

Consider the following images of women at work:

## Source 1: Fresco from a bar in Pompeii



This fresco from a bar in Pompeii shows two customers (left) and a serving girl? (right). The text above them reads:

A: Hoc [poculum mihi est]

B: Non! Mia est!

C: Qui vol, sumat!

A: This cup is mine

B: No! It's mine!

C: Whoever wants it, pick it up!

*Fresco from Caupona of Salvius, Pompeii.*

## Source 2: Reliefs of doctors/pharmacists from Gaul



This limestone funerary stele (left) shows a female doctor, carrying a small box in her right hand. The monument is damaged, so the first half of the inscription is missing, but the remaining part reads:  
[...]*INI* · *FIL[ia]* · *MEDICA*  
*daughter of (father's name), doctor*

*Above: funerary stele from Roman Gaul, 2nd-3rd cent. AD (Metz).*

The funerary relief on the right features a female doctor or pharmacist (?). She has a book on her left knee, and sits at the centre of a busy workshop (pharmacy?). Next to her someone is stirring a mixture over a burner (A), and on the other side a woman adds material to a vat (B). Below her, liquid is distilling into vats (C).

*Below: funerary stele from Roman Gaul, 2nd century AD (Epinal).*



What do you think the profession of the girl in the fresco was?  
What do you think the professions of the women in the reliefs were?

### Source 3: fresco of a street vendor



In this fresco, an elderly street vendor (right) seems to be offering cupids for sale to the well-dressed ladies on the left - she holds one forward, one stands at the seated woman's knee, and the vendor has another in a cage (could this be a metaphor for something

*Fresco from Villa Ariadne, Stabiae*

Do you think we can learn anything from this scene, though it seems fanciful?

### Source 4: fresco of painter

In this fresco, a woman (left) completes a painting of a figure, while a woman sitting to the right of her observes (she looks over her shoulder to the painting).



*Fresco from the House of the Empress of Russia, Pompeii.*

### Source 5: relief of hairdressers



In this funerary relief (left) from a large tomb (right), four women attend to a lady seated in a wicker chair. From left to right: two women tend to the lady's hair, another holds up a mirror, and a fourth stands by with a jug.



*Marble relief from a large family tomb from Neumagen (Trier).*

Do you think the hairdressers in the relief might be slaves, or professionals?

What difficulties did you encounter when interpreting these images?