Professor Lebrun's opinion, to utilize novel material and also to bridge the gap between denunciation and hagiography so lamentably prominent in Maistrian historiography. Professor Lebrun did utilize much material, and he wrote an honest, judicious, nuanced and scholarly work. Yet that work is almost entirely pro-Maistrian. The ideologist is usually taken at his word, and his lapses, minor and explainable by his social background and the conditions in which he had to function, are not allowed seriously to detract from "this generally very attractive and admirable personality" (263-264). The reader even begins to miss the presumptuous and frequently misguided but at times perhaps penetrating fury of Professor Lebrun's predecessor and foil Professor Robert Triomphe's *Joseph de Maistre, étude sur la vie et sur la doctrine d'un matérialiste mystique*, Geneva, 1968. Well, perhaps in historiography as in law, truth is established through an adversarial process.

To conclude, Professor Richard A. Lebrun has written an important book, in his own, better than acceptable, manner, and from his own entirely legitimate (to be distinguished in this case especially form legitimist) point of view. We are very grateful to him for it.

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Ruth Mazo Karras — *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. Pp. x, 309.

This book takes up one of the great themes of medieval social history, slavery, and explores its history across an ambitious geographic and chronological scope — Scandinavia (here Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) from the ninth through the mid-fourteenth centuries. In the first chapter, Karras sets out a useful survey of the various theoretical approaches to the problem of slavery and also supplies a thumbnail sketch of slavery throughout medieval Europe. The analysis of slavery is perceptive and judicious. While taking into account broad economic and social aspects of slavery, the author also asks a good question — why did the category of slaves exist in the first place? Karras steers a middle course between the views of her two main authorities on slavery, M.I. Finley and Orlando Patterson, and insists that slavery is above all a conceptual category, a way to classify people and, naturally, a means to compel some people to work. The law helps to give shape to the conceptual category, but by itself does not provide a complete portrait of slavery. Karras accepts Patterson's emphasis on slaves as dishonored people and his view that there is more to slavery than the simplistic notion that the slave is merely a type of property. By insisting that direct exploitation is the key for distinguishing slavery from serfdom, Karras has a good model for investigating household, small-time slavery in agrarian Scandinavia. This approach may not be as useful for places where the masters benefited from slave labor in ways as indirect as the lords extorted labor services from serfs.

Slavery endured for a long time in Scandinavia, but the sources do not reveal much about the actual numbers of slaves or their economic significance. Karras accepts an estimate that perhaps 9 percent of the population of Anglo-Saxon England

were slaves, but whether or not slavery in the north was as important remains a mystery. The Scandinavian slaves, the thralls, found themselves in a region where local customs and laws created several styles of slave regimes. Karras is always careful to point out local exceptions in customs and practice. Throughout Scandinavia, the laws and literary evidence indicate a clear hereditary slavery, and in Viking age important new supplies from capture and trade. Debt slavery existed and seems, at least in Iceland and Norway, to have created a less degraded status for those whom debt forced into slavery. While the laws and sagas do not provide much evidence on the economic role of slaves, household slaves seem to have worked alongside their masters in the fields and with flocks. The situation in Sweden is somewhat more clear because twenty-nine wills from the period 1256-1310 contain manumission clauses. The slaves in these wills mainly belonged to the rich, and some of them served as stewards for their masters. Karras makes the best of all the evidence, but without sources to illuminate the details of the slave market or estate management, she cannot offer any conclusive assessment of slaves in the economy.

Relatively abundant legal sources permit a closer analysis of the slave in the law. Karras believes that Roman law "heavily influenced" parts of the Scandinavian law on the purchase of slaves (97). But in other matters, the law reveals indigeneous trends. In common with Germanic law in the rest of Europe, Scandinavian law relied on the wergeld, here defined as honor price, to compensate for crime. In general, only free people had a wergeld, but slaveowners might be compensated for damage to their slave in the same way as injuries to livestock also merited payment. Icelandic law required a master who killed his slave to announce the deed in the assembly and also prohibited a master from killing a slave during Lent and other holy seasons. Elsewhere, the laws were silent on these matters and presumably, masters could kill with impunity. Variations in legal practice supply some interesting and telling contrasts; in Norway, slaves were beaten if they worked on Sunday; in Sweden and Denmark, the law recognized slave marriages; in Iceland, slaves had some rights to personal property but in Sweden and Denmark, they could not buy freedom. Karras has teased from these difficult sources an important and sophisticated study of the mechanics of Scandinavian slavery, and she carefully uses the problematic evidence from the sagas to augment and, where necessary, to correct the static portrait in the law.

In the final chapter, Karras applies her evidence and conclusions to the challenge of explaining the end of slavery in Scandinavia. Slavery was waning in twelfth-century Norway and Iceland, and basically disappeared by the middle of the next century. Slaves still appeared, in insignificant numbers, in mid-thirteenth-century Denmark and early fourteenth-century Sweden. Karras considers a range of possible explanations for these outcomes. Slave revolts and violence did not contribute to the demise of slavery. The laws provided for manumission and the Church encouraged it, but Karras does not believe that Christianity ended slavery (surely a correct view). The sources on the freeing of slaves are too sketchy to permit any conclusions on the effects of religion. According to Karras, Scandinavian slavery worked well for masters when there was free access to new lands; when the land filled up, property owners could switch to tenant farming and rely upon necessity to provide the tenants and compel them to work. The author is very suspicious of "supply-side" arguments and repeatedly points out that problems in acquiring slaves would not necessarily spell the end of slavery. Its end in Scandinavia did not produce serfdom, but instead large scale landowners relied on the available pool of tenants and wage laborers. This analysis is plausible and appealing. The evidence is, however, thin in

spots and Karras herself concludes that the economic explanation by itself is inadequate to solve the problem of slavery's end.

Karras' own explanation is worth quoting — "In Scandinavia, slavery ended because those who created the cultural categories stopped classifying people as unfree" (153-154). Or, "Slavery was no longer conceptually necessary when society and law developed to the point that they recognized distinctions within the free group.... The social leaders had someone to look down on without the slave" (160). For Karras, the absence of serfdom in Scandinavia is decisive; tenant farmers and household servants, technically free, provided enough of a new conceptual hierarchy to satisfy the presumably innate desire of social leaders to have somebody literally to despise. Readers will weigh this explanation for themselves and should consult the book for the full case. Yet as bad as the evidence is on the economy, it seems stronger than sources on conceptual and cultural categories. The law stopped mentioning slaves, this much is certain and must reflect some change in social realities. But why tenants replaced slaves must have something to do with the price of slaves, the cost of subsistence and wage rates in Scandinavia. Karras has no evidence on these issues.

This book is a carefully and documented study of slavery, and at the same time provides the reader with the challenge of a sustained argument. As Karras herself noted, medievalists have the burden of poor sources, and the author has provided a model of how thoughtful questions and insights can compensate for this difficulty.

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Kathleen E. McCrone — *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*. London and New-York: Routledge, 1988. Pp. 310.

Kathleen E. McCrone's study of the role of sports in the lives of late-Victorian and Edwardian middle-class women provides a fresh and insightful approach for understanding the changing lifestyles and status of women in the decades before World War I. There has been a multitude of recent excellent books on the struggles for women's emancipation, but these studies have for the most part concentrated on legal and political rights, access to higher education and professions, and issues of sexuality. McCrone argues convincingly that the development of women's sports provided a form of emancipation from the constraints of Victorian ladyhood that was as important as the campaign for women's suffrage. Her examination of the changes in middle-class women's physical activity is a contribution not only to the scholarship on English women's history but also to the history of Victorian sports, which has hitherto been predominantly androcentric.

The book begins with an examination of sports in the new women's colleges at Cambridge and Oxford. In that one of the major arguments against female higher education was the fear that women, considered as naturally weak, would become even more enfeebled by too much intellectual activity; physical exercise was from the beginning included as an important part of the university regimen. Exercise would strengthen women physically, even as it provided an antidote to possible mental overstrain. Walking, as the major form of female exercise, was soon supplemented