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Michael Zeuske. *Handbuch der Geschichte der Sklaverei: Eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2013. xiv + 725 pages, Hardbound, Price 149.95 € ISBN 978-3-11-027881-1.

Biblical scholars have studied the references to “slaves” in the Bible in detail. They appear right from the Patriarchal narratives onwards in legal, narrative and prophetic texts (indictments of selling fellow Israelites into slavery or the large scale human trafficking of neighbouring nations) and probably played a much more pervasive role than becomes apparent from the biblical texts. In the context of various conquests and the exile, many ancient Israelites themselves experienced deportation and enslavement. Also, for the sake of comparison, scholars have examined slavery in the ANE, in particular legal stipulations in various codices. In the NT the focus has been on slaves and masters in the parables of Jesus, on the so-called household codes of the letters, metaphorical uses of slaves and slavery (see, e.g., John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A Traditio-Historical and Exegetical Examination*, WUNT II.162 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003]), on studies of the identity and social make-up of the early Christian communities and the indictments of human trafficking directed against “Babylon” in Revelation 18:10-13. Often such references were read in view of more recent reminiscences and incidents of slavery (from the past three centuries) or, in liberation or postcolonial hermeneutics, from the perspective of those who suffer or suffered from oppression which resembles or constitutes a form of slavery. In some cases, such experiences became the key with which the biblical evidence was approached and interpreted. Today’s scholars are tempted to interpret the biblical occurrences slavery with modern, at times Hollywood-inspired, preconceptions (the portrayal in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* reflects only some aspects of ancient slavery!) or from experiences in a different age and context. Thus a handbook on

slavery in a global-historical perspective is welcome and can challenge and sharpen our perception.

The present handbook aims at taking seriously the scholarly research in the past two decades that indicates that slavery is a much more complex and variegated phenomenon than hitherto recognised. Zeuske's volume combines a global historical approach with micro-historical, translocal and transcultural approaches and the theoretical concept of human bodies as capital (a concept also to be found in some biblical texts). While one may expect from the title of the volume a chronological history of slavery, the approach is thematically. It opens with a historical-anthropological survey of research entitled "Slaveries Instead of Slavery" (pp. 1-26). In the preface, Zeuske summarises his approach as follows.

Ausgangspunkt musste die Realität heutiger Sklavereien sein, das wichtigste räumliche Organisationsprinzip nicht Kontinente, sondern Meere, und ich musste mir eine historisch-anthropologische Grundchronologie (10.000 v.u.Z - heute) erarbeiten, die es ermöglichten, statt eine unflexible Definition einer Sklaverei (hinter der meist Vorstellungen von der „römischen“ Sklaverei oder der Sklaverei im Süden der USA stehen) durchzukonjugieren, die unterschiedlichsten Sklavereien und Menschenhandelssysteme weltweit, auf dem ganzen Globus und seinen Ozeanen, Meeren, Inseln und Kontinenten, zu analysieren und darzustellen. Die wichtigste Perspektive sollte nicht mehr die der Institution Sklaverei sein (die implizit meist die Sichtweise von Sklavenbesitzern und Sklaverei-Gesellschaften reproduziert), sondern eine Globalgeschichte aus Sicht ihrer wichtigsten Akteure – und das waren Sklavinnen und Sklaven auf der einen sowie die der direkten Versklaver (Menschenjäger, Sklavenhändler, Kapitäne, Hilfspersonal und Sklavenhalter) auf der anderen Seite.

Next comes a long chapter on historiography and problems of research in a global-historical perspective (pp. 27-96). The following chapters address in the detail issues of definition (pp. 97-128), historical causes of slavery (pp. 129-149), female slaves apart from institutionalised slaveries (pp. 150-173), kin-slavery, small- and large scale slaveries (pp. 174-199), societies with slaves and societies built on slavery (pp. 200-220), slaveries and legal issues (pp. 221-260), various means of capturing slaves, human trafficking and slaveries (pp. 261-297), slave traders and slave markets as protagonists and structures of accumulation (pp. 298-381) and processes of transculturation, knowledge and resistance (pp. 382-405). Under the heading "Hidden Atlantics," Zeuske describes the cultures and structures of human trafficking between the Americas and Africa (pp. 406-429). Other chapters address issues of mobility, nutrition, terror and translocal infrastructures of violence (pp. 430-450), the "numbers games" regarding slaveries (pp. 451-478) and Europe as the territory

of slaveries and of the profiteers of worldwide slave trade (pp. 479-524). In closing, Zeuske discusses the many names of slavery (pp. 525-563) and concludes with a survey of contemporary slavery and human trafficking (pp. 564-573). The volume contains extensive bibliographies of both primary (pp. 583-593) and secondary sources under various headings (pp. 593-666) and closes with several indices (pp. 667-725).

At the very least, the comprehensive and instructive volume is a reminder that slaveries involve far more than people(s) being forced to work for other people(s) and that its immediate and long-term impact on individuals and societies cannot be over-estimated. The comprehensive portrayal presented here will point biblical scholars to aspects hitherto missed or neglected in their texts and to place the biblical references in the larger phenomenon of global slavery in historical perspective.

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Christoph Stenschke, Biblisch-Theologische Akademie Wiedenest and Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, University of South Africa, P. O. Box 392, Pretoria, 0003. Republic of South Africa. *E-mail*: Stenschke@wiedenest.de

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