FONDAZIONE BRUNO KESSLER
MAGAZINE

THE WORK OF WOMEN IN THE MODERN EUROPE CITIES

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What has changed and what has remained unchanged for today's female workers? We asked Anna Bellavitis, professor of Modern History at Rouen Normandie University, and speaker at the FBK-ISIG "Oval Table" meeting series.

“Competition between men and women in work is a constant factor and usually women lose because the institutions, which in modern Europe were the corporations, are predominantly male.” This is how **Anna Bellavitis**, professor of Modern History at the **University of Rouen Normandie**, during the seminar within the series of autumn meetings entitled **“Oval Table”** organized by **FBK’s Italian-German Historical Institute**, explains what has not changed in our contemporary society in female work. “Another aspect that has not changed much is that women’s wages are lower compared to men’s on equal employment terms.”

Her study, collected in a volume edited by Viella, has taken into account the work of women in modern European cities and is based on a large international bibliography and on unpublished archival research in a vast area which ranges from Italy to Scandinavia, Spain and Poland.

As far as the areas where improvements have been made, Bellavitis emphasizes: “Even though the crystal ceiling still exists, objectively women’s access to power posts in the workplace has greatly increased and above all huge steps in accessing education have been taken. In modern Europe women would have no access to universities nor would be part of intellectual academies. There were some exceptions in Italy. In some cases, women have been called to teach, such as at the University of Bologna. These were rare cases and the women involved were either daughters or wives of faculty members, but in the rest of Europe this did not happen, and women were totally absent from the academic world. ”

Bellavitis, who is also a member of the Institut Universitaire de France and founder of the Italian Society of Women Historians, described the work of craftswomen, female shop owners, baliards, prostitutes, merchants, artists, journalists and industry captains in the European modern society and the role played by women in economic evolution despite the limits that laws and traditions had imposed on their freedom of action and movement.

The FBK-ISIG “Oval Table” seminar series has been designed to foster discussion and scientific exchange between scholars of modern history, and offer them a free, informal, historical update on current research.

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