

und persönlichen Erfahrungen verknüpfte Aspekte und Ansichten. Auch die Provinzialrömische Archäologie in Deutschland kann diese Beiträge mit Gewinn lesen und darin teilweise Erklärungen finden, warum welche Themen im Ausland von besonderem Interesse sind. Seien es die vergleichende Geschichte des römischen Militärs, der Aspekt der Ethnizität oder die Forderung nach stärkerer Einbeziehung der benachbarten römischen Provinzen (etwa Gallien) als Hinterland der Grenzregionen. In allen Beiträgen, auch im Schlusswort von Th. Fischer (S. 601–608), wird zudem immer wieder die sprachliche Barriere thematisiert, die man als ‚semipermeabel‘ charakterisieren möchte, also als nur in einer Richtung durchlässig.

Am Ende dieser Besprechung noch in aller Kürze eine Gesamteinschätzung. Aus Sicht des Rezensenten hätte man mit Gewinn die Deutsche Limeskommission und die dort vertretenen Landesarchäologen in das Buchprojekt einbeziehen sollen. Eine größere Themenbreite und auch Aktualität mit Darstellung etwa mehrjähriger bereits abgeschlossener Forschungsprojekte der DFG zur Rekonstruktion des römischen Rheinverlaufs (*ripa*) und seiner Wasserstände sowie der dortigen Häfen oder zu den *viae publicae* wären möglich gewesen. Dieses Monitum bezieht sich ebenfalls auf die fehlende Einbeziehung der Naturwissenschaften in diesem Band, die zu historischen Mensch-Umwelt-Beziehungen im Rahmen von Geoarchäologie, Archäobotanik und -zoologie oder Anthropologie forschen. In dieser Hinsicht zeichnet das Handbuch leider ein veraltetes (zumindest einseitiges) Bild provinzialrömischer Forschung in Deutschland.

Doch wir wollen und dürfen es keineswegs bei dieser Kritik belassen, da man der Publikation damit in keinem Fall gerecht wird. Die vorliegenden Beiträge sind wirklich sehr fundiert und mit guten Karten, Abbildungen und Graphiken versehen. Sie sind ohne Zweifel überaus geeignet, einer internationalen Leserschaft Stand und Ergebnisse provinzialrömischer Forschung in Deutschland näher zu bringen. Allerdings muss man festhalten: Hier wurde kein „Handbook of the Archaeology of Roman Germany“ vorgelegt – dazu bleiben einfach zu große Regionen unberücksichtigt und es fehlen wichtige Themen als Überblicksartikel –, wohl aber ein sehr gelungener Essayband. Zu einer vergleichbaren Einschätzung kam bereits ein Rezensent an anderer Stelle (E. DESCHLER-ERB, *Hist. Zeitschr.* 312,2, 2021, 486–488. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/hzhz-2021-1102>).

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MATTHIAS TOPLAK / HANNE ØSTHUS / RUDOLF SIMEK (eds), Viking-Age Slavery. *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia* volume 29. Fassbaender Verlag, Wien 2021. € 29.90. ISBN 978-3-902575-95-1. vi + 226 pages with numerous illustrations.

The issue of slavery currently commands much scholarly attention in the study of the past. Much as ethnicity surged as an archaeological researcher focus in the 1990s, reflecting the conflicts surrounding the break-up of the Cold-War political order, and individual (or consumer) differences grew as interest-point in the wake of social media politics in the 2010s, the renewed scholarly focus on the poor, enslaved and disenfranchised reflects a contemporary society in which social inequality has regained focus as a major political issue. The edited volume “Viking-Age Slavery” reflects this development, as does the DFG-funded Cluster of Excellence “Bonn Centre of Dependency and Slavery Studies”, which has supported this work.

This collection of eight papers originates in an international conference held in 2019 at the University of Bonn. All papers are written in English. The contributors include archaeologists,

historians, and philologists with specialisms in early-medieval east and central Europe, Scandinavia, the British Isles, and western Europe. Beyond contributing to a greater awareness of slavery in early medieval Europe, the volume aims specifically to assess the role of enslaved people within Viking Age Scandinavia and the significance of slavery and slave-taking in the Scandinavian maritime raiding, trading, and warfare.

The introduction by archaeologists Ben Raffield, Leszek Gardęła, and Matthias Toplak (pp. 7–57) presents a brief survey of the research history, and a critical assessment of the archaeological evidence, which has been summoned in previous studies. Their detailed and perceptive study outlines the methodological predicament of the subject. While asserting that archaeology is “well-placed to study institutional systems of subjugation and coercion” (p. 8), they conclude that none of the widely cited archaeological proxies for slavery can be accepted at face value. Finds of shackles may reflect either slaves, captives, punishment of criminals, or animal hobbles. Pottery styles (such as the much-discussed diffusion of Slavic ‘Baltic ware’ forms in Scandinavia) may reflect enslaved Slavs, but also other forms of diffusion. Aspects of settlements or hoards are equally ambiguous. The record of sacrificed individuals in “slave burials”, often held to be the most direct archaeological evidence of enslavement, is now increasingly interpreted in a ritual framework, rather than as relating by default to unfree people. These points remind us as to why slavery remains an elusive topic in archaeology, despite all interest.

The contribution of Jon Viðar Sigurðsson (pp. 59–73) revolves around assessing the proportion of slaves in Viking Age Scandinavian society, and more specifically how this assessment squares with the criteria for a “Slave Society” in the Marxist stage-theory of Moses Finley (cf. M. FINLEY, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* [Princeton 1998]). J. V. Sigurðsson lists the many forms of hard, physical work that would have been associated with life in the early Middle Ages and concludes somewhat boldly on that evidence that slaves “might have made up as high a number as twenty to thirty percent of the population” in order to accomplish these (p. 73).

Stefan Brink finds Sigurðsson’s estimate to be a grossly “maximalist” opinion (pp. 75–97). In response, his chapter summarises main points from his own recent monograph “*Thraldom. A History of Scandinavian Slavery in the Viking Age*” (Oxford 2021; first published in Swedish 2012). St. Brink acknowledges the methodological difficulties but maintains that Scandinavian Viking Age society was primarily characterised by other, more ambiguous forms of social hierarchy and obligation than outright slavery. He suggests that “the slave population in the Late Iron Age could perhaps be 3–4 percent”, which would amount to “a ‘society with slaves’ and not a ‘slave society’” (p. 95).

The paper by Dariusz Adamczyk reviews the sources – mainly textual – for the use and trade of slaves in Viking Age eastern Europe (pp. 99–116). He makes a point of placing Scandinavian slave trade along with that of other groups who were active in the region, including steppe nomads. His take-home messages are that the trade in east European slaves (*Saqlābs* in Arabic sources, as distinct from *Zanj* – black slaves) was substantial, that Scandinavians were major brokers in this trade, and that the resultant wealth is what we see reflected, in a general sense, in the eastern silver found in Viking Age hoards. D. Adamczyk’s points are pertinent, although he makes no attempt to assess the absolute volume of the slave trade, or to evaluate its economic value relative to other widely cited products, such as fur.

Cólman Etchingham, meanwhile, presents an erudite and polemic attempt to nuance the many references to Viking captive-taking found in Irish annals, and to some extent also in English and Frankish sources (pp. 117–145). These sources have been quoted as evidence of a large-scale market for slaves in the British Isles. However, C. Etchingham demonstrates how the majority of references deal with hostages taken (and mostly released) for ransom. His conclusions lean towards Brink’s model of a “society with slaves”, rather than an economy revolving around massive slave-trade.

Janel M. Fontaine singles out a single source, the law-code composed in 1020 or 1021 by Archbishop Wulfstan II of York and issued on behalf of King Cnut (pp. 147–164). Wulfstan's text deals extensively with the definition of free and unfree status, reflecting a new effort to delineate this boundary as part of an effort to reinforce social and legal hierarchy in the face of increasingly blurred lines, perhaps in response to increasing overseas slave trade.

Shachar F. Orlinski examines the changing attitudes to slavery in Early Medieval western and northern Europe, comparing late Roman sources with episodes in Merovingian and Carolingian texts including saints' lives (pp. 165–184). This focus continues in Rudolf Simek's chapter (pp. 185–193), which analyses the evidence for slavery in the well-known biographies of Ansgar, Rimbart, and Findan, emphasising the continuity of tropes and practices from before the Viking Age.

In their introduction to the book, B. Raffield, L. Gardela, and M. Toplak assert that study of slavery has “been quietly and tacitly ignored by previous generations of archaeologists” (p. 56). This view contrasts rather starkly with the very considerable body of research literature surveyed in their essay, and in other chapters. These texts refer to rightly influential studies by historians such as Clara Nervéus, Niels Skyum-Nielsen, Claus Krag, and Kåre Lunden in the 1970s and 1980s, another period where social inequality was at the forefront of intellectual debates. At that time, archaeology was mostly pursued as a data-driven discipline, and most practitioners refrained from entering the debates led by text-based historians in consideration of the same source-critical issues, which are highlighted in the present volume. But as Brink notes in his chapter, a more interdisciplinary paradigm made slavery a virtual “hot topic” in Scandinavian archaeology in the 1990s and 2000s (p. 91). By then, the works by scholars like Frode Iversen, Dagfinn Skre, Stefan Brink, Mats Roslund, Mats Olsson, Agneta Breisch, Thomas Lindkvist, and Janken Myrdal placed slavery at the forefront of social archaeology.

To say that research has hitherto been restricted to “the study of elite society and life-ways” while “women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and other socially-dependent or vulnerable members of the population... remain marginalised” (Raffield, Gardela, and Toplak, p. 56) reiterates a trope, which has been voiced continuously since the 1970s. It is a point that bears restating, as the structure of the archaeological record is indeed biased towards preserving traces of ostentatious statements and material wealth. However, the present volume should be commended rather for supporting a long-standing effort, than for breaking silence or new ground.

The book is well-edited and produced, and despite its brevity manages to achieve a good balance of coverage and geographical overview, albeit a chapter with specific focus on Iceland and the North Atlantic settlements is missed. At a price that affords a wide readership, it can serve as an accessible introduction as well as a course-book, supplementing Brink's monograph, for an important subject in the social history and archaeology of a transformative period.

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