

Andrew Wilson & Miko Flohr (Eds.), *Urban Craftsmen and Traders in the Roman World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 408 pp., ISBN 978-0-19-874848-9¹

In 2016, under the aegis of the Oxford University Press was published the collective volume *Urban Craftsmen and Traders in the Roman World*, coordinated by Andrew Wilson and Miko Flohr. The volume appears in the monograph series *Oxford Studies on the Roman Economy*, coordinated by Alan Bowman and Andrew Wilson, focusing on Rome's economy, especially from the Mediterranean Basin, during ca. 100 BC – AD 350. The works in this series are comparative studies of archaeological and documentary data on the economic evolution of ancient Rome from a collective perspective.

In the preface, the volume coordinators state that the book has its origins in the workshop *Beyond Marginality: Craftsmen, Traders and the Socio-Economic History of Roman Urban Communities*, organized by the Oxford Roman Economy Project and held at Wolfson College, Oxford, UK, July 21st - 23rd of 2011. The articles in the volume were grouped according to the workshop's structure: the history of research; economic strategies of craftsmen and traders; the position of the crafts and trade in urban space; craftsmen and traders in their social environment. The collective work includes 16 studies, signed by archaeologists and historians of ten states (Greece, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Sweden and Belgium).

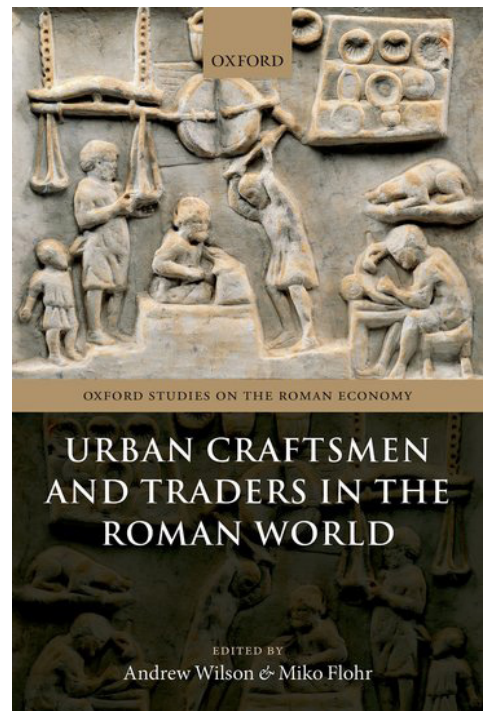
In the Introduction, the volume editors (p. 1-19) make a synthesis of the project and of the authors' contributions, starting from the history of research, economic strategies, social environment, economic life and urban development to broader discussions on the craftsmen and traders roles and shares. The volume coordinators emphasize both the trade share in the life of the Roman towns as well as the role of the producers, retail sellers and traders who were the basic social categories of the Roman towns.

Part I. Approaches (p. 23-94) comprises three studies in the field of intellectual history of the Roman crafts and trade representing the dynamics of debates and research of the field in European historiography. M. Flohr and A. Wilson analyse in article *Roman Craftsmen and Traders: Towards an Intellectual History*, based on German and Anglo-Saxon traditions, the approaches of Roman craftsmen and traders in the 19th and 20th century historiography. C. Salvaterra and A. Cristofori, in article *Twentieth-Century Italian Scholarship on Roman Craftsmen, Traders, and their Professional Organizations*, discuss the Italian historiography of the 20th century on Roman craftsmen and traders and the impact of the political regimes on the research of this topic. J.-P. Brun's contribution, *The Archaeology of Roman Urban Workshops: A French Approach?* presents the French tradition in investigating urban craftsmanship in ancient Rome. As it results from the three perspectives presented in this chapter, the historiographical approaches of the 19th – 20th centuries were often parallel, without interconnections or consideration one from another owing to both linguistic aspects as well as the totalitarian regimes governing the European

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states. Concurrently, the ratio of German and Anglo-Saxon approaches is noticeable, interacting in terms of Roman Empire history. For instance, the French historiography granted higher attention to aspects regarding workshop infrastructures, the Italian – to the role and concepts of Roman crafts, while that Anglo-Saxon – to the social share of the craftsmen and traders in urban settings. Circumstances changed after WWII, when research networks extended at European level and the quality of comparative studies increased.

Part II. Strategies (p. 97-179) includes four studies focusing both on the economic specificities of craftsmanship and trade as well as the economic strategies to ensure their market share. Economically, each participant in these relations pursued a well-defined goal, namely developing their trade, minimizing risks and ensuring the expected profit. For efficient organisation and minimal risks, each producer/craftsman and trader had to bear in mind a series of peculiarities specific to the region, province or town where they lived and worked, the market demand and potential buyers. C. Rice discusses in his article *Mercantile Specialization and Trading Communities: Economic Strategies in Roman Maritime Trade*, especially based on epigraphic sources, the economic strategies specific to the maritime trade in the Mediterranean Basin. Maritime traders were rather flexible and adapted their economic strategies to both economic circumstances of the market as well as the specificities of the maritime trade. To ensure their business, Roman traders established trading communities in port towns. K. Ruffing, in the study *Driving Forces for Specialization: Market, Location Factors, Productivity Improvements*, based on the epigraphic data from Egypt and Asia Minor, discusses market specialization from a number of perspectives: market competition, which compelled producers to exploit certain niches; quality and quantity of their production focusing on a small subset of services or products; local specific circumstances, like for instance accessibility to certain resources, causing the development of certain crafts within a town. C. v. Driel-Murray discusses in this article *Fashionable Footwear: Craftsmen and Consumers in the North-West Provinces of the Roman Empire*, how footwear was made. The author bases his study on the consumer theory in order to sketch the economic landscape of footwear manufacturers in the Roman Empire. The making of children, man and women footwear is part of the consumer's economy, based on traditional patters. However, in the case of certain social categories, footwear was made upon the order and necessity of the consumer. N. Monteix, in his study *Contextualizing the Operational Sequence: Pompeian Bakeries as a Case Study*, analyses a very important economic trade for each human community – bread baking. Based on the data from Pompeii, the author reveals various aspects of the bread baking technology and bakery space.

Part III. People (p. 183-298) comprises five articles focusing on the social context, social networks and daily life of craftsmen and traders in the Roman towns. The craftsmen lived, worked and interacted within an open environment. On one side, craftsmen and traders were known by their clients rather well, on the other hand the producers and traders interacted with the representatives of the urban

administrations, and, to this effect, were part of several social networks. C. Freu, in article *Disciplina, patrocinium, nomen: The Benefits of Apprenticeship in the Roman World*, discusses the role of education in training craftsman skills. In most cases, professional abilities were passed on from father to son. Nevertheless, apprenticeship was an important field in the Roman Empire, whereby children/youths sought opportunities for training their professional skills with famous workshops and craftsmen in urban environments. An original study is made by L. Larson Lovén – *Women, Trade, and Production in Urban Centres of Roman Italy* –, discussing the role of women in the urban economic environment of the Roman empire. Although historical sources are modest on this topic, the author proves the key importance of women in various sectors of urban economy. W. Broekaert, in his article *Freedmen and Agency in Roman Business*, analyses the role of freedmen in the networks of the Roman urban economy. The *patroni* used freedmen as economic agents, thus reducing their own risks. This model was also applied in craftsmen and traders' operations. N. Tran analyses in this study *The Social Organization of Commerce and Crafts in Ancient Arles: Heterogeneity, Hierarchy, and Patronage*, the operations and peculiarities of trade and craftsmanship organisation in Arles. Thus, the author presents a case study on port economy from the western side of the empire, with an extant clear hierarchy of the professional associations – *navicularii, negotiatores, mercantores*. These professional classes played an important role in both the economic and social-political environment of the town. I. Arnaoutoglou, in *Hierapolis and Professional Associations: A Comparative Analysis*, analyses the specificity of the professional associations from the eastern side of the Roman Empire. Based on the epigraphic sources from Hierapolis, the author discusses the memory of the association members and how they cared for their graves. It results from the author's reports the craftsmen and traders ratio in the urban environment and the townsmen behaviour towards with these professional classes.

Part IV. Space (p. 301-404) comprises four works debating the position of the craftsmen in urban trade structure via the crafts and trade physical interaction with the urban environment, the diffusion of the economic operations in this environment, as well as the degree to which certain activities were spatially clustered. P. Goodman discusses in his study *Working Together: Cluster of Artisans in the Roman City*, from an archaeological view, craftsmen clusters in the Roman towns. Based on data from Pompeii, Timgad and Silchester, the author concludes that the cluster phenomenon was specific to towns and was supported by Roman elites. K. Droß-Krüpe, in his contribution *Spatial Concentration and Dispersal of Roman Textile Crafts*, debates the specificity and position of crafts in the textile field, proving that the cluster phenomenon was disadvantageous to this field of economic operation. The article of O. Láng, *Industry and Commerce in the City of Aquincum*, reveals, based on archaeological data, the economic topography of the town at Aquincum. On the same reasoning path, J. Poblome discusses in his article *The Potters of Ancient Sagalassos Revisited*, the history of the potters quarters in the town at Sagalassos. The production of fine wares is a trade which required high skills from both the manufacturing technology

point of view and buyer requirements. Although the quarter was not central in the urban structure, the author evidences the potters' important role in the economy of the town at Sagalassos.

The collection also includes, by the beginning, data on the authors, lists of figures, tables and by the end – an index of names and notions, which provide quick access to the data, fields and topics approaches by the authors.

In conclusion, we believe that volume *Urban Craftsmen and Traders in the Roman World* – the result of the efforts of a team of experts in the economic history of ancient Rome – is an important contribution to the history of crafts and trade in the Roman world. The discussion on the role and

organization of certain actors of the Roman economy is important and topical, all the more so as one may note the flexibility of the producers and traders in urban environments to consumer requirements from various regions and periods of the empire. It is also worth emphasizing the efforts made by the coordinators and authors for a complex analysis of written and archaeological sources and a geographical balance between the eastern and western regions of the empire. We recommend this volume to all those interested in Roman history, economy and society. The workshop underlying this work may be a model for a further complex research project for other fields, regions and historical periods.