

ELISABETH HERRMANN-OTTO: *Ex ancilla natus: Untersuchungen zu den "hausgeborenen" Sklaven und Sklavinnen im Westen des Römischen Kaiserreiches*. Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei 24. Franz Steiner, Stuttgart 1994. viii, 512 S. ISBN 3-515-06329-3. DEM 168.

This book is an admirably richly documented and detailed study on houseborn slaves. The starting point is the controversial question of the importance of the natural reproduction of slaves. As the ancient sources are insufficient in many ways, the question has received very different answers over the years.

The first part of the book begins with a profound analysis of the meaning of the term *verna* itself, and of its juridical implications, followed by an equally painstaking discussion on the position of the *vernae* and *ex ancillis nati* in the family, and in the *familia*, both private and imperial. The special groups *vernae vicarii*, *servi publici* and *municipales* are also treated separately. The evidence is mostly based on the inscriptions, and also the juridical literature. As a result we are given a detailed picture of the many-sided nomenclature of the *vernae*, and of the terminology that is used in the inscriptions and texts that deal with them.

The second part deals with the more general question, namely the significance of natural reproduction. The method chosen is to follow the "career" of the *verna* from birth to death. This is due to the well-known fact that the source material does not allow statistics to be applied, when it comes, for example, to the birth and mortality rates of the slave population.

In the end, the author is careful not to give definitive answers too readily, and understandably so, considering the incoherence of the sources. Nevertheless, she concludes the book, answering the initial question as follows: "Dennoch kann man abschließend sagen, daß neben anderen Quellen wie Aussetzung, Menschenraub und -handel sowie weniger stark praktizierter Kriegsgefangenschaft die unfreie Geburt eine bedeutsame Rolle für den Fortbestand der römischen Sklaverei vor allem in der Kaiserzeit bis in die Spätantike gespielt hat, jedoch ohne alle Systematisierung und Planung, die dem Römer auf diesem Gebiet fremd war."

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*Current Research on the Romanization of the Western Provinces*. Ed. by Mark Wood and Francisco Queiroga. BAR International Series S575. Tempus Reparatum. Oxford 1992. 121 p. ISBN 0-86054-728-0. GBP 21.00.

"Opportunity or Opposition?: Life in the West from Roman Conquest until the end of the Roman Empire" war der Titel eines Symposions in Oxford im November 1989. Viele der dort vorgetragenen Forschungsergebnisse werden hier in neun Beiträgen