

CRAFTS AND TRADES

All the heavy work in a Roman town was done by slaves, so ordinary citizens had to earn their living in other ways. Most townspeople worked as shopkeepers or craftworkers, and Roman towns and cities were filled with bustling shops and workshops.

SHOPKEEPERS

Each town had several bakers, butchers, fishmongers, olive oil sellers and wine merchants, who supplied people's daily needs. The baker was especially important because everyone needed fresh bread each day.

In this picture of a busy baker's shop, the roof has been cut away so you can see inside.



The bread was baked on shelves above a roaring fire.

The flour was mixed with yeast and water to make dough.

Wheat was ground into flour in a mill.

The baker served his bread from a counter at the front of the shop.

CRAFTWORKERS

Roman craftworkers produced a huge variety of goods, ranging from basic clothes and tools to fancy goblets and statues. Usually, the craftworkers were men, but Roman wives and daughters also helped in the family workshop. Sons learned their trade by working with their fathers, but slaves were kept to do the nastiest jobs.



A carving of a knife-maker and his wife at the counter of their workshop

The same essential craftworkers were found in every town. Carpenters made beds, tables and storage chests, potters produced a range of basic pots and dishes, while smiths shaped tools, pans and weapons from iron, copper and bronze.