chapter is full of quotations, which sometimes detract from the flow of the narrative. That said, for those less familiar with the material, they do provide useful insight into the sources of Honorius and his world. There is the occasional unexplained person or group, like the Iubaleni (90), who are otherwise unaccounted for in the book, but who feature in Ammianus' *Res Gestae*. There are some gaps in the scholarship, too, such as Downey on the peasants in North Africa, Merrills and Miles on the Vandals, Modéran on the Moors, and Sivan's book on Galla Placidia, among others. Finally, in a book that works hard to resurrect Honorius' reputation and to circumvent the comparative absence of quality source material, not as much of the discussion is focused on Honorius as I might have expected, which perhaps only serves to underscore the problems with the source material.

Throughout, D. tries to boost Honorius' reputation, and on the basis of some details, like his abolishment of child abandonment and his building programme, his arguments are perhaps not so easily dismissed. The longevity of Honorius' reign does support D.'s case, although bigger issues, like the numerous challenges to Honorius' authority, whether they came from generals or competing popes, are likely to leave some unconvinced. That said, D.'s book is easy to read and provides a wide-ranging overview of the Roman world in the early fifth century C.E. using a diverse body of evidence.

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PETER HEATHER, *ROME RESURGENT: WAR AND EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xiii + 393, illus. ISBN 9780199362745. £22.99.

Peter Heather is known for his big books on 'barbarians' and the later Roman empire, and it is no surprise to find him turning to the subject of Justinian I's reconquest of the west. The book is part of the OUP series Ancient Warfare and Civilization, in which 'leading historians offer compelling new narratives of the armed conflicts that shaped and reshaped the classical world'. The central question H. poses is whether the conquests of Justinian were worth it. He pursues this across an Introduction and eleven chapters, supported by maps (though a couple have issues of legibility), illustrations, endnotes and bibliography, as well as a timeline and a glossary.

The Introduction begins with the building of Justiniana Prima in the Balkans, a neat way to introduce Justinian himself. The key issue of whether Justinian's conquests were fatal for the Roman empire is established, and H. asserts that 'this is fundamentally a book about the wars of Justinian: an attempt to provide narrative and analysis of their causes, course, and consequences' (10). Here he acknowledges the Procopius problem — akin to the Thucydides problem. In ch. 1, H. establishes the 'political and institutional backdrop', an approach which, he remarks, is out of favour 'under the influence of the Cultural Turn' (18). He takes time to establish the ideology of the empire, in which military success was key. He also dwells on the issue of succession (which surfaces throughout the book), to which, in H.'s view, insufficient attention is paid (31). Ch. 2 considers the evolving nature of the later Roman army (there is 'a military revolution', 55), and how the army was funded.

With the context established, H. then turns to the narrative. Ch. 3 describes how Justinian came to be emperor, entailing consideration of the reigns of Anastasius and Justin I. Here Theodora, 'a blonde' (89), also surfaces. Ch. 4 tracks the early history of the reign (ecclesiastical affairs, legislation, Persia) culminating in the infamous Nika Riot and the decision to launch the expedition against the Vandals in North Africa. Ch. 5 details the campaign, and argues that it was the transformed nature of the Roman army that was primarily responsible for the success. Ch. 6 narrates the campaign against Ostrogothic Italy up to the capture of Ravenna by Belisarius in 540. Ch. 7 takes us through Justinian's legal, building and ecclesiastical activity in the wake of the dramatic victory. Ch. 8 turns to Persia again, and the renewed conflict under Chosroes. Ch. 9 returns to Africa and Italy, considering the further problems that were encountered, and ends with the victories of Narses. H. then gives us his verdicts on the consequences of Justinian's campaigns: ch. 10, taking in both the northern frontier and Spain, provides a balance sheet, and concludes that the campaigns were indeed worth it. Finally, ch. 11 considers whether the western campaigns

actually weakened the eastern empire and led to its collapse. Again H. finds in favour of Justinian, and argues that it was external factors (the Avars and Arabs) that did for the Roman empire, though at the very end he poses the question whether the example of Justinian's spectacular military successes was responsible for subsequent emperors making poor decisions.

Such are H.'s answers to the central question he had posed. One may feel, however, that there is little to surprise here: Mark Whittow's 1996 assessment of the state of the empire around 600 in *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium* came to my mind. Furthermore, Heather offers a rather familiar account of the reign of Justinian. The campaigns are not his sole focus of interest, and all the usual suspects are encountered — Theodora, legislation, plague, church affairs, Hagia Sophia, to name but a few.

It is clear that the book is not primarily aimed at other academics but rather at a more general readership. The supplying of the glossary indicates this, as does the more informal style of writing: contractions abound, emperors are said to 'peg out', and we are assured that Totila 'would have made one hell of a polo player' (255). There is heavy use of historical parallels and allusions, some of which have a genuine point to make (Michael Gove surfaces more than once in relation to competition for power), while others seem just for colour (references to Trump and to Bill Clinton). H. even draws on his own experiences from working in the UK Treasury, in order to make a point about how government presents its actions in relation to the previous regime. Some of the illustrations are also suggestive of aiming at a popular audience; a nineteenth-century image of the eunuch Narses is included without any discussion (Fig. 4.1).

Another notable feature of the book is that some recent scholarship on the later Roman army is not utilised, such as work by David Parnell, Philip Rance and Michael Stewart, and the two volumes on *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity* edited by Alexander Sarantis and Neil Christie (2013). One imagines that the likely audience for H.'s book would have been interested in these also. There is the sense, too, that H. does not entirely solve the Procopius problem. It is revealing that Procopius is now receiving significant attention again: witness the volume *Procopius of Caesarea: Literary and Historical Interpretations*, edited by Christopher Lillington-Martin and Elodie Turquois (2018). Of course, H. did not set out to write a comprehensive history of the reign of Justinian; but his book reminds us that we still lack one.

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LILLIAN I. LARSEN and SAMUEL RUBENSON (EDS), *MONASTIC EDUCATION IN LATE ANTIQUITY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF CLASSICAL* PAIDEIA. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. x + 398, illus. ISBN 9781107194953. £90.00.

This fascinating book, the fruit of a conference held at Lund University, studies late ancient Christian monasteries as centres of education. It reconsiders monastic pedagogical strategies, school texts and literary culture in relation to their Greco-Roman counterparts. Its chapters focus on how monastic institutions transmitted Greek and Roman classical philosophy and literature. In monastic circles, teachers taught their students reading, writing and rhetoric, while they pursued the life of virtue through the exercise of ascetic discipline. The book argues for a dynamic continuity between emergent monastic movements and the practices and contours of Greco-Roman *paideia* and philosophical schools.

Lillian I. Larsen and Samuel Rubenson have edited this book meticulously. Its contributors come from subfields that include papyrology, material culture and literature, and they examine sources from Latin, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic. Some authors investigate inscriptions, notes on ostraca, papyri, or philosophical traditions; others analyse the monastic material itself, asking how these products came from 'a society steeped in Classical *paideia*' (3). The book contains five parts: I 'The Language of Education'; II 'Elementary Education and Literacy'; III 'Grammar and Rhetoric'; IV 'Philosophy'; V 'Manuscript and Literary Production'. Through studying what and how monks learned, we see the transmission and refashioning of classical *paideia* in its Christian ascetic form.