

*GENS HERENNULEIA**

by

WOJCIECH PIETRUSZKA, IGOR WYPIJEWSKI

ABSTRACT: The aim of our article was to write, using prosopographical methods, a kind of socioeconomic collective biography. We studied the case of Auli Herennuleii – a group distinguished by a rare *nomen gentilicium* (we know around 80 people who had this name), which is documented in chronologically similar period and has a limited geographical reach. Taking into consideration the only sources that mention them – inscriptions – Auli Herennuleii were mostly active in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE in the Augustan *regio I*, more precisely in Pompeii, Rome and Ostia. We analysed the cases of all known Auli Herennuleii and we tried to date their activity and to find the connections between them. As a result we prepared the biography of the so-called “middle class” *gens* from the Principate period. It is worth noting that quite a lot of Auli Herennuleii were involved in economic activities and almost none of them made a political career. This is probably the reason why they are rarely mentioned by historians. We think that such situation cannot be justified. A small history of Auli Herennuleii becomes a good illustration of the grand socioeconomic processes that took place in central Italy in the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd centuries.

Prosopographical studies still display great potential among widely defined classical studies¹. Thanks to new technologies and methods such as database tools or social network analysis (SNA), the usefulness of prosopography is currently being redefined². However, meticulous data mining continues to form the foundation of prosopographical analysis. Alongside the unquestionable role of prosopography in administrative and social studies, researchers are increasingly frequently underlining the perspectives it could offer to studies on economic phenomena, where it has so far been used quite rarely³.

The fact that, in our opinion, the prosopographical method is highly useful (despite its limitations, of which we are aware⁴) has motivated us to attempt to create

* We would like to thank Olli Salomies and Wim Broekaert for their great help.

¹ ECK 2010.

² GRAHAM, RUFFINI 2007.

³ VERBOVEN, CARLIER, DUMOLYN 2007: 50.

⁴ Stemming primarily from source-based limitations, i.e., the laconic and standardised nature of epigraphic texts.