

## BOOK REVIEW

*Making Textiles in Pre-Roman and Roman Times: People, Places, Identities*. Edited by MARGARITA GLEBA and JUDIT PÁSZTÓKAI-SZEÖKE. Ancient Textiles Series Vol. 13. Oxford, UK and Oakville, CT: Oxbow Books and Casemate Academic, 2013. Pp. xvii + 238. Hardcover, \$60.00. ISBN 978-1-84217-767-9.

Textile production in the pre-Roman Italy and the Roman Empire was both a necessary household activity and, later, an important part of imperial trade networks as this volume demonstrates. John P. Wild comments in his introduction to this book that textile production and trade have been very little investigated in the past because very few examples of textiles have survived in the archaeological record and documentary evidence is likewise sparse and uneven. His summary of past scholarly investigations provides a good introduction to this volume's thirteen articles that use insights from recent developments in archaeology, anthropology, history to investigate inventively the evidence we have. Each article is followed by its endnotes and bibliography. A comprehensive index concludes the volume.

Margarita Gleba's "Transformations in Textile Production and Exchange in pre-Roman Italy" examines how the introduction of technological organizational changes modified in "purpose, intensity and scale of organisation of textile production" (1) during the Orientalizing and Archaic periods. While textile production in these periods remained a female occupation, Sanna Lipkin shows that textile tools can identify the status and age of textile makers in Latium and southern Etruria ("Textile Making in Central Tyrrhenian Italy—Questions Related to Age, Rank and Status"). Karina Grömer ("Discovering the People behind the Textiles: Iron Age Textile Producers and their Products in Austria") looks at the surviving evidence, tools, iconography, work flow and weaving techniques, and division of labor to create a hypothetical picture of these textile producers, their social status, and their living and work places and then examines two case studies, Hallstatt and Dürrenberg, which show that there were various ways of organizing textile production, including, perhaps, the first mass production workshops, and, moreover, that this textile production continued right up to the incorporation of Austria into the Roman Empire.

The remaining chapters focus on textiles during the Roman Empire. Kordula Gostenčnik (“Textile Production and Trade in Roman Noricum”) looks at textile production in several large cities and their territories; iconographic sources pertaining to textile production and trade; lead tags (*tesserae*) inscribed with names, professions, colors and garments, wages and prices. She concludes that the settling of the Romans in Noricum opened a new market with exports to Italy and other parts of the empire and that the increased production was organized in various ways, such as possible centralization in some areas, likely collaboration with certain Italian textile centers, and textile production in certain villas.

Ivan Radman-Livaja examines more examples of lead tags found in Pannonia in “Craftspeople, Merchants or Clients? The Evidence of Personal Names on the Commercial Lead Tags from Siscia.” He reviews past research on these tags, their dates, and theories as to their use, and discusses the meaning of various abbreviations appearing on them, finding good reason to agree with the hypothesis that they were used by textile craftspeople as labels for the goods they sent to fullers and dyers, though arguing that the names on the tags are more likely the clients of such workers.

In the sixth paper (“Female Work and Identity in Roman Textile Production and Trade: A Methodological Discussion,” Lena Larsson Lovén looks at various terms for female textile workers (e.g. *quasillaria*, *lanifica circulatrix*, *purpuraria*) to establish that there were a number of textile jobs that women participated in. She examines iconographical representations of women textile workers to find that there clearly is a division of labor based on gender and that men more frequently are attested in such production. She suggests several reasons why there is such an imbalance in these representations and textile worker terminology, finding *inter alia* that “Roman gender ideologies ... emphasized female identities in their family roles rather than their professional capacities” (124).

Jinyu Liu (“Trade, Traders and Guilds (?) in Textiles: the Case of Southern Gaul and Northern Italy (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries ad)”) finds evidence pointing to not only the production of wool in these areas, but also their role as supply centers for non-luxury clothing and textiles for non-local trade, in significant part due to the demand from Rome’s large population and the military troops stationed in the frontier provinces. Liu suggests that this increased trade resulted in collaboration but also competition among craftspeople and traders in the form of *collegia*.

Textile production and trade in the Egypt and Eastern Mediterranean is the theme linking the next four papers. In “Textile Trade in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*”, Manuel Albaladejo Vivero argues that this text is, in fact, “a major

source of information on ... maritime routes employed to sail the Indian Ocean, the navigation calendar, and trading practices in the ports” as well as information on the major ports and the items exchanged there (142). Kerstin Droß-Krüpe focuses on textile fragments found in Myos Hormos and Berenike, and papyrological sources to give concrete examples of items and information on the merchants behind the data given by the *Periplus*, finding, for example, that this trade was intercultural, engaging people from India, Palmyra, and Aden as well as Egyptians and Romans and that the large sums of venture capital for this trade may have come not only from rich Alexandrians but also the senatorial elite of the empire.

Sophie Gällnö (“(In)visible Spinners in the Documentary Papyri from Roman Egypt”) examines the few Greek documentary papyri that mention spinners to investigate factors that impact why this type of female worker is less visible in these sources. She suggests that one major reason was that the, “common disapproval of feminine lucrative work may have contributed to the invisibility of women’s activities in the papyri” (169). The fourth paper of this group, “Textile Production Centres, Products and Merchants in the Roman Province of Asia” (Isabella Benda-Weber) turns to one of the most important textile manufacturing centers, that of Asia Minor. She discusses a number of these centers, providing illustrations of patterns of Phrygian and Lydian textile patterns, and also the various kinds of ready-made garments, gold-woven textiles (with illustrations of gold textile threads). She concludes that there was a synergistic effect among these production centers that enable them to produce textiles of various degrees of luxury, quality, and diversity.

The last two articles focus on the *fullones* and felters working in Pompeii. In “*Ulula*, *Quinquatrus* and the Occupational identity of *Fullones* in Early Imperial Italy,” Milo Flohr investigates how *fullones* “used the ritual activities in which they were involved, and the religious symbols with which they were associated, to shape their personal and collective identities and to communicate these identities to the wider urban community” (193). He finds that the sacred owl of Minerva (*ulula*) had power as a symbol of group identity and that the annual festival (*quinquatrus*) in honor of Minerva helped in building a sense of teamship. Jens-Arne Dickmann (“A ‘Private’ Felter’s Workshop in the Casa dei Postumii at Pompeii”) provides a number of clear, colored photos of the “kitchen” of this house, to support his argument that this area was re-purposed as a felting shop after the earthquake of ad 62 and speculates why the owner of this shop did so.

These papers demonstrate that despite relative scarcity of evidence, these authors have been able to re-interpret that evidence or tease out from it a deeper understanding of certain aspects textile production and trade. Their methodology is careful, nuanced, and intriguing. The value of their articles is enhanced by the many clear illustrations they provide in both colored and black-and-white photographs, charts, maps, tables, and drawings. For anyone interested in the Roman economy, women as craftspeople, and ancient textiles, this is a volume worth reading.

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