Chapter III offers a similar though slightly less detailed analysis of Books 2–8 (pp. 151–284). Again, Z. demonstrates that Herodian's account is almost entirely controlled by his general conception of how the moral disposition of an emperor as acquired through education and experience determined the quality of a particular reign. As for the sources of Books 2–6, Z. again suggests that the material used and remodelled by Herodian was almost all taken from Dio's *History*, whereas for the end of Book 6, and Books 7 and 8 (on the years 235–8, for which Dio was no longer available) Herodian had transformed another senatorial source.

Z.'s readings are mostly convincing and attractive. In fact, this is the first full-scale study to examine systematically the aims of the representation and thus it does greater justice to this text than most of the previous scholarship. However, owing to Z.'s focusing on the individual character-sketches, the picture created of the period as a whole gets less attention than perhaps it deserves. As for the results of Z.'s learned and impressive study of sources, which attempts to confirm with new arguments the old *Hauptquellentheorie*, it remains to be seen if they will meet with unanimous approval. Given Dio's mutilated text and the almost complete loss of all other potential sources (e.g. Septimius Severus' autobiography and the historical works by L. Aelius Antipatros and Asinius Quadratus, not to mention the pictorial representations often referred to in the text but all rejected as fictitious by Z.), and the fact that Herodian must have used other, though completely unknown, sources in his later books, a more sceptical view still seems possible.

Chapter IV deals with Herodian as a historical figure. Given the scant evidence provided only by the text itself, necessarily most of this chapter has a rather speculative character. Z. rightly rejects attempts to date the work under a particular emperor after Philip the Arab, as it seems impossible to identify potential allusions to a specific reign with certainty. However, the same must be said (as Z. himself is well aware) of Z.'s own attempts to prove the view that the text was written under the reign of Philip the Arab. The assumption that it had been written with an eye to the thousandth anniversary of Rome in 247/8 is based on even poorer evidence. Finally, Z. joins the (unprovable) *communis opinio* that Herodian was of western Asian Minor origin, but rejects the common view that he worked in an official position at the imperial court on the grounds of his poor knowledge of the court as well as of the city of Rome; he was rather a *reiner Stubengelehrter* (p. 327) working somewhere in the distance from the centre of power.

There is a useful general index and an *index locorum*, but it seems odd that there is no full bibliography in a book of this scope (although there are good bibliographies in *ANRW* ii.34.4, 2830ff. and 2914ff.).

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VISIGOTHIC SPAIN

P. HEATHER (ed.): *The Visigoths from the Migration Period to the Seventh Century: an Ethnographic Approach.* Pp. 563. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999. £50.00. ISBN: 0-85115-762-9.

Books on the Visigoths and Visigothic Spain in English are rare, so this collection of conference *Acta* is a welcome addition to their ranks. It contains a short introduction, eleven papers, the transcriptions of the discussions which followed them, and one of a further discussion on the future of Visigothic studies. The

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transcriptions are lengthy and a little light editing to remove the banter as opposed to substantive discussion would have been welcome. The last discussion is perhaps the most disappointing. Here, although the subjects raised are of importance, the somewhat formless way in which they are presented detracts from the issues themselves. It is the case, though, that the transcriptions allow the reader to see clearly the intellectual issues and debates raised by the papers.

The subtitle of the collection, 'An Ethnographic Perspective', is perhaps a little deceptive as the papers range widely over issues of identity in the Late Antique/Early Medieval world. The papers by Green on linguistic evidence for Gothic migration, Heather on the creation of the Visigoths, and Jiménez Garnica on the settlement of the Visigoths in the fifth century are perhaps ethnographic in the strict sense, but the other papers range widely.

Schwartz deals with religion and the conversion of the Visigoths to Christianity, Díaz with the political structures of the Visigothic kingdom, and Ripoll López with artefacts and self-identity. Wood looks at social relations in the Visigothic kingdom through a close reading of the *Lives of the Meridan Fathers* and a comparison of its narrative to Visigothic law. While W. sees Visigothic society as one essentially perpetuating the Roman town–country nexus, he concedes that this may be the only of the South of the peninsula. (Sadly, regional differences in the peninsula are alluded to, but not explored in the collection.) Law was important, but he warns us against using legal sources uncritically as a mirror of society. It is persuasively argued that both religious and secular patronage were an important fulcrum of power in the kingdom, which possibly supplanted the power of kinship groups.

Ausenda, on the other hand, looking at Visigothic marriage laws from an anthropological perspective, sees a large rôle for kinship. Here perhaps we see an overly positivistic use of legal texts; more account could be taken of the Roman, as opposed to the Germanic, elements of the Visigothic law codes. There is an insistence that a legal prohibition on an act implies that that act is occurring. However, much of this law is religiously inspired and because of this we may well have, as we see in some of the more fanatical Islamic *fiqhs* of our own day, prohibitions based on ideological requirements which have little relevance to the world outside the *scriptorium*.

Velázquez's detailed study of inheritance law in the Visigothic codes argues for a legal syncretism. V. sees Visigothic law as a combination of Roman and Germanic elements: the Visigothic kings used the framework of the Roman legal tradition, but adopted it to fit their own, rather different, circumstances. The end product was a form of law showing, by the seventh century, a group identity which is neither Roman nor Germanic, but draws upon and transcends both traditions. This radical approach to syncretism or transculturation is a highly stimulating one, though V. from time to time succumbs to hunting for traces of the pure originals in the resulting alloy. V. could have examined the reasons and time it took this putative enterprise to succeed. The author of the *Lives of the Meridan Fathers* remarks in passing that Bishop Masona was a good Christian although he was a Goth, and he rejoices in the Hispano-Roman origins of the saviour of the kingdom, Duke Claudius. Here we still have signs of sharp racial awareness. For de Jong this has vanished by the time of Julian of Toledo. J. gives a reading of Julian's *Historia Wambae* and sees in it the construction of the Goths as a new chosen race of God on the lines of Old Testament Israel. However, there is for J. no racial connotation here—Julian's use of Goths is shorthand for all those who live in the Visigothic kingdom (save, one assumes, the Jews).

Retamero deals with economic affairs. He begins with the account in the *Lives of the Meridan Fathers* of a visit to that city by Greek, or Greek-speaking, merchants. R.

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seems to envisage that the merchants arrived by ship, but this seems unlikely as the Salto do Lobo makes the Guadiana unnavigable downstream from Merida. R. is happy to concede that there was trade with the Eastern Mediterranean, but sees this as concentrated into a few months of the year and restricted to costly luxury goods. He even casts doubt on whether the purveyors of such goods were primarily merchants, agreeing with Arce's suggestion that they could have been primarily pilgrims or ambassadors. Unless something has been suppressed by the hagiographer here, the dramatic date of *VPE* means that the merchants were being extremely provocative to the Arian authorities if this second suggestion is correct. Similarly, while R. is probably right to see luxury trade strictly controlled by the authorities, the date of *VPE* means that the Orthodox Bishop Paul could not have performed this function, as at this time the official church in Spain was Arian.

R. uses the theories of Karl Polanyi to draw a sharp distinction between luxury trade and everyday economic activity. He argues that coinage may have circulated mainly among the aristocracy and the king, and hence there would be no need to postulate that large numbers of coins were circulating in Spain during this period, as has sometimes been held. For R. coin is merely an aristocratic vehicle for capturing peasant production, but does not require peasants to possess coins. The model outlined is a stimulating approach to the dynamics of a peasant economy.

In short, this wide-ranging collection has much to offer not just to Spanish studies, but to students of late antiquity in general.

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GUILDS

O. M. VAN NIJF: *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East.* Pp. iv + 314. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1997. Cased, Hfl. 145. ISBN: 90-5063-257-2.

This book attempts to set the epigraphical material relating to the *collegia* of the Roman East into its proper social setting. Much of it (Chapters III–VI) focuses on the involvement of these associations at public festivals and in civic processions, and their implication in patronage relationships, all fashionable topics. Chapter I, however, deals with their funerary activities, perhaps the rôle best attested in epigraphy, and consequently already well studied for the Latin West. Van Nijf provides a useful summary of material relevant to the East.

It is with the central category of enquiry that I have problems, since the study imposes curious restraints upon itself. On the one hand, N. continually uses the Latin term *collegium*, a dubious move for the Greek East because this use of Latin terminology implies such organizations are to be regarded as the result of Romanization in the East. In fact, they had a long history in both the classical and, especially, Hellenistic East, and it is disappointing that N. has taken for granted a set of cultural influences which might have formed a central problematic of the study. In other words, how much did these associations owe to the (Greek) past, and how far did Roman rule modify this? This curious use of Latin terminology for the Greek East occurs throughout—I find it difficult to accept that the (repeated) description of 'the *plebs media* in Roman provincial towns' (e.g. pp. 28, 243) is the appropriate way to describe the audience for these associations in the Greek world.

On the other hand, he restricts the meaning of *collegia* to 'professional associations'

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