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Franz STAAB (ed.), *Zur Kontinuität zwischen Antike und Mittelalter am Oberrhein*, Sigmaringen (Thorbecke) 1994, 201 p. (Oberrheinische Studien, 11).

The essays collected in this volume were originally delivered at a conference held in Speyer in 1991, and they are all dedicated to the question of continuity from late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages in the upper Rhine. Discussions of the passage from Antiquity to the Middle Ages have bulked large in the work of past scholars, at least from the time of Petrarch. In the past, various theories were often evoked to explain such a passage. However, most scholars agree nowadays upon the fact that no major or absolute breaking point can be found. A slow process of transition and adaptation seems to have been the case and, subsequently, a greater degree of continuity in many respects is acknowledged by historians and archaeologists. This is also the general conclusion that emerges from the nine papers collected by Franz Staab, and each of them, in its own way, reassures Kant's saying that *in mundo non datur hiatus, non datur saltus, non datur casus, non datur fatum*.

In such a review one cannot do more than summarise the major themes covered by the papers and comment in greater detail only on one of them. In the first paper, which also serves as an introduction to the whole collection, Franz STAAB explores the conceptual evolution of the passage from late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, especially in German Historiography.

Two papers are dedicated to the examination of the evidence concerning particular Germanic groups. Jörg JARNUT examines the double role of the early medieval Barbarian leader as a king and as a military commander. He stresses the importance of both aspects of leadership, and the difficulty in assessing the contribution of each of them. From there Jarnut goes on to compare the Lombards and the Franks, in order to reveal what Roman elements each of them integrated after conquering their territory. Dieter GEUENICH, on the other hand, discusses the evidence for the history of the Alamans, and concludes that all we know about them is evidently uncertain.

Three papers are dedicated to the examination of new archaeological findings. Jürgen OLDENSTEIN's excavations at Alzey Castle provide, according to him, a new tool with which one can re-evaluate the information provided by the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Günter STEIN's paper summarises the excavations in Altrip (*Alta Ripa*). The findings, it seems, demonstrate the existence of Roman influences and traditions on the site even after the invasion of 407. And in his paper 'Die Lande rechts des Rheins zwischen 260 und 500 n. Chr.', Egon SCHALLMAYER argues that the fall of the Roman *limes* in 259/60 was the apparent breaking point for the Roman influence on the regions east to the Rhine, supporting his argument with archaeological and numismatic evidence, as well as with the evidence of place-names. Place-names are also examined by Wolfgang KLEIBER, who argues that the Roman name tradition offers the historian and the archaeologist the best evidence for continuity.

Two papers deal with cultural and religious issues. In his brilliant paper Friedrich PRINZ examines several cultural aspects which characterised the passage from late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages in Gaul, stressing the place of Christianity in creating the new cultural and religious milieu in the Frankish kingdoms. And finally, Franz STAAB examines the state of paganism and Christianity in *Germania Prima* during the very same period. Well aware to the absence of any detailed and exhaustive source that describes the religious situation, Staab assembled his evidence from various bits and pieces of information. His conclusion could only be expected. Although Christianised, the Rheinland was not completely Christian, and paganism persisted there well into later periods. Thus, he infers, Christianity and paganism existed side by side in *Germania Prima* throughout the passage from late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.

Staab's paper is an indispensable reading for any student of the subject, even though I myself do not find all its argument entirely convincing. Too often Staab takes the sources at face value. For example, the fact that no written evidence survives from the diocese of Worms, does not turn Burchard's *Decretum* into a reliable source. Furthermore, Harmening's theo-

ry is dismissed too quickly, and more is needed to prove that the Germanisation of personal names points to the creation of a new Frankish-Christian identity. Nevertheless, against the background of recent publications on the subject, such as Valery Flint's controversial work, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford 1991), or the lamentable book by James Russell, *The Germanisation of Early Medieval Christianity* (Oxford 1994), Staab's sober and thorough examination deserves a very warm welcome indeed.

All in all, the nine papers collected in this volume offers some fresh thoughts and many stimulating ideas on the passage from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and on the question of continuity, although one or two contributors do not seem to have kept up with the ever-growing secondary literature on their subject (such as Benjamin Isaac's seminal study on the Roman *limes*, Chris Wickham's work on Lombard Italy, or John Matthews' major contribution on Ammianus Marcellinus). Nevertheless, ›Zur Kontinuität zwischen Antike und Mittelalter am Oberrhein‹ is an important contribution on the issue of the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, which no historian or archaeologist can afford to miss.

Yitzhak HEN, Haifa

Reinhold KAISER, *Das römische Erbe und das Merowingerreich*, München (Oldenbourg) 1993, IX-157 p. (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 26).

For historians, the *Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte* is a valuable teaching tool (a sister to *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte*) and of considerable help for research as well. In many ways it is similar to the *Nouvelle Clio* series published in France but its focus tends to be more narrow, this, of course, increases its value. These volumes, like the *Nouvelle Clio* series – several of which have been translated in an appallingly unsystematic manner, should be systematically translated into English and French and frequently brought up to date. One cannot generally expect American undergraduates to be able to read German.

Reinhold Kaiser, Professor of medieval history at the University of Zurich, has provided a very useful volume for students and scholars alike. Part I provides an encyclopaedia-like overview of various aspects of the history of the Merovingian *regna*. This section is largely undocumented and ostensibly is intended to be non-controversial. Part II deals with the basic research problems, sometimes with a critical appreciation of the relevant literature and intimations regarding the direction of research. Part III is a seventeen page bibliography which is divided into two sections. The first section provides a very helpful guide to the best modern critical editions of the sources and the second section is devoted ostensibly to full citations of the works examined in part two. Kaiser writes very lucidly – a pleasant relief from normal Germanic prose.

As Kaiser's title more than hints¹, post war historiography concerning the early Middle Ages, in general, and research regarding the Merovingian world, in particular, emphasize continuity with the Roman past a fundamental. John Durliat's characterization of the empire's successor states as Romano-German accurately depict the situation even if Kaiser is perhaps somewhat less enthusiastic than I might like. Here I would argue that treatment of the archaeological data gives an unnecessarily Germanic cast to this survey. Nevertheless, Kaiser treats this literature well, in general. For example he recognizes its limitations in a formal sense, e.g. »Das archäologische Fundmaterial erlaubt nur in den seltensten Fällen, rechtliche oder verfassungsgeschichtliche Aussagen zu machen« (p. 98).

However, it is my belief that all so-called Germanic graves and especially their artifacts are not as Germanic as one might be led to think. The implications of Birgit Arrhenius' monu-

1 For the Anglo-phone the word ›Erbe‹ presents some difficulty because of its frequent and rather complicated usage in National Socialist tracts.