

often fragile, easily mutable and transferable seem to me very dubious. People generally have a clear idea of who they are.' (p. 301 n. 18). It is unfortunate that this perspective has not been extended, as it runs counter to prevailing orthodoxy. In particular, P. Amory's recent *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy* (Cambridge, 1997) has made a strong case for political identity as being a choice in the period of the collapse of the western empire, and it would have been useful to have some engagement with this work. M. is at times more sensitive than the above quotation implies (pp. 244 and 264–5). But M.'s interpretation of identity leads to doubts that the Eudoxia who married Arcadius was the daughter of Bauto. The argument is that Bauto was a Frank and that 'Arcadius marrying the daughter of a Frankish general is perhaps inherently improbable' (p. 7 n. 6). Since Arcadius' niece Serena married Stilicho, the son of a Vandal officer, stronger arguments need to be made if Philostorgius is to be rejected.

At one point M. suggests that 'Ricimer may have thought of himself primarily as Roman' (p. 191), but, tantalizingly, this insight is not developed, and later it is suggested that as 'a barbarian and an Arian' he could not have been a candidate for the throne for either the Italian aristocracy or Leo (p. 201). This judgement should be considered in light of the offer of the throne by the Senate to Aspar (though this was surely the Senate of Rome, not of Constantinople) and the fact that Aspar's son Patricius was made Caesar (known to M., p. 267). In other words, for both the Italian aristocracy and for Leo, both ascribed ethnicity and faith were not insuperable obstacles to imperial power (pp. 266–7). If we are to understand why men did not want to become emperor, then a more sensitive understanding of the fifth century is necessary (and perhaps greater attention to the strains of the position, highlighted by Constantius III, who was unable to live as happily as emperor as when he was *magister militum* [Olympiodorus, Blockley fr. 33]).

There are a number of minor errors. The chronological table asserts falsely that the Rhine was frozen in 406–7 and that Stilicho was murdered in 409. On the map (p. xvi), labels vary between English and Latin, i.e. Rome but Mediolanum, New and Old Epirus but Dacia Ripensis. Majorian became emperor in 457, not 458 (p. 83). Petrus was *magister* (rather than *quaestor*) *epistularum* (p. 84). *Coloni* were not part of the military structure (p. 154) and *protectores domestici* were not élite troops (p. 188).

This is a well-focused study on one aspect of the fifth-century West. It shows well the weaknesses of the primary sources and the challenges posed in using them to write connected narrative.

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THEODORA

J. A. EVANS: *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian*. Pp. xvi + 146, maps, ills. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002. Cased, US\$29.95. ISBN: 0-292-72105-6.

A monograph by Allan Evans is always eagerly anticipated, and this volume, though relatively slight, is no exception. In this biography of Theodora, wife and partner of Justinian, Evans follows up his analysis of Justinian's reign in the *Age of Justinian: the Circumstances of Imperial Power* (1996) and, as one of the world's acknowledged experts on the sixth century, attempts an elucidation of the motivation and actions of one of the most enigmatic and much debated figures in Byzantine history. Indeed, one of the strengths of the work is the use of Syriac and other non-mainstream

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sources, such as the *Chronicles* of Zachariah of Mytilene and Michael the Syrian, the *Vita* of John of Tella, and the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* to supplement the more commonly known sources for the sixth century.

Evans divides his work into a discussion of the origins of the dynasty, Theodora's background and early career, the couple's early years in power, the Nika revolt, her 'friends and enemies', and her contribution to Justinian's foreign policy, followed by three chapters on her involvement in Justinian's on-going dialogue with Chalcedonians and Monophysites in his attempt to reconcile the opposing parties.

An ex-actress who became her husband's imperial collaborator and partner, 'in the eyes of the upper-class beholder, what Theodora represented was revolutionary' (p. 39), and the volume more than anything emphasizes the unique rôle played by this unusually influential empress—influential not by means of any power in her own right, but by virtue of Justinian's reliance on her loyalty and intelligence.

In any analysis of Justinian's reign, an inevitable problem is the way in which Procopius' works are to be approached. The interrelationship and relative dating of Procopius' works Evans has dealt with elsewhere (notably, *GRBS* [1996]). Here, in his a brief but valuable discussion of the available sources on pp. ix–xvi, he labels the *Anecdota* (*Secret History*) of Procopius as a 'slashing attack' and a 'hostile source written by an embittered man', though not entirely fictional, and notes with regard to Theodora's hippodrome career as an actress that 'the stories Procopius relates about Theodora's early life in his *Secret History* may be only half-true . . .' (p. 15) and, with regard to Theodora's treatment of her enemies, that 'we cannot accept the *Secret History* at face value' (p. 58). Indeed, regarding the overt contradictions in the accounts in Procopius' *Wars* and *Anecdota* of Amalasuintha's murder, he concludes that the balance of probability seems to lie somewhere between the two accounts, with the *Anecdota* rather revealing what court circles thought possible than accurately chronicling events (pp. 64–6). Nevertheless, he does not entirely avoid the trap of apparently accepting the account of the *Anecdota* where no other source is available, with regard not only to Theodora's shady past, but also her underhand machinations as empress. Her ruthless reaction, when Justinian was seriously ill with the plague, to the discussions of officials about the possibilities surrounding the succession (pp. 52, 96)—though entirely credible—is only documented by the *Anecdota* (4.1–13). Similarly the *Anecdota* is our only source for the tittle-tattle of the court regarding matters such as the background of Justinian's uncle and predecessor Justin (pp. 4–5), the affair of Belisarius' adopted son and his wife Antonina (pp. 52–4), and Theodora's removal of the handsome young barbarian Areobindus from court (p. 48). It is quite possible that the *Anecdota* is presenting an embellished version of the truth—after all, it is not the *Anecdota* but the *Wars* and the *De Magistratibus* which are witness to her machinations against John the Cappadocian—but the fact that in the *Anecdota* Procopius is a 'malevolent witness' (p. 18) and that Theodora could inspire 'bitter visceral hatred' (p. xv) should never be discounted.

Similarly, with John of Ephesus' two contradictory accounts regarding the later career of the deposed patriarch Anthimus, Evans accepts the one given in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* which tells how Theodora concealed the ex-patriarch for twelve years in the palace women's quarters (p. 83), though this differs radically from John's other account of Anthimus' deposition in his *Ecclesiastical History* (1.42).

Viewing Theodora as 'both Justinian's loyal opposition and his loyal collaborator' (p. 68), Evans attributes the empress with the power and willingness to run deliberately counter to Justinian's own policies, as in her successful establishment of Monophysitism amongst the Nobadae of Nubia in deliberate competition with Justinian's

own Chalcedonian embassy (pp. 61–3), instead of seeing this as one of the occasions of the couple's *modus operandi* of invariably collaborating, while acting publicly as if at daggers drawn (*Anecdota* 10.23). Certainly her commitment to Monophysitism was fervent, and it is ironic that Evans concludes that her one lasting achievement was inadvertently to widen the rift between Monophysites and Chalcedonians (p. xvi).

An afterword discusses Theodora briefly in terms of powerful women from Aspasia and Cleopatra VII on, noting the shift in attitude introduced by Christianity which brought women greater respect and the ways in which Theodora differs from other powerful imperial women, such as those of the Theodosian dynasty and even her own niece Sophia, in being totally without a power base: 'actresses were the outcasts of society' and no empress before or since had started so low, yet she became the accepted 'partner of one of the best emperors in Byzantine history' (pp. 117–18) and perhaps even the one most enthusiastically behind the grandiose plans for the reconquest of the west (p. 105).

Despite her involvement in Justinian's legal reforms, which particularly targeted disadvantaged women (pp. 36–9), Evans rightly does not see her as a feminist, but as a woman acting within Christian traditions of compassion for weak and helpless—and, one might add, an empress concerned to reinforce her own status by being seen to so act. Her overwhelming impact was due to the fact that she was seen to wield independent power in a man's world, which usually limited feminine power.

The book is written with verve and great scholarship, but some references are incomplete: for example, Agapetus's accusation of Justinian as a second Diocletian (p. 82); and Victor of Tonnena's ascription of Theodora's death to cancer (p. 103). Pauline Allen's 'Contemporary Portrayals of the Empress Theodora (AD 527–548)' in *Stereotypes of Women in Power* (1992) could have been included in the brief but useful bibliography, while the primary sources are not arranged to best advantage and have apparent omissions (such as John of Nikiu, Evagrius). However, this is a work which no serious student of the sixth century could afford to be without.

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ECONOMICS OF THE ROMAN ARMY

P. ERDCAMP (ed.): *The Roman Army and the Economy*. Pp. 434, maps, ills. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2002. Cased, €98. ISBN: 90-5063-318-8.

'Who can count up the benefits of a successful life in the army?' So Juvenal began his famous satire on the Roman army (16.1–2). Soldiers were regularly paid, had adequate food, and lived in what must have seemed to the local population well-appointed camps and forts. It is no wonder that these military bases became a magnet for civilians providing various services. The question of supplying the troops and their economic impact on local communities is important. Although numerically only a small proportion of the population, by the late second century A.D. the Roman army had a permanent presence in nineteen provinces of the empire, and was the largest state-sponsored organization in the ancient world.

The essays in this collection, which concentrates on the imperial period down to the late empire and early Byzantine period, loosely follow three main themes: army supply, communications and transport, and the impact of the army in the provinces (concentrating on Spain, Britain and Germany, north Africa and the east). Central to the discussion is the idea that taxes flowed from the core provinces to pay the troops in