

de inte längre fäste sig vid det. Clarke noterar också i sin skildring vilket oljud magistratens trumslagare förde då de gick längs gatorna och ropade ut kungörelser.

Clarke's anteckningar om bjällror som klingade då slädar drog förbi och trumslagarnas intensiva trummande ger extra krydda åt avhandlingens kanske mest ambitiösa kapitel, där Savolainen försöker återskapa ljudvärlden i Åbo under 1700-talets slut. Utan dessa skildringar hade Savolainen bara kunnat bygga på domböckernas rätt så repetitiva rättsfall i vilka åboborna grälade om huruvida krogmadamen hört domkyrkoklockan slå nio eller inte.

Panu Savolainen utexaminerades till arkitekt från dåvarande Tekniska högskolan innan han blev historiker, vilket förklarar hans intresse för stadsrummet och dess funktioner och också hans förmåga att presentera sina forskningsresultat visuellt. Ett gott exempel på detta är den utmärkta användningen av kartor. Stadskartorna över Åbo från åren 1756 och 1808 dyker upp på många ställen i undersökningen och tjänar alla gånger olika syften. Savolainen pekar på kartorna ut t.ex. i vilka stadsdelar och kvarter i staden som kaffehusen och krogarna fanns, på vilka gator det förekom flest gatuslagsmål och problem med ordningen, eller var det fanns flest enpersonshushåll. På en särskilt fascinerande karta åskådliggör Savolainen var i staden den för snatteri upprepade gånger gripna "qwinpersoner" Walborg Ericsson dotter gömde sitt stöldgods.

Lösningen att använda gamla kartor är lyckad. De är åskådligare och trevligare att betrakta än kartor som ritats i dag, och eftersom kartorna återkommer i flera kapitel blir läsaren snart mycket förtrogen med 1700-talets Åbo-geografi. Det här kräver så klart att boken är tryckt med hög kvalitet, och Panu Savolainen har i detta haft förmånen att få ge ut sin avhandling på det lilla Åboförlaget Sigillum som ger ut högkvalitativa böcker och har gjort ett utmärkt jobb med den här boken. För den som varit tvungen att själv knöla in sin avhandlings-

text i en grafisk mall för ett universitetsförlag ter sig detta som en avundsvärd förmån.

Juba-Matti Granqvist

(översättning Henrika Tandefelt & Charlotta Wolff)

Vilhelm Vilhelmsson, *Sjálftætt fólk. Vistarband og íslenskt samfélag á 19. öld.* [Independent People: Labour Bondage and Icelandic Society in the 19th century] (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 2017). 313 pp.

Vilhelm Vilhelmsson's book is a study of "everyday practices of power relations" in pre-modern Iceland. Based on a doctoral thesis from the University of Iceland in 2015, the author focuses in particular on the institution of bonded labour (*vistarband* in Icelandic) during the 19th century, the tensions and frictions between masters and servants (*vinnufólk*), and the possibilities of the latter to manoeuvre within the system to improve their position and resist authority. The author also examines groups that tried to make a living on the margins or outside labour service: landless and poor casual labourers (*lausamenn*) and vagrants (*flakkarar*), and their tactics of avoiding compulsory service. The author challenges a more established view in the historical literature that the agrarian working classes passively subjected themselves to a repressive social and economic system ruled by an elite of landowners and government officials. It is true, the author admits, that the labour bondage was an integral part of a patriarchal, unequal social order, yet the servant and the labourer were active agents who were able to create their own 'space' in everyday life by contestation, disobedience and even resistance. This is *history from below* where "society is viewed with the eyes of the servant, the rebel, the lawbreaker" (p. 13).

A theoretically inclined historian, Vilhelm Vilhelmsson digs deep into the terrain of cul-

tural history, employing subaltern studies and Michel Foucault's theory of power relations, James C. Scott's theories of different strategies of resistance to domination, and Finn Janning's concept of "existential resistance". The author uses these theoretical tools with erudition and intelligence although this reviewer is not convinced of the usefulness of some of the theoretical constructions, in particular the concept of existential resistance.

The author divides the topic in three parts. The first one examines the historical development and the ideological underpinnings of compulsory service in Iceland in the context of early modern Europe. The origins of labour service in Iceland can be traced back to the late Middle Ages, but with the Lutheran reformation and the increasing importance of domestic discipline in its wake, it developed into a compulsory service for most landless people. Labour bondage became a prominent feature of the social structure during the 17th and 18th centuries reaching a most stringent form during the period 1783–1863 when almost all exemptions were prohibited. While compulsory service served multiple purposes, such as securing farmers supply of farmhands and guaranteeing the poor a secure employment, the author emphasises its importance as a system of moral regulation and maintenance of social order.

The second part focuses on the Icelandic servant class and the institution of labour bondage in the 19th century, a period that saw a shift from intensified attempts to increase control over the landless poor well into the second half of the century, to a relaxation of the legislation in the 1860s and again in the 1890s when compulsory service was all but abolished. The novelty of this section lies in the author's use of trial proceedings and other

court records from magistrates to uncover a significant number of servants' attempts to create their own space and resist authority. These are different types of cases such as lack of deference, disobedience, indolence, theft, mistreating the master's livestock, and leaving the service unlawfully, all manifesting agency on behalf of the servant.

The third part studies casual labourers, a heterogeneous group of usually poor people trying to make an independent living outside service. Legislation on compulsory service was closely related to laws on casual labour and vagrancy, social groups that were regarded as social parasites and a threat to stability and social order in the eyes of the authorities. Despite hostility towards casual labourers in the public discourse they were what may be called a "normal exception", in the view of the author, as they were part of the community all over the country and even grew in number in the course of the 19th century. The author regards casual labour as "contingent form of resistance" where individuals sought to improve their lot by avoiding service.

Vilhelm Vilhelmsson's book not only makes an important contribution to the social history of pre-modern Iceland but it also offers valuable insights into the institution of compulsory service in early modern Europe. The book may well exaggerate the possibilities of the landless poor to manipulate the social system to their own advantage – but it makes the important point that in order to understand power relations it is not enough to examine the social structure, legislation or prescriptive discourses of how the labour bondage was supposed to function; what is needed is a study of power relations in everyday life.

Guðmundur Jónsson