

refreshing change. Differences of opinion between the contributors are at times apparent (as, for example, between Harries and Graumann on the extent to which Theodosius was actively involved in the decisions of his government; part of a wider debate on the degree to which the personal involvement of an emperor in the decision-making of ‘his’ government may be discerned), but this only gives the reader more to think about.

The volume builds on a growing corpus of recent studies challenging once-established views of Theodosius II and his reign as feeble and incompetent; it highlights the complexity of court politics, too often assumed to be dominated by one faction or even individual – a point already well made by H. Elton (‘Imperial Politics at the Court of Theodosius II’, in A. Cain and N. Lenski, *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* [2009], pp. 133–42) but deserving of further exploration. This will undoubtedly be a most useful book for scholars of the period and will considerably enhance our understanding of the rule of Theodosius II, the longest-reigning Roman emperor.

Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main

MEAGHAN MCEVOY
mcevoy@em.uni-frankfurt.de

THE CAPITAL OF THE ADRIATIC

DAVID (M.) *Eternal Ravenna. From the Etruscans to the Venetians*. Pp. 287, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. Cased, €95. ISBN: 978-2-503-54941-5.
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This book is the product of a long-standing interest of the author. It stems from thirteen years of research and teaching on Ravenna, as associated professor in late-antique archaeology at the Centre of Ancient Ravenna and Byzantine Studies in Ravenna (University of Bologna). D. is moreover a renowned scholar in the field of late-antique urbanism, especially of Milan and Ostia, the latter in which he is currently directing an excavation outside the Porta Marina. He is thus in an excellent position to fulfil the book’s aim of placing Ravenna in a larger political and cultural context. The book also applies a longer time frame than usual. It does not limit itself to the period beginning with the move to Ravenna by Emperor Honorius in 402, until the time of the church historian Agnellus in the mid-ninth century. Instead, it spans the whole length of the city’s ancient history, from the oldest finds dating to the sixth century B.C.E., until Ravenna became part of the Papal States in 1512. This is to avoid a common misunderstanding of the city’s position, not as the ‘Byzantium of Italy’, but as a reflection of the whole of Italian history, as in the famous line by Arnaldo Momigliano (‘When I want to understand Italian history, I catch a train and go to Ravenna’), quoted in the introduction.

The book is divided into seven chapters, covering the development of Ravenna chronologically. In the introduction earlier scholarship is presented, together with a presentation of the changing coastal landscape. The second chapter covers the period from traces of Etruscan culture in the sixth century B.C.E. down to the city becoming an imperial residence in 402 C.E. The following two chapters, covering the fifth century and sixth century, are by far the longest, and form a natural focus, as in most studies on Ravenna. They are followed by much shorter chapters describing developments from the Lombard invasions to the mid-ninth century, the years c. 850–1200 and finally the period leading up to the papal conquest in 1512. The book closes with an illustrated appendix of maps, plans, drawings and photos.

It also has endnotes (which are kept to a minimum, but still prove useful), a sizeable bibliography and an index of names.

The dust jacket claims that the book aims to remedy a lack of general studies on the city. This is underscored in the foreword, which states that the book will study Ravenna 'beyond the trite and repetitive framework in which it is often confined'. This book should rather be seen as part of a current, and much welcome, trend of general works on Ravenna, sometimes also expanding beyond the late-antique framework, which will, however, always form a natural core of scholarly interest. To name but a few (most of them quoted in the bibliography): D.M. Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (2010), which despite the name includes chapters on Republican and Imperial Ravenna, and goes up to 850; the five-volume work *Storia di Ravenna* (1990–1996); the collection of studies in *Ravenna da capitale imperiale a capitale esarcale* (2005); A. Augenti, (ed.) *Classe: indagini sul potenziale archeologico di una città scomparsa* (2011) and F. Boschi (ed.) *Ravenna e l'Adriatico dalle origini all'età romana* (2013) on recent work in the hinterland of Ravenna; E. Cirelli, *Ravenna: archeologia di una città* (2008), an archaeological survey of the city which covers the period from Augustus to the fourteenth century; and C. Jäggi, *Ravenna: Kunst und Kultur einer spätantiken Residenzstadt* (2013), with expert coverage of late-antique Ravenna accompanied by a collection of fabulous images.

What makes this volume outstanding in its coverage of Ravenna is its lavishly produced photographic record of monuments and works of art. D. has worked closely with Basilio Rodella and his son Matteo Rodella, of BAMS Photo Rodella, and with the generous cooperation of heritage authorities in Ravenna, in a photographic campaign covering an entire year. The result is 219 breathtaking and crisp colour images, sometimes of sites or objects to which the ordinary visitor does not have access.

The book is not primarily aimed at the scholarly community, but is meant to be appreciated by the general public, according to D. in an interview by an Italian newspaper. However, the book requires a fair amount of previous knowledge of the topography and history of Ravenna, with names and events piling up, often without giving the reader any background information. To include quotes in Latin and ancient Greek, sometimes only translated in the endnotes, might also deter a more general readership. Maps, plans and reconstructions can be found at the end of the book, but the text would have been made much more lucid by their integration with the main text. This is especially true of the introductory chapter, where maps would have been a good complement to the fine aerial views. Often locations in Ravenna are given by modern street names, but there is no map where these are included. Moreover, the maps use Latin names for rivers, whereas Italian names are provided in the text.

The volume was simultaneously published in Italian (as *Ravenna eterna*, by Jaca Book), German (as *Ravenna: Kunst und Architektur in Antike und Mittelalter*, by Imhof Verlag), French (as *Ravenne*, by Editions Hazan) and English. The book was written in Italian, and the English text is unfortunately marred by a convoluted language, perhaps a result of an overly hurried translation. We are, for example, informed that the Huns were 'capable of seriously compromising consolidated political assets' (p. 105). Translations of names are also inconsistent, with most names being given in English, but the bishops of Ravenna, and other local personalities, alternate between English and Italian name forms. This also applies to place names given in translations from Latin, such as *al Faro* for *ad Farum* (p. 124), or *the church of the Salvatore* for *ecclesia Salvatoris* (p. 207). In general, the translation of quotations in Latin leaves much to be desired.

There are also some factual errors in the text. To give some examples: the 'age of the Antoninians' (p. 48) does not refer to coins, but to the Antonines. It is doubtful whether it

can be said that Constantine created 'a strictly monocratic regime' (p. 54), when in fact he divided the empire between his sons. It was Ambrose, rather than Ausonius, who gave an oration at the funeral of Theodosius at Milan (p. 61). D. asserts that the fate of the empire was 'resolved in a face-to-face confrontation between Honorius and Alaric' (p. 64). Another example is the Keay 26 *spatheia*, which D. claims should be dated to between the ninth and the twelfth century (p. 77). It is an odd suggestion that 'in 554 Justinian declared war in Italy with the Pragmatic sanction' (p. 190). Finally, iconoclasm was not proclaimed in 711 (p. 213).

Apart from the English translation, these are minor faults that do not detract from the overall quality of the book. Throughout the work, D. competently weaves together general historic narrative, urban developments and discussion of individual monuments. Together with the excellent illustrations, the volume forms an intriguing image of the ancient city, and the book should be a proud addition to the library of all with an interest in the 'capital of the Adriatic'.

University of Bergen

SIMON MALMBERG
simon.malmberg@ahkr.uib.no

WARFARE IN LATE ANTIQUITY

SARANTIS (A.), CHRISTIE (N.) (edd.) *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity. Current Perspectives*. In two volumes. (Late Antique Archaeology 8.1 & 8.2.) Pp. xxvi + viii + 1084, figs, ills, maps. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013. Cased, €254, US\$329. ISBN: 978-90-04-25281-3 (vol. 1); 978-90-04-25282-0 (vol. 2); 978-90-04-25257-8 (set).

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The theme of warfare in Late Antiquity has become a major focus of academic interest in recent years, although detailed and fully referenced books on the subject have not matched this rise in popularity. These two volumes go some way towards providing a very useful textbook, covering a wide range of topics from the late Roman, but also the early Byzantine, period. Contributions are mostly, but not exclusively, based upon papers presented at a conference held in Oxford in 2007 in which both historians and archaeologists participated. All texts are accompanied by copious up-to-date references allowing for further investigation.

The first volume contains a series of bibliographical essays introducing the most recent publications on key aspects of warfare; notably on military equipment, the conduct of warfare, the late Roman army and strategy, and fortifications in the west, Africa and in the East. Although exceptionally well-referenced, these studies in themselves provide a range of interesting and valuable contributions, including excellent papers by S., 'Waging War in Late Antiquity' and 'Tactics', as well as a stimulating review of the 'Organisation and Life in the Late Roman Military' by C. Whately. The last two papers on fortifications in the western provinces (by S. and C.) are rather short on discussion but include invaluable bibliographical information and guidance in a field which has become crammed with a vast quantity of data, in part due to the regular series of international conferences on forts of the Roman empire (The Limes Congresses).