

Bianca Laura Saibante and the use of Semiramis. A case study on the reception of Antiquity in the Italian debates on women in the eighteenth century

Bianca Laura Saibante y el uso de Semíramis. Un estudio de caso sobre la recepción
de la Antigüedad en los debates italianos sobre la mujer en el siglo XVIII

Michaela Oberhuber

Journal “Geschichte und Region/Storia e regione”, Italia
michaela.oberhuber@provinz.bz.it

Recibido el 14 de junio de 2024

Aceptado el 6 de noviembre de 2024

BIBLID [1134-6396(2025)32:1; 57-81]

<http://dx.doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v32i1.31062>

ABSTRACT

For centuries, the use of *exempla* of ancient women accompanied the discussion of the *Querelle des femmes*. At times, this practice has been seen as a purely static reproduction of the same *topoi*, and its innovative power and originality have been strongly relativized. This article aims to test this thesis by analysing the case study of the Italian writer Bianca Laura Saibante (1723-1797), paying attention to nuances and details in her depiction of ancient women. To this end, the analysis focuses on one of a number of ancient women Saibante included in her writings on the female question, namely the Babylonian ruler Semiramis. Main focuses are the narrative elements of Semiramis' life that she highlighted, and the way she functionalized them. Comparison with other representations of the Babylonian queen in writings from a broad context relevant to Saibante serves to identify “small differences” and particularities in her Semiramis' treatment, showing the dynamic character of the reception of Antiquity and its functionalisation for contemporary gender debates.

Keywords: Bianca Laura Saibante. Female writer. Rovereto. Italian gender debates. *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*. Reception of Antiquity. Semiramis. *Querelle des femmes*.

RESUMEN

Durante siglos, el uso de *exempla* de mujeres de la Antigüedad acompañó los debates de la *Querelle des femmes*. En ocasiones, esta práctica se ha visto como una reproducción puramente estática de los mismos *topoi*, y su poder innovador y originalidad se han relativizado. El presente artículo pone en tela de juicio esta tesis tomando la escritora italiana Bianca Laura Saibante (1723-1797) como caso de estudio, prestando especial atención a los matices y pormenores de su representación de las mujeres de la Antigüedad. El análisis se centra en una de estas mujeres que Saibante incluyó en sus escritos sobre la cuestión femenina: la soberana babilónica Semíramis. Se analizan tanto los

elementos narrativos de la vida de Semíramis que Saibante destacó como su uso. Además, la comparación con otras representaciones de la reina babilónica en escritos relevantes para el contexto de Saibante servirá para identificar particularidades en su tratamiento de Semíramis y muestran así el carácter dinámico de la recepción de la Antigüedad y su funcionalización en los debates contemporáneos sobre el género.

Palabras clave: Bianca Laura Saibante. Escritora. Rovereto. Debates italianos sobre el género. *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*. Recepción de la Antigüedad. Semíramis. *Querelle des femmes*.

SUMMARY

1.—Introduction: Antiquity and Gender. 2.—A case study from Rovereto and the *Accademia degli Agiati*. 3.—The reception of Antiquity in one of Bianca Laura Saibante's writings. 4.—Saibante's narrative of Semiramis in comparative perspectives. 5.—Conclusion: the particular features of Saibante's reception of Semiramis. 6.—Bibliography.

1.—Introduction: Antiquity and Gender

Exploring the interplay between gender and Antiquity in post-antique societies is a historiographically interesting undertaking, for several reasons¹. To begin with, both concepts are characterized by a notable historical variability. Anna Heinze and Friederike Krippner have also pointed out similarities in their social function: both are repeatedly appropriated and produced by communities and serve as central foci of self-understanding and positioning². In addition, gender concepts and images of Antiquity have been closely interwoven³. In certain contexts, they are also mutually dependent: post-antique gender orders have a great influence on how Antiquity is perceived, taken up and narrated, and on the ways in which this process occurs; this is particularly true with regard to women in Antiquity. And conversely, ancient gender discourses provide later societies a wide range of material⁴ of gender-

1. I owe thanks to the editors of this dossier, Agnès García Ventura (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain) and Kerstin Droß-Krüpe (Universität Köln, Germany), for the opportunity they gave me to present this study on Bianca Laura Saibante, for their precious remarks, and for their help in the language revision. I am further indebted to Francesca Brunet and Siglinde Clementi (both Centre for Regional History, Brixen/Bressanone, Italy) who read an earlier version of this text for their valuable comments. Last, I am grateful to all people of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* for their helpfulness in allowing me to use their historical archive.

2. HEINZE, Anna and KRIPPNER, Friederike: "Einleitung". In HEINZE, Anna and KRIPPNER, Friederike (eds.): *Das Geschlecht der Antike. Zur Interdependenz von Antike- und Geschlechterkonstruktionen von 1700 bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2014, pp. 7-16, p. 7.

3. KARREMANN, Isabel: "Geschlechterdifferenz". In JAKOB, Joachim and SÜSSMANN, Johannes (eds.): *Das 18. Jahrhundert. Lexikon zur Antikenrezeption in Aufklärung und Klassizismus* (Der Neue Pauly, Supplemente Band 13). Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler, 2018, pp. 273-281, p. 274.

4. Cf. SCHNEGG, Kordula: *Antike Geschlechterdebatten. Die soziale Verortung der Frauen und Männer in der griechisch-römischen Antike*. Tübingen, Narr Francke Attempto, 2021, pp. 7-8.

specific ideas and values in their search for answers to contemporary challenges and disputes. Ancient gender orders thus have an impact on post-antique gender discourses through processes of transformation and reception, while post-antique gender orders in turn fundamentally shape the understanding of Antiquity that is conveyed in each particular case⁵.

One of the places in which entanglements of this kind between gender history and the reception of Antiquity⁶ can be discerned is the historiographically broad field of the *Querelle des femmes*. This term encompasses the multi-layered, Europe-wide debates about the sexes that began in the late Middle Ages and continued into the eighteenth century⁷. Questions about the value and nature of female and male genders were negotiated, gender equality or inequality was discussed, the intellectual abilities of women and thus their access to knowledge were addressed, and their ability to rule as well as their role in (and significance for) society was debated⁸.

5. On this interplay, cf. HEINZE and KRIPPNER: "Einleitung", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

6. The two approaches are fruitfully brought together, for example, by Adelheid Müller in her exploration of two female protagonists in classical studies and their knowledge of Antiquity. MÜLLER, Adelheid: *Sehnsucht nach Wissen. Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke und die Altertumskunde um 1800*. Berlin, Reimer Verlag, 2012. On the connection between Antiquity and gender in art, see ROSE, Marice and POE, Alison C. (eds.): *Receptions of Antiquity, Constructions of Gender in European Art, 1300-1600*. Leiden, Brill, 2015; MOORE, Kenneth (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to the Reception of Ancient Greek and Roman Gender and Sexuality*. Milton Park/Abingdon/Oxon, Routledge, 2023.

7. For a detailed explanation of the dating question, see: BOCK, Gisela and ZIMMERMANN, Margarete: "Die Querelle des Femmes in Europa. Eine begriffs- und forschungsgeschichtliche Einführung". In BOCK, Gisela and ZIMMERMANN, Margarete (eds.): *Die europäische Querelle des Femmes. Geschlechterdebatten seit dem 15. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart/Weimar, Metzler Verlag, 1997, pp. 9-38. There are differing opinions on the date of the end of the *Querelle des femmes*: historians such as Tiziana Plebani or Rebecca Messbarger make a clear distinction between the Italian gender debates of the eighteenth century and the earlier *Querelle des femmes*, while others, such as Claudia Opitz Belakhal, also include the debates of the eighteenth century in the *Querelle* and prolong them until the time of the revolution. Cf. PLEBANI, Tiziana: "Socialità e protagonismo femminile nel secondo Settecento". In FILIPPINI, Nadia Maria (ed.): *Donne sulla scena pubblica: società e politica in Veneto tra Sette e Ottocento*. Milano, F. Angeli, 2006, pp. 25-80, here p. 26; MESSBARGER, Rebecca: "The Italian Enlightenment Reform of the Querelle des Femmes". In MESSBARGER, Rebecca and FINDLEN, Paula (eds.): *The Contest for Knowledge. Debates over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 1-22; OPITZ-BELAKHAL, Claudia: *Streit um die Frauen und andere Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen "Querelle des femmes"*. Roßdorf b. Darmstadt, Ulrike Heimer Verlag, 2020. For the case study from the eighteenth century discussed in this essay, the question of the exact dating of the *querelle* is of little relevance, while the use of female figures from the past within the context of the *querelle des femmes* is more important.

8. KELLY, Joan: "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes*, 1400-1789". *Signs*, 8-1 (1982) 4-28; BOCK and ZIMMERMANN: "Die Querelle", *op. cit.*; VARGAZ MARTÍNEZ, Ana: "La Querelle des femmes: una tradizione politica". *Segni e comprensione*, XXXII-94 (2018) 134-149; OPITZ-BELAKHAL: *Streit, op. cit.*

These texts, whether they turn in a misogynistic direction or are conceived as praise of women, have in common the fact that they interweave narratives about women from the past (figures from the Bible, from ancient mythology and history, but also from modern times) in order to use them as an argument or an example⁹. The *Querelle des femmes* is sometimes described as static and bound to tradition, given that it always took up the same themes and arguments¹⁰. In a less *topoi*-oriented approach, however, “small differences” also become visible along with specific nuances and shifts; these can indicate discontinuities or even transformations, but are in any case meaningful for the respective contexts of origin¹¹.

Such a perspective can also be adopted for the reception of Antiquity by drawing attention to the details in the depiction of ancient female figures that were presented as *exempla* in the gender debates. Even if it is a traditional women’s catalogue that is used again and again, and at first glance is always the same, a close-up view (and this is one of the contentions of the present article) promises to uncover the “small differences” in the use of ancient female figures and thus to show the dynamic character of this reception of Antiquity. Numerous stories of many of the female figures were already circulating in Antiquity, each of them told with different emphases and associated omissions. For the incorporation of female figures of this kind into (post-Antique) texts (e.g., in the context of the *Querelle*), it was possible to select from a wealth of possible stories and, in turn, to

9. KELLY: “Early Feminist Theory”, *op. cit.*, p. 24; BOLUFER PERUGA, Mónica: “Galerías de ‘mujeres ilustres’ o el sinuoso camino de la excepción a la norma cotidiana (ss. xv-xviii)”. *Hispania*, LX/1, núm. 204 (2000), 181-224; CARINCI, Eleonora: “Modelli, autorialità e donne illustri nella letteratura scientifica e filosofica italiana del Cinquecento: Maria Gondola e Camilla Erculiani”. In CERRATO, Daniele and SCHEMBARI, Andrea and VELÁZQUEZ GARCÍA, Sara (eds.): *Querelle des femmes: Male and Female Voices in Italy and Europe*, Szczeci, Volumina.pl, 2018, pp. 27-41, here pp. 28-29. See the detailed analysis in SONNLEITNER, Käthe: “Frauen aus Bibel und Antike als Fundamente in Christine de Pizans *Stadt der Frauen*”. In FISCHER, Irmtraud (ed.): *Bibel- und Antikenrezeption. Eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung*. Münster, LIT-Verlag, 2014, pp. 130-166; ZELLER, Rosmarie: “Der Kanon gelehrter Frauen der Antike in der ‘Querelle des femmes’ des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts”. In SCHREINER, Sonja, PLOTKE, Seraina and SCHIER, Petra (eds.): *Gender Studies in den Altertumswissenschaften. De mulieribus claris. Gebildete Frauen - bedeutende Frauen - vergessene Frauen*, Trier, WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2020, pp. 131-142.

10. The “static quality” is mentioned, for example, in KELLY: “Early Feminist Theory”, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Similarly, CHEMELLO, Adriana: “Weibliche Freiheit und venezianische Freiheit. Moderata Fonte und die Traktatliteratur über Frauen im 16. Jahrhundert”. In BOCK and ZIMMERMANN (eds.): *Die europäische Querelle*, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-268, here pp. 239-240.

11. Cf. OPITZ-BELAKHAL: *Streit um die Frauen*, p. 15. See also GUERCI, Luciano: *Per una storia delle donne nell’Italia del Settecento*, ed. by STRUMIA, Elisa, Alessandria, Edizioni dell’Orso, 2023 [orig. *La discussione sulla donna nell’Italia del Settecento. Aspetti e problemi*, Torino, Tirrena Stampatori, 1987; *La sposa obbediente. Donna e matrimonio nella discussione dell’Italia del Settecento*, Torino, Tirrena Stampatori, 1988], p. 18.

place a particular emphasis in the presentation according to the respective focus¹². In order to detect these “small differences” in the reception of female figures from Antiquity, we need to discern which of the narrative elements that were available for the ancient figures were used and to examine them in terms of their representation, selection, and functionalization.

This article will attempt such an analysis using a case study that can be assigned to the context of Italian gender debates in the *Settecento*. In the course of the eighteenth century, the production of texts in Italian that directly or indirectly addressed women proliferated¹³. The immense abundance of texts indicates that this topic played an important role in the public debate¹⁴, but also that the increasing presence of women in the public sphere provoked responses and reactions¹⁵. In these debates, the majority of the speakers were men, but women also participated. One of these female voices (albeit without relevant echoes) was that of Bianca Laura Saibante (1723-1797): in the 1750s and early 1760s, she took up the *questione femminile* several times on the stage of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, repeatedly referring to women from Antiquity. Saibante’s gender-specific writings have received little attention in research so far; they have occasionally been examined from a gender-historical perspective, but a systematic and comprehensive analysis is still lacking¹⁶. So far, Saibante’s recourse to Antiquity has been

12. Käthe Sonnleitner, for example, has pointed out how Christine de Pizan draws on Boccaccio’s *De claris mulieribus* for the catalogue of women that serves as the foundation for her work *City of Women*, but sometimes radically alters her depiction of ancient women, giving the respective female figures a different meaning and function. See SONNLEITNER: “Frauen”, *op. cit.*, pp. 141, 145, 148-149.

13. GUERCI: *Per una storia delle donne*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

14. *Ibidem*; MASSBERGER: “The Italian Enlightenment Reform”, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

15. MASSBERGER: “The Italian Enlightenment Reform”, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-11; PLEBANI Tiziana: “Socialità”, *op. cit.*

16. An analyses of Bianca Laura Saibante’s writings as contributions to the gender debates of the eighteenth century are provided by: NUBOLA, Cecilia: “Imparare a Trento: donne e istruzione in età moderna”. *Annali di storia dell’educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche*, 2 (1995) 25-37, here pp. 27-30; STRUMIA, Elisa: “Clementino Vannetti e ‘L’educazione del bel sesso’”. *Atti dell’Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VIII (1998) 175-202, here pp. 176-178. An overview with a gender-specific focus of Saibante’s writings is provided by ROMAGNANI, Gian Paolo: “Dal salotto di casa Saibante all’Accademia degli Agiati: l’avventura intellettuale di una donna nella Rovereto settecentesca”. In BETRI, Maria Luisa and BRAMBILLA, Elena Brambilla (eds.): *Salotti e ruolo femminile in Italia. Tra fine Seicento e primo Novecento*. Venezia, Marsilio Editore, 2004, pp. 213-235. In general, Bianca Laura Saibante has received little attention in historiography, and the main focus has been on her role as the mother of the famous scholar Clementino Vannetti. Significantly, no monographic studies of her life and works have been published. As a result of these lacks, in addition to the article by Romagnani mentioned above, the studies by Emer and Bettanini published more than a century ago are still considered to be the most detailed research on Bianca Laura Saibante to date: EMER, Dario: *Bianca Laura Saibante Vannetti e l’educazione di Clementino*. Trento, Stab.Giov.Zippel.ed., 1892 (Estratto dalla Strenna Trentina letteraria e artistica per il 1893);

completely ignored. The present article cannot close these gaps, but it does want to set out a path for an examination of her writings in a way that brings together the reception of Antiquity and gender history. For this purpose, the question of Saibante's access to knowledge (here, specifically to the knowledge of ancient women) is also relevant. This is one of the reasons why we will first provide an outline of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, the context of our case study (II). We will then turn our attention to Saibante's use of role models in her writings on the *questione femminile*, whereby the analysis focuses on one of the ancient female figures to which Saibante refers, namely the Babylonian ruler Semiramis. Saibante's use of Semiramis will be examined in terms of the narrative elements she adopts for this figure and how they are functionalized for her reflections (III). Finally, a comparison with other depictions of Semiramis (IV) will be useful to identify similarities and "small differences" in order to be able to highlight particular features of her representation of Semiramis (V).

2.—A case study from Rovereto and the *Accademia degli Agiati*

Bianca Laura Saibante was born in 1723 into a wealthy patrician family¹⁷. She spent almost her entire life in the small town of Rovereto, today located in the region of Trentino in Italy. In Saibante's time, Rovereto was in many respects a frontier region, an area of transition: politically, the Italian-speaking city had belonged to the House of Habsburg since the sixteenth century, after an interlude of about 100 years under the Republic of Venice. It was not dependent on the adjacent Prince-Bishopric of Trento, but was part of the County of Tyrol and was able to administer itself largely autonomously, at least until the reforms under Maria Theresa and Joseph II in the second half of the eighteenth century¹⁸. Economically, Rovereto was part of a Europe-wide trade network mainly thanks to its production of silk, which was central to the city's economy; this situation was also favoured by the city's location on the important communication axis north-

BETTANINI, Anatolone: "Saibante-Vannetti Bianca Laura". *Atti della I.R. Accademia*, ser. III, vol. VI-2 (1900) 107-144. In September 2023, Bianca Laura Saibante was the focus of a wider research project for the first time, when the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* hosted a conference dedicated exclusively to her on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of her birth. See the programme of the conference "Intellettuale, moglie, madre. Bianca Laura Saibante, una donna del Settecento" at url: <https://agiati.org/bianca-laura-saibante-convegno-2023> [last access: 27.5.2024]. FILIPPI, Paola Maria and ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (eds.): *Intellettuale, moglie, madre. Bianca Laura Saibante, una donna del Settecento* [forthcoming]

17. BETTANINI: "Saibante-Vannetti, Bianca Laura", *op. cit.*, pp. 108-110; PERINI, Quintilio: "Famiglie nobili trentine, vol. VII: La famiglia Saibante di Verona e Rovereto". *Atti della I.R. Accademia*, ser. III, vol. XII-1 (1906) 49-84.

18. NEQUIRITO, Mauro: "L'assetto istituzionale roveretano nel Settecento". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI (1996) 319-346.

south across the Alps, which connected the commercial centres of Verona and Augsburg via the Bolzano/Bozen fairs¹⁹. Rovereto grew prosperous as a result, and also developed into a cultural centre inside the region²⁰. Although there was no local university, the sons of the city attended Italian or Austrian universities and maintained connections to the Italian-speaking and German-speaking areas, so that Rovereto was integrated into a wide, cross-border cultural network between Vienna and Venice²¹. In the course of the eighteenth century, schools and libraries were founded in Rovereto, and printing houses were set up²². The philosopher and historian Girolamo Tartarotti (1706-1761) played a prominent role in this process. Tartarotti was involved in the Republic of Letters and was in contact with many scholars north and south of the Alps²³; he played a central role not only to the cultural consolidation in Rovereto in the first half of the eighteenth century, but also in the educational path of our protagonist.

In her youth, for several years Bianca Laura Saibante attended the Orsoline girls' school in the nearby city of Trento. There she was taught reading, writing and mathematics, embroidery and drawing, as well as Italian, German and French²⁴. Returning to her parents' home, she and her brother Francesco Antonio were taught logic, philosophy and poetics by Tartarotti, who was their private tutor²⁵. We can

19. Cf. SABBATINI, Renzo: "Manifatture e commercio". In BELLABARBA, Marco and OLMÍ, Giuseppe (eds.): *Storia del Trentino*, vol. IV: *L'età moderna*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, pp. 283-318, esp. pp. 301-304; LORANDINI, Cinzia: "Sete, mercanti e scambi immateriali lungo l'asse del Brennero in età moderna". In LONGO-ENDRES, Lucia (ed.): *Artisti e mercanti in viaggio. Oltre le Alpi, attraverso il Tirolo*. Bologna, Pàtron, 2020, pp. 149-164; LORANDINI, Cinzia: "Mercanti tedeschi a Rovereto tra Sei e Settecento". In BONAZZA, Marcello and FRANCESCHINI, Italo (eds.): *Arrivi. Persone, gruppi, popolazioni verso il territorio trentino (preisotria-xx secolo)*. Trento, Società di Studi Trentini, 2021, pp. 243-249.

20. ALLEGRI, Mario: "La produzione letteraria". In BELLABARBA and OLMÍ (eds.): *Storia del Trentino*, vol. IV: *L'età moderna*, op. cit., pp. 555-596, especially pp. 580-582.

21. ALLEGRI, Mario, "Tra Vienna e Venezia: La formazione di una società colta nella Rovereto di primo Settecento". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, serie VII, vol. VI (1996) 67-89; SPADA Alessandra: "Gli accademici 'Taxiani' di Innsbruck e il loro contributo alla cultura roveretana". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI (1996) 535-555.

22. DE VENUTO, Liliana: "Lettori e biblioteche a Rovereto in età di antico regime". *Atti della Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*. Atti A, ser. VII, vol. IX (2009) 31-109; DE VENUTO, Liliana: "Libri, biblioteche e lettori lungo la Valle dell'Adige nel Settecento". *Geschichte und Region/Storia e regione* 29-1 (2020) 57-77.

23. ZUCCHI, Enrico: "Tartarotti, Girolamo". In *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 95 (2019), url: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-tartarotti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last access: 27.5.2024]; ALLEGRI: "La produzione letteraria", op. cit., pp. 583-586; GARMS-CORNIDES Elisabeth, "I rapporti tra Girolamo Tartarotti e gli eruditi oltremontani". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI (1996) 117-136.

24. NUBOLA: "Imparare a Trento", op. cit., pp. 33-36.

25. BETTANINI: "Saibante-Vanetti", op. cit., p. 112; ROMAGNANI, "Dal salotto", op. cit., p. 214.

also assume that Bianca had knowledge of Latin, since some of her writings contain Latin quotations and she also made translations.

Her education at school and with a private tutor, relatively broad for a woman from the eighteenth century, created the basis for her access to knowledge²⁶. The possibilities for her intellectual development were considerably expanded by her own efforts and those of her brother Francesco to establish *Casa Saibante* as an important cultural venue in Rovereto²⁷: from a private literary circle (sometimes referred to as a *salon*), emerged the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* in 1750. This was a formative moment not only for Saibante, but for Rovereto in general. She was one of the founding members of this literary and erudite academy, together with four young men – including her brother Francesco and her future husband Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti²⁸. In the course of the first year, more than 100 men of culture were admitted as members, mainly from Rovereto, but also from the Trentino area and Verona. The circle expanded even further: within fifteen years, the Academy had 450 members, including some of the most important Italian intellectuals of the time, such as Scipione Maffei, Carlo Goldoni and Laura Bassi. A special feature of the *Accademia Roveretana* was that it included representatives not only of Italian scholarship and culture, but also from the German-speaking world²⁹. The Academy, in its early years, perceived itself as an interface between the two cultures, an aspiration reflected in its activities of mediation and communication (e.g., through translations) of philosophical or scientific treatises from German into Italian, and also in its wide network of correspondents.

The centre of this academy was the *Casa Saibante*, which was considered its headquarters in the first decades of its existence. Bianca Laura continued to live there even after her marriage to Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti (1754) and the birth of her son Clementino Vannetti in the same year, moving to the second floor of

26. In many ways, Bianca Laura Saibantes corresponds to the social profile that Joan Kelly has reated for the female voices of the *Querelle des femmes*. Cf. KELLY: “Early Feminist Theory”, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

27. On the significance of women in the cultural and social spaces of eighteenth-century Italy, see: PLEBANI, Tiziana: “La ricerca italiana di genere su cultura femminile e Illuminismo nell’Italia del Settecento”. In BRAMBILLA, Elena and JACOBSON SCHÜTTE, Anne (eds.): *La storia di genere in Italia in età moderna: un confronto tra storiche nordamericane e italiane*. Roma, Viella, 2014, pp. 139-156, especially pp. 141-147.

28. On the history of the institution, see BONAZZA, Marcello: *L’accademia roveretana degli Agiati*, Rovereto, L’accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 1998; FERRARI, Stefano: “Un ceto intellettuale ai Confini d’Italia. L’Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati dal 1750 al 1795”. In BELLABARBA and OLMÍ (eds.): *Storia del Trentino*, vol. IV: *L’età moderna*, *op. cit.*, pp. 654-684.

29. FERRARI, Stefano: “Una società ‘confinante’: la vicenda storica dell’Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati (1750-1795)”. In FERRARI, Stefano (ed.): *Cultura letteraria e sapere scientifico nelle accademie tedesche e italiane del Settecento*. Rovereto, Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati, 2003, pp. 91-126, esp. pp. 99-114.

their parents' house, while her brother Francesco lived on the first floor. It was here that the *Agiati* came together for the regular meetings, the *tornate* (of which there were about nine per year at least for the first fifteen years) to recite their own poetic-literary and philosophical-scientific texts in public³⁰. It was also here that the *Accademia's* library and first archive were set up: all members were required to provide the texts presented to the *Agiati* in manuscript form to the Academy, and also copies of their publications³¹. So, in her own home, Saibante had direct access to the writings of the *Accademia's* vast network, as well as to the books in its library and in the extensive private collection of the Saibante-Vannetti family³².

3.—*The reception of Antiquity in one of Bianca Laura Saibante's writings*

Bianca Laura Saibante not only played a central role in the conception and organization of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, but also took an active part in the *tornate*, the monthly public meetings: in the first fifteen years, she presented her own texts at almost every one of these public meetings. After the death of her husband in 1764, she appeared less and less frequently in the *Accademia*, devoting herself as a widow mainly to her son and to (domestic) economic affairs, so that from the 1760s onwards her literary output stagnated. In the early days of the Academy, however, she recited many poems or novellas, as well as translations from the Old Testament. The range of subject matter of her texts expanded from 1753 onwards, when she also occasionally recited prose texts of a philosophical-historical nature known as *ragionamenti*. In these, she dealt with questions about painting, with anthropological considerations about shepherds and farmers, and also, in probably the most famous of her *ragionamenti*, with the education of her son³³. However, nine of these *ragionamenti* dealt with various aspects of the nature

30. Cf. FERRARI: "Una società confinante", *op. cit.*, pp. 106-114.

31. See ANDREOLLI, Alessandro: "Nascita ed evoluzione di un patrimonio. Transizioni e fratture". In ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (ed.): *Beni privati e interessi pubblici. Storia e attualità delle biblioteche accademiche italiane*, Rovereto, L'accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 2022, pp. 35-63, here pp. 37-42.

32. *Ibidem*; DE VENUTO, Liliana: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte I". *Studi trentini di scienze storiche. Sezione prima*, 81-4 (2002) 605-657; DE VENUTO, Liliana: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte II". *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche. Sezione prima* 82-2 (2003) 331-391; DE VENUTO, Liliana: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte III". *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche. Sezione prima*, 82-3 (2003) 637-687.

33. Cf. the chronological listing of the preserved manuscripts for the lectures held by the members on occasion of the *Agiati's* meetings in BONAZZA, Marcello: *Accademia roveretana degli Agiati. Inventario dell'archivio (secoli XVI-XX)*, Rovereto, Provincia Autonoma di Trento Servizio beni librari e archivistici/Accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 1999, pp. 42-66.

and conduct of women within the framework of the *questione femminile*³⁴. In these gender-specific writings, she included various women from the past such as the Biblical figures Rebecca, Rachel, Judith and Sarah, and of course Eve, and also women from ancient mythology and history such as Penelope, Lucrezia, Phyllis, Cintia, Semiramis, Laodice, Cleopatra, Cloelia, Zenobia, Terenzia and Agrippina, but also collectives such as the women of Athens and Sparta, the Sabine women or the women of the Roman Republic.

This article focuses on Saibante's use of one of these ancient women, Semiramis. The Babylonian queen provides a prime example of how different images and evaluations of a figure circulated in Antiquity and how this heterogeneity also continued in modern times. Sometimes a brief reference to the figure was enough to evoke associations³⁵. Saibante spoke thus of Semiramis in one of her *ragionamenti*, which she presented to the *Agiati* in April 1759:³⁶

Semiramide invasa dallo spirito ambizioso dopo avere ucciso il marito, non tenne il proprio Figliuolo Nino dimesso in abito femminile tra le Ancelle di corte a trattar la cannocchia, e il fuso, quasi vil Donna, a solo fine di dominar essa, e maneggiare a suo talento lo scettro appartenente al giovane Principe avvilito?³⁷

In the ancient and modern narrative tradition, many different narrative elements from the life of Semiramis are available, but Saibante chose only Semiramis' murder of her husband and her concealment of her young son, dressing him in women's clothes and obliging him to do women's work. The reason for this action Saibante found in Semiramis' desire to rule; in fact, the image she develops of the Babylonian queen is decidedly negative.

34. The writings of Bianca Laura Saibante are preserved as manuscripts in the archives of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*. A selection of her texts on the female question was printed during her lifetime, in 1781, probably at the instigation of her son, but with minor editorial interventions (which is why the original manuscripts are used here). SAIBANTE, Bianca Laura: *Discorsi, e lettere di Bianca Laura Saibante Vannetti fra gli Agiati di Roveredo Atalia, Lette nell'Accademia de' medesimi, con una lettera alla stessa della signora Contessa Francesca Roberti Franco*, Venezia, Coleti, 1781.

35. Cf. DROß-KRÜPE, Kerstin: *Semiramis, de qua innumerabilia narrantur. Rezeption und Verargumentierung der Königin von Babylon von der Antike bis in die opera seria des Barock*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag 2020, pp. 83-91.

36. This text, which comprises nine closely written pages, has been preserved as a manuscript in the archives of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* and has been published in 1781 in the above mentioned volume. For the analysis in this essay, the original manuscript is used because of the editorial interventions made (perhaps by Saibante's son) in the printed version; Archivio dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati [AARA], sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489).

37. AARA, sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489). "Did not Semiramis, seized with ambition after she had murdered the husband, keep her own little son Nino apart in women's clothes in the midst of the court maids to spin, almost like a lowly woman, only with the aim that she herself should rule and hold at her own discretion the sceptre that belonged to the young, humiliated prince?"

The reason why she used these narrative elements for Semiramis and not others had to do with the specific function that the reference to this particular historical figure is intended to fulfil. This function results from the composition of the text. Semiramis is not the only ancient female figure that Saibante included in this *ragionamento*; in fact she selected a total of six female figures, or groups of figures, which she discusses in the course of the *ragionamento* in the following order: in addition to Semiramis, who is mentioned first, Laodice, Cleopatra, the women of Sparta (as a collective), Cloelia and Zenobia³⁸. As with Semiramis, Saibante also added some brief but specific information to the other ancient women's names. This additional information is not a short biographical presentation, but rather an associative allusion to certain narratives that are assumed to be familiar to the audience, or brief anecdotes. Saibante's aim was not to introduce these women or to make them visible; rather, through these attached associations and anecdotes, she could steer the respective interpretation of meaning in the desired direction and thus functionalize these ancient women as *exempla*.

Fundamental to the composition of the text is Saibante's division of these ancient women into two groups, evaluating them in different ways. Semiramis, along with Laodice and Cleopatra, belongs to the group of negative *exempla*. While it was quite common to treat Semiramis together with Cleopatra, this combination of Semiramis with Laodice is unusual. We can assume that this is a deliberate creative act on Saibante's part, and is therefore quite significant for the reconstruction of her reception of Antiquity.

The narrative elements that Saibante selected for these three women are all constructed as rhetorical questions and have interesting parallels in terms of content:

Laodice appresso la morte del marito non avvelenò ella barbaramente cinque suoi piccioli figliuoli per continuare a regnar essa sola sul trono della Capadocia? E che non seppe fare Cleopatra, perché da Marcantonio si uccidesse Cesare, onde poter Ella regnare con essolui?³⁹

After Semiramis, Saibante includes Laodice, the wife of the Cappadocian king Ariarathes V from the second century BC, of whom she reported that after the death

38. In addition to the ancient figures, Eva and Donna Eleonora Marchesa di Fava are also mentioned in this text. We will not include them in our analysis, because the Marchesa is a contemporary figure with no bearing on our questions about the reception of Antiquity, and Eve has a completely different function in this text: she is not cited as an example, but as an argument to underpin the superiority of women over men.

39. AARA, sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489): "Did not Laodice, after the death of the husband, poison her five little children in a barbaric manner, so that she could continue to reign alone on the throne of Cappadocia? And what didn't Cleopatra know how to arrange for Cesar to be killed by Marcantonius, so that she could rule with him?"

of her husband she poisoned her own five small children in order to be able to rule alone. Then Saibante mentions Cleopatra, of whom she said that she was able to persuade Marc Antony to have Caesar killed so that she could rule together with him. The stories about these three women, whom Saibante treats together in the first group, thus have two things in common: on the one hand, all three do away with their husbands, children or partners, and on the other, all aspired to sole rule or co-regency. Saibante wanted to outline these two thematic elements with these three examples. They represent the focus of her narrative, which determines the elements that she selected in reference to Semiramis (and to Laodice and Cleopatra) and the ones that she omitted.

At first, one might assume that Saibante is concerned here with the much-discussed topic of female domination in the context of the *Querelle des femmes*⁴⁰, which she connotes negatively here. But if we include in the analysis the second group of ancient women that she incorporated later in this *ragionamento*, it quickly becomes clear that she is not at all concerned with rejecting female domination. This second group comprises ancient female figures who served her as positive examples; one of them is Zenobia, the ruler of Palmyra, whom she describes as a queen and military leader:

Zenobia Regina de' Palmireni non solo dilatò i confini del proprio Impero; ma lungamente sostenne la guerra contro de' Romani, cosicchè fu d'ammirazione allo stesso Imperador Adriano [*sic*]⁴¹, il quale nell'atto che vinta gli si presentò innanzi, domandolla, perché tanto ardire avesse avuto d'opporli all'armi Romane. Alla qual richiesta intrepidamente rispose la forte Donna: Perché ne Gallieno, né alcun altro de' suoi Capitano mi poteva togliere la speranza di divenire, ova la fortuna non m'avesse tradita, compagna nel medesimo Impero, e consorte a Te, che veramente sai vincere⁴².

Saibante's portrayal of Zenobia makes it clear that she did not reject women's rule in general, and that she would use female regents in their role as rulers and military leaders as positive role models. So she did not previously cite Semiramis, Laodice, and Cleopatra as negative examples of female domination; rather, in her narrative presentation of these three women, she focused on their endeavours to

40. OPITZ-BELAKHAL, *Streit um die Frauen*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-96.

41. Saibante confuses Emperor Hadrian with Emperor Aurelian.

42. AARA, sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489): "Zenobia, queen of the Palmyrians, not only enlarged the boundaries of her own empire, but also waged war against the Romans for a long time, so much so that even the emperor Hadrian [Aurelian] admired her, who, when she appeared before him as a vanquished, asked her why she had resisted the Roman arms so much. To this question the strong woman answered fearlessly: For neither Gallienus, nor any other of his officers, could deprive me of the hope of becoming a companion in the same dominion, and wife of you, who really know how to be victorious, if fortune had not betrayed me".

rule and the consequences of their aspirations: in order to fulfil these ambitions, all three women accepted the elimination of their own husbands and/or children.

Saibante thus deliberately selected the narrative elements from the accounts of the lives of these ancient female figures that could serve her in this *ragionamento* as an illustration of her theses. Her general aim was to reflect on the nature and the defects (“difetti”) of women. Drawing on the Biblical story of creation, she refers to the noble descent and perfection of the female sex, whose superiority over men derived from Eve. But at the same time, Saibante explained, many evils (“tanti mali”) emanate from women, the reason for this being *superbia femminile*, female ambition. Indeed, “superbia” is a vice to which women in particular fall victim. Saibante defined “superbia” as an inverted appetite for higher things, and one that has fatal consequences. *Superbia* makes women forget respect as wives, love as mothers, obedience as daughters, duty as citizens⁴³. Saibante illustrated this with the first *exempla* group of Semiramis, Laodice, and Cleopatra, telling the story of the devastating acts they perpetrated against their closest family members.

In her reflections, however, Saibante was not concerned with situating the space of women within the sphere of the family. This is evident in the stories she told with reference to the second group of ancient female figures. Saibante cited the Spartan women as a collective, then Cloelia, a mythical figure from early Roman history, and Zenobia, the ruler of Palmyra in the third century AD. Saibante spoke of the *donne Spartane*, who would tell their sons who went to war that they should return either with their shield (i.e., as victors) or on their shield (i.e., as fallen). As for Cloelia, she described how she walked through enemy territory without fear, taking with her other women who like her were held hostage by King Porsenna. The information Saibante provides for Zenobia initially states that she expanded her own empire as queen and held out against the Romans for a long time; she then continues with the anecdote of the conversation that Zenobia had with her vanquisher, the Roman Emperor Aurelian, after her defeat, in which she explained that she had been able to resist the Romans militarily for so long because she had hoped to become co-ruler with her counterpart.

In Saibante’s portrayal, these three positive examples in turn have two things in common: first, they have achieved great things, and second, they have done so because they were guided by appropriate male role models: the Spartan women are valorous and brave because their husbands set a good example; Cloelia is able to liberate her fatherland because the model of the Roman Republic, embodied in her ancestors, lived on in her; and Zenobia was able to resist militarily because she had in her opponent, the Roman emperor, a role model for a true victor.

Bianca Laura Saibante used the specific narratives of the two groups of ancient female *exempla*, both positive and negative, to present her reflections on two core

43. AARA, sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489), *passim*.

themes of the debates on the female gender: the role of women in society and, relatedly, the importance of female education. Via the ancient female figures, who are functionalized as either negative or positive role models, Saibante emphasized the effectiveness of female action – for better or for worse. She identified the presence or absence of exemplary men as the decisive factor in determining whether the consequences of female actions turn out to be positive or negative: Without such positive role models, women are affected by *superbia*, which has such far-reaching consequences; but with such positive role models female action turns into a positive force. Saibante combined the motif of exemplary men with a direct appeal to her (male) audience at the *Accademia Roveretana* to stand up for female education: wise and learned men should teach women the “lettere”, to train them in self-knowledge, to think wisely and clearly and to master their own passions: in other words, to educate their minds. Through female education, female vices such as *superbia* can be overcome, to the benefit of society as a whole. This is because women’s actions (both the negative, guided by *superbia*, and the positive, guided by education via good male role models) have an impact that goes far beyond the personal sphere of individual women, affecting the “domestiche pareti, le cittadi, e le Provincie intere”⁴⁴, the family, the city, and the countryside. Using the narrative elements of the figures Semiramis, Laodice and the Spartan women, Saibante shows how their actions affect the family; with the stories of Cleopatra, Cloelia and Zenobia, on the other hand, she highlights the effects of women’s actions at a more comprehensive socio-political level, that is, on the respective state system. Saibante emphasized several times how marked the influence of women is on their own home (“case”), on their own city (“città”) and on the broader political unit (“provincia”, “regno”) – so much so that the well-being of society as a whole depends on women.

Saibante’s central concern in this text is therefore to highlight the fundamental role of women in the fate of society as a whole and to emphasize the value of women’s education. To this end, she cites six female figures or groups of figures from Antiquity as examples, to whom she has assigned a specific function. This function was crucial in Saibante’s choice which women of Antiquity she includes, but also what stories she does tell (or does not tell) about these women. So, in her reception of antiquity, Saibante made a conscious selection. For example, in the portrayal of Zenobia, she emphasized the expansion of her empire as well as its military strength – narrative building blocks that she might also have used with regard to Semiramis, but she did not describe Semiramis’ conquests or military successes: she was only interested in the stories of her actions towards her husband and son. From this perspective, Semiramis could serve her as a (negative) example to show that the actions of women who are left to their propensity for *superbia*

44. AARA, sc. 24, 134.1 (già VIII, 488-489).

have fatal consequences that go far beyond the personal dimension of the female individual in question.

4.—*Saibante's narrative of Semiramis in comparative perspectives*

The theory presented at the beginning, according to which the reception of Antiquity in gender-specific debates should not be understood as a rigid reproduction of a standard catalogue of women but as a dynamic and variable appropriation, can now be verified by comparing Saibante's depiction of Semiramis with other images of the Babylonian queen. A comprehensive, conclusive comparison can not be offered here, but we can only highlight a few salient points that illustrate Saibante's reflections on the gender debate. First we will compare Saibante's reception of Semiramis with the poets Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who were fundamental to the Italian literary tradition. Then we will focus the comparative perspectives on texts from the *Querelle des femmes*, starting with Christine de Pizan, followed by some voices from the Italian *Querelle*, before two texts from the eighteenth century are used as contemporary comparisons for Saibante's use of Semiramis.

In the post-antique depictions of female figures from Antiquity, the texts of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Petrarch (1304-1374) and Boccaccio (1313-1375) laid important foundations for the Italian and European literary tradition⁴⁵. All three incorporated the figure of Semiramis into their works. In her study on the history of the reception of Semiramis, Kerstin Droß-Krüpe has explored in detail the portrayals of Semiramis by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio and the sources to which they referred⁴⁶. These writers presented Semiramis in quite different ways and place their emphasis on different aspects of the narratives involving her. Central elements in the depiction of Semiramis in all three, albeit with different focuses, are the reference to her as a ruler, military leader and conqueror, the founder of the city of Babylon, the builder of the city walls, or the regent who manages to put down an uprising. Her marriage to Ninos and her donning of men's clothes are sometimes mentioned. Fundamental is the narrative thread about her sexual relationship with her son, especially the amendment of the law, attributed to her, that allowed incest. Furthermore, all three connect Semiramis to the vice of lust ("lussuria"), which is important as their writings had a lasting influence on the way Semiramis was imaged in contemporary Europe and in the centuries that followed. Above all, Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* was an important source of stories about women in gender debates. Bianca Laura Saibante was probably aware of

45. DROSS-KRÜPE, Kerstin: *Semiramis, op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

46. *Ibidem*, pp. 93-110.

these representations of Semiramis: people from her close circle, such as Girolamo Tartarotti and Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, had made detailed studies of Dante⁴⁷, which she would certainly have known. She herself was a connoisseur of Petrarch and imitated his style in her poems⁴⁸, while the humorous novellas recited by the *Agiati*, especially in the early years, and of which Saibante herself wrote several, reflect the influence of Boccaccio⁴⁹. However, Saibante did not copy the models of the three Tuscan authors for her own portrayal of Semiramis; the elements narrated in them do not appear in her work.

Semiramis is used as an ancient female figure in numerous texts in the context of the *Querelle des femmes*. Christine de Pizan (1364-1430 ca.), whose work *The City of Women* is considered to be the beginning of the *Querelle*, incorporates Semiramis into her city along with many other women from the Biblical and ancient traditions. De Pizan transforms all the women she uses into positive role models and also adapts the stories she takes from Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* accordingly⁵⁰. Semiramis is cited as ruler, her reign and her military exploits are praised, and her incestuous relationship with her son is mentioned but excused. In de Pizan's account, Semiramis' husband is killed by an arrow shot⁵¹. It is unclear whether Saibante knew de Pizan's work, but even in this comparison the differences between what is said of Semiramis are striking. Once again, this is also related to the different appraisals: while Pizan offers a positive image of Semiramis, Saibante presents a negative one.

It is more likely that Saibante was familiar with the Italian voices of the *Querelle* from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among those who have dealt with Semiramis in more detail in their gender-specific treatises, Luigi Dardano, Giambattista Marino and Francesco Pona stand out; their accounts of Semiramis are similar to Saibante's. In Dardano's *La bella e dotta: difesa delle donne* (1554),

47. Cf. *Dantisti e Dantofili die secoli XVIII e XIX. Contributo alla storia della fortuna di Dante*, vol. 1, Firenze, 1901, p. 152; TAMANINI, Enrico: "Studi danteschi a Rovereto nel settecento". *Annuario della I.R. Scuola Reale Superiore Elisabetтина in Rovereto*, 52 (1911) 3-50. Vannetti's library, accessible to Saibante, also contained a manuscript by Tartarotti about Dante's *Inferno*, cf. DE VENUTO: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte II", *op. cit.*, p. 391.

48. An anonymous and undated manuscript with some biographical notes on Bianca Laura Saibante mentions Saibante's lyric imitation of a Petrarchan style: Biblioteca Civica di Rovereto [BCRov], Ms. 72.8.36. See also PENSA, Maria Grazia: "La produzione letteraria d'imitazione a Rovereto". In ALLEGRI, Mario (ed.): *L'affermazione di una società civile e colta nella Rovereto del Settecento*, Rovereto, Accademia Rovereto degli Agiati, 2000, pp. 212-229, particularly for Saibante: pp. 221-222.

49. PENSA, Maria Grazia: "La produzione letteraria", *op. cit.*, p. 225; RODLER, Lucia: "Bianca Laura Saibante, scrittrice antica o moderna?" In FILIPPI, Paola Maria and ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (eds.): *Intellettuale, moglie, madre. Bianca Laura Saibante, una donna del Settecento* [forthcoming].

50. SONNLEITNER: "Frauen aus Bibel und Antike", *op. cit.*, p. 130.

51. Cf. DROß-KRÜPPE: *Semiramis*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

Semiramis is accused of having taken over the regency in place of her son⁵² – a narrative element that also occurs in Saibante. Dardano lists numerous other offences committed by Semiramis, but they do not appear in Saibante's Semiramis story. In Giambattista Marino's *La Galleria* (1619), the verses that are put into Semiramis' mouth include the motif of the murder of her husband⁵³, which is also central to Saibante's depiction⁵⁴. In his *La galleria delle donne celebri* (1625), the Veronese Francesca Pona provided a detailed biography of Semiramis, who – here classified among the “donne lascive”, the lascivious women – murdered her husband and many of her previous lovers⁵⁵. In Saibante's work, however, the narrative element of the voluptuous Semiramis does not come into play at all.

It is also interesting to compare Saibante's depiction of Semiramis with a female author from the Venetian *Querelle des femmes*⁵⁶, namely Lucretia Marinella (1571-1653). Little is known about her life, but she wrote numerous books, mostly hagiographic writings, dramas, poems and a handbook of advice⁵⁷. Her work *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne co'diffetti et mancamenti de gli huomini* (1600) is considered an exemplary work of the Italian *Querelle*. It is conceived as a polemical response to Giuseppe Passi's misogynistic work *I donneschi difetti* (1599); Marinella responded with a defence of women, in which she lists the virtues of women in the first (positive) part, and the vices of men in the second (negative) part⁵⁸. In *La nobiltà*, Marinella mentions Semiramis several times and paints a positive picture of her throughout. First, Semiramis is listed as an example of “donne prudenti, & nel consigliare esperte”, who acts as a wise adviser to her husbands⁵⁹. Semiramis also appears in the section “Delle donne magnifiche, & cortesi”, her “magnificenza” being expressed in a detailed description of her building activities⁶⁰.

52. *Ibidem*, p. 122.

53. DROß-KRÜPPE: *Semiramis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-124.

54. Giambattista Marina works were (in part) accessible to Saibante, as at least one appears in her husband's library catalogue. See: DE VENUTO: “La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte II”, *op. cit.*, p. 639.

55. DROß-KRÜPPE: *Semiramis*, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-126.

56. On the Venetian *Querelle*, see ZIMMERMANN, Margarete: “‘L'eccezione veneziana’: La querelle italiana nel contesto europeo”. In VON KULESSA, Rotraud, PEROCCO, Daria and MEINE, Sabine (eds.): *Conflitti culturali a Venezia dalla prima età moderna ad oggi*, Florence, Franco Cesati Editore, 2014, pp. 181-189.

57. PANIZZA, Letizia: “Introduction to the Translation”. In MARINELLA, Lucrezia: *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men*, edited and translated by DUNHILL, Anne, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 8-15; BENEDETTI, Laura: “Le Essortationi di Lucrezia Marinella: l'ultimo Messaggio di una Misteriosa Veneziana”. *Italica*, 85-4 (2008) 381-395.

58. PANIZZA: “Introduction”, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

59. MARINELLA, Lucretia: *La nobiltà et l'eccellenza delle donne, co'difetti, e mancamenti de gli Huomini*, Venezia, Gio. Battista Combi, 1621 (3rd ed.), pp. 88, 90-91.

60. *Ibidem*, pp. 93-94.

And finally, Marinella also cites Semiramis as the first example of “*donne nell’arte militare, & nel guerreggiare illustri, & famose*” (famous women in military art and warfare) praising Semiramis’ military-strategic arts and triumphs⁶¹. In view of the success of Marinella’s *La nobiltà* – it was reprinted several times and was repeatedly commented upon in later writings⁶² – it is quite reasonable to assume that Saibante was familiar with the contents of this work. Nevertheless, the differences in the narrative motifs regarding Semiramis are clear: for Saibante, Semiramis is of no interest either as an adviser, as a builder, or as a strategist.

Even in the eighteenth century, Semiramis retained her place in the now increasingly frequent Italian discussions of the *questione femminile*. These debates were characterized by a strong ambiguity, in which the boundaries between misogynistic and philogynistic positions were often blurred: for example, the emphasis on gender equality in their general ability might easily be combined with the affirmation of the different natures of the sexes, which immediately undermined the demand for comprehensive gender egalitarianism. Luciano Guerri identified these ambivalences in the example of Paolo Mattia Doria (1667-1746)⁶³. The Genoese author had settled in Naples after a chequered career and was active as a writer and philosopher in the city’s Accademia Palatina⁶⁴. In 1716 he published a pamphlet in which he sought to show that women had the same capacity for freedom (“*libertà*”) as men⁶⁵. In the chapter on women who founded empires, enacted laws and waged wars, he cites Semiramis as the founder of the first great empire, the Assyrian Empire⁶⁶. He describes her life in detail over many pages, repeatedly emphasizing that she contains both outstanding virtues and the worst possible vices (“*bruttissimi vizi*”), although the latter do not overshadow the former⁶⁷. The most important narrative elements of Doria’s portrayal of Semiramis can be briefly listed: the founder of the empire, an outstanding strategist, war leader, conqueror; murderer of her husband Nino because of her striving for rule⁶⁸; wearer of men’s clothes, a city builder, a lascivious woman with many lovers, abuser of her son, and the person who allowed incest by law⁶⁹. Much as in Saibante, Semiramis’ quest for domination is a central

61. *Ibidem*, pp. 103-104.

62. PANIZZA: “Introduction”, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-33.

63. GUERRI: *Per una storia delle donne*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

64. ROVITO, Pierluigi: “Doria, Paolo Mattia”. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 41 (1992), URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-mattia-doria_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last access: 27.5.2024].

65. DORIA, Paolo Mattia: *Ragionamenti indirizzati alla Signora D. Aurelia D’Este duchessa di Limatola Ne’ quali si dimostra la donna, in quasi che tutte le virtù più grandi, non essere all’uomo inferiore*, Francfort [Napoli], 1716.

66. *Ibidem*, p. 75.

67. *Ibidem*, pp. 80, 88.

68. *Ibidem*, p. 85.

69. *Ibidem*, p. 94.

narrative element in Doria's account. However, all the other narrative elements used in Doria are irrelevant in Saibante.

The comparison with Doria is not only interesting because of the similarities and differences in the narrative elements used for Semiramis, but also because of similarity of the ideas on the nature of the female sex. Doria emphasized the equality of women and men in their ability to achieve freedom. He understood "libertà" as being free from faults and vices, i.e., identifying freedom with virtue. But his affirmation of gender equality in the same text is lost again when he argues that women are more afflicted by vices than men. In doing so, he introduces a specific relationship of inferiority, from which he also deduces that women need men in order to be led to virtue, that is, to freedom⁷⁰. Saibante also elaborates on a similar principle in the *ragionamento* analysed above, when she explains that women are more affected by *superbia* than men and need male education.

These comparisons in Saibante's depiction of Semiramis will be rounded off with an example from her immediate context. Saibante was not the only member of the *Agiati* who dealt with people or topics from Antiquity at the regular meetings. Other members of the *Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* also made Antiquity the subject of their treatises⁷¹. Clemente Baroni Cavalcabò (1726-1796), for example, an intellectual from Rovereto, member of the *Agiati* and a contemporary and friend of Saibante and her husband, was primarily concerned with scientific, mathematical, philosophical, moral and local historical questions, but he was also interested in issues of Antiquity, especially in his younger years⁷². His reflections on the intellectual abilities of women, which he presented at the Accademia in 1752, contained a brief exposition on the figure of Semiramis⁷³. Although he explicitly refrained from using examples from the past in order to cite women "dei tempi nostri" ("from our time") and their achievements in the sciences, in the introduction he referred to a single woman from Antiquity, namely Semiramis. He only sketches her briefly, but his picture of her is positive. Focusing on her ability as a political and military leader, he reports that she initially disguised herself as a man, but received greater recognition from her subjects when she revealed herself as a woman. We can assume that Saibante was aware of Cavalcabò's remarks, since she attended this lecture and was also directly addressed by Cavalcabò. However, in her

70. GUERCI: *Per una storia delle donne*, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

71. DE VENUTO: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte III", op. cit., p. 652. Cf. also the chronological list of the manuscripts read at the meetings in BONAZZA Marcello: *Inventario*, op. cit., pp. 38-67.

72. LEONARDI, Claudio: "Baroni Cavalcabò, Clemente". *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 6 (1964), URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/clemente-baroni-cavalcabo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last access: 27.5.2024].

73. AARA, sc. 128.5 (già II, 69).

portrayal of Semiramis presented a few years later to the same audience, she did not use any of the narrative elements that Cavalcabò had used in his description.

5.—*Conclusion: the particular features of Saibante's reception of Semiramis*

The comparison of Bianca Laura Saibante's depiction of Semiramis with the accounts of this figure in other texts (which are situated inside the gender debates or constitute important landmarks in the literary tradition) could here only be touched on. The examples presented are intended to sketch out a diachronic and synchronic pathway for a comparison that brings into focus the selection mechanisms at work in Saibante's reception of Semiramis. Even within this limited framework of comparative contextualization, the focus on the narrative elements reveals some striking characteristics. For her *ragionamento* on female *superbia*, Saibante selected certain motifs regarding Semiramis and omitted many others: for example, she did not discuss the Babylonian ruler's military and strategic successes or depict her as the founder of a city or as a great builder – narrative elements that were of central importance in the other texts. Saibante (different from Lucretia Marinella) did not characterize Semiramis as an example of *prudencia* (wisdom) who advises men – but on the contrary, used Semiramis to illustrate her argument that women need guidance from men. Positive attributes such as wisdom were of no interest to Saibante, because they were at odds with her aim of assigning Semiramis to the group of negative role models.

At the same time, however, she also left out other narrative elements that might have shown Semiramis in an even worse light: she said nothing of her numerous love affairs, nor did she hint at the story of her sexual desire for her own son, even though this son (or Semiramis' behaviour towards him) is key to Saibante's functionalization of the figure of Semiramis. One reason why Saibante did not include the narrative element of Semiramis' lasciviousness may lie in the basic intention of her *ragionamento*, which was to emphasize the importance of women for the collective. From this perspective, the motif of lust was not helpful for illustrating these negative *exempla* as the consequences of lasciviousness could not be described as devastating in moral and social terms. They are however limited by a woman's ability to function as an effective individual and do not impinge on the society overstepping the individual sphere. However, Saibante's aim was precisely to show that women's actions transcend the personal level and have an impact on society as a whole. In fact, the incest motif would have suited the depiction of Semiramis very well, especially in connection with the narrative according to which she legally authorized incest; it could have further supported Saibante's attempts to stress the impact on society of Semiramis' (negative) actions as a legislator. Saibante must have been familiar with this narrative element for Semiramis; we can assume that she had access to the works of Boccaccio and

Petrarch, for example. Perhaps a reason why she decided not to include it in her portrayal of Semiramis is to be found in Saibante's biography: as a young mother of an only son, speaking about incest in front of the male audience of the *Agiati* might have been a step too far for Bianca Laura.

However, in common with many other authors of the texts used here for comparison, Saibante did use the narrative element of Semiramis' murder of her spouse, as that Semiramis dressed her son in women's clothes to hide him among the maids. The act of dressing in clothes of the other sex is also reported in some of the other texts, but in that case it is Semiramis who disguises herself as a man; in Saibante's depiction Semiramis degrades and conceals her son in order to keep him away from the sceptre of power. By choosing precisely these two motifs, Saibante was able to functionalize Semiramis in the desired direction in her text: by focusing on these two narrative elements, she was able to present Semiramis' ambition to rule as an example of female *superbia* and to highlight its negative effects beyond the personal domain. In order to achieve these intended meanings, Saibante did not need to explain the respective narrative thread in detail; brief allusions were quite sufficient, because she could assume that her audience were familiar with the elements in question.

So, the choice of women we find in Saibante and which stories she tells about them is a calculated act – but not a simple passive reception of Antiquity. This is not a reproduction of an immutable catalogue of women, but a narrative act involving deliberate selection of *exempla* in order to assign them a specific function in her considerations as a whole.

This case study of the reception of Antiquity in a text from the debates on the Italian *questione femminile* in the eighteenth century is of course only partial, but these first considerations demonstrate that a synopsis of the reception of Antiquity and gender discourse can yield fruitful insights if one focuses on the “small differences”. Here, we have focused on only one aspect of the case study of Bianca Laura Saibante: the analysis of the narrative elements of her reception of Antiquity would have to be extended to all the ancient female figures that she introduced in her writings. In addition, the contextualization would have to be broadened in order to be able to gauge Saibante's knowledge of ancient women as well as the threads of discussion in the gender debates. To this end, we need to reconstruct not only her readings, but also her communication networks. Only when we can comprehensively explain which models Saibante drew on, which stories she knew regarding which ancient women – that is, which possibilities were available for her narrative choices – will we be able to identify lines of tradition and also the specific creative features in Saibante's reception of Antiquity⁷⁴. This can then serve

74. These issues are at the centre of a research project that aims to comprehensively explore the connection between the reception of antiquity and ideas of gender in Bianca Laura Saibante's work.

as a starting point for asking why certain stories from Antiquity (out of the many possible ones) were selected and told in a specific case – that is, why they were given priority over others. For analysing the interplay between Antiquity and gender in the eighteenth century, Bianca Laura Saibante, who has so far received little attention from scholarship, offers a particularly interesting case study, not least because she offers a female voice in gender debates in a multi-layered (peripheral) border area where different traditions, languages and cultures all had an impact.

6.—Bibliography

- AA.VV.: *Dantisti e Dantofili die secoli XVIII e XIX. Contributo alla storia della fortuna di Dante*, vol. 1, Firenze 1901.
- ALLEGRI, Mario: “Tra Vienna e Venezia: La formazione di una società colta nella Rovereto di primo Settecento”. *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI, 1996, pp. 67-89.
- ALLEGRI, Mario: “La produzione letteraria”. In BELLABARBA, Marco and OLMI, Giuseppe (eds.): *Storia del Trentino*, vol. IV: *L'età moderna*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, pp. 555-596.
- ANDREOLLI, Alessandro: “Nascita ed evoluzione di un patrimonio. Transizioni e fratture”. In ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (ed.): *Beni privati e interessi pubblici. Storia e attualità delle biblioteche accademiche italiane*. Rovereto, L'accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 2022, pp. 35-63.
- BENEDETTI, Laura: “Le Essortationi di Lucrezia Marinella: l'ultimo Messaggio di una Misteriosa Veneziana”. *Italica*, 85-4 (2008) 381-395.
- BETTANINI, Anatolone: “Saibante-Vannetti Bianca Laura”. *Atti della I.R. Accademia*, ser. III, vol. VI-2 (1900) 107-144.
- BOCK, Gisela and ZIMMERMANN, Margarete: “Die Querelle des Femmes in Europa. Eine begriffs- und forschungsgeschichtliche Einführung”. In BOCK, Gisela and ZIMMERMANN, Margarete (eds.): *Die europäische Querelle des Femmes. Geschlechterdebatten seit dem 15. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart/Weimar, Metzler Verlag, 1997, pp. 9-38.
- BOLUFER PERUGA, Mónica: “Galerías de ‘mujeres ilustres’ o el sinuoso camino de la excepción a la norma cotidiana (ss. XV-XVIII)”. *Hispania*, LX/1, núm. 204 (2000), 181-224.
- BONAZZA, Marcello: *L'accademia roveretana degli Agiati*. Rovereto, L'accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 1998.
- BONAZZA, Marcello: *Accademia roveretana degli Agiati. Inventario dell'archivio (secoli XVI-XX)*. Rovereto, Provincia Autonoma di Trento Servizio beni librari e archivistici/Accademia roveretana degli Agiati, 1999.
- CARINCI, Eleonora: “Modelli, autorialità e donne illustri nella letteratura scientifica e filosofica italiana del Cinquecento: Maria Gondola e Camilla Erculiani”. In CERRATO, Daniele, SCHEMBARI, Andrea and VELÁZQUEZ GARCÍA, Sara (eds.): *Querelle des femmes: Male and Female Voices in Italy and Europe*. Szczeci, Volumina.pl, 2018, pp. 27-41.
- CHEMELLO, Adriana: “Weibliche Freiheit und venezianische Freiheit. Moderata Fonte und die Traktatliteratur über Frauen im 16. Jahrhundert”. In BOCK, Gisela and ZIMMERMANN, Margarete (eds.): *Die europäische Querelle des Femmes. Geschlechterdebatten seit dem 15. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart/Weimar, Metzler Verlag, 1997, pp. 239-268.
- DE VENUTO, Liliana: “La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte I”. *Studi trentini di scienze storiche*. Sezione prima, 81-4 (2002) 605-657.
- DE VENUTO, Liliana: “La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti parte II”. *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche*. Sezione prima, 82-2 (2003) 331-391.

- DE VENUTO, Liliana: "La biblioteca di Giuseppe Valeriano Vannetti, parte III". *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche*. Sezione prima, 82-3 (2003) 637-687.
- DE VENUTO, Liliana: "Lettori e biblioteche a Rovereto in età di antico regime". *Atti della Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, serie VIII, vol. IX (2009) 31-109.
- DE VENUTO, Liliana: "Libri, biblioteche e lettori lungo la Valle dell'Adige nel Settecento". *Geschichte und Region/Storia e regione*, 29-1 (2020) 57-77.
- DROß-KRÜPE, Kerstin: *Semiramis, de qua innumerabilia narrantur. Rezeption und Verargumentierung der Königin von Babylon von der Antike bis in die opera seria des Barock*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020.
- EMER, Dario: *Bianca Laura Saibante Vannetti e l'educazione di Clementino*, Trento, Stab.Giov. Zippel.ed., 1892 (Estratto dalla Strenna Trentina letteraria e artistica per il 1893).
- FERRARI, Stefano: "Un ceto intellettuale ai Confini d'Italia. L'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati dal 1750 al 1795". In BELLABARBA, Marco and OLM, Giuseppe (eds.): *Storia del Trentino*, IV: *L'età moderna*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, pp. 654-684.
- FERRARI, Stefano: "Una società 'confinante': la vicenda storica dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati (1750-1795)". In FERRARI, Stefano (ed.): *Cultura letteraria e sapere scientifico nelle accademie tedesche e italiane del Settecento*. Rovereto, Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati, 2003, pp. 91-126.
- FILIPPI, Paola Maria and ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (eds.): *Intellettuale, moglie, madre. Bianca Laura Saibante, una donna del Settecento* [forthcoming].
- GARMS-CORNIDES, Elisabeth: "I rapporti tra Girolamo Tartarotti e gli eruditi oltremontani". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, serie VII, vol. VI (1996) 117-136.
- GUERCI, Luciano: *Per una storia delle donne nell'Italia del Settecento*, ed. by Elisa STRUMIA, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2023 [orig. *La discussione sulla donna nell'Italia del Settecento. Aspetti e problemi*, Torino, Tirrena Stampatori, 1987; *La sposa obbediente. Donna e matrimonio nella discussione dell'Italia del Settecento*. Torino, Tirrena Stampatori, 1988].
- HEINZE, Anna and KRIPPNER, Friederike: "Einleitung". In HEINZE, Anna and KRIPPNER, Friederike (eds.): *Das Geschlecht der Antike. Zur Interdependenz von Antike- und Geschlechterkonstruktionen von 1700 bis zur Gegenwart*. München, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2014, pp. 7-16.
- KARREMAN, Isabel: "Geschlechterdifferenz". In JAKOB, Joachim and SÜSSMANN, Johannes (eds.): *Das 18. Jahrhundert. Lexikon zur Antikenrezeption in Aufklärung und Klassizismus* (Der Neue Pauly, Supplemente Band 13). Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler, 2018, pp. 273-281.
- KELLY, Joan: "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes*, 1400-1789". *Signs*, 8-1 (1982) 4-28.
- LEONARDI, Claudio: "Baroni Cavalcabò, Clemente". *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol 6 (1964), URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/clemente-baroni-cavalcabo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last acces: 27.5.2024].
- LORANDINI, Cinzia: "*Sete, mercanti e scambi immateriali lungo l'asse del Brennero in età moderna*". In LONGO-ENDRES, Lucia (ed.): *Artisti e mercanti in viaggio. Oltre le Alpi, attraverso il Tirolo*. Bologna, Pàtron, 2020, pp. 149-164.
- LORANDINI, Cinzia: "Mercanti tedeschi a Rovereto tra Sei e Settecento". In BONAZZA, Marcello and FRANCESCHINI, Italo (eds.): *Arrivi. Persone, gruppi, popolazioni verso il territorio trentino (preistoria-xx secolo)*. Trento, Società di Studi Trentini, 2021, pp. 243-249.
- MESSBARGER, Rebecca: "The Italian Enlightenment Reform of the *Querelle des Femmes*". In MESSBARGER, Rebecca and FINDLEN, Paula (eds.): *The Contest for Knowledge. Debates over Women's Learning in Eighteenth-Century Italy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 1-22.
- MOORE, Kenneth (ed.): *The Routledge Companion to the Reception of Ancient Greek and Roman Gender and Sexuality*. Milton Park/Abingdon/Oxon, Routledge, 2023.

- MÜLLER, Adelheid: *Sehnsucht nach Wissen. Friederike Brun, Elisa von der Recke und die Altertumskunde um 1800*. Berlin, Reimer Verlag, 2012.
- NEQUIRITO, Mauro: "L'assetto istituzionale roveretano nel Settecento". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI (1996) 319-346.
- NUBOLA, Cecilia: "Imparare a Trento: donne e istruzione in età moderna". *Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche*, 2 (1995) 25-37.
- OPITZ-BELAKHAL, Claudia: *Streit um die Frauen und andere Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen "Querelle des femmes"*. Roßdorf b. Darmstadt, Ulrike Heimer Verlag, 2020.
- PANIZZA, Letizia: "Introduction to the Translation". In Marinella Lucrezia: *The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men* (edited and translated by Anne DUNHILL). Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 8-15.
- PENSA, Maria Grazia: "La produzione letteraria d'imitazione a Rovereto". In ALLEGRI, Mario (ed.): *L'affermazione di una società civile e colta nella Rovereto del Settecento*. Rovereto, Accademia Rovereto degli Agiati, 2000, pp. 212-229.
- PERINI, Quintillo: "Famiglie nobili trentine, vol. VII: La famiglia Saibante di Verona e Rovereto". *Atti della I.R. Accademia*, ser. III, vol. XII-1 (1906) 49-84.
- PLEBANI, Tiziana: "Socialità e protagonismo femminile nel secondo Settecento". In FILIPPINI, Nadia Maria (ed.): *Donne sulla scena pubblica: società e politica in Veneto tra Sette e Ottocento*. Milano, F. Angeli, 2006, pp. 25-80.
- PLEBANI, Tiziana: "La ricerca italiana di genere su cultura femminile e Illuminismo nell'Italia del Settecento". In BRAMBILLA, Elena and JACOBSON SCHUTTE, Anne (eds.): *La storia di genere in Italia in età moderna: un confronto tra storiche nordamericane e italiane*. Roma, Viella, 2014, pp. 139-156.
- RODLER, Lucia: "Bianca Laura Saibante, scrittrice antica o moderna?" FILIPPI, Paola Maria and ANDREOLLI, Alessandro (eds.): *Intellettuale, moglie, madre. Bianca Laura Saibante, una donna del Settecento* [forthcoming].
- ROMAGNANI, Gian Paolo: "Dal salotto di casa Saibante all'Accademia degli Agiati: l'avventura intellettuale di una donna nella Rovereto settecentesca". In BETRI, Maria Luisa and BRAMBILLA, Elena Brambilla (eds.): *Salotti e ruolo femminile in Italia. Tra fine Seicento e primo Novecento*. Venezia, Marsilio Editore, 2004, pp. 213-235.
- ROSE, Marice and POE, Alison C. (eds.): *Receptions of Antiquity, Constructions of Gender in European Art, 1300-1600*. Leiden, Brill, 2015.
- ROVITO, Pierluigi: "Doria, Paolo Mattia". *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 41 (1992), URL: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paolo-mattia-doria_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last acces: 27.5.2024].
- SABBATINI, Renzo: "Manifatture e commercio". In BELLABARBA, Marco and OLM, Giuseppe (eds.): *Storia del Trentino, IV: L'età moderna*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2002, pp. 283-318.
- SCHNEGG, Kordula: *Antike Geschlechterdebatten. Die soziale Verortung der Frauen und Männer in der griechisch-römischen Antike*. Tübingen, Narr Francke Attempto, 2021.
- SONNLEITNER, Käthe: "Frauen aus Bibel und Antike als Fundamente in Christine de Pizans *Stadt der Frauen*". In FISCHER, Irmtraud (ed.): *Bibel- und Antikenrezeption. Eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung*. Münster, LIT-Verlag, 2014, pp. 130-166.
- SPADA, Alessandra: "Gli accademici 'Taxiani' di Innsbruck e il loro contributo alla cultura roveretana". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VI (1996) 535-555.
- STRUMIA, Elisa: "Clementino Vannetti e 'L'educazione del bel sesso'". *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana Degli Agiati*. Atti A, ser. VII, vol. VIII (1998) 175-202.
- TAMANINI, Enrico: "Studi danteschi a Rovereto nel settecento". *Annuario della I.R. Scuola Reale Superiore Elisabetina in Rovereto*, Vol. 52 (1911) 3-50.
- VARGAZ MARTÍNEZ, Ana: "La Querelle des femmes: una tradizione politica". *Segni e comprensione*, XXXII-94 (2018) 134-149.

- ZELLER, Rosmarie: “Der Kanon gelehrter Frauen der Antike in der ‚Querelle des femmes‘ des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts”. In SCHREINER, Sonja, PLOTKE, Seraina and SCHIER, Petra (eds.): *Gender Studies in den Altertumswissenschaften. De mulieribus claris. Gebildete Frauen – bedeutende Frauen – vergessene Frauen*. Trier, WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2020, pp. 131-142.
- ZIMMERMANN, Margarete: “‘L’eccezione veneziana’: La querelle italiana nel contesto europeo”. In VON KULESSA, Rotraud, PEROCCO, Daria and MEINE, Sabine (eds.): *Conflitti culturali a Venezia dalla prima età moderna ad oggi*. Florenz, Franco Cesati Editore, 2014, pp. 181-189.
- ZUCCHI, Enrico: “Tartarotti, Girolamo”. *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 95 (2019), Url: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-tartarotti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [last access: 27.5.2024].

