

MACMAHON, ARDLE, and JENNIFER PRICE, EDS. *Roman Working Lives and Urban Living*. Pp. viii + 224, figs. 97, tables 12, maps 3. Oxbow Books, Oxford 2005. \$40. ISBN 1-84217-186-0 (paper).

[1188 words]

This edited volume contains twelve chapters, divided into two sections, that gives insights into the urban, and sometimes rural, settings for, and the people involved in, various crafts, trades, and other business and ritual activities that were important to Roman urban living, and also insights into these activities.

The first section, 'Urban living and the settings for urban lives', includes five chapters. In the first chapter, Simon Esmond Cleary reminds us that ritual played an important role in the use of urban space. He calls for the 'peopling' of the 'large' towns of Roman Britain. He stresses a need to move away from investigating the individual physical elements of urban space and to examine temporality, movement, ceremonies and other activities within these settings. Dominic Perring reminds us that town residences were also places of work. Again in the context of Roman Britain, he focuses on aristocratic patrons receiving clients to argue that the design of reception rooms in the houses of the urban rich was closely influenced by a spread of a Roman-style education. Janet DeLaine's chapter moves the discussion to Italy and to the commercial landscape of Ostia. Assuming that this landscape is structured by sellers and not buyers, she identifies superimposed patterns of visibility and accessibility in different types of facilities - from temporary stalls, to shops, to large-scale selling in horrea and fora. She discusses the commercial activities carried out by inhabitants and casual visitors, and highlights the role of auctioneers in Roman commerce. The last two chapters in this section are by Ardle MacMahon. In the first he uses evidence from ground plans to first identify shops and workshops in Romano-British towns, and then to discuss the form of such establishments, pointing out that the limited evidence makes it practically impossible to identify the locations of particular crafts. The discussion seems rather circular and unsystematic, and one wonders if there is any need to separate craft establishments from general lower class housing. In the next chapter, like Steven Ellis' comparable study introduced in *JRA* 17 (2004), 371-384, MacMahon's takes the counter as the predominant identifier of tabernae in Pompeii and Herculaneum. He examines their inset *dolia* and marbled surfaces, and iconographic information, to identify the kinds of activities that took place in such establishments.

The second section, 'People at work: owners and artisans, crafts and professions' includes seven chapters. In the first Damian Robinson investigates the social statuses of people who owned of workshops involved in the textile industry, the hospitality industry, and baking in Pompeii. He rightly argues against ascribing zones of the city to specific industries but overplays our ability to recognise the locations for the textile and hospitality industries through structural remains and limited artefactual evidence. For example, Unit I 10,6, which he identified as a *fullonica*, was actually identified as a stone carver's workshop by Ling, Insula of the Menander vol I [Oxford 1997], 147-148 (see also P. M. Allison, Insula of the Menander vol III [Oxford 2006], 335-336). Robinson concludes that the upper classes were not as heavily involved in the hospitality trade as in baking and the textile industry. Interestingly, the importance of spinning and weaving to the textile industry, which may well have taken place within

all types of residences as well as in workshops, is overlooked. The evidence for a restaurant attached to the Villa of Julia Felix, and its interpretation, seems to have been left out of this discussion, although one cannot ascertain which actual properties are included in Robinson's study and why. Through analogy with the timber industry in 19th-century Canada, Sharon Graham examines the transportation of bricks from their place of manufacture to Rome, and the role of the Tiber and its associated infrastructure in that transportation. Like MacMahon's first chapter, Jenny Halls' deals with shops and craftworkers in Roman-Britain, but specifically in London. She, likewise, argues that strip houses were likely to accommodate craftworkers and retailers, but uses artefactual evidence to identify the products and the merchandise of particular establishments. She argues that the town was divided into residential, commercial, and industrial zones although this is not evident from the material she presents. Jeremy Evans comments on the urban manufacture, consumption, and retailing of pottery in Romano-British towns, stressing that urban pottery industries were less common than rural ones, that specialist pottery shops existed in the northwest provinces, and that pottery in retail must be considered both as a commodity itself and as a container. Jennifer Price examines evidence for secondary glassworking sites, artisans involved in glass working, retail outlets and glass circulation throughout the Roman world, reminding us that glass was also important for windows in public buildings, particularly baths. She examines the location of glassworking within urban contexts, noting changes over time, and discusses the limited evidence for the organisation of the glassworking industry and for the retail of glass. Marina Ciraldi examines plant remains from recent excavations in and around Pompeii. She argues that the residues found in *dolia* in the Villa Vesuvio identify this as the location for the production of medicines. And she uses archeobotanical remains recovered from the Casa delle Vestale and the Casa delle Nozze di Ercole to trace changes in food production and consumption which, she argues, is paralleled by transformation in social organisation. In the last chapter Ralph Jackson investigates the place of doctors and healers in urban life. He discusses the standing of doctors, their places of work, and the healing activities that different practitioners were likely to perform. In particular he discusses the exceptional evidence from a 3rd century surgery Rimini. His observation of the high incidence of evidence for the practice of surgery in Pompeian houses suggests that many medical practices were more household tasks than specialisations (see Allison, 2006, 383-384).

The volume as a whole presents interesting and thought-provoking approaches to Roman urban living. It draws on fresh evidence and analyses to highlight crafts and industries that are important to urban lifeways. It demonstrates innovative and experimental approaches which provide much room for further research, regardless of how successful these initial experiments are. In general, the volume is well illustrated but some of the discussions would have been easier to follow with clearer plans and more explanations of tables. Grammatical errors are few.

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