

Abstracts

Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Women in trading business at the end of the 18th century: a Salzburg case study with implications for the social history of law

Based on a wide selection of documents (census, real estate register, trade register, marriage contracts, diaries, business correspondence, legal codifications), the article analyses the role of women in the trading business of a small residential town at the end of the 18th century. Traditionally women from urban vicinity were selling the products of their own work in agrarian households at certain places in town (markets), thus constituting the fundamental link between the urban and the rural area (Braudel). Intermediate trade with products which did not originate in the area was organized by women who mainly had come into this business by collaborating with their fathers, husbands or brothers. Important to note that all these women had acquired knowledge of measures, weights and various monetary units in informal ways (learning by doing). Daughters of the leading economic groups in Salzburg, of wholesale and retail merchants acquired active functions only in rare occasions (widowship). Yet in regard to family fortune and economic licence they had a passive function similar to daughters of ruling sovereigns: with their marriage alone the substance of the family fortune could be kept intact and profitable. The General Civic Law of 1812 (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, ABGB) took the family model of bourgeois/middle class family as a norm for all: henceforth the man was considered by law as the nourisher of family (§ 141) and the increase of the family property stemmed mainly of this work (§ 1237). Thus the relevant working cooperation of spouses in agriculture, craft and trade was bluntly ignored. However, contradictory to the limited role stipulated by the ABGB different patterns for women were possible out of mere practical needs: the trade law (*Handelsgesetz*) of 1862 introduced formally the concept of an independent woman with all duties and rights of a male merchant.

Andrea Ellmeier, Dealing with the Future. Gender Politics and the Austrian Consumer Co-operative Movement

Since the 19th century women were addressed as consumers by different agencies – market orientated advertising industries, bourgeois women movements and Consumer Co-operatives. As a part of the Austrian Labour Movement the invention of the Consumer Co-operatives was to transform the capitalist system of production-distribution-consumption to a nationalized economy. How did the Austrian Co-operatives manage to win working class women as “their” consumers? Analysing those specific strategies implies speaking about the politics of consumption, about organizing the so-called “unpolitical” women as well as commenting on a gendered concept of politics and women’s participation in the public sphere.

Sabine Kienitz, Female hawkers. Insights into mobile forms of life at the beginning of the 19th century

Images of female hawkers in history are mainly clichés, romanticizing or stigmatizing women who lived on the road. Due to the scarcity of sources we know little about their self-images and self-representations. A case of murder in Württemberg reveals consistent and detailed knowledge about the lifestyle and value system of a mobile group of people at the beginning of the 19th century. In 1818 a young Swabian pedlar of 24 years had killed a 64-year-old woman, a wandering money-lender, with whom she had travelled for a while. Based on the court records the biographies of both women are

reconstructed, shedding new light on the organization of their everyday lives in the context of the often dangerous roads. Their detailed statements in the trial refer to the intensive relations and interdependences of mobile people and the local residents.

Eva Labouvie, Women in wholesale trade and monopoly. A regional study in the German-French borderland

From the 16th to the 17th century it was not uncommon for women to be involved in the wholesale trade and monopoly. Due to favourable rights of inheritance for women in leases between the ruler and his tenants, they were to be found in quite considerable numbers up until the 18th century in the Saarland and bordering areas, in those branches of industry connected with regales and privileges. These included trade in iron, iron products, coal, soot, tobacco, rags or glass. During the 17th and 18th centuries this wholesale trade, fulfilled by women, was a mobile special trade of retail goods, which, in the 18th century, also expanded into the production of goods. With this emerged a new type of woman involved in the whole sale trade, who established herself in the country and organised trade and transport from her own place of production. In the last third of the 18th century there began a process of transformation, in the course of which women were above all excluded from the coal and steel sectors. It now became possible to forcibly remove female wholesalers through the courts on the grounds of their gender and the impropriety of their activity. Another option was the pretext of a male line of succession which was ordered by the salers families but in no way was attested either by civil or commercial law. At the same time and during the population development of the 19th century, there emerged the figure of the female wholesaler in town who concentrated her commerce on the distribution of various types of goods to provide for urban everyday needs. Both mobile trade and transport were replaced by a business centre. Travelling saleswomen and those women involved in production and transport were replaced by saleswomen or trade women in charge of one or more large groceries and general stores. On the one hand the new form of resident urban wholesale facilitated control over the women and on the other admittedly opened up a different form of trade by women; a trade which women have been able to secure for themselves right up until the present day. This is predominantly because these new forms meet with the social attitudes of the 19th and 20th centuries of labour force divided according to gender.