celebration in literature and art, the exemplary role of his family and himself, and the attitudes of poets like Propertius and Ovid (thus the mysterious title). ‘God and Man’ is more obviously a study of the ruler cult associated with Augustus and considers Augustus as priest, as godlike man and as saviour.

I recommend both books very highly. But I would want Wallace-Hadrill to support his challenge to innocent readers to exercise their minds on the source material with an equal challenge to command the minefield of scholarship.

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This book is derived from the author’s very concise text Essentials of Statistical Methods, in 41 Pages, with some additional examples taken from history or archaeology for the benefit of students whose main interest lies in study of the past. The author explains that ‘this Version is perfectly usable with a general-purpose statistics course, and may stimulate some students to get interested in the past who would not otherwise have done so’.

Part 1 (pages 1-39) is devoted to Data Description. The concepts of summarising data, sampling, mean, median, root mean square, geometric mean, harmonic mean, range, quartiles, mean absolute deviation, standard deviation, variance, box-and-
whisker plot, skewness, cumulative frequency plot, stem-and-leaf plot and histogram are illustrated mainly with a list of the percentages of tin in a collection of 15 medals by Pisanello. Other historical data (rice prices in Guangzhou and neighbouring provinces, motorway planning) are used to illustrate scatterplots, regression and correlation. A clear explanation is given that the concept of mean is applicable only to numerical data, whereas the concept of median is applicable both to numerical data and to non-numerical graded data. The two standard methods for computing standard deviation

\[ s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(x-m)^2}{n-1}}, \quad s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 - \frac{1}{n}(\sum x)^2}{n-1}}, \]

are shown to be algebraically equivalent; with due warning that the second version is less stable numerically than the first version. Indeed, roundoff in the second version can lead to a negative value for the variance \( s^2 \) ! The author adopts a neutral stance over the vexed question of \( n \) versus \( n-1 \) in the denominators.

Part 2 (pages 40-91) is devoted to Probability. Brief accounts are given of the 3 principal ways of defining probability, followed by the standard rules for calculating probabilities, illustrated with Venn diagrams and tree diagrams. Binomial distributions, Poisson distributions and then general probability distributions and cumulative frequency plots are discussed, including the important cases of uniform distribution, exponential distribution and normal distribution, with expectation and variance of random variables. The only significant historical data discussed are the frequencies of various scores with the ancient Roman gambling using knucklebones, and nutrition of slaves in the USA.

Part 3 (pages 92-138) is devoted to Inference. The concepts of standard error and of the Central Limit Theorem are discussed, leading on to confidence interval, significance level and hypothesis testing. The only significant historical examples used
are the distribution of size of shellfish in Aboriginal shell middens and thicknesses of annual layers in ice caps in the Andes.

References are given on pages 139-140, and a detailed index on pages 141-152. The back cover is filled with diverse quotations on the theme of statistics, including Florence Nightingale’s dictum that:

To understand God’s thoughts we must study
statistics, for these are the measure of his purpose.

This brief textbook is written concisely and clearly, with no misprints being noticed. It should prove to be a useful textbook for an introductory course on statistical methods, although the historical data considered is rather meagre.

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Lee’s book is fresh, valuable and extremely interesting. Not only does it exhibit the author’s knowledge of a very wide spectrum of source material from late antiquity (and of some unexpected secondary reading too), but it ranges well beyond the frontiers themselves into the realms of policy formation and the responses of governments and peoples to those policies.