

## Roman Sheep

P.Horden and N. Purcell The Corrupting Sea. A study of Mediterranean History, Oxford 2000, pp.82-7, 197-200, 352-63, 610-11

C.R.Whittaker (ed.) 1988. Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity, CPhS Supplement 14, Cambridge

### 1. Contexts: Pastoralism and Textiles and

#### PASTORALISM

- not an alternative to arable agriculture, but in relationship with it
  - animals as converters of resources not otherwise usable by humans
  - animals as storage “The walking refrigerator”
- dairy and meat products in ancient diets (and their alternatives)
- dairy and meat products in ancient cuisine
- secondary products

**\*\*\*most animals were kept primarily for meat: other products were secondary.**

#### TEXTILES

Pre-modern societies

high levels of demand for manufactured clothes & textiles  
high proportion of early modern city-dwellers worked in this sector  
textiles as a source of wealth e.g. wool and Cistercian Monks

Kinds of textile:

wool, leather, linen,  
flax in wetlands (e.g. Patras, Colchis, Cyprus, Tarsus, Egypt)  
animal products versus vegetable products  
luxury materials: silk, dyed cloths

Production, manufacture and marketing

the collection of raw materials  
primary processing  
location, organisation  
manufacture of textiles and of clothing  
sale of: (1) raw materials (2) processed materials (3) clothing  
trade notes in Zurai tariffs and also 11/32 section of Price Edict

Investment

special crops or breeds  
animal pens, processing plants  
labour (including women's)

## 2. Ovicaprids in the Mediterranean World

J. Frayn, 1984. Sheep rearing and the wool trade in Italy during the Roman period, Liverpool

### OVICAPRIDS

sorting the sheep from the goats: archaeological difficulties

ovicaprid origins:

undomesticated varieties

the Near East and the Secondary Products Revolution

(other domesticated animals too)

ovicaprids in mixed agriculture: strengths and weakness

animal needs: food, water, shelter

>>ubiquitous in Med.

especially: scrublands, wetland fringes, mountain slopes

animal effects on crops: impact on grasses and other vegetable

ovicaprid uses

meat, dairy products, wool

selection for particular products

species and breeds,

conditions of raising, age structure of populations etc.

### ARIDITY

general competition between human and other large mammal populations for water and food especially in the summer.

ovicaprids resistance high, but low milk yield results from limited water/ green fodder

>> ovi-caprids more likely to thrive than cattle or pigs, but limited unless they can move to better water sources during the summer.

### HEAT

resistance high, but poor wool from hot-weather breeds

### TRANSHUMANCE

objectives/rationale cf. Garnsey in Whittaker ed.

1. juxtaposition of diverse resources
2. allows migration to be a response to seasonal fluctuations in heat, water +/-or fodder (thus allowing animals to be raised in environments that could not sustain them throughout the year)
3. alternative to growing fodder crops

vertical/ short range) versus horizontal / long range transhumance

(Thompson in Whittaker ed.)

- The Doghiana of Mediaeval Apulia as an example of long range transhumance. Government regulation of agricultural practices to preserve winter pastures
- Sardinian 1930's vertical economies as an example of short range transhumanc. Mountains in summer, village in winter.

### FALLOWING AND LIVESTOCK

rotating arable cultivation with crops that enrich the soil

feasible only on medium-large farms (Agronomist)

manure and arable cultivation: different strategies for manuring

3. Ovi-caprids in the continental hinterlands

A. C. King 1999. Diet in the Roman world: a regional inter-site comparison of the mammal bones JRA 12, 168-202

OVICAPRIDS AND OTHER DOMESTICATED SPECIES

comparison of the faunal remains from various sites  
essentially pig:cattle: sheep ratio assessed in each case.

1. Italy (w. central) has a diet v. high in pigs.
2. A pork rich diet spreads in the Med. largely at the expense of ovicaprids
3. More northern provinces diet had a greater presence of beef (especially where the army was stationed)

NEW KINDS OF SHEEP

bigger animals under Roman rule in northern Gaul:  
cattle increased in size by 20 %  
horses by 15 %, pigs by 12.5 %  
sheep by 9%

imported animals & deliberate breeding

4. Some productions

THE CRAU

O. Badan, J.-P. Brun and G. Congès 1995. Les bergeries romaines de la Crau d'Arles. Les origines de la transhumance en Provence, Gallia 52, 263-310

Goudineau in Whittaker (ed.)

Pliny 21.57 on the thousands of sheep transhuming to eat the thyme there.

the Crau plain: thyme, wind, exposed area

excavated sheep pens:

- 40-65 m long, 10 m wide with a 'prow' pointed to the north wind)
- shelters for shepherds, ovens, associated small finds
- wells

total of 100,000 sheep + from C1st AD -> late antiquity  
(when multiplied up to include unexcavated and unexcavable areas of the Crau)

## POMPEII

Möller W.O. 1976. The Wool trade of ancient Pompeii, Leiden

Jongman, W. 1988. The Economy and Society of Pompeii, Amsterdam ch.4

J. shows production mainly for local consumption rather than export (Möller)?

- fullones (fullers) attested dedicating a building to Eumachia
- archaeological evidence of officinae lanificariae, officinae tinctoriae (both with vats and furnaces and fullonicae (vats). Dispersed and small scale
- epigraphic evidence suggests
  - small teams 5-12 persons employees
  - felt makers, dyers, fullers, cleaners also involved

## EGYPT

Jones, A.H.M. 1960. The cloth industry under the Roman empire, reprinted from Economic History Review in P.Brunt ed. The Roman Economy, Oxford, 1974

Wipszycka, E. 1965 L'industrie textile dans l'Egypte romaine, Wroclaw

- papyri document workshops, putting out of work etc.
- wool produced for export as well a local consumption
- linen and flax also produced
- major mediaeval industries too

## BELGICA

J.F. Drinkwater 1982. The wool textile industry of Gallia Belgica and the Secundinii of Igel, Textile History 13, 111-28

Wild, J.-P. (1968), 'Clothing in the North-West provinces of the Roman empire', Bonner Jahrbucher 168: 166-240.

- fame of Gallic woollen wares and sheep in literary sources (sagum)
- negotiator sagarius from Metz attested at Milan
- The monument of the Secundinii at Igel (nr Trier)
  - Drinkwater interpretation: the Secundinii as Clothiers, co-ordinating the process from buying up fleeces, the putting out system for yarn production, weaving, fulling, dying. and then the marketing of the finished cloth