and manipulation of evidence, it also stands as an excellent example of precisely the sort of liberated source-criticism which many undergraduate courses aim to promote.

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HERODIAN

M. ZIMMERMANN: *Kaiser und Ereignis. Studien zum Geschichtswerk Herodians.* (Vestigia. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte 52.) Pp. xii + 344. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999. Cased, DM 158. ISBN: 3-406-45162-4.

This is a welcome book: it is the first monograph on Herodian for more than thirty years and offers a fresh and stimulating interpretation of this often misread text. The study basically is an abridged version of Z.'s Tübingen *Habilitationsschrift*, some results of which have already been published earlier (*Chiron* 28 [1998], 287–322; M. Zimmermann [ed.], *Geschichtsschreibung und politischer Wandel im 3. Jh.* [Stuttgart, 1999], pp. 17–56, 119–43).

In order to overcome the prevailing uncertainty concerning the historical reliability of Herodian's work, Z. sets himself the goal of demonstrating with what intention in mind the historian selected, organized, and manipulated his material, and how far his ordering hand actually reached. By way of preliminary, Z. quite rightly rejects Alföldy's reading of the text as a chronicle of the third-century crisis as well as the widespread view of the work as a (historical) novel. Z. hopes that his case-study will be of general interest, since it offers the chance, as it were, 'of watching a second-class author' composing his history (p. 13).

Chapter I examines the proem and the beginning of the work in order to elaborate Herodian's aims (pp. 17–41). The proem, as Z. rightly points out, on the one hand labels the text as contemporary historiography, on the other it is made clear that the narrative will be entirely focused on the emperors and their moral qualities. It is further specified that good government depends on the ruler's *paideia* and experience (*empeiria*), and that was why young emperors had often failed. Z. therefore concludes that, contrary to e.g. Suetonius, in Herodian's view suitability for reigning did not depend on a positive or negative *physis*, but only on *paideia* and experience. Though this is generally true, yet certain qualities of a ruler are explicitly explained by his *physis*: Septimius Severus is 'by nature' irascible (3.6.1) and inexorable (3.8.3), Caracalla murderous (4.9.3), Elagabalus a boaster (5.8.4), and Severus Alexander a mild character (6.1.6). As for the beginning of the work, Z. convincingly shows that Marcus Aurelius is introduced as the incarnation of the four cardinal virtues of the Platonic–Stoic tradition and as an exemplary ruler who sets up the standard readers are intended to apply to all his successors.

As is well brought out in the second chapter (pp. 43–150), this conception of the preconditions of good government determined most of Herodian's account of Commodus' reign in the first book. The depravity of Commodus' last years, then, is presented as the result of the emperor's gradual alienation from his father's ideals and friends. Z. is right to point out that Herodian is not interested in giving the details of the specific historical case, but rather aims at offering a universal explanation of the origin of tyranny. On the basis of a comparison with Cassius Dio's account (at places perspicaciously reconstructed by Z. himself) he further argues that this could only be achieved by a thorough-going remodelling of the historical material Herodian had at hand, and that this material had almost exclusively been taken from Cassius Dio.

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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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