

ut slike skjønnhetspletter og publisert et mer striglet produkt. Samtidig har den uflidde, lett slentrende stilen sin verdi. Blant annet oppgir Stubberud epost-korrespondanse han har hatt med ulike fagpersoner. En bibliografi over Wilses trykte skrifter har han fått Øivind Berg ved Nasjonalbiblioteket til å utarbeide. I kapitlet om verket *Eftertiiden i Norge* bruker han samme Berg nærmest som eneste kilde. Kapitlet om Wilse som "proto-økolog" kunne ikke ha vært skrevet uten tilgang til et foreløpig upublisert artikkelmanus av Marie-Theres Federhofer. Og så videre. Det ligger en faglig kvalitetssikring i denne måten å arbeide på, en kvalitetssikring man for en bok på et akademisk forlag ville tatt for gitt, men som her utbroderes i detalj for å markere at boka tross alt ikke er et enmannsprodukt. Stubberud byr på mange glimt fra sin arbeidsmetode som denne leseren ikke ville vært foruten. En må også berømme de mange offentlig ansatte forskerne som har bidratt. Deres svar på Stubberuds henvendelser er bevis for at personale ved universiteter, museer og biblioteker tar sitt samfunnsoppdrag alvorlig.

Stubberuds Wilse-presentasjon er stort sett solid. De kontekstualiserende utsynene i biografien er ofte fiffige og uventede, men som regel godt underbygd. Han har orientert seg i faglitteraturen innen en rekke felt. Noen steder halter likevel fremstillingen. Et problem han aldri helt overvinner er hva slags patriot Wilse var, eller hva slags identitetsståsted han hadde (jf. eksemplet fra Fredericia-beskrivelsen, over). Det blir heller aldri forklart hvilket økonomisk kretsløp Wilses publikasjoner inngikk i. En nærmere analyse av dynamikken innen patron-klient-forhold i 1700-tallets vitenskapskultur, og hvordan denne kan ha påvirket måten han ytret seg i ulike verk, ville ha vært klargjørende. Det ville også ha vært nyttig å få utvidet perspektivet noe utover det norske nasjonale. Helstaten var tross alt en enhetlig offentlighet, med dansk som skriftspråk og København som den ubestridte politiske, kul-

turelle og lærdomsbærende metropolen. Wilses avisartikler, tidsskriftprosjekter og bøker inngikk alle i dette helstatlige kretsløpet. Han skrev med samme innlevelse og varme om sine reiseopplevelser gjennom danske og tyske landskaper som gjennom bygder og byer i Østfold. Stubberud er godt klar over alt dette og holder det på ingen måte skjult. Hans lokalhistoriske, for ikke å si lokalpatriotiske, grunnperspektiv fortjener imidlertid å utfylles med ytterligere analyser fra europeisk, tysk eller aller helst et genuint dansk-norsk, felleskulturelt ståsted. For slike arbeider vil Stubberuds biografi tjene som en kilde til inspirasjon.

Per Pippin Aspaas

Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, *De frimodiga: Barnmorskor, födande och kroppslighet på 1700-talet* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 2016). 230 pp.

Helping a child into the world and supporting the woman in labour has always been an important and culturally regulated task at the very heart of any society. However, attitudes towards midwives and their work have varied greatly throughout history, being both appreciative and pejorative, even antagonistic. Finnish historian Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen sets our eyes on this professional group in society in her book *De frimodiga: Barnmorskor, födande och kroppslighet på 1700-talet*, first published in Finnish in 2012 as *Ujostelemattomat. Kättilöiden, synnytysten ja arjen historiaa*.

Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen has a wide interest particularly in women's history and everyday life. Currently holding the professorship of Finnish History at the University of Turku in Finland, Vainio-Korhonen has published many studies on the history of noblewomen in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Finland and on the work of Finnish goldsmiths, arti-

sans, female entrepreneurs and domestic servants. Her study on the work of midwives in eighteenth-century Finland, *De frimodiga*, continues this same theme.

In many ways the professional midwives are an interesting and exceptional group among eighteenth-century working people. They had their professional oath and special training lasting for four years. Their work was public and they had various social duties and, by and large, a very visible role in society. As Vainio-Korhonen states in *De frimodiga*, “all this is interesting, because previously the professions and the professionalization of work have been considered to be part of the masculine sphere of life” (s. 30).

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe the profession of midwife was practically the only regulated, licenced work open to women. Midwives had their own professional oath and some of them gained both respect and considerable wealth – for example, in many European noble households the court midwives, such as Louise Bourgeois, a famous midwife to Marie de’ Medici, Queen of France, were paid handsomely and also enjoyed other significant benefits. They were educated women with a professional mission, means and real medical power.

*De frimodiga* is a story of the Finnish midwives trained in eighteenth-century Stockholm, who then returned to work in their home districts. Finland, at that time the easternmost part of the Kingdom of Sweden, was mainly a rural and sparsely populated land with few larger towns. These towns were the central domain of the professional midwives – some of them were even trained at the expense of the communities in which they were expected to work after completing their studies. In total 89 Finnish midwives were trained in Stockholm until 1808 when the Finnish War broke out between Sweden and Russia and Finland eventually became a part of imperial Russia.

In eighteenth-century Europe, the medical profession was divided into physicians, surgeons and apothecaries. The profession of midwifery was totally feminine until the eighteenth century, when the first man-midwives appeared in the field of childbirth. However, in Sweden midwifery as a profession developed somewhat differently than it did in for instance Britain. In Sweden professional midwives were more appreciated by officials and their education was regulated and protected by law. For example, in 1777 a new regulation was passed that banned all those without proper training from practising as midwives. However, this injunction was cancelled only three years later.

In past centuries childbirth undeniably was an essential part of female life, more so than it probably is for women today. As Vainio-Korhonen points out in her book, in most cases married women were frequently either pregnant or in childbed – fulfilling the reproductive role to which every married woman was destined. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, midwives themselves were always married women, often with children of their own. Many times knowledge and profession were even handed down to the next generation, from mother to daughter. However, in 1795 the law was changed and unmarried and childless women were also allowed to train and work as professional midwives. Thus, the idea of education and scientific knowledge began to replace experience and tradition.

The training and work of the professional midwives were connected to the wider social and demographic picture. High infant mortality in particular was seen as a real and immediate problem in a kingdom that was recurrently at war. One way to ensure a supply of manpower was to reduce infant and maternal mortality. Eighteenth-century midwives also had a wider role in society than is generally assumed. Their work was not merely a question of childbirth and lying-in; midwives also

had legal power and their testimony had influence in the court cases related to infanticides, rapes, adultery, premarital pregnancies and in defining gender. They also had an important religious obligation: in cases of emergency, the midwife could baptize the child if no priest was available and the child's life was in danger. However, to me this speaks more to the meaning of the baptism to the Lutheran Church than to the significance of midwives. After all, they were present at births and in many cases they were the only persons to offer the sacrament of baptism, which was considered as indispensable for salvation.

Vainio-Korhonen is mainly interested in midwives working in towns. I would have liked to, as a contrast to this, read more about childbirth in the countryside, where traditional, untrained midwives, so called *bona fides*, had a greater role in labours. All in all, Vainio-Korhonen sees the position of midwives in a very positive light. She emphasises their professional skills, medical knowledge, education and status in eighteenth-century society. On the other hand, Vainio-Korhonen pays very little attention to social pressure and the hierarchies defining the limits and communication between people. It is true that professional midwives were educated women and that they were also expected to be able to read and write fluently: some of them – albeit only a few – even wrote their own guidebooks and textbooks on midwifery. When reading Vainio-Korhonen I draw the conclusion that the gender issue – the position of women in relation to the authority of the male profession and medical knowledge – was more apparent later, than it was in Sweden in the age of Enlightenment. In nineteenth-century Britain, which I am more acquainted with, during the Victorian era, British midwives were constantly called “ignorant” by the medical profession, mainly consisted of university-trained male doctors. As one English midwife, Mrs Baker, stated in her 1857 guidebook: “it is much to be regret-

ted that the talent of women is neither cultivated nor appreciated by many, though the necessity for co-operation must be apparent to everybody.” In light of Vainio-Korhonen's book, this was not the case in eighteenth-century Sweden and Finland.

*De frimodiga* reminds us that not only men have represented the public and socially active sphere in the past, while women were relegated to domesticity with the children and servants. Although I would have welcomed a slightly more critical approach and especially a wider medical and social background, I was fascinated by the wealth of detail and a new perspective on the lives of women in eighteenth-century Finland. After all, as Vainio-Korhonen writes in her book: “the authority of the midwives was not inherited from their deceased husbands, but rather it was achieved by their own education. They advertised their services and worked outside their homes, exposed to the public eye, in a profession that was regulated by law” (s. 184).

This is an updated version of the book review first published in *Ethnologia Fennica* (vol. 41, 2014).

Anna Niiranen

Han F. Vermeulen, *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment*, Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology (Lincoln/London, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2015). xxiii + 718 pp.

In this monograph, Han Vermeulen, an associate of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, traces the prelude to the formation of modern anthropology through Franz Boas (1858–1942). Both thematically and methodologically, *Before Boas* follows up on the author's research over the last thirty years (cf. 676–678). This shows at first sight. The list of references amounts