The professionalization of women in the field of information and communication technology is a natural extension of some aspects outlined in previous sections. The first contribution, Giuditta Parolini’s UK case study of Rothamsted Statistics Department, illuminates one element that has long been in the shadows: the participation of many women in the early days of computing. Subverting the traditional image of computing as a masculine field, she explains the sociogenesis of women’s early role, showing that as of 1920 women were already active participants in that process. Based on the testimony of former employees, she highlights the singular part they played, showing the contradiction between their professional status as ‘technicians’ and the fact that they were not fully regarded as such by their male colleagues. Chantal Morley and Martina McDonnell’s contribution extends the discussion begun by G. Parolini by offering a comparative study of women in computing in France, Finland and the United Kingdom between 1960 and 1990. Despite different national contexts, the authors observe many similarities in gender divisions within the information and communication technology professions. These points in common partly explain the over-representation of men in these professions, but do not allow to step up a new deal. In order to do so, Karen Lee Ashcraft and Catherine Ashcraft reflect on diversity interventions and demonstrate the part that history could (and should) play. Showing that women taking second place in certain occupational sectors is not specific to Europe or to ICT, they start a dialogue between European and American histories, and between civil aviation and ICT.
history, showing how Civil Aviation gradually confined women to care functions. Their emergence in other professional bodies reconfigured the essentialized forms of masculine and feminine attributes without allowing an equal professional recognition of men and women, which proves the existence of the ‘glass ceiling’ that women face in such professions and in many others.