Mortuary practice in *P.Lond.* 1.77 does not 'reflect the author's ecclesiastical status' (179), but is paralleled in the wills of contemporary men and women. Apollo is not a 'gratuitous heathen God's name' (242), but the Greek version of Abydene Osiris; Bes's status and authority derive precisely from his position as his protector (see also Strabo 17.1.42). A lack of consistency in the use of place names and manuscript citation may also irk some specialists. An index of papyri, inscriptions and other primary sources cited would have been useful and perhaps avoided this latter issue. Finally, just a few typos mar the text, and the last chapter retains some characteristics of informal writing, which, one suspects, is residual from an oral presentation.

Mischaracterisations and errors are to be expected in such a wide-ranging study seeking to control material culture usually covered by different disciplines (if determinedly not archaeology). The work nicely demonstrates the extraordinary range of objects, including texts, uniquely preserved in Egypt, and draws together the evidence for study in a compelling and highly readable exposition. F.'s systematic reappraisal of what it was to be Christian and his deep and critical reading of material sources are especially laudable.

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M. ROBERTS (ED. and TRANS.), *VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, POEMS* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 46). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. xx + 910. ISBN 9780674974920. £19.95.

Venantius Fortunatus, a sixth-century poet writing in Merovingian Gaul, has received increasing attention as more scholars have realised the inventiveness of late antique poetry. Michael Roberts is among recent contributors to our understanding of the complexity of Fortunatus' writing with his *The Humblest Sparrow* (2009). In his new edition and translation for the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, R. provides for the first time an English translation of the entire corpus of Fortunatus' poetry (minus the *Vita Sancti Martini*, already available elsewhere). That this much needed volume features both accessible prose and an affordable price means the beauty and skill of Fortunatus' writing can be appreciated by a far wider audience.

The volume begins with a short introduction to Fortunatus' life, writings and unique style. Though brief, it provides the right balance between the necessary information for a general audience to appreciate the poems and the endnotes to lead scholars to recent in-depth studies and the critical apparatus of earlier editions by Leo, Reydellet and Di Brazzano. Following this, R. proceeds to Fortunatus' preface and the twelve books of his poetry, with the Latin edition and English translation helpfully on facing pages. Books 1–3 and 5 contain poems related to religious matters and church leaders, organised, as R. points out (ix), by status of the addressee. Book 4 collects epitaphs. Books 6 and 7 are poems addressed to secular figures, including members of the Merovingian royal family. Book 8's poems are dedicated to Radegund and Agnes, founder and abbess respectively of the Convent of the Holy Cross and close friends of Fortunatus. Books 9–11 are less organised but also contain many poems to Radegund and Agnes. The final book, 'Appendix', consists of poems not found in most manuscripts of Fortunatus' corpus, collected together by Friedrich Leo in his 1881 edition and henceforth usually treated by scholars as a twelfth book. Three figure poems are reproduced at the end, followed by short but helpful notes — again well balanced between the minor variations in his edition for scholarly reference and the clear explanation of allusions and metaphors for a general audience.

R.'s stated aims for his translation are 'to produce a readable and accurate version of Fortunatus's Latin, without slavishly following the structure of the Latin when it would produce uncomfortable English' (xviii–xix). That he largely succeeds against the challenge of Fortunatus' wordplay and masterful alliterative invention is a testament to his own poetic skill. For example, the vivid imagery of Fortunatus' 'Nunc meliore via viruit renovata vetustas / et lapsae fabricae flos redivivus adit' becomes 'Now the old, made new, is refreshed and improved, and the flower of its fallen fabric comes back to life once more' (1.13.11–12). '… qui nos Romanos vincis in eloquio' becomes '… who in your speech outdo us Romans in ours' (6.2.100). Even simply relaying the meaning of Fortunatus' words in a readable manner can be challenging, without concern for rhythms and alliterations, yet R. produces some of the most readable translations available. In an

epitaph for Leontius the Younger of Bordeaux, R. renders 'Nobilitas altum ducens ab origine nomen, / quale genus Romae forte senatus habet' as 'His nobility derives from his ancestry a lofty title, a family such as might belong to the senate at Rome' (4.10.7–8). Some might quibble at the precise parts of speech, but R.'s prose is fluid and quite faithful in meaning to the original.

One particular term stands out as out of place in a modern edition, and that is 'race'. At 4.26.15, Vilithuta is described as 'torva de gente', for R. 'from a fierce race'; at 7.7.45–6, the description of Lupus as 'Antiquos animos Romanae stirpis adeptus' is rendered 'Possessing the ancient character of the Roman race'; and at 2.8.23 Launebod, 'a man of barbarian ancestry' ('vir barbarica prole') took up duties not done by those 'descended from the Roman race' ('veniens Romana gente'). In contrast, for 'quacumque ex gente creatos', R. provides 'whatever their nationality' (3.14.5). While it could be argued that using 'nationality' rather than 'race' simply replaces one potentially anachronistic and slippery term with another, and that 'race' might even be a more accurate representation of how contemporaries would have understood *gens*, one must not forget that this volume and series are aimed not just at specialists but also at a more general readership. A casual reader who is dependent on the English translation is unlikely to be familiar with scholarly debates on these terms; he or she will simply see the word 'race' and all the modern baggage that comes with it. Given the recent increase in impact of that baggage, some extra caution with the term is probably warranted.

In sum, R.'s edition and translation is an impressive achievement, and a very welcome volume for specialists and general readers alike. Students will benefit from its price and readability, with R.'s notes guiding them through multiple layers of meaning. Specialists will appreciate having what will undoubtedly become the standard edition of Fortunatus' poetry in an accessible format on their own bookshelves. And greater accessibility means we can expect even greater scholarly exploration to come. With R.'s volume, Fortunatus returns to us here and now.

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D. FERNÁNDEZ, *ARISTOCRATS AND STATEHOOD IN WESTERN IBERIA, 300–600 C.E.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. Pp. xiv + 310, illus. ISBN 9780812249460. £50.00.

Over the past couple of decades there has been a noticeable upsurge in English-language studies of Late Antiquity in the Iberian Peninsula. Damián Fernández's fine monograph responds in interesting ways to a number of recent trends in this work, although scholarship in Spanish, Portuguese and other languages is also effectively employed, while the book is well-situated in relation to historiographical trends on the late antique West more generally. Especially impressive is F.'s grasp of the archaeological material, which, alongside the literary and documentary sources, he harnesses to good effect throughout in support of a subtle thesis about the relationships between aristocrats and statehood in late antique Iberia. F. makes a valuable intervention into well-worn debates about relations between central and local powers. However, rather than examining how western Iberian elites expressed their independence following the end of Roman imperial power in the West, or bought into or resisted the attempts of the post-imperial kingdoms of the Suevi and the Visigoths to impose royal power, he demonstrates effectively how they exercised agency in a number of different ways within late and post-Roman state systems, often shaping such systems to their own interests.

Following an introduction that lays out the theoretical, historiographical and methodological foundations of the study, as well as explaining its geographical scope, the book is divided into two parts, each composed of three chapters. Part I examines western Iberian aristocracies in the late Roman world, while the post-Roman context is the focus of Part II. Ch. 1 establishes the baseline from which the rest of the work proceeds, outlining what is known about urban and rural settlements, with a particular focus on monumentality; ch. 2 explores aristocratic identity, while ch. 3 discusses the socio-economic conditions that underpinned aristocratic wealth. Chs 4–6 repeat