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queenship were not powerful enough to determine the course of political events'. Yet the book's demonstration of the gradual development of an Ottonian ideology of queenship is significant; any future discussion of medieval queenship needs to take this on board. MacLean's individual case studies of queens, especially Gerberga, also provide many new insights into tenth-century politics and the continued interconnectedness of the post-Carolingian kingdoms. As such, the book is a valuable resource for anyone studying the political history of the period, whether or not their particular interest is in queens and queenship.

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RACHEL STONE

Slavery After Rome, 500–1100. By Alice Rio. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2017. xi + 285 pp. £65. ISBN 9780198704058.

What was the fate of slavery after the fall of the Roman empire? Notwithstanding individual variations and historiographic extremes over time in answering this question, the consensus – powerfully reconfirmed in Chris Wickham's 2005 *Framing the Early Middle Ages* – is that a socio-political and socio-economic transition occurred that changed the life and labour conditions of enslaved individuals in such a way as to remove them de facto from the condition of slavery – even if in legal terms they remained of servile status. In *Slavery After Rome*, Alice Rio offers a new answer to the same old question. Rio sidesteps the tension inherent in privileging life and labour conditions over slaves' legal status by stressing 'the diversity in their expected rights and duties' (p. 247). In contradistinction to 'the Roman model of slavery' (p. 1), she emphasizes the significant room for manoeuvre for those whom she calls lords and the unfree in agreeing, exercising and delivering their respective obligations: 'existing conditions of life and levels of agency seem to have determined what rights and duties unfree status would entail, not the other way round' (p. 247). Rio acknowledges that 'law and legal instruments were still highly meaningful, and capable of functioning as important tools of domination', but 'without being subjected to any unifying pressure'; she consequently argues for a 'proliferation in forms of meanings within what was putatively still a single legal status' (p. 247). Through multiple examples, Rio shows that decisions over whether someone's life was 'closer to the "slave-like" or the "serf-like" ends of the spectrum' were often made at the 'end-user level' (pp. 247–8).

This 'Swiss army knife' (p. 244), as Rio terms the availability of manifold socio-political tools and the potentiality of diverse socio-economic functions, is argued over six chapters, divided in three parts: the first is concerned with the sources of slaves (including external and internal sources, from slave-raiding to self-sale) and manumission (pp. 19–131); the second deals with how and why 'the category of unfreedom was being reproduced' (p. 135) in both a household and an estate context (pp. 135–211); and the third focuses on the more abstract level of rules and the processes of negotiation that shaped the life of the unfree (pp. 215–45). The discussion offers a dazzling assortment of examples, ranging in geographical terms across the medieval west (with a focus on the Frankish kingdoms, Italy and Spain), and spanning the full chronological range of the book's title. Rio carefully sketches an image of unfree life that was characterized by multiple status vicissitudes, at individual, familial and group level. In this, Rio concentrates on (adult) males, while acknowledging (esp. in Chapters 4 and 6) that women and minors were particularly vulnerable to status alterations. The book concludes with a comparative outlook on the different situation in the twelfth century, when 'a new legal concept of "serfdom"' (p. 244) emerged.

Rio's negotiable 'Swiss army knife' is neat, avoiding in its theoretical apparatus the antagonisms inherent in equating legal status with life and labour conditions. Its supposed distinction from slavery is however less persuasive for the Romanist and scholar of slavery because of disregard for the evidence of slave agency in the ancient and the modern worlds concerning labour 'rights' and duties (such as work times or holidays, access to and possession of assets, animals and land, etc.), personal treatment, family life and maintenance. Such agency (and the considerable latitude in the dominant claims among masters vis-à-vis their slaves) is widely recognized as part and parcel of the slave experience; to exclude slaves' agency and the resulting diversities in life (including social rank and de facto powers) from an identification of 'slave-like' life in the early Middle Ages reads like special historiographic pleading, and ends up, ironically, at the same point as earlier contributions in identifying particular conditions and actions as innately distinct from the servile condition – contrary to established practice among scholars of slavery. The proposed contrast between the early medieval situation(s) and the Roman past also limps because Rio puts a finely worked mosaic of unfreedom in 500–1100 next to a static and monolithic picture of Roman slavery, thus *not* comparing like with like (cf. p. 14). To support this contrast, Rio contends that '[w]hat had lent coherence to Roman slavery, underneath this diversity [of life conditions], was that slaves did all in principle live under a single and coherent *juridical* regime, and shared the same sets of rights and duties'

(p. 246, original emphasis). Apart from the difficulty in applying the notion of a single, coherent juridical regime to the 1000 years or so of Roman history that have left evidence of slavery behind, the yardstick of such a single juridical regime can by its very definition *not* be applied to a *patchwork* of numerous (early medieval) polities, even if these include polities within which a single coherent juridical system applied.

Rio's study has been criticized by another reviewer for its title: Shami Ghosh notes that that book 'is clearly about "unfreedom", by Rio's own definition, rather than "slavery", and a more accurate title would have been *Unfreedom in Western Europe, 500–1100*' (*Reviews in History* 2017, with Rio's response). What bothered Ghosh about Rio's title vis-à-vis her analysis of the many diversities and variabilities in the relationships between those with power and those without, or with very little, actually recommends precisely that title: *Slavery after Rome* shows in great detail and with commendable sophistication the omnipresence of that institution, in its many faces, in the early Middle Ages in the west. Rio has produced a rich and courageous book that tackles in new and original ways an important historical topic, bringing to the table an impressive array of evidence and arguments concerned with the early medieval period. It is less convincing in its comments on the shifts between ancient and medieval because it concentrates entirely on 'one side' of 'the divide', thereby reinforcing the notion of a divide not through argument but through (and in our) historiographic practice.

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ULRIKE ROTH

Between Jewish Posen and Scholarly Berlin: The Life and Letters of Philipp Jaffe. By Daniel R. Schwartz. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 2017. 380 pp. ISBN 9783110484601.

Every medieval historian knows of Jaffe's *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* published in 1851 when the author was thirty-one, and re-edited by Marco Schütz in 2016. Some may know his *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*, with editions of the letters of Boniface, Alcuin, Charlemagne, Gregory VII and Wibald of Stavelot, and a great deal more. But only the readers of Harry Bresslau's *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* or Horst Fuhrmann's enjoyable 'Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen' (which must be the only work to show medievalists armed with beer mugs gazing at a photograph of an Ottonian charter), have a sense of Jaffe's unhappy life. Now English readers have a biography, superbly annotated and including 229 letters