dynastic strategy are clear and balanced, if mostly unsurprising, and include some felicitously arresting turns of phrase ('un régime qui s'est toujours efforcé de ne pas dire ce qu'il était' (p. 545). Best, the third section, ostensibly discussing, as (wordily) H. puts it, 'the extent to which the real position of the "co-regent" within the régime was part of the more general framework of the birth and development of the dynasty founded by Augustus' (p. 415), but mostly in fact concerned with epigraphic and iconographic evidence from all over the empire (pp. 431–44, 448–81, 487–97, 511–30): going well beyond traditionally juridical or Romanocentric approaches, H. both assumes and in exhaustive detail proves the significance of this material for understanding the *principes*' developing dynastic policy, particularly in its presentation to the vast majority of their subjects for whom constitutional niceties and Republican tradition were of scant concern. This is by far his most valuable contribution.

The bad news is that H. is far, far too verbose. The entire first section brings little that is new, and should have been axed, with light re-organization and re-annotation of the other two. A persistent periphrastic mannerism ('l'historien grec' = 'Dio', 'le fils adoptif de Jules Cesar' = 'Octavien', 'le savant allemand' = 'Mommsen') may irritate even native French readers. So specialized a volume need not tell us that 'the chief materials on which inscriptions are found are stone and bronze' (p. 14) or use nearly half a page (p. 396) explaining what a triumph is. By the time we reach p. 416 we need no reminder that 'the co-regents' 'have in common that they were connected to the *princeps* by family ties'. 'The explanation of what in Rome could at first sight appear a paradoxical situation is in truth the clearest declaration by the new government of its real nature: the honours awarded to Gaius Caesar throughout the last decade before our era only assume their full significance in consideration of the privileged position which is reserved in every dynasty for the son of the monarch' (p. 484). Such bathetic prolixity is all-pervasive and seriously off-putting.

A book on this scale needs good indices. H.'s—of sources, personal and divine names, geography and principal monuments, and finally 'noteworthy terms'—are regrettably disappointing: strings of page-references without sub-headings (162 to 'Rome' in Index 3, for instance, 81 to 'Julia' [i.e. Augustus' daughter] in Index 2) are unhelpful.

A final cavil: Janus' Gates were not those of a 'temple' (p. 58) but just gates (Platner–Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* [Oxford, 1929], pp. 278ff.).

Despite its good qualities, then, a book probably destined to be cited rather than read.

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IMPERIAL CULTURE

J. HUSKINSON (ed.): *Experiencing Rome. Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire*. Pp. xv + 378, maps, figs. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Paper, £16.99. ISBN: 0-415-212840-7.

This exciting new book contains twelve essays written, with two exceptions, by members of the Classics Department at the Open University. It is designed in effect as the coursebook for a third level option, 'Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire', and as such will be at fundamental collection for the University's large body of undergraduates. It deserves, however, to reach a wider audience still. (I have,

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for example, recommended it warmly to sub-Honours Ancient History students at Edinburgh.) In part this is because practically every Roman history course you could imagine would engage to some degree with the themes of culture, identity, and power; but partly too because Janet Huskinson has put together here a lively, challenging, and very modern treatment. As a complement to a traditionally chronological course on, say, the twelve Caesars or the Antonines and Severans, this collection would see excellent service.

The book's coverage is wide. It concerns itself with a broad range of social history, in the main from the first two centuries of the Empire. The essays mix established (and important) chestnuts, such as urbanism (Lisa Nevett and Phil Perkins), religion (James Rives), dissent (Paula James), and Jews (Margaret Williams), with some more recent angles and topics, such as the communication of culture (Richard Miles) or gender (Dominic Montserrat). In each case, the authors relate their topic to the overarching themes (with the unnecessary effect of exhausting the phrase 'culture, identity and power' by the end). Inevitably, individual essays are generally synchronic, although lists of key dates are given (pp. ix–x), and important changes over time, such as the Second Sophistic, are clearly articulated. Although few undergraduates outside the OU will sit down and read the book from cover to cover, many will find lots to hold their attention. Perkins (again) on the economy, for example, or Valerie Hope on the city of Rome, would be enlightening places to start work on these particular topics.

Throughout the book, art-history, literature, archaeology, coins, inscriptions, and other sources are marshalled to create an impressively interdisciplinary approach. The authors tend to use sources as touchstones for much more discursive enquiries—the book's opening discussion, by Huskinson herself of an El Djem mosaic, reproduced in colour on the cover, sets a high standard of imaginative interpretation and could well be the cornerstone of many a good class on 'Rome and the provinces'. The dedicated bibliographies are up to date and of sensible length. Although well informed, the essays avoid a dense, scholarly style which might put off many a reader; there are, for example, very few footnotes. Instead there is a more intimate and contemporary approach. (Trimalchio is described as a graduate from the 'university of life', p. 104; discussion of the gap between Roman rich and poor adopts the current political tag 'the haves and have nots', p. 141; and Elagabalus is said to partake of 'gender-bending activities', p. 156). I must admit, I found a little off-putting the occasional direct questions ('If the emperor could not control Rome, how could he control a vast empire?', p. 75) and the frequent jussive subjunctives ('let us look at some of the underlying questions', p. 6); I wondered if they would be better suited to the lecture theatre or educational film. On the other hand, I readily concede that such a style probably succeeds in the laudable goal of encouraging amongst readers some disagreement and dialogue (Montserrat is conspicuously provocative here and had me shouting out loud). In the selection and interpretation of evidence, the range of approaches and the manner of presentation, the book never hectors or declaims. Rather, it opens horizons and invites the reader to have a look.

The book is rich in black-and-white photographs, maps, plans, axonometric views, and reconstructions. Unlike in many textbooks, these plates are not used as pretty illustrations to provide visual corroboration of a point really drawn from the texts, but function as the starting-point of the argument. As it happens, quotations from central texts like Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius compete for space with others such as Aelius Aristides and Fronto, whom undergraduates are far less likely to meet in their normal routines. In sum, the book strikes me as a well-judged, accessible, and inspiring synthesis of some of the most contemporary approaches to its themes; but in its range

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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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