

conflicts, and consequently often draw simplistic conclusions that, at times, have the air of artificial additions. That is a pity since these outliers detract from the worth of the articles. The forced connections of ancient events especially to the particulars of US involvement in Iraq or reference to, for example, a private military contractor company already renamed by the time of the printing (Blackwater has been renamed Xe since early 2009) will shorten the period for which the book is relevant. Perhaps a careful culling of the more specific claims and clumsy comparisons from the articles and a separate concluding discussion would have served the volume's original goal better? Maybe the more modern conclusions should have been left for the reader to make. Even so, some authors succeed in bridging the millennia, by avoiding the minutiae of strategic studies, like Peter Heather in his excellent piece on the Later Roman Empire.

The editor's stated aim of complementing and providing accessibility to the less well-known (to the general public) wars and warfare as examples of strategic thinking and warfare is a laudable one. The proof-reading has been careful and the standard of production of the volume is high. The further reading offered at the end of the articles nicely serve classroom use or the interested general reader. Even with its relative weaknesses the book is a worthwhile read and some of the articles would do well as reading material on courses of ancient warfare or even modern strategic studies.

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ELISABETH HERRMANN-OTTO: *Sklaverei und Freilassung in der griechisch-römischen Welt*. Studienbücher Antike, Band 15. Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim 2009. ISBN 978-3-487-14251-7. 263 S. EUR 19.80.

Sklaverei und Freilassung in der griechisch-römischen Welt is an introduction to slavery in the Greco-Roman world, beginning with the Mycenaean period and ending with Christian era and emperor Justinian. The book aims at providing a differentiated picture of a multi-faceted phenomenon.

The first of the book's five chapters provides an overview of the slavery discourse in antiquity, as well as scholarship on the subject since the 17th century. Herrmann-Otto summarises and comments on the most important currents and debates in the field and notes how they often have been connected to political and colonial issues. What follows in chapters 2 through 4 is an introduction to slavery in Greek and Roman cultures as well as in Late Antiquity. The Greek world is first approached, as may be expected, from the Mycenaean and Homeric eras, after which the reader is presented with Greek slavery and its relationship to democracy, occupations of Greek slaves, and special forms of slavery as, e.g., the Spartan helot system. The chapter closes with an overview of the Hellenistic Levant. The Roman republic, slave revolts and slaves in Italian agriculture precede the treatment of slaves in the urban Roman context, after which follows a discussion of slaves and slave families in private households, and slaves' roles in society. The last subchapter sheds light on legal and societal perspectives on slavery and manumission. The final chapter deals with slavery and the Jewish and Christian religions in late antiquity and in imperial legislation.

As will be evident from the sketch of its contents above, *Sklaverei und Freilassung* covers an exhaustive scope of issues in a relatively limited space. Discussions of Greek and

Roman types of slavery are fairly evenly balanced and cover together some 150 pages of the book, whereas late antiquity receives a shorter treatment with twenty or so pages, which renders the approach rather traditional.

Compared with English-speaking research in particular, *Sklaverei und Freilassung* provides a divergent view on ancient slavery. Herrmann-Otto contests the thesis of ancient slave societies, and instead of analysing aspects of marginality and vulnerability of a slave's position as is done in several recent studies, the book focuses, especially when it comes to Roman society, on moderate views: that household slaves' conditions may be considered "very good" (p. 175), that slaves had families and could aspire towards manumission, that slavery provided options for social mobility, that manumission served to integrate former slaves into Roman society, etc. The attention appears to be on the fortunate few at the expense of the invisible majority.

Herrmann-Otto warns her readers against drawing hasty conclusions on ancient slavery based on what slavery is in today's world: the ancient world was different and should be approached cautiously. Perhaps this renders her wary of approaching the darker side of slavery. It is of course right to note that slaves were not the only marginalised group in ancient societies, and not always the group on the lowest ladder of society. Women, free or not, were likewise in the margins. So were they in this book; I would have hoped for a more analytical discussion on the conditions, occupations and prospects of female slaves.

This applies also to slaves' children. We learn that they were in many instances raised in families along with legitimate children, and in fact might have been stepsiblings of the free children. It is a challenge and not without problems to analyse the connotations of such relationships, but combined with ancient sources that, e.g., illustrate masters' fear of slaves or discuss different expectations of slave children and legitimate children, one could at least ask how these children would have viewed their position and future, and how would these differing expectations have affected their notions of themselves or each other. Were all slave children even this fortunate?

To some extent these considerations trace back to how Herrmann-Otto approaches her sources. The choice of sources itself is varied and extensive (philosophical, literary and legal texts, church fathers' writings, inscriptions), but sources tend to be accepted at their face value; not much space is dedicated to discussing their nature, representativeness or reliability. In a textbook one would expect to be reminded that these texts almost completely represent idealised views and motives of slave-owning males who belonged to the elite of their society. Voices of slaves, women and children have been lost, or are transmitted through male perspectives.

Likewise, the currently prevailing view of the diversity of early Christianity could show more clearly in the book's choice of sources. As it is, church fathers are the primary sources for Christian perspectives on slavery, and while they provide valuable insights, theirs is the view of the ruling ecclesiastical elite. Other early Christian texts, such as the Nag Hammadi treatises, and analysis of their slave metaphors and rhetorics would have enriched and diversified the picture the book gives of ancient slavery. On the other hand, inclusion of Philo of Alexandria in the first chapter is a valuable addition to ancient discussions of slavery.

Sklaverei und Freilassung provides a compact introduction to ancient slavery, and has the advantage of bringing together a variety of developments over times and cultures. This is a meticulous yet general overview of the topic.

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