hospice, especially in the Trastevere area, thus giving work to an entire neighborhood. The working day was marked out in detail, as were the religious practices that were mandatory.⁶

2.1 The "Spinsters Spinners" and the Processing of Silk

15 During the seventeenth century, the art of weaving, both that of wool and silk, had undergone a period of considerable development, so much so that the popes believed they were encouraging it with a gradual and rigid form of customs protection (Spagnolo, 1991).

16 This type of activity was carried out by both female and male personnel, yet, with particular reference to female work, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, various statistics have shown that women were not even shown as an active population, despite the fact that their employment was fundamental everywhere (Toscano, 1996).

17 In the eighteenth century, the closure of monasteries in Protestant Europe led to a revolution in the education of girls, as it was necessary to find alternative forms, which could only be of a working nature, to allow single women of the bourgeois and noble classes to maintain themselves (Bellavitis, 2016).

18 The silk factory began its activity in 1727, employing for its production work the spinsters who already lived in the conservatory of San Giovanni in Laterano and who were not immediately transferred to the Apostolic Hospice for reasons of space; in fact, they were not moved until 1775, thanks to the expansion of the new branch of the wool mill.⁷

19 When the factory opened its doors, the spinsters numbered about two hundred, and their being placed in employment was very important to the Pontifical government, more than any other category of assisted persons, for moral reasons (Saccà, 1982). The hierarchy was formed as follows: at the head there was a prior/prioress, a sub-prior/prioress, about seven teachers for the management of the house, about seven teachers to teach the work duties, the choristers, taken from among the older spinsters in charge of maintaining order in the dormitories and the escorts for spinsters outside the conservatory, and finally a large number of spinsters.

2.2 The Gender Pay Gap

20 The whole system of life at San Michele was organized in such a way that nothing was left to the initiative of individuals and, therefore, a written regulation was envisaged that could be applied by the supervisors who, in the event, were authorized to impose even quite severe sanctions.

21 The pupils remained in the Institute from the age of seven to twenty-two; for the little ones who could not work, only religious learning was expected. Usually, they worked from five in the morning until noon and then from one PM until midnight in the summer and until three in the morning in the winter.

22 In the eighteenth century, 300 people were needed to operate the 20 looms present (in 1810 there would be 30) and to carry out the 27 necessary operations for good weaving processes (at the end of the eighteenth century, however, it appears that the available staff only consisted of 200 boys; see Parisi, 1994).

23 The boys were obliged to work on a certain number of pounds of wool per day, obtaining a different pay based on age. The cost of the operations was established either by the weight of the worked wool or by piece.

24 In the last years of the eighteenth century, it appears from the budgets that the older ones earned about 15 bajocchi, the next category down 12 and a half bajocchi, then 7 bajocchi, and the youngest only 5 bajocchi.⁸

25 For pupils, who were not yet working, from the age of 12 onwards, there was a rise in pay of 5 bajocchi per year for each year of age, starting from a minimum of 5 bajocchi and going up to 45 bajocchi per month by the age of 20.

26 Of this salary, only one part was given to the person concerned, because the other part was set aside, from which from 1/2 to 1 bajocco per month was deducted for the expenses of the oratory and any penalties (up to a maximum 15 bajocchi per month).⁹

27 Those who held positions of responsibility in San Michele were usually well paid: the chief topper earned 15 scudi a month; the chief carder 3 shields; the chief weaver 1 shield and 50 bajocchi; while the boys who worked on the loom earned 15 bajocchi monthly at the maximum age level.

28 During the decade considered, the amount of salaries in the first category seems stable: this was due to the fact that the elderly did not leave the Institute until their death, therefore their presence and their duties always remained the same.

29 The second category, that of children, has a certain discontinuity due to the age limit at which they had to leave the Institute, or it could be due to the end of the learning phase and the beginning of the actual work activity.

30 The third category, that of spinsters, fluctuates very little since it was established a priori that they would earn a fifth of what was produced.

31 Alongside the assisted labor force, the employees outside the Institute also worked, even if the external contribution, more consistent but not very quantifiable, was made by domestic workers, to whom the managers of management turned when there was an increase in demand for San Michele wool products in the internal market of the capital (Piccialuti, 1994). The aim was also to give jobs to needy families in the capital, first relieving them from poverty and later using their experience in the field of textile art.

32 As for women, there was the custom of entrusting all the tasks relating to daily management to the less young and to those in poor health, while the younger ones

could apply themselves to learning a trade, generally under the tutelage of teachers, chosen from among the oldest and most experienced.

33 As for the silk factory, the organization of work had aspects that were very similar to those of the wool factory, with the difference that it was mostly the spinsters who ran the industry, making use of the experience of teachers and at least for the first period, of foreign weavers who helped them.

34 The silk factory contractor was protected from any falls in demand on the domestic market since the cost of labor depended on the quantity produced. In any case, the spinsters had to guarantee a minimum of daily work, which consisted not so much of silk but of hemp, linen and cotton. The fees for this part of the work were fixed according to the amount and the type of fabric worked. Then, on the basis of what was produced, as established by the "Patti" or pacts (Saccà, 1982, 463-464), the spinsters would earn 20 per cent of the profits.

35 Furthermore, there was a dowry of 60 scudi when they married or 100 scudi if they became nuns, as per the Regulations of 25 July 1725.¹⁰ In any case, as for the boys in the wool mill, the spinsters also did not receive everything they earned monthly, as about half was given in cash and the other was put in a fund.

36 Calculating that the Institute usually spent about 230 scudi a year on their maintenance and about 377 scudi on their salaries, and that there were about 200 spinsters, each received about 1.9 scudi a year (about 190 bajocchi per year) which, divided by approximately 12 months and 30 days, would be half a bajocco per day if we wanted to make an approximate calculation.

37 This, in some way, made it possible to keep the cost of labor low, to postpone the payment of part of the wages for as long as possible and to devalue what would be given in the future.

38 A spinster's typical day was characterized by sixteen hours of activity and eight hours of rest. Of those sixteen, ten were for work while the remaining six were divided between one and a half hours of mass, spiritual exercise and rosary, one hour, before the start of work, for reciting the litanies as well as before going to bed, another two and a half hours for the vigil. In total, therefore, about five hours were dedicated to religious works; in reality, they were the same old maids who, in order to avoid work, asked to be able to devote more and more time to devotion (Saccà, 1982, 462).

39 From August 1725 to 1797, the number of spinsters at the Conservatory and at the San Michele factory would decrease by about a third after their transfer, although this happened gradually over the years. Initially, in fact, the entrances were forced, and the spinsters underwent a sort of "confinement"; subsequently, to enter the Conservatory a sort of notification would have been necessary, perhaps by the wealthy families of the city who used to make charitable donations to the Conservatory.

40 By analyzing the annual number of spinsters engaged by age, from 1725 to 1797, it is possible to state that the highest relative frequencies are always found for the age group <16 years and for those between 17 and 26 years (an exception is made for the period from 1737 to 1749 when the highest relative frequencies are for the age groups between 17 and 26 and between 36 and 59 years). For the same time spans it can be seen how the same spinsters in terms of absolute frequency tended either to die (about 50 per cent) in the conservatory or to marry (about 33 per cent), see Saccà (1982, 476-477).

41 From the archive documents, relating to the monthly remuneration for the 50 spinsters (incoming) at the Lateran silk factory in 1739, there is a total amount of 17 scudi, therefore an individual salary of 34 bajocchi, which is a little more than 1 bajocco per day: also if the wages for the minimum daily work established by the "pact" were added to these wages, the total wages for each of them would not have exceeded 5 bajocchi per day.¹¹

42 In the eighteenth century in Rome, the silk sector used a lot of home processing. Historical documents show that the women who worked in the capital's silk industry received 10 to 15 bajocchi per day (5 less than men), while in the rest of the Roman territory where the sector was more established, they generally earned 20 bajocchi per day (Toscano, 1992, 23-36).

43 However, during the management of the contractor named Pizzi, a total of 39 scudi and 37 bajocchi were paid in one month for 126 spinsters in 1789, on average just over 1 bajocco a day. The value of these salaries was therefore close to that of unskilled workers at the wool mill; the spinsters of San Michele, regardless of their specialization, received a salary that approached that of the students at the wool mill, who even at the end of the eighteenth century could not earn more than 2 bajocchi a day. A spinster therefore earned less than a child, with one of the lowest wages at the wool mill. Even those spinsters who took care of the administration of the Lateran Conservatory did so for a few paoli a month, when a capable director would have received a salary of 15 scudi a month.

44 Unlike the girls, the few good teachers, due to the lack of widespread craftsmanship in Rome, earned much more compared with skilled workers, receiving between 15 and 38 bajocchi a day as far back as 1739.¹² In addition to this fixed monthly salary, they also enjoyed special food, qualitatively superior to that of the other workers.

45 Despite the low level of monetary wages, offset by the expectation of a dowry, all the spinsters achieved a good degree of specialization over time that allowed them to keep the company going for about a century (Groppi, 1994).

46 As far as the "tapestry school" is concerned, the skilled specialization of the workers was fundamental, and for this reason, there were masters of international fame and the apprentices were among the best: they all depended directly on the pontiff and were paid by him. The wages were high, both for the teachers and for the apprentices who earned as much as 6 scudi a month. The pupils received about 20 bajocchi a day. The Director of the tapestry shop and his deputy could earn 25 shields and 15 shields a day respectively.

47 The cost of labor was therefore very high and the processing times were very long; Highly skilled employees were rare but at the same time necessary if one wanted to compete with products from other European factories, such as the French ones.

48 Therefore, as regards the manufacturing activity of San Michele a Ripa Grande in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, referring to the activities relating to the woollen mill, silk and tapestries, it is possible to state that there was a notable difference between the genders: men had a better chance of improving their job position over time and moreover, all the leadership roles were the prerogative of the male gender, such as the topping head, the carding head and so on, where the wages were obviously higher (from 3 to 15 shields per month).

49 Women, who were kept under strict control due to their easy "immorality," earned one tenth of what a small boy in the wool mill could earn. Furthermore, a dowry was only guaranteed if they were nuns or married and therefore if they submitted to God or to their husbands. The women who earned more because of their position, for example teachers, were few in number, and only because they were necessary for quick and rapid teaching to the assisted pupils, and certainly not because of their highly rated qualities. A separate discussion is required for the school tapestry shop, where salaries were much higher because the workers were directly employed by the Pope and because manpower of that type was lacking. Obviously, there was no place for women in the tapestry shop, as their contribution was made from the outside, without recognition, through the spinning of the silk necessary for the composition of the tapestry.

3. The Italian Tobacco Factory

50 In the nineteenth century, alongside the San Michele a Ripa factory, among the centralized manufactories the Tobacco Factory engendered particular interest, also on the part of the nascent Italian state.

51 In Rome, the first tobacco factory was built in 1774 by Pietro Giovanni Wendler, to whom Pope Pius VI granted the right to use the machines suitable for the manufacture of stick tobaccos for five years. Upon expiry, the patent was renewed for another twelve

years in favor of other entrepreneurs. It was only in 1798, during the Roman Republic proclaimed after the occupation of Rome by Napoleon's troops, that the "Regia of the sal and dei tabacchi" was established at the convent of Santa Caterina da Siena in Magnanapoli (Aa.Vv., 1943, 339). During the nineteenth century, there were also new and important factories in the new Italian states for the processing of tobacco, such as those of Chiaravalle, Cagliari, Catania and Comiso, Di Parma, Modena and also in Rome, built in the working-class district of Trastevere by order of Pope Pius IX, whose construction began in 1860 and ended in 1863. On 17 March 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, through which the Piedmontese administrative organization was extended to the entire Italian peninsula, characterized by the repressive surveillance of, for example, military, judicial and police institutions.

52 In 1862, there were fourteen tobacco factories and ten salt factories very different from each other both in terms of the number of workers and in relation to production, accounting, products, distribution and forms of management.

53 In addition, the critical financial situation of the new Kingdom required particular consideration for the immediate income that could be realized with private companies (Cassese and Melis, 1990).

3.1 The Workers at the Royal Tobacco Factory

54 The newly unified Italy had inherited several tobacco factories with obsolete facilities characterized by too many workers, administrative disorder and a lack of reliable accounting records, high production costs and monopoly overheads equal to over 40 per cent of gross product from the finances (Ministero delle Finanze, 1868). Theoretically, the state should have sold off this legacy, but unfortunately the conditions of the state budget prevented this since, despite everything, tobacco brought about 12 per cent of the total tax revenue to the treasury.

55 A compromise was found in 1868, when the monopoly was sold for 15 years to a consortium of bankers, mostly French and English, set up as a limited company for the jointly owned the *Tabaccherie* in the Kingdom of Italy, led by Credito Mobiliare directed by Domenico Balduino in exchange for a fixed fee and profit sharing. All this represented one of the biggest deals to link private interests and public finance in liberal Italy, with all the associated political-financial scandals, parliamentary inquiries and related criminal trials (Coppini, 1975, 297).

56 The private management managed to start a suitable transformation process that helped tobacco manufacture to become a true industrial enterprise. After 1878, the next step was to open the export trade in tobacco, in order to reduce the stocks accumulated in the warehouses and rebalance the relationship between production and sales. However, the tobacco was sold abroad at a lower price than the national one and this led to great concern regarding the danger of smuggling.

57 Royal Decree 3685 of 21 March 1867 standardized the tobacco processing service throughout the new national territory; in this way, the roles of personnel, salaries and allowances, the role of subordinate agents and permanent workers, the distribution of personnel for each type of manufacturing according to the various service needs, and the various rates for piecework were established (Società anonima per la regia cointeressata dei tabacchi nel regno d'Italia, 1886).

58 According to their importance, the factories were divided into two orders and the staff employed divided into two categories: the upper and the secondary. In fact, the Director, the Inspector, the Chief Technical Officer and the Controller were considered senior employees for the first-rate factories, while for the second-rate ones, the Factory Manager and the Controller were senior.

59 The tobacco industry was essentially based on the production of cigars, whose processing and packaging were exclusively manual. It should be remembered that the machines for manufacturing cigarillos, the *toscanelli*, only made their appearance in the years between the two wars, and therefore after the period in question.

- 60 The women workers carried out a job that no machine could replace. The production of cigars had always been the prerogative of the women workers, as they were considered more suitable for a job that required attention, precision and manual skill, as well as being economically more convenient in terms of labor costs.
- 61 The women cigar makers represented on average about 75 per cent of the staff in the sector and over 50 per cent of the employees in the entire industry, forming a large, homogeneous and compact nucleus.
- 62 The work of the women cigar makers was generally carried out in large halls. The women cigar makers, seated side by side on parallel benches with 10-12 seats, had a walnut wood board on which to perform the work, a bowl containing starch paste to spread on the bands and a knife with a curved blade that was used to dissect the leaves and trim the heads of the finished cigars.
- 63 The band obtained from the flaps of tobacco leaves was spread on the table that had previously been coated with starch paste and then made into the desired shape with the knife. At this point, with great skill, the cigar was shaped by filling it with the pieces of leaves to give it the required shape, size and consistency. At this point, the cigar was popped at the ends and aligned with the others on the "control measure" which was used to find the required size.
- 64 The number of cigars to be produced was determined by the average piece rate. At the end of the working day, the woman cigar maker had to make ends meet and the quantities of tobacco received were such as to guarantee the predetermined production. Tobacco was to be used in exactly the right measure, otherwise the work was considered poorly done and disciplinary action could be incurred for negligence.
- 65 In order to reach the minimum set piece rate, which was usually to pack a minimum of 800-900 cigars per day, the women cigar makers had to work with precision and speed.
- 66 However, it was difficult to maintain these levels of productivity all the time, and to safeguard the final result, the workers resorted to various expedients: stealing a quantity of tobacco and keeping it well hidden in order to have a small supply available, and wetting the tobacco to make it softer in processing and at the same time more voluminous and heavier. In addition to these individual expedients, there was another, more common one, also very popular: the lending of cigars. After completing their work, the most experienced workers passed a quota of cigars to their fellow workers who were behind in their work, so that they too could reach the quota of the minimum piecework required.
- 67 Often even the most experienced workers were unable to achieve the required amount of piecework. The recurring cause was the poor quality of the leaf intended for the bands. Many batches of tobacco were of poor quality, and the less substantial leaves were torn at the time of handling. This forced workers to redo the work or to apply an additional band: these were operations that reduced the speed of execution and therefore the profit. In addition to the loss of piecework, the women workers who produced defective cigars were subject to a reduction in their daily wage, which could be up to 50 per cent.
- 68 From what has been described, it is clear how the women cigar makers were able to control and intervene in the production process. On the other hand, the professionalism of the other women workers employed in the various departments of the factory was poor. In the manufacturing of snuff, either shredded or "spagnolette," where a mechanized process had already been in place for some time, the role of the workers was exclusively that of supervising the machines.
- 69 The processing phases, like all the others relating to the formation of cigars, were strictly codified and controlled at every step.
- 70 Turning now to an analysis of aspects concerning the workers' conditions in the factories, the data that emerge clearly show a nucleus of the working class women located in a largely privileged position, compared with that of private industry, a favorable situation especially from the point of view of wages and working hours which were only eight hours (in 1904, this would become 7 hours plus one hour of overtime).

Other privileges were given by state assistance and social security, by the payment of working days in the event of illness, and the theoretical presence of a nursery adjacent to the factory, but above all by the stability of the workplace.

71 However, we should remember that, while it is true that their remuneration was higher than that of other workers in the various manufacturing sectors or in any case of those in the private sector, it is also irrefutable that their remuneration was always and in any case lower than that of men in any sector.

72 Among the most frequent reasons for discontent among the manufacturing workers were the poor hygienic conditions in which they had to carry out their work, in environments that were always closed, poorly ventilated and saturated with the fumes of the macerating leaves. The cigar makers had to continually immerse their hands in water to keep the tobacco leaves moist, which, by fermenting, released nicotine that directly hit the eyes and lungs, before stagnating in the closed rooms. Nicotine poisoning produced visual impairment, various eye diseases and favored lung diseases in general, including tuberculosis (Majno Bronzini, 1900, 14).

73 The strict factory discipline and the severity in the interpretation of internal regulations combined to frustrate the workers, also because it was impossible to protest without almost automatically incurring a disciplinary measure.

74 The management and the other important figures did not give due value to the work of the tobacconists from whom they demanded greater discipline: unlike men, all the female workers were obliged to wear a cap and each of them was personally responsible for their headgear. This had to completely cover their hair, on their forehead, on the sides and on the nape of the neck. They could not have protruding tufts of hair, curls or anything else that would have affected the product.¹³

75 In the event of individual complaints forwarded to superiors, male workers enjoyed greater credibility than their female colleagues; this was also due to the fact that men were far more punctual compared with women. There was no sensitivity on the part of the managers to the needs and problems of working mothers, who at the time found no division of roles within the family and were overloaded with additional tasks, such as looking after the children.

76 Female work did not allow downtime for rest, as was the case with ordinary workers. If they were at the *Toscana* factory they could only go to the bathroom if the teacher replaced them.

77 Their work was also much harder and more tiring than that for men: the man behind the machine only had the task of running it, while the female workers lifted the tobacco into very large crates to then put it into the hopper.

78 Other elements allow us to affirm that women were subjected to worse treatment. If the machine did not work because it had some breakdown or defect, preventing the normal running of production and therefore the achievement of the piecework rate, the mechanic also obtained the remuneration corresponding to this, while the workers only earned a full day.

79 The wages of the "instructors and verifiers per day" were always the highest of all the workers and, as regards the manufacturing work in Milan, even exceeded 3 lire per day in the years from 1911 to 1914.

80 The daily women workers, who were usually the oldest and with the right to sickness pay from the second day, received higher wages than the Italian average and which, in the reference period, were between 2.19 and 2.97 lire.

81 With the maximum production, the piece-rate cigar makers could earn 2.50 lire a day, but unlike the daily ones, they could not count on sick pay. Compared with the Italian average, they received a slightly lower daily salary, with the exception of the years 1909-1910 when there was a variation of 0.03 cents (Della Peruta, 1987, 128).

82 Another category was that of piece-rate strippers, who earned from 2.10 lire up to a maximum of 2.78 lire in 1912-1913.

83 The apprentices were paid by the day in a progressive way: they did not receive any remuneration for the first two months after hiring, in the third month they earned 25 cents a day and in each subsequent month they had a raise of 7 cents on the daily pay

up to 60 cents, and then after they turned fifteen, they were introduced into a definitive category. This system was then reformed and all apprentices began to earn 70 cents a day after the trial period until they entered another category (Imprenti, 2007).

84 The hours were shorter than the average ones of the Milanese women workers. For the daily workers, the day was 8 hours with a half hour lunch break; the jobbers, on the other hand, could enter the factory up until 8.30 and until 9.00 in the summer, leaving it at 15:30 or 16:00 respectively. The average age of tobacconists was high compared with that found in private establishments. The women cigar makers remained in the factory even up to the age of 60.

85 The right to a pension for tobacco workers was sanctioned in 1904 by the Luzzatti Law, even if from 1888 onwards, the Directorate of the *gabelle* (consumption tax) granted monthly allowances to workers recognized as being totally unable to work and as such removed from their jobs.

86 The Luttazzi Law sanctioned that workers at 60 and female workers at 55 had the right to a pension after with 25 years of service; if they were recognized as being unable to work because of both work-related and non-work related pathologies (Garbini, 1999, 58-59). The amount of pensions, for workers with 25 years of seniority, was calculated on the basis of the average daily wage multiplied by 150; through a series of intermediate steps, the multiplier became 180 for workers with 35 years of service, 210 for those with 45 years of service and 270 for those with 55 years of service. In no case could the pension be less than 300 lire a year for women and 480 lire a year for men (*ibid.*).

3.2 Analysis of the Wages of the 14 Tobacco Factories between 1869 and 1881

87 The study and analysis of the report of the Ministry of Finance, "Answers to the interrogation of the Commission of Inquiry on Tobacco" of 1881, kept in the Historical Library of the Ministry of Finance, made it possible to highlight some important elements. Meanwhile, it is outlined how the workers, both male and female, were divided into two categories according to the way they were paid: a fixed pay category and a piecework category. These systems were already used before the establishment of the Royal Manufacture, the only difference that was introduced with the Royal Decree of March 21, 1867 was that the number and wages of permanent workers and the price of piecework wages in the various factories were finally clearly defined.

88 The male staff were usually paid a fixed salary, and there were very few cases of payment by piece rate; the female workers, on the other hand, were almost always admitted without a fixed salary, except for the teachers.

89 The decree had not, however managed to standardize the wages among the various establishments of the state, so that from North to South, it was possible to find different wages paid for the same tasks. One of the objectives of the Regia was to create, over time, an appropriate distribution of the works throughout the country and a fair remuneration for the work performed by each person, extending to all the work carried out in the factories, through the system of piecework pay.

90 All of this was implemented in 1873, and as a result of the abovementioned general application of piecework rates, the average earnings of the workers increased so that, while the earnings had previously been 2.41 lire for men and 1.23 lire for women, they then rose to 2.88 lire and 1.44 lire respectively. This improvement for such a large staff, such as that of manufacturing, caused a significant increase in the annual expenditure for piecework labor, but at the same time considerably reduced the expenditure for the work performed per day, as well as the number of paid workers with a fixed salary (Società anonima italiana per la Regia cointeressata dei tabacchi, 1881a).

91 In this case too, it is possible to observe how in the factories the average daily wages of the male workers were always higher than those of the female workers, with

differences ranging from a minimum of 0.51 cents in the factory in Rome to a maximum of 1.82 Lire in the Cagliari factory (*ibid.*).

92 The duration of daily work was 8 hours. On the contrary, the wages of the workers in the other local industries refer to working days of 10 hours (2 hours more than in tobacco factories), with no subdivision between wages per day and per piece.

93 From the table it can be deduced that in any case women earned less than men. Taking into consideration the workers of the Tobacco Factory who worked on a daily basis, the minimum for the wage differential was from 1.00 to 1.20 lire, and the maximum was from 1.50 lire in Parma to 2.20 lire in Chiaravalle and Sestri. For the Lecce factory, the comparison cannot be made as there were no workers paid by the day.

94 Moving on to examine the workers who worked at a piece rate in the Tobacco Factory, we can see how here too the differential between the wages of men and women was around 2 lire, with a maximum ceiling at the Florence factory, where the differential reached 2.25 lire.

95 By contrast, comparing the wages of female workers at the Tobacco Factory with those of the other industries, we deduce that the exceptions with respect to a higher wage for tobacconists than the others concern: the factory in Parma with a wage per day that went from 1.50 lire to 1.00 lira and the piece rate ranging from 1.58 lire to 1.07 lire against that of other industries which instead went from 2.00 to 0.60 lire (*Società anonima italiana per la Regia cointeressata dei tabacchi, 1881b*). The same thing applies to the Turin factory, where the daily salary for a generic industrial worker ranged from 1.50 to 1.00 lira against 1.40 lire for tobacco and 2.06 lire for that of tobacco piecework. A comparison with the factories in Modena, Naples, Rome, Sestri and Venice is not possible due to the lack of comparative data.

96 The category of workers only includes employees employed manually in the processing of tobacco and not the supervisors, teachers and craftsmen. Of these, the former were paid with a daily wage from 3.80 to 3.00 lire; the latter received fixed pay from 2.20 to 1.60 lire per day; finally, the craftsmen had different per diems from 4.00 to 2.50 lire and in some cases they were also employed in piecework.

97 It should also be noted that the earnings of tobacco workers, when they were not absolutely higher than those paid by other industries, were then relative to the duration of the work. In addition, the workers of the tobacco factory enjoyed certain advantages: for those who worked daily, the salary was paid even in the event of illness; subsidies or compensation were granted in extraordinary cases of need; they received assistance in the event of an accident at work and their work clothes were provided free of charge.

98 The average profit for female workers was 1.50 lire with a fluctuation from a minimum of 1.08 lire for the production of 360 ordinary 5-cent cigars at the Cagliari factory, to a maximum of 3.07 lire for producing 850 "ordinary" 5-cent cigars at the Rome factory or 2.34 lire to produce 600 6-cent "straw" cigars at the Bologna factory (*Società anonima italiana per la Regia cointeressata dei tabacchi, 1881c*).

99 The daily quantity of output depends on the different processing method used for each kind of cigar, and for the same kinds. As for the average production of cigars by men and women, in reality the male workers were gradually phased out, because only women's hands were able to do the work accurately and less expensively; those men (only 12) who were still recorded as cigar makers at the Florence factory, were only there because they could not be assigned to other duties. Others who were transferred to other departments were positioned in such a way that they could receive compensation proportional to the income they received from processing the cigars.

4. Comparison and Analysis of the Two Case Studies: San Michele A Ripa Grande and the Tobacco Factory

100 The two case studies examined were intended to represent a historical, economic and social investigation aimed at finding out what conditions were like for women compared with those of their male colleagues, both in the San Michele a Ripa Grande hospice in the eighteenth century and in the Italian tobacco factories of the nineteenth century, highlighting their different treatment in terms of life and pay.

101 In particular, women in both centuries were assigned the tasks that required more patience, attention and small and delicate hands. The salary was low because the person who was believed to financially support the family was the man and therefore the work of women was considered a mere temporary job. What seems absurd, aside from the different tasks and the different pay for the same age group, is that women still earned much less than a child did, and even a simple pupil was paid more.

102 The spinster women of San Michele a Ripa, unlike those at the Tobacco Factory were more damaged from an economic and salary point of view, both in their social condition and given the historical context. They were mostly orphans and homeless, in a century in which the thought that women could claim fundamental rights had not yet been born. Their working hours were exhausting and their free time devoted solely to Christian worship.

103 The women of the Tobacco Factory were instead more combative and emancipated, and some of them were also socially well integrated. Although even here, at the same factories, women could not aspire to hierarchical roles or tasks other than that of the "cigar maker" who manually created cigars or subsequently cigarettes, and earned much less than any of their male colleagues, subordinates or otherwise; however, they had the advantage of being able to earn a higher salary than their female colleagues employed in other factories, both public and private; they had a steady job and they had guarantees (some of them) regarding sick pay and so on. They only worked 7 hours a day, which allowed them to better manage their private life. In both cases, however, their work environments were characterized by poor hygiene and the spread of respiratory and skin diseases.

5. Conclusion

104 As analyzed in the two case studies, it is possible to see how gender and wage differences were present both in the eighteenth-century San Michele a Ripa factory and in the nineteenth-century Italian Tobacco Factory. Some women began to work from the seventeenth century due to the state of family poverty that necessarily led to their needing to contribute or during the wars due to the lack of male labor as men were forced to the front to fight. However, their contribution was valued differently, although they were employed in more strenuous and exhausting jobs for many hours, their daily or hourly wages were usually less than half that of a man. Most likely it was all due to the fact that their consideration as a worker or as a member of the family who could make an economic or financial contribution was very low. In the case of the San Michele a Ripa Grande factory, we have seen how marked the wage gap was between the men at the woollen mill and the tapestry school and the women spinners at the silk factory. In addition, men had a better chance of improving their job position over time. All leadership roles were the prerogative of men, such as the topping chief, the carding chief. Women, for fear of their easy "immorality," were first of all kept under strict control, and earned little, a tenth of what a small boy in the wool mill could earn. Moreover, their dowry was guaranteed only if they were nuns or married and therefore, if they ideally submitted to God or to their husbands. Their working position was considered purely as temporary, as they could not aspire to anything concrete and stable in the future; this led them to be discouraged and not try to improve their situation. The only stable and sure thing for their future could be a good marriage. Although the working hours were the same, despite the fact that the type of work was

similar if not more strenuous, the wage difference between a spinner and the worst paid among the boys in the wool mill was almost 20 per cent.

105 As for the women at the Tobacco Factory, they appear to have been more combative and emancipated and perhaps also for this reason placed in a better context than that outlined for the San Michele a Ripa factory. The historical context, the battles for women's emancipation, the industrial revolutions and the greater awareness of their being, led them to become better socially integrated (Dimand et al., 1995; 2000; Fuster and Birulés, 2021). Although the women, even here, within the same factories, could still not aspire to hierarchical roles or tasks other than that of the "cigar maker," and earned much less than their male colleagues, subordinates or otherwise, they benefited from being able to earn a higher salary than their female colleagues employed in other factories, both public and private; they also had a permanent job, and some of them (the day workers) also had guarantees such as sick pay. They only worked 7 hours a day, which allowed them to manage their private life better.

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Notes

1 In this work, also for reasons of space, the question of the guilds will not be included: still very active in the Roman eighteenth century, they represented a problem within some arts (such as that of silk and tailors). At this regard see Groppi (1999, 346-350) and Parisi (1999).

2 Literature has been greatly enriched in the last twenty years (Arru, 1988; 1990; 1995; Bellavitis et al., 1990; Pelaja, 1990, 45-54; Cavaciocchi, 1990; Del Prete, 2010; Delsalle, 2008, 219-232; Feci, 2004; Groppi, 1990; 1994; 1996; 2011, 25-32; Laudani, 1996, 183-205; Laurence, 1994; Martinat, 1990, 683-693; Humphies and Sarasua, 2012, 39-67; Mol , 2000, 423-459; Ogilvie, 2003; Petti Balbi and Guglielmotti, 2012; Schneider, 2013a; 2013b; Bellavitis and Martinat, 2022).

3 Monsignor Carlo Tommaso Odescalchi was a canon from the noble and wealthy Como family and a relative of Pope Innocent XI.

4 It was Pope Innocent XII who, with the Bull "Ad exercitium pietatis" of May 20, 1693, ordered the foundation of the Apostolic Hospice of the Poor Disabled of San Michele to be initially placed in three distinct locations with unified management.

5 On the industrialization process and women, see in particular Levy-Leboyer (1968), Vandenbroeke (1987), Burnette (1997; 2004; 2009) and Sharpe (1998).

6 State of Archive of Rome (SAR), OAM, b. 145; Vai, 1779. The Roman shield: silver coin worth 100 bajocchi. The Bajocco: copper coin worth one cent of a Roman shield (Balbi De Caro and Londei, 1984).

7 SAR, OAM, b. 280.

8 The salaries refer to 1782 when the wool mill was managed by a contractor called Galbani.

9 SAR, OAM, b. 275.

10 SAR, OAM, b. 48.

11 SAR, OAM, b. 772.

12 SAR, OAM, b. 48.

13 Archive Manifattura Tabacchi of Florence, *Service and personnel orders*, Service order n. 627 of 12/13/1946.

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