
In tension. Doing ‘social history’ today

Michele Nani*

The publication of Alessandro Stanziani’s *Tensions of Social History* provides a useful opportunity to reconsider the global field of ‘social history’, a topic that continues to be a fertile area of research. As the author suggests, adopting a ‘social history’ perspective on historiographical practices by focusing on the dialogical construction (in terms of social actors and geographical locations) of crucial junctions in historical research (archives, data, categories and models) could reinvigorate the debate in Italy as well.

Key words: social history, global history, historiography

The tendency of intellectual debates to use labels and adjectives must be traced back to the internal and external structures and dynamics of research, as a popular distinction in the history of science would have it. This intuition reminds us that even the spaces of scientific work, like all fields of cultural production, are social worlds and not merely arenas for an ideal, disembodied confrontation that triggers continuous ‘turns’.¹ The reference to ‘social history’ is no exception. What logic can help us to understand why discussions around this field of historiography — or historiographic approach — and its practices have declined in the Italian context?² It would be worthwhile reopening the

Received: 05/06/2024. Accepted for publication: 18/06/2024.

* Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo; michele.nani@cnr.it

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Il mestiere di scienziato. Corso al Collège de France 2000-2001*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2002 (1st ed. 2001); Gary Wilder, *From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographic Turns*, “American Historical Review”, 2012, n. 3, pp. 723–745; Roger Chartier, *Introduzione*, in Id., *La rappresentazione del sociale. Saggi di storia culturale*, Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1989, pp. 9–23.

² Maria Malatesta (ed.), *Metamorfosi della storia sociale*, “Memoria e ricerca”, 2002, n. 10; Claudia Pancino, *Storia sociale*, Venice, Marsilio, 2003; Paolo Sorcinelli, *Viaggio nella storia sociale*, Milan, Bruno Mondadori, 2002 (new edition of a 1996 book). For a reflection on social history in Italy, see Mariuccia Salvati, *La storiografia sociale nell’Italia repubblicana*, “Passato

debate on social history in Italy, as it has been dormant for too many years, much like the *general* debate on the historian's profession,³ which even historians of the contemporary age latter have neglected for too long.⁴ This is obviously not the place to tackle so many challenging issues. It is sufficient to say that, outside of Italy, approaches to social history still have an inexhaustible vitality,⁵ as demonstrated by the publication of Alessandro Stanziani's *Tensions of Social History*.⁶

Despite his Italian origins, Stanziani spent his entire career in France. After studying at the University of Naples and earning a doctorate in Economics, he worked on temporary contracts for a few years. In France, he obtained a second doctorate in History, passed his qualifying examination and was employed by the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris, where he is currently also a lecturer in *histoire globale*. In addition, he has made many research visits abroad, especially to Russia and the United States. A specialist in peasant economics and rural economists in Tsarist and Soviet Russia,⁷ Stanziani expanded his research to include markets and capitalism. He began

e presente", 2008, n. 73, pp. 91–110 and Alberto Mario Banti, *La storia sociale: un paradigma introvabile?*, in Cristina Cassina (ed.), *La storiografia sull'Italia contemporanea*, Pisa, Giardini, 1991, pp. 183–208. Luigi Dal Pane identified a longer genealogy in 1952, in *Storia economica e storia sociale*, later published in Id., *La storia come storia del lavoro. Discorsi di concezione e di metodo*, Bologna, Pàtron, 1971 (1st ed. 1968), pp. 71–116. See also the dossier *Storia sociale*, edited by the Seminario polesano di storia sociale, "Storiografia", 2023, n. 27, pp. 119–203.

³ The last real debate took place more than twenty years ago. In 'Paesi lontani e storici d'oggi' and 'Gli storici e la prospettiva neoeopocale' ("Storica", 2004, n. 28, pp. 127–137 and 139–151), Francesco Benigno and Igor Mineo, respectively, responded to Giorgio Chittolini's article, 'Un paese lontano' ("Società e storia", 2003, n. 100–101, pp. 331–354). It is interesting that only one of the authors in the double issue celebrating the journal's quarter-century anniversary — all of whom members of the editorial board — addressed general issues.

⁴ The debate was between medievalists and modernists. For some exceptions, significantly in terms of the history of national historiography, see Paolo Favilli, *Marxismo e storia. Saggio sull'innovazione storiografica in Italia (1945-1970)*, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2006; Gilda Zazzara, *La storia a sinistra. Ricerca e impegno politico dopo il fascismo*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2011; Massimo Mastrogregori, *L'Italia repubblicana*, in *Enciclopedia Italiana*, vol. 8, *Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero. Storia e politica*, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2013, pp. 597–630 and Luca Baldissara, *Il lungo dopoguerra. Gli storici e le storie d'Italia*, "Storica", 2016, n. 66, pp. 73–111.

⁵ One good example is Christophe Charle, *Homo historicus*, Paris, Colin, 2013.

⁶ Alessandro Stanziani, *Tensions of Social History. Sources, Data, Actors and Models in Global Perspective*, London, Bloomsbury, 2023. My observations owe much to two discussions of the book: a session of the Seminario polesano di storia sociale (Rovigo-Associazione Minelliana, 26 May 2023) and a book launch, with the author, at the University of Padua (DISSGEA, 10 November 2023), both at the suggestion of my friend Andrea Caracausi, whom I thank. I would also like to thank Gianluca Albergoni, Piero Brunello and Andrea Rapini for their precious notes on a first draft of this text. All the internet addresses cited here were last accessed on 24 May 2024.

⁷ *L'économie en révolution. Le cas russe, 1870-1930*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1998.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli.

with the French case, before extending the comparison to Asian empires and eventually returning to the Russian case, studying the alleged role of backwardness and despotism in relation to Western development.⁸ What emerges from this last approach is the focus on the role of unfree labour (e.g. slavery, serfdom, *corvées* and indentured and bonded labour) in capitalism, the topic of his only monograph to be translated into Italian thus far.⁹ Stanziani's interest in the planetary dimension of labour compulsion has led him to question the genealogy of 'global history' and propose a definition,¹⁰ with two further developments: a long-range, global history of the creation of land as capital,¹¹ that is, the productive and ecological cycle of industrial agriculture; and a rethinking of social history, always beyond national and regional perimeters, as set out in *Tensions of Social History*.

Stanziani's latest work is an ambitious study that begins with the dual tension implied by the plural in the title: the confrontation within the community of researchers and the relationship between that community and wider society. In reality, even scholars of the past are close to the problems of knowledge of the present, although they seem to be placed on a different level. Whether it is current or distant phenomena that are being examined, the tools of knowledge are always called into question, as are the methods of quantifying social reality and the classification of its components. This is why it is important to question these tools, and the best way for historians to do this is to attempt a 'social history of social history' capable of holding the two moments of 'tension' together. The call for scholars to connect the internal archaeology of knowledge with external social dynamics does not stop at deconstructive criticism; it demands a different attitude if it is to reconstruct the collective production of knowledge. For example, the revision of Eurocentric categories should not become an outright rejection, but rather a stimulus for adopting a trans-regional perspective and viewing them as products of multiple scales (i.e. not limited to the local and the national level). This approach also has a civic side, in that the deepening of global inequalities

⁸ *Histoire de la qualité alimentaire, XIX^e-XX^e siècles*, Paris, Seuil, 2005; *Rules of Exchange. French Capitalism in Comparative Perspective, Eighteenth to Early Twentieth Centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012; *Bâtisseurs d'empires. Russie, Chine et Inde à la croisée des mondes, XV^e-XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Liber/Raisons d'agir, 2012; *After Oriental Despotism. Eurasian Growth in a Global Perspective*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014.

⁹ *Bondage. Labor and Rights in Eurasia, 16th-20th Centuries*, New York-Oxford, Berghahn, 2014; *Sailors, Slaves, and Immigrants. Bondage in the Indian Ocean World, 1750-1914*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; *Labor on the Fringes of Empire. Voice, Exit and the Law*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; *Le metamorfosi del lavoro coatto. Una storia globale, 18.-19. secolo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2022 (1st ed. 2020). For a discussion between Marino Landriani and Maria Luisa Pesante, see: www.storialavoro.it/discussioni-6/.

¹⁰ *Eurocentrism and the Politics of Global History*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; *Les entrelacements du monde. Histoire globale, pensée globale*, Paris, Cnrs éditions, 2018.

¹¹ *Capital terre. Une histoire longue du monde d'après, XIIe-XXIe siècle*, Paris, Payot, 2021.

and the prospect of environmental destruction require us to go beyond inherited conceptual oppositions. To overcome entrenched dichotomies, Stanziani tests his dual movement of 'dis-tension' (intellectual historicisation and social contextualisation) against the four pillars of historical research: archival documents, quantitative data, social categories and interpretative models.

The analysis begins with sources, which are considered in terms of either comparison or connection — the two main operations through which scholars can examine different contexts and cases. Stanziani refuses the common opinion that comparisons was less reliable than connections, as the former would be subjective and dependent on the researcher's choices, whereas the latter would be solely based on archival traces. However, this assumption is invalid because archives are also historically constructed; historians should know the history *of* archives as well as how to work *in* archives. To account for this move, Stanziani reconstructs the archival transformations provoked by three major turning points in contemporary history: the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and decolonisation.

Advocates of archival solutions to the problem of proving a claim are opposed by those who favour quantitative verification. But documents and data are both historical constructs, as is any artefact that scholars consider to be a trace of the past, and thus a historical source. The result is a set of similarities between the two forms of documentation, which Stanziani highlights by re-examining the historical scholarship on the profitability of slavery and the role of the 'peculiar institution' in US industrialisation. Statistics itself has a history, which is expressed through various approaches and methods, but it is important to capture their circulations rather than their distinctions. Indeed, data have a multi-layered 'social life'; rather than accepting the reductive image of a monolithic state that is inextricably linked to capitalist development, Stanziani prefers to investigate internal conflicts and the way in which they intertwine with social dynamics, both in the production of statistics and in their subsequent use in social history. This raises the issue of the indistinguishability between data and their sources, leading to the risk of numbers being uncritically interpreted as 'facts' — even Piketty himself, who has criticised this tendency among economists, would not be immune to it. The answer cannot be the postmodern dissolution of the problem, that is, the acknowledgement of the unreliability of past numbers. Rather, historians must continue to critically evaluate sources.

The invention of empirical fact and the dilemma of statistics (a universal science or a social tool?) are brought back to the analysis of a case that Stanziani knows well. Both before and after the revolution, statistics in Russia were not merely an ideological projection. As always, it involved a complex process of socially constructing the data, and the author accurately describes this process with regard to agriculture and rural society, from the selection

Copyright © FrancoAngeli.

of survey samples and the distribution of questionnaires to the analysis and presentation of the results.

Not only social statistics, but also those concerning nature and the environment — which are apparently more objective — lend themselves to the same criticism. The Anthropocene raises questions of periodisation and geography: does it date back to the Industrial Revolution, the twentieth century or its second half? And does it concern Europe, the West or the entire world? Stanziani uses the example of weather forecasts, which move from initial scepticism to consolidation (because of the link with economically relevant phenomena, such as maritime insurance or trends in agricultural production), to examine two cases: Russian harvests and Indian Ocean cyclones. Whether their referents are social or natural, the world of data always presents itself as a two-faced Janus, balancing technique and discipline, and this constitutive ambivalence is even more pronounced in its public use. Who decides what criteria to use to collect, group together and display data? The statistical experts, the bureaucrats of the institutions that produce data or the politicians who govern them? There are many overlaps and collaborations, and the answer therefore always depends on the context. State and statistics are historically focused on control, but a strictly Foucauldian approach suffers from a lack of attention to the interactions of the groups that produce and use data, to the negotiations that these activities imply and to the global impact of specific forms of quantification of the real.¹²

Archives and statistics conceal the claims and conflicts of social agents, who are often made invisible by the reification of documents and data. But how to identify the fragments of the social, and how to turn them into real categories? Even in a reductive approach that limits itself to the basic economic level, the question inevitably arises: who acts, in the end? Individuals, groups or classes? And should we limit ourselves to the economic level, ignoring the formation of social groups upstream and downstream of production or consumption? If the nineteenth-century concept of the transition from ‘status’ to ‘contract’ (Henry S. Maine’s theory set out in *Ancient Law* in 1862) still holds true today, there are many calls for group belonging criteria to be expanded. Analytically, though, it is difficult to account for their interrelation and hierarchy in specific contexts. Finally, what complicates matters is the dialectic — as much in the present as in the relationship between present and past — between self-identification of agents and their classification by external observers.¹³

This constellation of problems is covered in three concise chapters examining the relationship between workers and slaves, peasants and consumers, respec-

¹² I have written elsewhere on quantitative methods in history: Michele Nani, *The lost half. Quantitative methods and historical studies: a critical review*, in *Italia contemporanea Yearbook 2020*, Milano, FrancoAngeli 2021, pp. 183-195.

¹³ Carlo Ginzburg, *Le nostre parole, e le loro. Una riflessione sul mestiere di storico, oggi*, in Id., *La lettera uccide*, Milan, Adelphi, 2021, pp. 69–85 (first published in English in 2012).

tively. For Stanziani, the category of the 'worker' (not defined exclusively by social conditions or class action) emerges in a dialectic relationship with other categories ('slave', 'artisan', 'peasant') with which it has long been intertwined because of its multi-activity and the seasonal nature of production. The Second Industrial Revolution reshaped this long-standing ambiguity, imposing a class logic and a single occupation (the prevalent one), as well as marking the emergence of the 'consumer'. However, the standardisation process was incomplete as it was fragmented nationally and limited geographically, given the exclusion of rural and colonial societies — hence of a large part of the working population. Although Stanziani focuses on labour and consumption and is implicitly wary of the nowadays popular debates on intersectionality,¹⁴ it would have been worthwhile to expand the discussion to include the history of women (workers and consumers) and gender perspectives.¹⁵

Finally, *Tensions of Social History* also calls into question the 'models' that should help make individual research findings comparable and cumulative, giving direction to empirical work by proposing general reconstructions of the structure and dynamics of human societies.¹⁶ The global revolutions of the eighteenth century, which were the outcome of profound economic and political transformations, inspired powerful theories of society, from the Enlightenment to Marxism. Later these theories were challenged and clarified by Weber and Durkheim, and then by the Annales school and economic anthropology (Polanyi and others). However, the great intellectual confrontations of the twentieth century have not eliminated the nineteenth-century Eurocentric imprint of social sciences and historiography, nor have they resolved the internal contradictions between the claim to universality and national contexts. This process of reconsideration was, instead, initiated by decolonisation and continues in the contemporary focus on non-European and 'non-Western' worlds.

In conclusion, Stanziani endorses Eric Hobsbawm's famous call for a 'history of society',¹⁷ but argues that this approach — which in some ways is

¹⁴ For recent, explicit critiques, see Stéphane Beaud, Gérard Noiriel, *Race et science sociales. Essai sur les usages publics d'une catégorie*, Marseille, Agone, 2021 and Loïc Wacquant, *Bourdieu va in città. Una sfida per la teoria urbana*, Pisa, ETS, 2023. See also Kathy Davis, *Intersectionality as buzzword. A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful*, "Feminist Theory", 2008, n. 1, pp. 67–85.

¹⁵ Updated maps can be found in Ida Fazio, *Una prospettiva d'avanguardia: la storia delle donne e di genere in Italia* e Simona Troilo, *Donne e storia d'Italia: all'incrocio di nuove prospettive*, "Italia contemporanea", 2023, n. 302, pp. 219–227 and 228–241.

¹⁶ On the relationship between history and the other social sciences, see the in-depth reflection in the special issue *Au miroir des sciences sociales*, "Annales", 2020, n. 3-4, as well as *Storia e scienze sociali*, "Meridiana", 2021, n. 100. See also Andrea Rapini, *Sperimentare controcorrente. La storia, Pierre Bourdieu e le scienze sociali*, "Italia contemporanea", 2022, n. 299, pp. 11–18.

¹⁷ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Dalla storia sociale alla storia della società*, "Quaderni storici", 1973, n. 22, pp. 49–86, now published in Id., *De historia*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1997, pp. 89–112. The Copyright © FrancoAngeli.

critical of ‘social history’ itself — must now measure itself against three challenges: overcoming positivist residues and reductionist tendencies; broadening the narrow concept of the ‘social’; and moving beyond the Eurocentric bias that still prevails. *Tensions of Social History* proposes the dissolution of all the dichotomies that condition the approach to sources (starting with the opposition between documents and data), the choice of interpretative categories and the reference to social models. Overcoming these oppositions becomes easier if a serious historicisation is applied to them. The ‘social history of social history’ thus reveals that contradictory approaches to the past were not — and still are not today — reflections of reality, nor are they purely ideological constructs: they are always a combination of the two. Like any other cultural artefact, the tools of the historian are social constructions, not just intellectual ones. The fact that they were created in the West does not necessarily make them Eurocentric, while their transfer is not always an imposition; a variety of social worlds at different scales have contributed to their production, and their circulation often gives rise to creative adaptations. The control of archives and statistical productions, as well as the attempts to regulate the use and organisation of information, has always been limited by the multiplicity of the agents involved. Like categories and models, documents and data also have a ‘social life’, which undermines both attempts to monopolise their use and the idea of their neutrality. At the end of the book, Stanziani once again invites us to cherish the knowledge of the social, always keeping discourses *and* practices, ideology *and* concreteness together. His invitation also has an explicitly political undertone,¹⁸ with which the book closes. The aim is to achieve a knowledge of encounter that does not give in to the clash of civilisations and neo-liberalism.¹⁹

British historian is the subject of an excellent study by Anna Di Qual, *Eric J. Hobsbawm tra marxismo britannico e comunismo italiano*, Venice, Edizioni Ca’ Foscari, 2020.

¹⁸ As Sergio Bologna recently reminded us, there is a very strong connection between cultural-political militancy and the reflection on history, which is emblematic in three key figures of twentieth-century culture: Antonio Gramsci, Walter Benjamin and Marc Bloch. It is no coincidence that they all met their deaths fighting Fascism or, in the case of the Jewish-born German intellectual, trying to escape its murderous grip. See Sergio Fontegher Bologna, *Tre lezioni sulla storia*, Milan-Udine, Mimesis, 2023, pp. 24–25. The original lessons can be watched at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=naS56fWA3t0. It is perhaps worth quoting the three references in full, as they are always of crucial importance for historians: Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* [1929-1935], Valentino Gerratana (ed.), 4 vol., Turin, Einaudi 1975 (online edition: <https://quadernidelcarcere.wordpress.com/>); Walter Benjamin, *Sul concetto di storia* [1940], Gianfranco Bonola, Michele Ranchetti (eds.), Turin, Einaudi, 1997 and Marc Bloch, *Apologia della storia o Mestiere di storico* [1940-1944], Massimo Mastrogregori (ed.), Milan, Feltrinelli, 2024.

¹⁹ William Sewell has repeatedly highlighted the paradox of historical studies moving away from economic and social dimensions at a time when capitalism is shaping an increasingly unequal and polluted world: see *A Strange Career: The Historical Study of Economic Life*, “History and Theory”, 2010, n. 4, pp. 146–166 and the round-table contribution: Emmanuel

Copyright © FrancoAngeli.

Tensions of Social History deserves an Italian translation, which would facilitate its discussion and, not least, its use in degree courses and doctoral programmes in history and related subjects. This would be even more valuable if Stanziani's fluent writing, which conveys the wealth of developments and the density of the arguments in a lucid manner, could be maintained in Italian. Given the book's educational and reflective purposes, the author must also be credited for his attempt to link historiographic discussion with theoretical confrontation, which is crucial for overcoming partial approaches and serpentine neo-scepticism.²⁰ Moreover, his attempt does not remain at the level of general principles, but is concretely implemented in the various research sites set up by Stanziani in Europe, Russia and Asia, as well as in the scholarly debate, which is effectively reconstructed in the book.

In a world of 'social (media) historians', where even the past becomes fuel for endless polemics on *posts* and by means of *likes*,²¹ social historians still have something to say, without necessarily having to yield to that 'tyranny of the ego' that threatens their work even from within.²² Had there not been a 'historiographical revolution' in the twentieth century, we would still be writing an exclusively political and institutional history, focused on the narration of the ideas and actions of men from the ruling classes who have left traces in contemporary texts.²³ Texts such as Stanziani's 'handbook-non-handbook' escape the recurrent complaint about the 'crisis' of historical knowledge in the digital and global era,²⁴ often combined with pale evocations of its

Akyeampong et al, *Explaining Historical Change; or, The Lost History of Causes*, "American Historical Review", 2015, n. 4, pp. 1369–1423. More generally, see Alida Clemente's extensive review, *Il racconto del mercato globale e la crisi della storicità. Sul ritorno della storia economica*, "Storica", 2018, n. 72, pp. 7–52.

²⁰ Dylan Riley, *Hidden Dogmatism*, "Sidecar", 23 May 2023 (available at: <https://newleft-review.org/sidecar/posts/hidden-dogmatism>); Andrew W. Carus, Sheilagh Ogilvie, *The poverty of historical idealism*, "History Workshop Journal", 2005, n. 59, pp. 270–281. For a critique of postmodern scepticism, see again Carlo Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce. Vero falso finto*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2006 and Id., *Rapporti di forza. Storia, retorica, prova*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2000 (now republished by Quodlibet in 2022). For a historicisation, see the recent publication by Sabina Loriga, Jacques Revel, *Une histoire inquiète. Les historiens et le tournant linguistique*, Paris, Ehes, 2023, on which Luisa Tasca has written a timely comment, *Il Linguistic turn in prospettiva. Su Une histoire inquiète di Sabina Loriga e Jacques Revel*, "Passato e presente", 2023, n. 119, pp. 136–141.

²¹ Francesco Filippi, *Guida semiseria per aspiranti storici social*, Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 2022.

²² Enzo Traverso, *La tirannide dell'io. Scrivere il passato in prima persona*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2022 (1st ed. 2020).

²³ Peter Burke introduced the expression 'historiographical revolution' in *Una rivoluzione storiografica. La scuola delle "Annales", 1929-1989*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1993 (1st ed. 1990).

²⁴ For a still topical critique of the rhetoric on the 'crisis', see Gérard Noiriel, *Sur la «crise» de l'histoire*, Paris, Gallimard, 2005 (1st ed. 1996). For a successful global declination of micro-history, see Christian De Vito, *History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective*, "Past & Present", 2019, supplement 14, pp. 348–372 and Francesca Trivellato, *Microstoria e storia globale*, Rome, Officina Libraria, 2023.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli.

This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial – No Derivatives License.
For terms and conditions of usage please see: <http://creativecommons.org>.

possible public role.²⁵ Instead, *Tensions of Social History* reiterates the invitation to return to a reflection on the alternative between a history that aims to understand politics as the outcome of individual actions and decisions and a history that seeks structured explanations for the continuities and discontinuities of social dynamics. In the words of one of the great writers of the twentieth century, a ‘science of the concatenation of measurable human collective facts’.²⁶

Translated by Andrea Hajek

²⁵ For a different approach, see the recent contributions by Piero Brunello, *Gondole a Feltre. Domande di oggi, storie di ieri*, Sommacampagna (Vr), Cierre, 2022 and *Dubbi sull’esistenza di Mestre. Esercizi di storia urbana*, Sommacampagna (Vr), Cierre, 2023.

²⁶ In the 1970s, that divide could be traced back to the *Methodenstreit* of the late nineteenth century: see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Jürgen Kocka, *Sulla scienza della storia. Storiografia e scienze sociali*, Bari, De Donato, 1983 (1st ed. 1973 and 1977) and E. Hobsbawm, *De historia*, cit. See also Jan de Vries, *Changing the Narrative: The New History That Was and Is to Come*, “Journal of Interdisciplinary History”, 2018, n. 3, pp. 313–334. The quotation is taken from Raymond Queneau, *Una storia modello*, Turin, Einaudi 1988 (1st ed. 1942), p. 84; see Ruggiero Romano’s introduction to an earlier edition (Milan, Fabbri, 1973) later revised as *Raymond Queneau* in his *Tra storici ed economisti*, Turin, Einaudi, 1982, pp. 189–203.