



## Book reviews

### **Du royaume goth au Midi mérovingien. Actes des XXXIVe Journées d'Archéologie Mérovingienne de Toulouse, 6, 7 et 8 Novembre 2013.**

Edited by Emmanuelle Boube, Alexis Corrochano and Jérôme Hernandez. Mémoires 56. Bordeaux: Ausonius. 2019. 560 pp. €60. ISBN 2356132465. ISSN 1283 2995.

The present book is the result of the 34th Journées d'Archéologie Mérovingienne sponsored by the Association Française d'Archéologie Mérovingienne and held in Toulouse II – Jean Jaurès University in 2013. The celebration date of the symposium and the year of edition of its proceedings (2019) exactly mirror the symposium's leitmotiv: the 1600 anniversary of the arrival of the Visigoths in Gaul (413) and their settlement in *Aquitania* by means of a *foedus* accorded with the imperial authorities (419). Such publications usually have a miscellaneous tone due to the enormous number of issues covered. However, most articles here are consistent with the symposium's main objective: archaeological documentation of the arrival of the *gens Gothorum* in western Europe and their acclimatation there. The book is structured by the editors in five parts, of which only the last one (*actualités archéologiques*) is not specifically related to the conference topic, but is a collection of studies on the latest advances in Merovingian archaeology. The main bulk of the publication (up twenty-nine contributions) is, on the other hand, well focused within Visigothic studies.

Taken in general terms, this work should undoubtedly draw the interest of any scholar devoted to Visigothic archaeology in Gaul and Hispania. It is an excellent, and updated, point of departure both for students and new researchers looking for a global scope on the issue. It combines good syntheses (on archaeological theory, S.E. Cleary, pp. 115–25; urbanism, E. Boube, pp. 57–82; regional approaches, M. Pozo, pp. 227–37, A. Vigil-Escalera, pp. 269–80, J. López Quiroga, pp. 255–66; material typochronologies, Y. Gourgoury, pp. 239–54) with specific site studies, particularly necropoleis, which were for the most part unpublished and the result of recent preventive interventions. In summary, the work fulfils the double expectation of being a general reference on the topic and a fundamental updating of the state of the archaeological research in southern France (and to a lesser extent Spain and northern Italy). This is

evidenced by the sixteen different contributions – encompassing the fifth to seventh centuries and derived from recent interventions by the French Inrap (Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives) and professional archaeologists – that allow the debate around barbarian presence in Gaulish lands to be enhanced. In addition, we can see that necropoleis such as Blanzac (S. Djouad *et al.*, pp. 127–41), Bélou (C. Scullier *et al.*, pp. 143–63), Pazens (J.-P. Cazes, pp. 199–210), and Mouraut (D. Paya, J. Hernandez, pp. 173–97) have come to furnish far more ‘Gothic’ funerary material than usual.

The main achievement of these studies is their contribution to the consolidation and adjusting of chronologies and occupation phases of necropoleis and settlements. Secondly, together they help us acquire of a wider view of the rural and urban habitat of *Aquitania*, allowing us to glimpse common regional tendencies but also remarkable local differences. At first sight, the usual typochronological *corpora* (Ripoll, Kazanski, Ebel-Zepezauer) are not greatly revised. On the contrary, in many cases relative chronologies are confirmed or only slightly adjusted thanks to information derived from new excavations, based on a more rigorous methodology. Archeologists still follow the path marked by M. Kazanski some years ago (1991): a Roman phase (fourth century) followed by important changes in the fifth century, related to disintegration of Roman power and the arrival of alien (mainly Gothic) populations, who become progressively acculturated, then by the sixth century are finally replaced in the archaeological record by Merovingian influences. However, I find the studies on tomb typologies and burial practices derived from these new excavations to be very innovative – for example, by D. Paya in Toulouse (pp. 99–112), or J. López Quiroga in the Spanish Meseta. These innovations are derived not from documentation of new funerary practices, but from the exhaustive characterization of burials in various sites, showing both regional and local diversity in the manners in which local populations tended to be buried. This is not necessarily linked to ethnic identity explanations.

It is precisely this matter of which readers should be aware: most contributions, with noteworthy exceptions, are informed by a specific theoretical interpretative framework on this issue, sometimes actively promoted by the authors. Some researchers simply assume the old diffusionist viewpoints, although without returning to the ideological consequences of these assertions when formerly in the service of unappealing nationalisms. The path followed, from the 1990s, by M. Kazanski and P. Périn – both closely related to the 2013 Journées and these proceedings – is a good example of this. Facing the question of whether archaeology can document the migration of Goths and other barbarians into the Roman west, these authors have been answering

affirmatively for years by using exogenous archeologic material (related to models of the culture of Chernjakhov-Sîntana de Mureş, found in Western burials) as an ethnic marker. To take this path, on one hand, solves the problem of the barbarians' 'invisibility' in the western record. On the other hand, this adds the problem of having to assign the weight of ethnic identity onto a material that, a priori, has no ethnic marks. Critical approaches to this 'ethnification' of the archaeological register, especially by English-speaking archaeologists (G. Halsall), provide the same caveat that we could apply to the conclusions of this volume's contributions. Some of them contain relativist social-identitarian approaches to the matter (M. Pozo's view on the *Vascones* and their adoption of Frankish features is fascinating). Others argue, not misguidedly, that an explanation has to be given to the arrival of archaeological furniture in the fifth century with evident parallel features with that of Danubian regions, even if this explanation includes less drastic theories of imitation and social acculturation (Y. Gourgoury, J.-P. Cazes, J. Jřřic *et al.*, pp. 415–45). Indeed, a feature for which criticism of Kazanski and Périn's model has no answer is the discovery of individuals buried with intentional cranial deformation (in Blanzac, p. 131, or Collegno, p. 374, for example). This practice is usual in the Danubian steppe but completely alien in the west, and I believe that it deserves greater consideration by Kazanski and Périn's critics.

In summary, this is a book worthy of attention, with contributions both from acknowledged specialists and experienced archaeologists in the field. Specialized scholars will find both an up-to-date view on Visigothic archaeology in France and Spain, and some archaeological interpretations that will surely add elements to the debate around barbarian archaeology and its relationship with the transformations of the post-Roman world.

*Universitat de Barcelona*

ORIOl DINARÈS CABRERIZO 

### **Lyon dans l'Europe Carolingienne: Autour d'Agobard (816–840).**

Edited by François Bougard, Alexis Charansonnet and Marie-Céline Isäia. Collection Haut Moyen Âge 36. Turnhout: Brepols. 2019. 382 pp., 21 b/w ill. + 28 colour ill. €80. ISBN 978 2 503 58235 1.

The contributions in this book all revolve around the question of whether the city of Lyon made Agobard's reputation, or whether the infamous archbishop put the city on the map of Carolingian Europe. Thus, as the title implies, the twenty-three meticulously argued and