

# Agrarian Origins of Management Ideology: The Roman and Antebellum Cases

Martin Ruef and Alona Harness

*Martin Ruef*  
Princeton University,  
USA

*Alona Harness*  
Hebrew University,  
Israel

## Abstract

Drawing on archival materials from the Roman Republic and US antebellum South, this paper challenges the distinction between research on 'modern' and 'pre-modern' management thought, where the former commonly entails a critical analysis of management thinking within a social context and the latter offers documentation of past knowledge and practices. Contrary to this division, we offer a critical analysis of management discourse taking place in agrarian societies based on chattel slavery. In the late Roman Republic and early empire, the patrician elite confronted challenges to their large-scale land ownership, run by hired managers upon the landlord's absence. In the antebellum South, following the Nat Turner revolt, plantation owners staved off threats from abolitionism and Northern political activists. These challenges led to a considerable effort devoted to the elaboration of principles regarding the private management of unfree labor. Texts not only provided practical managerial advice, but also promoted an ideology supportive of the labor arrangements in dispute. We conclude by pointing to the relevance of these case studies from both an historical and a contemporary perspective.

**Keywords:** management ideology, 1800s, ancient world, management history

## Introduction

The practice of management, defined as a process involving the control of human activity and resources in order to meet specific goals, is a ubiquitous and ancient one: large enterprises managing a vast number of participants have been depicted since antiquity (Wren 2005). Historical exemplars include complex organizations operating on a more or less continuous basis — such as agricultural estates, armies, churches, governments, and guilds — as well as those dedicated to specific projects — such as the great building enterprises that produced the pyramids and irrigation systems of the Near and Far East (Wittfogel 1957; Pheng 2007). These pre-industrial forms of organization typically included a corps of supervisors, a shared body of administrative practices, and, in certain cases, a written discourse describing those practices and explaining their rationale. In contrast to modern organizations, early managerial systems often relied on enslaved or indentured labor though, as Perrow (1986: 49) has emphasized, they constituted an important precedent to the factory and public bureaucracies that would inspire subsequent management thought.

Organization  
Studies  
30(06): 589–607  
ISSN 0170–8406  
Copyright © The  
Author(s), 2009.  
Reprints and  
permissions:  
<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalspermissions.nav>

In spite of similarities between past and present practices, most scholars agree that what is now considered to be ‘modern management’, i.e. an explicit body of knowledge connected to academic centers and a group of professionals (Khurana 2007), started in western industrial societies during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a survey of developments in the sociology of organizations, Scott (2004) notes that ‘the first systematic studies of organizational behavior occurred during the late decades of the nineteenth century’ and were ‘spurred by changes in social structure associated with industrialization and bureaucratization’ (2004: 2). Industrial engineers — particularly the school of scientific management initiated by Taylor — were at the forefront of a movement to develop and rationalize management processes in formal organizations. Recent textbooks offer a similar assessment of the history of organizational theory, linking its birth to problems of standardization, efficiency, motivation, and labor relations that emerged with industrial society (e.g. Scott 2002; Morgan 2006; Perrow 1986).

A prominent feature distinguishing treatments of ‘modern’ management knowledge and practices from those considered ‘pre-modern’ lies in scholarly efforts to understand the embeddedness of modern management within an ideological discourse (Bendix 1956; Guillén 1994). Bendix (1956: 2) defines this discourse as the ‘ideas which are espoused by or for those who exercise authority in economic enterprise, and which seek to explain and justify that authority’. According to Bendix, these ideologies can be seen as an attempt to legitimate the highly unequal power relations between workforce and owners, which contradict the assumptions of a democratic, egalitarian society. In order to mitigate this contradiction, modern managerial theory offers concepts and routines promoting the appearance of mutuality between owner and worker interests, as well as genuine free will on the part of workers. This resolution was achieved through the alignment of management with social movements that advocated progressivism in other institutional spheres, such as science, ethics, and politics (Shenhav 1999; Khurana 2007). Progressive orientations contributed to the creation of a myth of ‘modern management’ as a ‘pure’ practice, based upon distilled principles of objective rationality that are being constantly refined through the progress of science.

Critical scholars of management have offered corrections to this narrative. In his ground-breaking text *Work and Authority*, Bendix demonstrated how the study of management benefits from a comparative approach that ties the justification of managerial ideology to broader problems of societal legitimacy. Scholars of management thought aim to refute the ‘modern’ myth through a detailed examination of the social, economic, and political context in which popular contemporary theories were conceived (e.g. Cooke 1999; Peruvemba 2001; Shenhav and Weitz 2000), and re-insert cases that have been ‘written out’ of the modern canon. For instance, Shenhav (1999) emphasized the extreme violence employed by owners to suppress labor protests in the early days of industrialism. Recent studies have also called attention to plantation management and the plight of slave labor, both in the antebellum South (Cooke 2003a; Nkomo 1992) and in the colonies (Cooke 2003b; Frenkel and Shenhav 2006; Prasad 2003).

Other scholarship, which may be classified as ‘historical’ research on management, follows a different path, documenting management thought and practices in pre-modern times for the purpose of establishing similarities in core principles between past and present (e.g. Ezzamel 2004; Pheng 2007; Wren 2005). Most often, historical case studies create an impression that pre-modern management was by and large a technological achievement, devoid of the complex power relations and elite interests evident in contemporary management discourse. Indeed, this assumption is fairly reasonable, given that inequality was the rule in most pre-modern societies, ostensibly rendering any justification of authority over laborers and capital unnecessary.

In this paper, we offer a critical examination of this assumption, by considering the role of management discourse in pre-industrial societies. We ask, why were management texts written at this point in time? Was it merely a technical discourse, free of the ambivalence and struggles characteristic of contemporary discourse, or did it serve an ideological purpose as well? We seek to understand historical examples of management in their own context, in order to learn about management’s role in society before it was recognized as such, i.e. before it became ‘management’ in the modern sense, with practices that were dominated by professional practitioners (cf. Foucault 2006). As we will show, such an analysis not only teaches us more about the past by providing a new perspective for constructing management historiography, but also provides insights for interpreting contemporary management discourse. To this end, we analyze texts dealing with agrarian management issues in two different societies: the late Roman Republic as it transitioned to the status of an empire (c. 2nd century BC–1st century AD) and the US antebellum South after the Nat Turner revolt (1831–1861).<sup>1</sup> The choice of cases, specific texts, and our treatment of them will be elaborated below.

## Case Studies

Textbooks covering management history have drawn upon a vast array of examples, ranging from military and government to religious institutions, in their search for evidence of early management thought (Wren 2005). An emphasis on the societal context of management ideology, however, requires a more specific comparative focus. Since a detailed understanding of private management within early agrarian societies is largely missing from the contemporary discourse on organizations (compared, for example, with attention to classical prescriptions for public governance, ranging from Aristotle to Machiavelli) and given that contemporary management discourse pertains first and foremost to the private sector, we narrowed our scope to early examples of management in private organizations. In pre-industrial society, large-scale agricultural enterprises represent the most widespread form of private management. This production unit was prevalent both in Roman society and the antebellum South, economies that relied extensively upon chattel slavery organized in large farms or plantations. By contrast, the ‘hydraulic civilizations’ of ancient Egypt, India, and the Far East devoted much of their attention to the management of labor and resources in public building projects — such as irrigation works, palaces, monumental architecture, and the like — rather than private enterprise (Wittfogel 1957; Ezzamel 2004; Pheng 2007).

Table 1.  
A Comparison of  
Management Texts and  
Contexts in Roman  
and Antebellum  
Societies

<i>Agrarian society</i>	Roman Republic/Early Empire	US Antebellum South
<i>Period analyzed</i>	2nd c. BC–1st c. AD	1831–1861
<i>Primary text sources</i>	Farm management manuals	<i>De Bow's Review</i> ; Texts in Breeden (1980)
<i>Social background of authors</i>	Roman Statesmen, Officers, and scholars	Southern landowners, nationalists, and professionals
<i>Principal audience</i>	Roman patrician landowners	Southern plantation owners
<i>Challenges to legitimacy</i>	Anti-latifundism; tenant farming	Abolitionism; political activism (Liberty, free soil, and Republican Parties)
<i>Response to legitimacy crisis</i>	Establish inherent virtue of agricultural labor; gentry can reconnect with land via rational management	Justification of slavery through religious, racist, and social rationalizations; rules for control of slaves

The second criterion for case selection was that each context had to deal with concerns about the control and methods of proper labor (i.e. slave) relations, albeit without the monopolization of those practices by a cadre of professionals (as found in modern management). Despite being positioned many centuries apart, the systems of chattel slavery in the antebellum South and the late Roman Republic both gave rise to a rich discourse among elite laypeople concerning the appropriate practices of management. The Roman archives feature three surviving farm management manuals, written shortly before or after the transition to Empire, which have been widely studied by classicists and historians. They include texts by Marcus Cato (1998), Marcus Varro (1934), and Lucius Columella (1941).<sup>2</sup> The authors were central figures in Roman cultural and political life, serving as influential politicians, statesmen, and scholars. Due to the limited literacy of the populace in the ancient world and the economic realities of large-scale farming, the farm management manuals were written largely for an aristocracy of patrician landowners. According to historians:

'it is hard to find any earlier society in which a governing class practiced ... agricultural methods so widely or the pursuit of returns and profits was so openly admitted ... [this] shows that the writings of Cato and Varro, at least, were not without audience'. (Martin Frederiksen, quoted in Love 1991: 59)

The antebellum case offers an equally accessible body of management texts, written for an audience of similar elite persuasions. We rely, in particular, on a systematic analysis of *De Bow's Review*, a journal established in New Orleans in 1846, devoted to the discussion of agricultural and industrial advancement in the South. We supplemented this material with texts from Breeden's (1980) *Advice among Masters*, sampling publications concerning slave management from other Southern agricultural and industrial journals.<sup>3</sup> The authors of these texts were typically land and slave owners. Occasionally, texts were written by non-managerial professionals, such as doctors and ministers, who interacted with the plantation management system. By and large, this discourse was addressed, whether by the authors themselves or by the editor, to the community of plantation owners.

Generally, the analysis of such management texts follows one of two approaches: the first regards texts as depicting actual management thought and practice; the second views them as discursive acts that may or may not have any bearing on administrative reality. In the remainder of this paper, we follow the

second route, namely, of framing these texts as the distinct phenomenon of ‘writing management’ (Czarniawska 1999). From this perspective, the corpus of texts raises questions such as, why were they written, by whom, and for whom? These questions inform a third criterion for our analysis: that we must be able to place the texts in a social context. As we suggest below, in both of our cases the texts can be interpreted in light of a legitimacy challenge to the central organizational form in each agrarian society — the *latifundia* in the Roman Republic and the slave-based plantation in the antebellum South (see summary in Table 1). The crucial distinction in these cases is the basis of that legitimacy challenge. In the context of the Roman Republic, a challenge arose from the tendency of the populace to question the ability and morality of the patrician elite who manage large landholdings. The roots of this challenge lay in tensions between the interests of the state and the interests of the landowners. In the context of the antebellum South, a challenge arose from the tendency of Northerners and abolitionists to question the ability and morality of the planter elite who manage slaves. This reflected a tension within a society that remained hooked on practices of colonial domination and, simultaneously, sought to embrace modernity (see Frenkel and Shenhav 2006 for a review of postcolonial perspectives).

### **‘Under the hands of honest men, everything prospers the better’:<sup>4</sup> Roman Management Discourse**

#### **The Roman Legitimacy Crisis: Anti-latifundism and Tenant Farming**

In the late Roman Republic, large agricultural estates — typically referred to as *latifundia* — were acquired by a wealthy aristocracy, often at the cost of crowding out peasant farmers. Two common apprehensions attended this development: one concern was that the use of land was less intensive, given the scale of these operations and absenteeism of the owners (White 1970); and a second, that the enclosure movement against the peasants would threaten subsistence farming and lead to an unruly class of unemployed laborers. Replacing slaves with tenant farmers (a class that lay on the continuum between a free peasantry and slaves) during the 1st century BC did not solve the problem, which now rested not just in the elimination of a free peasantry, but on the inefficiency resulting from bad tenants as well (Foxhall 1990: 102).

A deeper moral misgiving underlying these issues was that the elite Roman landowners had abrogated their responsibility to land cultivation, simultaneously ruining their character and that of their workers. As a consequence, the *latifundia* were often equated with the problem of *corruptio* — the corruption of morals brought by ‘the disappearance of the self-supporting, self-respecting farmer class, and the inordinate wealth and fantastic luxury of the small upper class’ (Simkhovitch 1916: 203). Pliny wrote that the *latifundia* ‘have been the ruin of Italy, and are now proving the ruin the provinces’ (Pliny 1950: 213). The poet Virgil (2006: 4) put the matter more subtly, offering the proverb, ‘cast a hungry eye on a big estate ... but tend a small one’).

According to Simkhovitch (1916), the expansion of the *latifundia* was a gradual process, associated with a progressive state of soil exhaustion that forced

farmers, many of whom had been legionaries on military expeditions, to sell their land at bargain prices. The new owners did little to repair the damage and often abandoned land cultivation altogether, converting their estates into cattle ranches. Reformers, such as Tiberius Gracchus, proposed to confiscate large tracts of land and break them down into smaller farms (Richardson 1980). For their part, patrician landowners rejected claims of soil depletion and believed that the predicament could be resolved if noblemen dedicated themselves to agriculture, as was customary in Rome's golden era. These beliefs were enshrined in different legislative acts, including laws compelling senators (218 BC) and bankers (AD 33) to invest capital in Italian land. Agricultural management texts were another key component of the campaign to restore the legitimacy of the latifundia, by persuading patricians to play an active role in land husbandry.

### **Agricultural Management Texts**

The surviving manuscripts from the late Republic and early Empire include those of Marcus Portius Cato (234–149 BC), the son of a farmer, who rose to the rank of Censor; Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BC), a Roman praetor and influential scholar; and Lucius Columella (AD 4–70), originally a native of Southern Spain, who served in the Roman military and owned several farms in the vicinity of Rome. Cato's *De Agricultura* (1998 [2nd century BC]) is the oldest surviving work in Latin prose. It draws heavily on Cato's experiences in olive and wine cultivation in the border region between Latium, Samnium, and Campania, suggesting how 'farm management must fit in with local practice and local market forces' (Dalby 1998: 14), while simultaneously presenting itself as a repository of more general managerial counsel. Varro's *Rerum Rusticarum* (1934 [1st century BC]) was written in the aging scholar's 80th year, when he presented a manual on farm management to his wife. Columella's *Re Rustica* (1941 [1st century AD]) is the most systematic treatise on Roman agricultural management, covering the topic in 12 volumes.

According to Starr (1987), the circulation of Roman texts, in the form of books and scrolls, was conducted through private channels within a small literary world, typically starting with the author's closest friends and then extending to a larger circle including other acquaintances, clients, and patrons. On the surface, much of the content of the Roman literature on agrarian management is mundane. In Cato's *De Agricultura*, for instance, the reader will find chapters on buying and developing a farm, equipment and livestock inventory, planting, harvesting, and the like. A more satisfying reading of these texts, however, follows when we consider the political context and legitimacy crises that the authors were grappling with. Specifically, how did the management guidelines presented in the texts address the recurrent challenges to the latifundia and the problem of connecting wealthy Roman landowners to agricultural labor?

### **The Virtue of Agricultural Labor**

The problem of the latifundia was framed in what can be considered, in modern terms, as agency theory (Eisenhardt 1989). Roman landowners (principals)



generally delegated responsibility for managing latifundia to *vilici* (agents) in a context where it was difficult to monitor the activities of these overseers. Adding uncertainty was the fact that many owners were urban patricians, with limited expertise in agrarian production, as well as the assumption that many slaves and tenants were opportunistic. For example, commenting on the issue of low productivity, Columella argues that:

‘such misfortunes ... come upon us ... because of our own fault; for the matter of husbandry, which all the best of our ancestors had treated with the best of care, we have delivered over to all the worst of our slaves, as if to a hangman for punishment’. (1941: 4)<sup>5</sup>

The Roman writers thus believed that it was the principal’s poor motivation that reflected upon the agent, requiring a concerted effort in order to send aristocrats back to the farm. A central trope of the Roman texts on agriculture was that farm ownership and labor be recognized as a virtuous activity.

In his public life, Cato was particularly concerned with the issue of morality and propriety among the Roman aristocracy, using the powers of his censorship to demote or penalize senators that failed to meet his normative standards. The opening chapter of *De Agricultura* expressed blunt judgment about the relative status of farming as an occupation. Cato (1998: 53) writes that:

‘when [our forefathers] wanted to say that a man was good, their highest compliments were to call him “a good farmer and a good husbandman” ... as to farmers, their offspring are the strongest men and bravest soldiers; their profit is truest, safest, least envied; their cast of mind is the least dishonest of any’.

Other occupations, by contrast, were considered more questionable: ‘trading can sometimes bring success, but it is insecure; so can money-lending, but that is not respectable’. While presented without qualification, Cato’s opinions were clearly directed to the wealth-building activities of the Roman political elite. As one translator, Andrew Dalby (1998: 24), notes: ‘a Roman senator could quite properly get his hands dirty in the purchase and management of *land*[;] as to *trade* and the financing of trade, that was a business for one’s clients, “intermediaries”, to engage in’.

Varro and Columella also invoked farm management as a noble Roman tradition. In the preface of his second book on agriculture, Varro recalls how ‘those great men, our ancestors, put the Romans who lived in the country ahead of those who lived in the city’ (1934: 307). By the time of Columella, in the first century AD, the hedonism of the Roman political elite was of paramount concern. In the preface of his manual, Columella (1941: 13) laments that ‘renowned captains of Roman stock were invariably distinguished in [the] twofold pursuit of either defending or tilling their ancestral or acquired estates’, yet ‘yesterday’s morals and strenuous manner of living are out of tune with our present extravagance and devotion to pleasure’.

Even after establishing the virtue of agricultural activity, a tension remains in the Roman discourse between mere investment in farmland and active involvement in agriculture as a way of life (Dalby 1998). On the one hand, the geographic positioning of the landed aristocracy in Rome and their decreasing familiarity with rural ways seemed to lend itself to an investment approach to agriculture. This threatened to vitiate arguments made in favor of the virtue of agricultural labor

and led to critiques of tenant farming, as noted above. On the other hand, Roman senators and politicians could hardly be expected to sow and plow their enormous estates. Even Columella (1941: 11) recognized, somewhat reluctantly, that:

‘we think it beneath us to till our lands with our own hands, and we consider it of no importance to appoint as an overseer a man of very great experience or at least, if he is inexperienced, one who is wide-awake and active’.

The idea of agricultural ‘management’ thus arose in these Roman texts as a well-chosen medium between two extremes, giving elite owners a way to connect to their land, while maintaining social and physical distance from the vulgarity of farm labor.

### Rational Principles of Management

The Roman manuals took on a tutorial form, offering ‘rational’ principles that aided the urban elite in managing their rural landholdings. Four types of principles appear repeatedly in the texts and constitute the core of Roman management. First, there is an emphasis on the existence of a layer of middle management, as writers devote considerable attention to the selection, evaluation, and instruction of the *vilicus*, as well as his spouse (the *vilica*, or ‘manageress’). Second, the texts emphasize the importance of monitoring activities on the part of landowners, as occasioned by their intermittent physical presence on their agricultural landholdings. A third generic feature is an agricultural calendar, specifying when the slave work force ought to be engaged in activities pertaining to manuring, sowing, harvesting (etc.) of crops. Finally, the texts propose specific ratios for inventories of agricultural equipment, livestock, structures, and laborers in proportion to the area of landholdings.

Most owners of latifundia delegated responsibilities for the day-to-day management of their farms to a *vilicus*.<sup>6</sup> According to Cato (1998: 199), these responsibilities involved attending ‘on the owner’s authority, to everything at the farm that needs to be done, or bought, or made’, including the instruction of the manageress. The responsibilities of the *vilicus* even extended to establishing incentive systems for slaves and tenants, featuring both positive reinforcement: the *vilicus* ‘must reward good behavior, so that others will want to do well’; and sanctions: ‘if anyone misbehaves ... give proper punishment in proportion to damage done’ (Cato 1998: 65). The Roman management writers were especially concerned with the authority of the *vilicus* and traits that should be sought in these managers as a result. Columella (1941: 85) argued that owners should not ‘appoint an overseer from that sort of slaves who are physically attractive, and certainly not from that class which has busied itself with the voluptuous occupations of the city ... a man should be chosen who has been hardened by farm work from his infancy, one who has been tested by experience’.

Perhaps most importantly, the *vilicus* was to have no client–patron relationships with anyone, aside from the owner of the latifundia that he managed (Cato 1998: 65; Columella 1941: 91).

Traces of the contemporary discourse on principal–agent problems were evident in the Roman management texts. Columella advises landowners to announce frequent visits to their property, ‘for under this apprehension both overseer and laborers will be at their duties’ (1941: 39). Cato directs owners to ‘go round the property’



each time they visit their farm and ‘as soon as you are clear how the business stands ... you should send for the manager and ask him how much of the work is finished, how much remains, whether what is done was done in time’ (Cato 1998: 57). The writers recognized that there was clearly a possibility of malfeasance on the part of the vilicus and the slaves, but believed this could be resolved through rational calculation of work days. Accordingly, Cato advises owners to:

‘get down to calculating people and day’s work. If the work seems wanting[,] the manager will say that he has done his best, slaves were sick, the weather was bad, slaves ran away or were requisitioned for public works: when he has put these and all his other arguments, bring him back to the calculation of workers and their work!’ (Cato 1998: 57)

To ease the monitoring of these agents, the Roman authors recommended an intermittent residential presence of landowners on their properties. Discussing the importance of country homes, Columella (1941: 37) quotes Mago (a Carthaginian writer on agrarian management), who suggested that ‘one who has bought land should sell his town house, so that he will have no desire to worship the household gods of the city’.

Another component of Roman managerial discipline was the agricultural calendar, which appeared as a standard element of these texts, beginning with Cato’s rudimentary chronology of seasonal planting and harvesting (Cato 1998: 109–149). By the 1st century AD, the Roman writers had adopted an explicit principle, which called on the vilicus to control the sequence and pace of worker activities throughout the year. Columella asks:

‘Who can doubt how irreparable is the flight of time as it slips away? ... for since everything has, one might say, its own proper moment when it should be done, if one piece of work is carried out later than it should be ... all the order of work, being disturbed, causes the hopes of the whole year to be disappointed.’ (Columella 1941: 67–69)

To avoid such travesty, Columella offered latifundia owners a daily almanac, identifying ‘the tasks which the bailiff [i.e. vilicus] has to perform, each in its proper season’ (Columella 1941: 69–129).

A parallel requirement for monitoring the latifundia was that owners had a keen sense of the workforce and inventory on these landholdings. Consequently, the Roman management texts offer precise ratios of equipment and structures to land, as well as spans of control for the vilicus. For instance, an olive plantation of 150 acres (61 ha) in Cato’s time was expected to feature a dozen laborers under the vilicus (including the vilica), while a slightly smaller vineyard of 60 acres (24 ha) would require a workforce of 15 slave subordinates (Cato 1998: 83, 87). Inventory control was equally important for landowners, who were often concerned about theft on latifundia in their absence.

These texts can be interpreted in light of the legitimacy crisis confronting the latifundia. A common belief among the Roman elite was that declining agricultural productivity was due to the moral disintegration of Roman noblemen who failed in their duty as providers for the Republic, placing its fate in the hands of their hired managers. The Roman management discourse encouraged a fuller engagement of the aristocracy in land cultivation by providing detailed manuals that would convey ‘instant’ management expertise and an ability to monitor overseers and slaves accordingly.

The crisis confronting the Roman aristocracy thus presented several challenges, though none resulted intrinsically from Rome’s economic foundation in chattel

slavery, which was considered wholly legitimate on both pragmatic and moral grounds. The socio-political context was fundamentally different in the case of the antebellum South, where the elite confronted direct threats against their slavery-based economic system.

### **'Do not kill the goose to obtain the golden egg':<sup>7</sup> Antebellum Management Discourse**

#### **The Antebellum Legitimacy Crisis: Abolitionism and Political Activism**

While the notion of slavery was by and large accepted both in the American South and North throughout the 17th and 18th centuries (Tise 1987), this equilibrium was interrupted during the first half of the 19th century, when a combination of political, economic, and religious changes led to questions about the Southern states' foundations in chattel slavery. Following the War of 1812, a recession in Europe forced British manufacturers to lower their prices, and the US Congress passed a series of tariff laws aimed at protecting American, mostly Northern, manufacturers. A dispute soon resulted between Southern and Northern business interests, reaching its peak with the Nullification Crisis (1832), in which South Carolina declared the tariffs null and void within the state's borders. The conflict was resolved through a compromise the following year, but the question of loyalty to the Union remained open. Defense of slavery became a cornerstone of Southern nationalist ideology, serving as the common denominator upon which many Southerners could agree (Faust 1988; McCardell 1979).

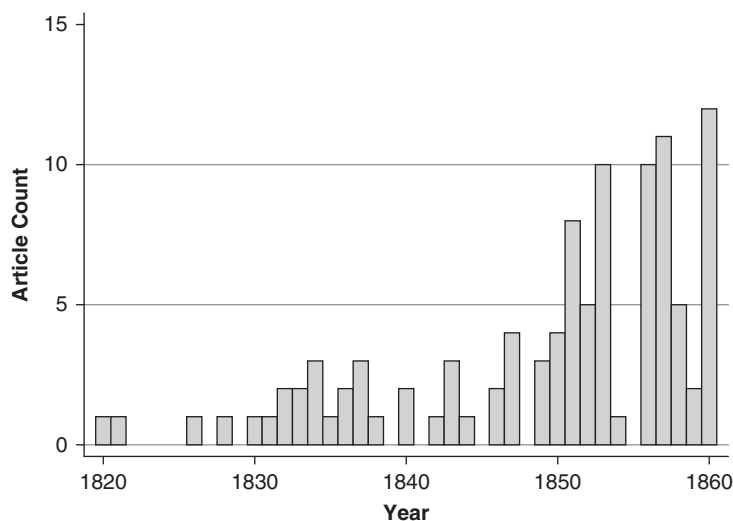
A second attack upon Southern interests came from Northern abolitionists, members of an antislavery movement inspired by Evangelical Protestantism. Based upon a mixture of religious and bourgeois-individualist values, abolitionists argued that the negation of personal freedom and civic rights precluded slaves from reaching salvation (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 2005; Tise 1987). These attacks accelerated and gained significance between the 1830s and 1850s, as political activism in the North added fuel to the fire. The Liberty, Free Soil, and Republican parties successively promoted antislavery ideas, culminating in Abraham Lincoln's election as president in 1861 (Bilotta 1992; Foner 1965).

Such developments in the political and economic arena impelled writers in the antebellum South to elaborate on their rationale and methods for slave management. In the course of this, the view of slavery changed from its opportunistic acceptance as necessary evil, to its defense as positive good for all, an indispensable element of a moral and stable social order (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 2005; Tise 1987). The view was exemplified through a structured system of social, racial, and religious arguments, representing the ideals of 19th-century scientific positivism (Faust 1979). As in the Roman case, texts on slave management offer one of the most perspicacious windows on the elements of this body of thought.

#### **Slave Management Texts**

In contrast to the writings of the Roman scholars, the 19th-century discourse of Southern plantation owners has received more attention among contemporary

Figure 1.  
Distribution of  
Antebellum Journal  
Articles on Slave  
Management



Source: Breeden's (1980) Corpus of Texts ( $N = 104$ )

students of management (e.g. Cooke 2003a), including at least one anthology: Breeden's (1980) *Advice among Masters*. The links to management ideology and the broader legitimacy crisis of Southern slavery, however, have remained somewhat opaque. Because Southern planters discussed management before the existence of a discipline of 'management' or management 'professionals' as such, many of their texts appear to address relatively mundane issues, such as food, housing, clothing, cleanliness, discipline, and the health of slaves. But a careful reading suggests that what is sometimes represented as an attempt to distribute knowledge — a mere 'advice among masters' — constitutes an effort to defend a system of chattel slavery against abolitionist and political challenges.

The timing of the antebellum management discourse itself is instructive. While slavery had been an accepted practice in North America since the 17th century, the great majority of prescriptive texts on slave management were penned by Southern writers in the three decades before the Civil War. The first US agrarian journal, the *American Farmer*, began publication in Baltimore in 1819, but few articles on plantation management appeared before the 1830s. Of the 104 managerial texts identified by Breeden (1980), only five were written before the Nat Turner revolt in 1831 (see Figure 1). In 1846, the premier commercial publication of the South — *De Bow's Review* — was founded to represent the distinctive interests of the region. Amid the rancorous ascension of the Republican party during the 1850s, the *Review* became increasingly pro-slavery in its tone and interested in matters of slave management. Between 1851 and 1862, the *Review* published a dozen articles that referred explicitly to the 'management' of labor or agricultural estates in their titles, typically under such headings as the 'management of slaves', 'management of negroes', and 'plantation management'.

Perhaps the most vigorous phase of antebellum managerial rhetoric commenced around the same time, marked by agricultural societies that commissioned essays and awarded prizes on the topic of slave management. These essay competitions

sought to elicit idealized self-portraits of master–slave relations from planters in a particular area and, thus, promoted a social movement in favor of ‘effective’ plantation slavery. The committees running the competitions were especially eager to highlight agreement on management principles. In 1853, for instance, a Georgia prize essay committee proudly concluded that ‘the system recommended for the management and treatment of slaves is substantially the same in nearly all [three slave states eliciting such essays]’ and that this ‘practical philanthropy’ should serve ‘as a refutation of the wanton calumnies that ignorant visionaries and malevolent fanatics are heaping on a generous people’ (Breedon 1980: 28–29).

The content of the antebellum management texts reveals further details about the response of the Southern elite to the challenges posed by abolitionism and the political activism of the Liberty, Free Soil, and Republican parties. As in the Roman case, this response contains both a moral and a pragmatic component.

### The ‘Virtue’ of Slavery

The majority of Southern writers dealt with the problem of abolitionism by proposing rules for the ‘proper maintenance’ and care of slaves. In an article on the ‘management of negroes’, an anonymous author stressed that ‘our first obligation is undoubtedly to provide [slaves] with suitable food and clothing’ (DeBow 1851: 325). This obligation was coupled with a paternalistic attitude toward blacks. Regarding the hygiene of slaves, the same writer emphasized that ‘it should ... be an invariable rule not to allow any of them to wash on Saturday night, for they will be dirty on the Sabbath, and render as an excuse that their clothes are wet’ (DeBow 1851: 326–327). The paternalism was often mixed with considerations of control, as evident from managerial rules regarding the sleep habits of slaves: ‘one of the most important regulations on a farm is to see that the hands get plenty of sleep[;] they are thoughtless, and if allowed to do so, will sit up late of nights’ (DeBow 1851: 328). Writers praised their own benevolence and thriftiness, as exhibited by their attention to slave diet, accommodation, and health. In this idealized narrative of master–slave relations, cruelty was to be avoided at all costs:

‘the negro should feel that his master is his law-giver and judge, and yet is his protector and friend, but so far above him, as never to be approached save in this most respectful manner ... if the master be a tyrant, his negroes may be so much embarrassed by his presence as to be incapable of doing their work properly when he is near’. (DeBow 1851: 328)

If one takes Breedon’s (1980) sample of texts as being fairly representative of antebellum managerial discourse, then attention to slave diet, quarters, clothing, cleanliness, and health care occupied nearly half of this discourse.<sup>8</sup> In the planters’ eyes, these rules served as a counter-balance to abolitionist threats, emphasizing how the physical well-being of black laborers was served by the system of chattel slavery. Underlying these rules were implicit justifications for slavery, particularly the claim that slavery was part of a hierarchical and moral social order, in which the weak are subordinated to and supported by the strong. To a lesser degree, there is reference to the racist justification of slavery, claiming that people of a black race are unable to take care of their own daily needs, shifting the responsibility to the master.

In certain respects, what is omitted from the antebellum management texts is as important in establishing the ‘virtue’ of slavery as what is included. In our

sample of texts on slave management from *De Bow's Review*, for instance, we could identify only one text including a reference to 'profit', 'productivity', or even 'performance'. Interestingly, that article — the 'Management of Negroes on Southern Estates' — argues that attention to economic outcomes among planters is excessive. The author, a Mississippi planter, writes:

'We often find planters comparing notes and making suggestions as to the most profitable modes of tilling the soil, erecting gates, farm-houses, machinery, and, indeed, everything else conducive to their comfort and prosperity; but how seldom do we find men comparing notes as to their mode of feeding, clothing, nursing, working, and taking care of those human beings entrusted to our charge, whose best condition is slavery, when they are treated with humanity and their labor is properly directed!' (De Bow 1851: 622)

Other planters went so far as to argue that attention to short-term productivity was inimical to the institution of slavery. In proposing a set of normative rules for managing slaves, an Alabama agricultural committee stressed that 'the maxim of making haste slow in plantation operations is equally applicable as in ordinary vocations of life ... do not kill the goose to obtain the golden egg' (DeBow 1855: 715). The motivation behind this maxim was scarcely veiled, since the committee went on to stress that abolitionists are so unreasonable that even such rules 'may not stop the clamor of wicked men, who seek to make political capital out of the spirit of abolition ... [though] the slaves themselves will not thank them for their efforts but laugh them to scorn' (DeBow 1855: 718).

### **Rational Principles of Control**

For all of their efforts, the attempt of antebellum writers to defend their system against abolitionism represented an incomplete response to the legitimacy crisis of chattel slavery. Political activism against slavery — most prominently in the form of the Liberty Party of the 1840s — had originated in abolitionist ideas, but soon adopted a broader platform. From its inception, the Free Soil party avoided the topic of black rights altogether in its national platform, instead being 'motivated by concern for the interests of free white laborers, who would be "degraded" by association with "the labor of the black race" (Foner 1965: 239). Such fears were not lost on the Southern planter elite, who believed that 'the free states [were] passing laws everywhere to protect themselves against the influx of free negroes' (De Bow 1851: 330). To counter this political challenge, the antebellum writers sought to demonstrate that their maxims of slave management not only supported the welfare of slaves, but offered effective control of the black population.

Issues of control pertained not only to the slaves, but also to their hired managers. Antebellum writers regarded their overseers suspiciously, seeing them as 'a necessary evil at best', and their employers as being 'too much in the habit of yielding up this important department [i.e. plantation management] entirely to their overseers' (Breedon 1980: 291–292). According to a Virginia planter writing in 1837, small plantations might forgo the layer of middle management entirely, though 'on farms of 800 acres [324 ha], or more, [the owner] will find it a difficult task to manage his negroes unless assisted by an overseer' (Breedon 1980: 295).<sup>9</sup> The authority of overseers was often called into question, with one Alabama landowner writing that 'some managers (if indeed such people can be called managers) enact the characters of old women admirably' (Breedon 1980: 292–293).

The main fault ascribed to the overseers was cruelty — the very characteristic the owners themselves allegedly lacked. As one committee chair warned his peers, a slave owner ‘cannot relieve himself from the odium of cruel treatment to his slaves by attempting to throw the odium on his overseer [;] it is his *duty* to know how his slaves are treated, and to protect them against cruelty’ (De Bow 1854: 716).

Control in the antebellum management discourse was established predominately through reference to plantation order, discipline, pacing of the workday, and religious instruction — all regarded as essential components of governance in these total institutions. During the antebellum period, plantation owners relied extensively on a slave patrol system to monitor their laborers (Hadden 2001). As a large slaveholder in Virginia commented, ‘each manager will do well to organize in his neighborhood, whenever practicable, patrol parties, in order to detect and punish irregularities of the negroes which are generally committed at night’ (DeBow 1853: 178). Writing in 1831, a Georgia planter stressed that he would

‘employ those means in conducting the internal or external police of the plantation, which in my judgment are deemed best calculated to promote the comfort and contentment and suit the condition of the subjects over whom they are intended to operate, and at the same time secure subordination and good order.’ (Breedon 1980: 50–51)

Such efforts at plantation governance were complemented by discipline, though — as noted above — antebellum management texts were careful to sustain the appearance that physical sanctions were only employed as a last resort. In *De Bow’s Review*, John Calhoun, functioning as the chair of an Alabama committee on agricultural management, suggested that the use of force was necessary because slaves could not be threatened with dismissal; physical punishment should only be used, however, ‘after reason and persuasion have been exhausted without producing the desired effect’ and ‘should never be carried to a greater extent than is absolutely necessary to enforce obedience to necessary commands’ (De Bow 1855: 716). Another planter prided himself on displaying ‘a few sour looks and as little whipping as almost any other place of the same size’ (De Bow 1851: 626). Experts on antebellum management also tried to legitimate punishments by offering alternatives to whipping, such as confinement, Sunday work, or the stoppage of special allowances of food and drink (De Bow 1857: 42).

While Roman management thought emphasized control through adherence to an annual agricultural calendar, the antebellum principles offered fine-grained control for each workday, designating specific times for rising, working, eating, and resting. This meticulous mode of control was justified because of the increasing dissemination of mechanical timepieces in the antebellum South during the 1830s (Smith 1996) and was supplemented, according to several writers, with an elaborate prison-camp surveillance system, which included morning check-ups, sick slave check-up, work surveillance, bed curfew check-up, and night-time check-up (DeBow 1853: 178). The antebellum management writers routinely referred to various ‘signals’ that would allow planters to communicate desired work starts and stoppages to their slaves. One planter suggested that a ‘large sized cow-bell that could be heard two miles [away] ... would serve not only as a signal for bedtime, but also for getting up a morning [sic], for ceasing work at noon and resuming it after dinner’ (Breedon 1980: 76).

A final mechanism of control widely represented in the antebellum management discourse was religious indoctrination. Church attendance had the immediate effect



of busying slaves during their limited free time and restricting social interaction among blacks to a form that was acceptable to the planter elite. Writing in 1837, a South Carolina planter argued that:

'most negroes take Sunday as their day of visiting and it not infrequently happens that they do more mischief on that day ... now, the attendance upon church permits them to meet their relatives and friends there, and, at the same time, keeps them out of all mischief'. (Breedon 1980: 225)

Beyond busying the slaves, the antebellum management rhetoric asserted the merit of religious teaching as a normative control mechanism within the black community. Considering the 'duties and responsibilities' of plantation life, the editor James De Bow quoted a South Carolina committee, which stressed that:

'religious culture aids greatly in the government and discipline of the slave population ... some of the facts given are, a stronger sense of duty upon the part of the negroes to obey[;] a feeling of fear to offend against the obligations of religion, and especially a fear of being "churched" and expelled for bad behaviour'. (De Bow 1860: 367)

## Discussion

Paralleling the insights developed by Bendix (1956) for industrial society, we suggest that the management discourse of the antebellum South and the late Roman Republic resulted from specific legitimacy crises confronting these agrarian societies. In the American South, dread of slave insurrection, abolitionist activity, and Northern political activism propelled the planter elite to elaborate a set of rules for slave management in the three decades before the US Civil War. These rules sought to establish both a normative foundation for antebellum management — based on an ideology of racial inequality and the consequent 'virtue' of plantation paternalism — and a pragmatic foundation — based on an extensive system of slave control. While such rules might appear a natural outgrowth of any system of chattel slavery, their absence from Roman management texts is illuminating. In the Roman case, legitimacy threats resulted from the increasing concentration of farmland in the hands of a small number of owners and the deterioration of agriculture, which was attributed to the preoccupation of those owners with urban affairs. Authors such as Cato, Varro, and Columella addressed these issues by highlighting the importance of agricultural labor for an urban elite, and by providing patricians with detailed manuals that allowed them to enjoy its virtues vicariously, through the guidance of their agents. Roman discourse thus advocated an early version of agency theory that would ensure the viability of latifundia maintained by managerial intermediaries.

Despite generic similarities in the economic systems of these societies, the span of two millennia and a host of geographic and cultural distinctions preclude any simple comparison of their management ideologies. Instead, we would like to address a more basic commonality, namely, the fact that though diverse in context and detail, each discourse exhibits a belief system regarding management, composed of both an ideological component and a supplementary rational-practical component. The ideological component includes a definition of an elite, represented by the authors, as the legitimate source of authority within a social and economic system; it then goes on to identify other members in the hierarchical order,

namely, middle managers and subordinates. Taken together, these elements provide the ideational justification for an arrangement in which one group dominates (and hence manages) another for the first group's economic gain. In the Roman discourse, the patricians were justified, at the expense of small farmers, as estate owners who could secure the prosperity of Rome; in the antebellum case, plantation owners were credited as the great benefactors of slaves.

Neither discourse serves as an accurate description of actual management practice. Varro and Columella provide detailed instructions for grain cultivation, even though this practice had fallen into disuse by their time (Simkhovitch 1916: 222). In the antebellum South, the texts downplay the severe hardships and abuse incurred by the majority of slaves (Nkomo 1992). Instead of mirroring reality, the interplay between the ideological and practical elements reveals a narrative tension that is reconciled through the discourse. For the Roman texts, the tension is between an ideal of a self-sustaining and flourishing Roman Empire, led by worthy patricians, and the social and economic deterioration marking the empire's gradual decline (Simkhovitch 1916). In the antebellum case, writers may have been aiming not only to answer abolitionist protests regarding the evils of slavery, but also to ease some of their own feelings of guilt.

Comparing our analysis with other historical case studies, it seems that management historians have been inclined to interpret early administrative practices and beliefs as uncomplicated or straightforward, owing to the fact that supervisors in agrarian societies often commanded workers who were either enslaved, in peonage, or rooted to particular trades. As Wren has noted for the case of ancient Egypt, 'strong cultural traditions bound freemen to occupations, and chains took care of other labor problems' (Wren 2005: 16). By contrast, our analysis suggests that elites in agrarian societies felt compelled to develop management ideologies in order to confront challenges from political activists, critical scholars, slave leaders, and the like. Even in these simple economic systems, coercion and tradition were not always enough to sustain the dominance of landholders, and a body of written management rules emerged to fill the void.

More generally, the critical examination of pre-industrial management discourse in this study offers the potential for bringing new insights to organization studies by questioning common dichotomies surrounding 'modernity', 'rationality', and the concept of 'management' itself. Before rationality and science became institutionalized as the leading values of modern society, we show that 'pre-modern' management offered a matter-of-fact language to handle controversies by breaking them down into mundane technical details. Just as Weberian scholarship has dealt extensively with the concept of 'capitalism' in antiquity and the questions surrounding its continuity and change since then (e.g. Love 1991), scholars must confront the conceptual historicism surrounding 'management' and the risks of interpreting it anachronistically. In contrast to some modern conceptions of managerial authority, the Roman and antebellum cases demonstrate that legal-rational administration could exist alongside traditional authority and blunt recourse to physical coercion (cf. Weber 1968). These observations point to the importance of a large-scale genealogical investigation of management, seeking to reveal the meanings ascribed to this function throughout the pre-industrial era. Such an inquiry, which might include cases ranging from 19th-century Caribbean slave

plantations (e.g. Stinchcombe 1995) to mercantile societies without chattel slavery, would illuminate our understanding of the development of managerial concepts, as well as the nature of current frameworks, in a new light.

## Notes

We would like to thank Sara Babb, Eyal Ben Ari, Mauro Guillén, David Lamond, and Viviana Zelizer for their insightful comments on earlier drafts. This paper also benefited from feedback at the 2007 ASA meetings in New York and the AOM meetings in Philadelphia, where it received the John F. Mee Award for Contribution to Management History.

- 1 Nat Turner, a Virginia slave, organized a rebellious group of more than 50 enslaved and free African-American people, who, on 21–23 August 1831, traveled between estates, freeing slaves and killing a total of 57 white men, women, and children. This incident served to polarize attitudes toward slavery across the American South.
- 2 A fourth text, by Rutilius Palladius (1873), is the only surviving treatise on agricultural management from the late Roman empire. We omit discussion of it here because the social climate in which it was produced (around the 5th century AD) is not comparable to that of the other texts.
- 3 These journals include the *American Cotton Planter* (1853–1861), *American Farmer* (1819–1861), *Farmer and Planter* (1850–1860), *Farmers' Register* (1833–1842), *Soil of the South* (1851–1856), *Southern Agriculturalist* (1828–1846), *Southern Cultivator* (1843–1861), *Southern Planter* (1841–1861), and *South-Western Farmer* (1842–1845).
- 4 Pliny in Simkhovitch (1916: 206).
- 5 In citing the Roman management texts, we indicate the date of the translated text followed by the page number in the translated edition.
- 6 For large Roman landholdings, the managerial division of labor could be far more extensive (White 1970: 353–355). Above the vilicus, the landowner might employ a *procurator* to administer multiple agricultural estates. Below the vilicus, foremen (*epistates*) would be hired to supervise working gangs of field-hands.
- 7 'Management of slaves', p. 715, by John Calhoun, chairman of a committee charged with the subject of slave management, 13 June 1846. Published in *DeBow's Review*, June 1855, Vol. 18: 713–719.
- 8 Breeden's anthology includes roughly 331 pages worth of texts, with 135 pages devoted to these topics, 169 pages devoted to other topics (ranging from slave discipline and plantation order to liquor and amusements on the farm), and 27 pages devoted to prize and commissioned essays. Excluding the latter essays, then, roughly 44% of the materials (135 out of 304) concern rules for the basic sustenance and care of slaves.
- 9 By comparison, the Roman agricultural writers recommended overseers for landholdings as small as 100 iugera (60 acres or 24 ha) (Cato 1998, 11: 87).

## References

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Bendix, Reinhardt<br/>1956 <i>Work and authority in industry</i>.<br/>New York: Wiley.</p> <p>Bilotta, James<br/>1992 <i>Race and the rise of the Republican Party, 1848–1865</i>. New York: Peter Lang.</p> <p>Breeden, James<br/>1980 <i>Advice among masters: The ideal in slave management in the Old South</i>. Westport, CT: Greenwood.</p> <p>Cato, Marcus Portius<br/>1998 <i>De agricultura</i>, trans. Andrew Dalby. Blackawton: Prospect Books.</p> <p>Columella, Lucius<br/>1941 <i>On agriculture</i>, trans. Harrison Ash. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.</p> | <p>Cooke, Bill<br/>1999 'Writing the Left out of management theory: The historiography of the management of change'. <i>Organization</i> 6: 81–105.</p> <p>Cooke, Bill<br/>2003a 'The denial of slavery in management studies'. <i>Journal of Management Studies</i> 40: 1895–1918.</p> <p>Cooke, Bill<br/>2003b 'A new continuity with colonial administration: Participation in development management'. <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 24: 47–61.</p> <p>Czarniawska, Barbara<br/>1999 <i>Writing management</i>. New York: Oxford University Press.</p> |
|--|---|

- Dalby, Andrew  
1998 'Introduction' in *De agricultura*. M. Cato, trans. Blackawton: Prospect Books.
- De Bow, James D. B. (ed.)  
1846–1861 *De Bow's review: Agricultural, commercial, industrial progress and resources*. New Orleans, LA: De Bow.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen  
1989 'Agency theory: An assessment and review'. *Academy of Management Review* 14: 57–74.
- Ezzamel, Mahmoud  
2004 'Work organization in the Middle Kingdom, Ancient Egypt'. *Organization* 11: 497–537.
- Faust, Drew  
1979 'A southern stewardship: The intellectual and the proslavery argument'. *American Quarterly* 31: 63–80.
- Faust, Drew  
1988 *The creation of confederate nationalism*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Foner, Eric  
1965 'Politics and prejudice: The free soil party and the negro, 1849–1852'. *The Journal of Negro History* 50: 239–256.
- Foucault, Michel  
2006 *History of madness*. London: Routledge. First published in 1961.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth, and Eugene Genovese  
2005 *The mind of the master class*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Foxhall, Lin  
1990 'The dependent tenant: Land leasing and labor in Italy and Greece'. *Journal of Roman Studies* 80: 97–114.
- Frenkel, M., and Yehuda Shenhav  
2006 'From binarism back to hybridity: A postcolonial reading of management and organization studies'. *Organization Studies* 27: 855–876.
- Guillén, Mauro  
1994 *Models of management*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hadden, Sally  
2001 *Slave patrols*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Khurana, Rakesh  
2007 *From higher aims to hired hands*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Love, John  
1991 *Antiquity and capitalism*. Routledge: London.
- McCardell, John  
1979 *The idea of a southern nation*. New York: Norton.
- Morgan, Gareth  
2006 *Images of organization*, updated edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Nkomo, Stella  
1992 'The emperor has no clothes: Rewriting "Race in Organizations"'. *Academy of Management Review* 40: 1895–1918.
- Palladius, Rutilius  
1873 *On husbandry*, trans. Barton Lodge. London: N. Trübner.
- Perrow, Charles  
1986 *Complex organizations*, 3rd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Peruvemba, Jaya  
2001 'Do we really "know" and "profess"? Decolonizing management knowledge'. *Organization* 8: 227–233.
- Pheng, Low  
2007 'Managing building projects in Ancient China: A comparison with modern-day project management principles and practices'. *Journal of Management History* 13: 192–210.
- Pliny  
1950 *Natural history*, Vol. 5, trans. H. Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Prasad, Anshuman, (ed.)  
2003 *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richardson, John  
1980 'The ownership of Roman land'. *Journal of Roman Studies* 70: 1–11.
- Scott, W. Richard  
2002 *Organizations: Rational, natural, and open systems*, 5th edn. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Simon and Schuster.
- Scott, W. Richard  
2004 'Reflections on a half-century of organizational sociology'. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 1–21.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Shenhav, Yehuda<br/>1999 <i>Manufacturing rationality</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Shenhav, Yehuda, and Ely Weitz<br/>2000 'The roots of uncertainty in organization theory: A historical constructivist analysis'. <i>Organization</i> 7: 373–401.</p> <p>Simkhovitch, Vladimir<br/>1916 'Rome's fall reconsidered'. <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 31: 201–243.</p> <p>Smith, Mark<br/>1996 'Time, slavery and plantation capitalism in the ante-bellum American South'. <i>Past and Present</i> 150: 142–168.</p> <p>Starr, Raymond<br/>1987 'The circulation of literary texts in the Roman world'. <i>The Classical Quarterly</i> 37: 213–233.</p> <p>Stinchcombe, Arthur<br/>1995 <i>Sugar island slavery in the age of enlightenment</i>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.</p> | <p>Tise, Larry<br/>1987 <i>Proslavery: A history of the defense of slavery in America, 1701–1840</i>. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.</p> <p>Varro, Marcus Terentius<br/>1934 <i>On farming</i>, trans. William Hooper. Cambridge, MA: Loeb.</p> <p>Virgil<br/>2006 <i>Georgics</i>, trans. Peter Fallon. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Weber, Max<br/>1968 <i>Economy and society: An interpretive sociology</i>. New York: Bedminster.</p> <p>White, K. D.<br/>1970 <i>Roman farming</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.</p> <p>Wittfogel, Karl<br/>1957 <i>Oriental despotism</i>. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.</p> <p>Wren, Daniel<br/>2005 <i>The history of management thought</i>, 5th edn. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.</p> |
|--|---|

## Martin Ruef

Martin Ruef is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, with research interests that lie at the intersection of organizational and historical sociology. He has written on the institutional evolution of the healthcare field, as well as the agricultural and industrial transformation of the American South following the Civil War. His books include *Institutional Change and Healthcare Organizations*, with W. Richard Scott and colleagues (University of Chicago Press 2000), *Organizations Evolving*, with Howard Aldrich (Sage, 2nd edn 2006), and *The Sociology of Entrepreneurship*, co-edited with Michael Lounsbury (Elsevier 2007). He is currently working on a monograph on entrepreneurial groups, which considers the interplay of social identities, networks, and collective action.  
*Address:* Department of Sociology, Princeton University, Princeton NJ 08544, USA.  
*Email:* mruef@princeton.edu

## Alona Harness

Alona Harness is a PhD student of Organization Studies in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. She has also been a visiting scholar at the School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Her doctoral dissertation investigates the different facets of institutionalization of change management practices in organizations. Her research interests include organization theory, especially understanding institutionalization processes through critical discourse analysis; power and politics in organizations and their contexts; and qualitative methods in organization studies.  
*Address:* 79/1 Oxford St, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.  
*Email:* alonah@mscc.huji.ac.il