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ANNA-ELISABETH JENSEN, *Freunde und Feinde. Dania Slavica. Südseeland, Lolland-Falster und Møn in der Wikingerzeit und im Hochmittelalter*. University Press, Aarhus 2023. 399,95 DKK. ISBN 978-8-77219-320-5. 352 pages with 162 illustrations including maps in b/w and colour, 4 appendices and bibliography.

The book is a German translation of the author's publication "Dania Slavica – Sydsjælland, Lolland-Falster og Møn i vikingetid og tidlig middelalder" from 2022. It is based on a project with a similar title (English transl.), "Friends and Foes. The Danish-Wendish relations in the Viking Age and Medieval period", which was initiated at the end of the "Medieval Year 1999" in Denmark and led by the author. From around AD 750 to 1250, the three islands Lolland, Falster and Møn were an important buffer zone in the struggles for economic and political control of the western Baltic, and thus also a zone of close contact between Slavic and Scandinavian culture. In a cross-disciplinary approach, the author combines historical sources, which tell of both peaceful and hostile interaction, with analyses of the physical landscape and the archaeological evidence from Lolland, Falster, Møn and South Zealand.

The introduction (chapter 1, pp. 15–27) outlines the main research questions. Firstly, is it possible by means of culture-geographical and landscape-archaeological analyses to identify political borders and estimate the level of the interaction between Slavs and Danes and the extent of Slavic settlement in southeast Denmark? Secondly, can a cross-disciplinary approach yield information on the nature of the cultural contacts across the Baltic? Also is there any archaeological evidence of Slavic settlement on the islands; if not, why not? Finally, the analytical methods, terminology and source critical issues related to the diverse nature of the sources are discussed. Actor-network theory

(Bruno Latour) provided the theoretical basis for the analysis of networks, borders, and identities, whilst the applied geographical information system (GIS) stored data about the physical landscape and thus the regional resource potential, as well as the archaeological data which attests to actual land use.

With the title, *Dania Slavica*, a reference concept devised by the initial project at the Marine Research Centre of the National Museum, chapter 2 (pp. 27–43) describes the main source categories, the geographical region, and the varied population of the Danish islands and the territories south of the Baltic. The “Wends” is used as a comprehensive term for groups including the historically known Obodrites, Veleti, Pomeranians and Sorbs. The emergence of the Slavs along the coastal regions of Mecklenburg and Schleswig-Holstein in the eighth century and their subsequent Christianisation and assimilation into the German and Polish states in the Middle Ages set the time frame of the study, the period AD 750–1250, and the main geographical area of study covers the former Storstrøm County (today part of Region Zealand), the borders of which are defined by the sea and, over long stretches of land, the rivers Suså and Tryggevælde, and Lake Tystrup. Land use and structures of ownership have changed considerably over time, and there are no longer any “untouched landscapes” in the region. Place names in, for example, the oldest cadastral maps and the Cadastre of King Valdemar (*Liber Census Daniae*, late thirteenth century) form a primary source group; there are few other written sources relating to the area. The archaeological data set consists of 982 finds and remains with known locations (compiled 2000–01). All sites are listed in the catalogue Appendix 4 and sorted into categories, including settlements, fortifications and defensive structures, hoards, burials, churches and monasteries, stray finds, roads and bridges. In view of the very diverse quality and broad range of the dating evidence, two main groups were distinguished: Late Iron Age/Viking Age and Medieval (see the structure of the database, p. 39). The settlement pattern is somewhat biased by modern-day circumstances of recovery, but is supplemented by other, rarer categories and by single finds and less precisely dated remains and finds. The categories of remains and finds correspond to those found elsewhere in Denmark, but there appears to be less evidence related to central power, such as the striking of coins, and although graves are recorded, investigations of pagan or early Christian cemeteries are lacking. The quality of the information enables a general, quantitative analysis of the region within the two chronological groups (fig. 18), and qualitative analyses of resource use and activities in selected areas (fig. 17, see chapter 6).

Chapter 3 (pp. 45–77) focuses on the historical and political landscape of the western Baltic region, the border zone between the Saxons and Danes, and the Slavs manifested by the *Danevirke* and the *Limes Saxonis*. The region was marked by power struggles to gain control of the Baltic trade, resources, and communication routes. Annals, chronicles, and diplomas (fig. 27) contain information on individual rulers and their political and marital alliances, now and then also information on economic issues, political territories, as well as the expanding Church. It is worth noting that there are no pagan-Slavic sources, and apart from rune stones and coinage no pagan-Norse sources from the early centuries. Beginning with the eighth-ninth centuries, followed by the tenth-eleventh centuries up to the twelfth century, the author provides a general survey of political and ecclesiastical events, and the gradual development of royal power and administrative/military functions. Contacts and conflicts between the Danes and the Slavs continued through the centuries, and by the turn of the twelfth century, the whole Baltic coastal region from the west to the river Oder in the east had come under Danish overlordship. Most of the sources relevant to South Zealand, Lolland, Falster and Møn record events relating to the Christian mission and relations of power. Saxo and Helmold also provide glimpses of how each of the involved parties viewed the other. Apart from Saxo, the rune stones and lists in the Cadastre of King Valdemar, few sources contain information on specific conditions in the region. It belonged to the Danish royal sphere of interest from the

eighth century onwards, but only the islands and no fortifications, trading places or any other sites are mentioned before the twelfth century. In the twelfth century, the picture becomes clearer, with the mention of individual families, their landed property and investments in the Church, as well as the multi-faceted conflicts of interest of the population, which apparently included people of Slavic descent judging by their personal names.

Chapter 4 (pp. 79–97) shifts the focus to the archaeological evidence, beginning with a brief survey of the historical background. Before the 1960s, the recorded remains and finds mainly consisted of silver hoards (the earliest recorded in the late eighteenth century), burials and fortifications; investigations of rural settlements did not begin until the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the picture is far more diverse and includes a wide range of finds kept at the Danish National Museum and the local museums responsible for excavations and site supervision. Far from all rural settlements (151) are fully excavated and Viking-Age and Medieval settlements with Slavic name types have not been examined in detail. Overall, the remains suggest a broad-ranged use of resources and some specialised production sites. Evidence of fortifications, ramparts, and ditches (103) mainly consist of Medieval castle sites and a few rampart systems, most of which are not precisely dated. Of the recorded burials and sites with skeletons (122), less than half have been securely dated. The burials usually appear to be pagan and hardly any Early-Medieval churchyards or extensive Viking-Age cemeteries have been investigated. Half of the known rune stones (12), some of them found near churches or reused in a stone church, have been recorded on Lolland. Evidence of transport consists of roads, bridges, barriers (34) and remains of boats/ships (15 sites), including a post-built barrier at Hominde and a ship-handling site at Fribrodre, Lolland. Most of the coin and silver hoards (31) come from the islands or Stevns whilst only four are from the rest of South Zealand, and although coins were minted in Denmark, the finds reflect an extensive bullion economy. In addition to these categories of remains and finds, the database includes a varied range of single finds (147), which have increased considerably in recent years, as well as medieval churches and monasteries (197), various sites of activity (53), and sites such as holy wells and Slavic settlements (119) associated with the period of study by legends and place names.

Chapter 5 (pp. 99–117) describes the coastal landscape of the Baltic, which was largely formed by ice and meltwater during the last Ice Age. The landscape contains many notable topographical features, such as distinct coastlines, waterways and lakes, watersheds, ridges, and hilltops. These would have formed natural landmarks and created barriers in and corridors through the landscape. Many photos provide an impression of the landscape and the variety of available resources, and a series of maps illustrate the distribution of different landscape types, including drained wetlands and bogs, forests, meadows, and open land in the last centuries. The analysis is based on the map of the Royal Danish Society of Sciences from 1776, scale 1 : 20,000 (fig. 121), which was produced before the great agrarian reforms in Denmark.

Chapters 6 (pp. 119–153) and 7 (pp. 155–175) deal with the relationship between landscape use and development of economic and political power in the region. Although South Zealand and the three islands were presumably equally well populated in the Viking Age and Middle Ages, the known remains/finds and monuments are not evenly distributed. The analyses therefore discuss both areas with many new discoveries that provide information about settlement and land use and areas with few such remains/finds (fig. 65). These focal areas are described individually, accompanied by detailed maps showing the distribution of inland and coastal sites, wetlands, rivers, and forests. The analyses and detailed discussions of each landscape contain a wealth of information on the landscape and notable remains and finds. Readers unacquainted with Denmark and this region may find the descriptions difficult to follow and would have benefitted from a few general maps showing

the most important named features, such as rivers, fjords, waterways, and main land traffic routes, as well as a detailed map of specific places, such as the town of Næstved, which is not marked on the regional map fig. 66. Following the analysis of landscape, chapter 7 focuses on settlement patterns. Nearly all the settlements from the period of study are distributed outside areas that were covered by forests or extensive bogs/wetlands in the late seventeenth century. Remains/finds and settlements from the Medieval period are more widely distributed than those from the Late Iron Age and Viking Age (fig. 89–90). A similar pattern is reflected in the distribution of earlier versus later place name types (fig. 91). The evidence is compared in detailed maps (fig. 92–95) which include Slavic place names. These are found in areas with evidence of earlier settlement. The author suggests that, rather than immigration to uninhabited areas, they therefore likely represent appropriation of an area or settlement based on political or economic agreements. The written sources from the period, such as the Cadaster of King Valdemar, indicate a settlement hierarchy and the places mentioned in the sources are often located near sites associated with political or economic power. The location of common settlements (and churches) appears to be determined by the demands of a rural economy (access to water, fields and grazing areas), whereas fortifications and other man-made features to a greater extent reflect factors such as access and movement through the landscape, i. e. corridors, barriers, and nodal points. The earlier settlements are some distance from the coast, unlike the settlements from the Late Viking Age and Medieval period, when access to waterways appears to have been more important. Slavic place names relating to settlement are in optimal, open agricultural areas in a forested landscape, a pattern like that south of the Baltic (fig. 107).

Chapter 8 (pp. 177–198) examines differences and similarities between the area of study in Denmark and the coastal region south of the western Baltic. Written sources tell of changing power structures which is also confirmed by the archaeological data. Although the natural landscape and topographical conditions are very much alike, the archaeological patterns differ, partly because of differing research interests, the extent of rescue excavations and modern legislation concerning the use of metal detectors. Investigations of rural settlements are dominant in the Danish area, whilst fortified sites and towns have attracted greater attention south of the Baltic. The rural economy was very similar, and the remains indicate that activities in both areas gravitated towards the coastal zones and nodal points of water and land transport. Along the coast, protected harbours were preferred, whereas steep and forested coastlines appear to have been avoided. The importance of waterways to communication is attested both by the archaeological discoveries and by contemporary written sources. Place names support the hypothesis of the movement of people. However, Danish names do not appear to have penetrated south of the Baltic. In contrast to the few Slavic place names on the Danish islands, ceramics and the so-called Slavic knife sheath mounts attest to communication at multiple levels.

Chapter 9 (pp. 201–221) provides a detailed study of the Baltic ware ceramics recovered from sites in the region, including a survey of the history of research. Baltic ware is often the only artefact category recorded from the period 750–1250 and dominates the ceramic assemblages on Lolland and Falster. The production, function and origin of this pottery is discussed. Baltic wares are no longer thought to have been imported but were instead locally produced, inspired by Slavic pottery produced south of the Baltic. Despite local and regional geographical differences, the vessel types found on both sides of the Baltic are very much alike, and the ceramic material cannot be used to positively identify Slavic settlements on the islands.

Contacts between the Danes and Slavic peoples across the Baltic are examined in chapter 10 (pp. 223–231). Extensive and varied cultural exchange is evident in the many similarities and few differences noted in the archaeological evidence. The Baltic was a visible barrier but also a common sea, connecting people from the north and south. The nature of the contacts depended upon the

social and political level, and interests, of the participants. Differences are noted, for example, in the development of the Church and secular power structures (and conflicts), whilst everyday life of the rural populations was very much the same, and a Slavic migration or population cannot be clearly distinguished in the recorded material culture. The combined analyses suggest that Lolland, Falster and Møn formed a distinct border zone (*dazwischenliegend*) without obvious central functions between the region south of the Baltic and South Zealand, the latter an integrated part under Danish rule.

With the title Friends and Foes (*Freunde und Feinde*), chapter 11 (pp. 233–262) summarises the many analyses and observations of the preceding chapters. Appendix 1 by Torbjörn Brorsson offers more information on the Baltic Ware from Lolland, and appendix 2 presents examples of the analytical potential of old maps of the area. References to the database structure and the catalogue are found in appendices 3 and 4, the latter including a list of finds and sites according to the main functional categories (pp. 286–294) and a complete list of finds and sites according to parish registration number (pp. 296–320). The information in the catalogue is minimal, but the reader can find further information in the references, mainly to the National Record of Sites and Monuments (DKC, in Danish), museum archives and Trap Danmark.

The book presents a broad-spectrum, cross-disciplinary analysis of a region and its position in the Viking Age and Medieval period. On a critical note, the text is in places repetitive, with individual sentences even repeated, e.g. p. 157/236, 202/204. It can be difficult for the non-local reader to follow the descriptions of landscapes or travel routes, and numbers in the text would have been useful as guides to illustrations in the chapters or placed elsewhere in the book. Nevertheless, the book offers a detailed and most welcome insight into a highly relevant subject matter, which has long been discussed, although not to a similar depth or using such a range of evidence. A tremendous effort was involved, and the author clearly has an extensive, detailed knowledge of the region, including the archaeological evidence, landscape, and historical context.

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Die zentrale Lage des Westbalkan innerhalb Europas und der Reichtum seiner archäologischen Kulturen stehen in keinem Verhältnis zu dem mangelhaften Kenntnisstand zur komplexen Erforschungsgeschichte dieses Reichtums, über den man üblicherweise in Mittel- oder Westeuropa verfügt. Nicht nur räumliche Entfernung und Sprachbarrieren trugen zu diesem Mangelzustand bei. Bis in die jüngste Vergangenheit fehlte es auch – und das nicht nur auf dem Westbalkan – an Instrumenten und Interesse für wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Reflexionen der verschiedenen Entstehungs- und Arbeitsbedingungen von archäologischem Wissen und archäologischen Institutionen. Vor allem aber überschrieben die fortwährenden politischen Verwerfungen des 20. Jahrhunderts mehrfach Biografien und Institutionengeschichten, und so ist es von „außerhalb“, zum Beispiel