

POST-HERULIAN ATHENS

Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens
A.D. 267–529

Edited by
Paavo Castrén

HELSINKI 1994

Julia Burman

The Athenian Empress Eudocia

Introduction¹

It is quite understandable that the Eastern Empress Eudocia interests modern historians of the fifth century. The beautiful and mysterious legend which surrounds her is fascinating: what can be of more interest to the human mind than the story of an intelligent woman famous for promoting monasticism who is also suspected of committing adultery?

In ancient and modern historiography it has been the tradition to categorise the Emperor Theodosius II as a feeble but studious emperor, who acted under the domination of others: his sister, the Empress Pulcheria; his wife, the Empress Eudocia; his ministers such as Cyrus or his chamberlain Chrysaphius. The two empresses have been described as duelling for control of the emperor and for exerting their own political power.² It may be useful to explore this scene of two politically powerful empresses and a weak emperor. It would also be relevant to consider according to what set of values Theodosius II could be deemed feeble and a coward. The purpose of this paper, however, is to question the role of the Empress Eudocia.

¹ I wish to thank Professor Paavo Castrén and our team for continuous support, especially my husband Erkki Sironen for his advice in interpreting Latin and Greek, and Ms. Arja Karivieri in archaeology. I also wish to thank Professor Päivi Setälä and her seminar for women studies for constructive criticism. Any faults, however, are mine.

² Guldenpenning (1885), 320–326; Seeck (1920), 82–83; Holum (1982), 91 ff., 97, 121; Alan Cameron (1982), 224; already in Priscus' fragments (5th c.) Theodosius is said to have lived the life of a coward, see Priscus' fr. 3 (ed. Blockley (1983)).

Sources

There are three main categories of direct sources concerning Eudocia:

- the writings of Eudocia;
- contemporary sources: inscriptions, the *Church History* of Socrates and a few references in epistolography;
- later sources: Byzantine chronicles, excerpts in Photius and *Suda*, and hagiography;

The indirect sources are archaeological material and the *Church History* of Sozomen, which, however, does not explicitly mention Eudocia.³

Perhaps the most reliable of the literary sources is the *Church History* of Socrates, but, unfortunately, he has been very brief concerning Eudocia. Thus most of the details can be found only in the later Byzantine chronicles. The intention of this paper is to scrutinise not only the legend of Eudocia but also the other available evidence in order to speculate on what the basis of these materials was formed; what and how much can be discovered about this mysterious lady?

I. The Woman of the Legend

The earliest version of the legend of Eudocia that we have is in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas (sixth century). It is more or less faithfully repeated by later chroniclers, because they used Malalas' chronicle as their source. The main differences are in the ways in which the story has been coloured: John Malalas tells us that Eudocia was learned in philosophy; the later chroniclers describe her as also being a specialist in mathematics and astronomy.⁴

The Legend of Eudocia in Malalas' *Chronicle*

The legend of Eudocia is notable in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, because it is a rather long, complete story, a legend *par excellence*, in comparison with his stories about the other empresses, which could be classified as anecdotes or short episodes.⁵ In its completeness the story about Eudocia is reminiscent of the legends comprising the earlier part of the *Chronicle*, which considers the more or less legendary past, that is Phaedra and Pasiphae.⁶ It has been noticed by modern scholars that Malalas reconstructs the legendary past in terms of events from the recent past.⁷ The legends of Phaedra and of

³ See Hansen (1960), Ixvii; Alan Cameron (1982).

⁴ Malalas 14 (transl. Jeffreys–Jeffreys–Scott (1986), 192–195). The Greek text, ed. Dindorf (1831), 352–358; for a late version, see Nicephorus Callistus 14.23 (*PG* 146, col. 1129).

⁵ Malalas 18 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 440–441) Theodora; *id.* 15 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 385–389) Verina; *id.* 13 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 341) Marina.

⁶ *Id.* 4 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 88–90) Phaedra, and Pasiphae (ed. Dindorf (1831), 85–86).

⁷ Jeffreys (1990a), 61; Scott (1990a), 151–152.

Eudocia are so similar regarding the tragic elements of misunderstandings and rumours which ruin the lives of these chaste women that Malalas cannot have accidentally included them in his *Chronicle*. As Elizabeth Jeffreys has shown, the composition of the *Chronicle* proves that Malalas was deliberate in including material in his history which corresponded to his world view.⁸

It is possible that John Malalas used a legend which was already in existence as the material for his story of Eudocia. Whether this derived from folklore or actual sources is unclear.⁹ The reasons why he chose to use such a story about Eudocia but no-one else involved in the history may be complicated, but I wish to suggest two simple ones. Firstly, as an Antiochian and possibly as a monophysite Malalas felt sympathy for the Empress Eudocia, as she was a benefactress of the city of Antioch and had been the patron of some famous monophysites in Palestine. Malalas may also have wished to deny the stories about Eudocia which were less sympathetic.¹⁰ Secondly, it is a charming story. It was not uncommon for ancient historians to relate amusing stories in between their histories as a means of entertaining the audience.¹¹

As has been pointed out by Alan Cameron and Kenneth Holum, the legend of Eudocia has a romantic aura, and includes typical folk tale elements. In brief, it is a Cinderella-story.¹² Folk tales are rich in variations, and the giving of a certain form is by no means arbitrary. Every part of the story has its internal function, but the parts also have an external relationship to historical events. In our case, however, it is difficult to determine which parts have a relationship to the historical events around Eudocia. Nevertheless, it constitutes an important piece of information. It is in fact trustworthy as regards the details of the legend of Eudocia, as these are confirmed by other sources. The reliability of the story has caused discussion, and as the disagreement between Alan Cameron and Kenneth Holum shows,¹³ the problems inherent in its interpretation are by no means easy to solve. In older historiography the story was accepted without criticism,¹⁴ whereas in modern scholarship it is mainly rejected by Holum and only partly accepted by Alan Cameron.

The main points of the story are a) the role played by the Empress Pulcheria in looking for a wife for her brother the Emperor Theodosius and the introduction of the orphaned daughter of the Athenian philosopher Leontius to him; b) the family dispute, in which Athenais/Eudocia, with the help of her aunts, petitioned against her brothers regarding her inheritance (thereby meeting the Empress Pulcheria) and after her marriage to the emperor her forgiveness of her troublesome brothers; c) Paulinus' role as the friend of Theodosius, who became a close friend also to Eudocia; and d) the tragedy of the apple affair, during which Eudocia gave the Phrygian apple she had received from Theodosius

⁸ Jeffreys (1990a), 55, 61, 62; Jeffreys (1990b), 164–166; Jeffreys (1990c), 168, 215–216. See also Scott (1990b), 75–77, the theme of manipulating the past in Malalas, Scott (1990a), 147–148.

⁹ Jeffreys (1990c), 180, 211.

¹⁰ These stories have not survived, but John of Nikiu (87.13) says explicitly that historians lie about the reasons why Eudocia left the Court. See also Alan Cameron (1982), 259. Recently the monophysitism of Malalas has been disputed by Croke (1990), 16–17.

¹¹ Herodotus was one of the first to do this: Scott (1990b), 79–80.

¹² Alan Cameron (1982), 258–259, 270 ff.; Holum (1982), 114.

¹³ Though both above-mentioned studies on Eudocia are excellent, Alan Cameron and Kenneth G. Holum seem to hold opposite views on the main questions. The basic articles Seeck (1909a) in *RE* and Beck (1966) in *RLAC* do have differences in interpretation.

¹⁴ Gregorovius (1927), 744; Diehl (1959), 21–35; Seeck (1920), 82; Stein (1928), 425–426 and Bury (1923), 220, 230–231, follow closely the legend. Only the adultery has been suspected, mainly on moralistic reasons.

to Paulinus after which Paulinus gave it back to Theodosius, thus causing the killing of Paulinus by the jealous Theodosius, and Eudocia's leaving for the Holy Land. As these elements have recently been interpreted in opposite ways by Holum and Alan Cameron, they must be scrutinised here, too.

a) The Role of the Empress Pulcheria

The legend as told by Malalas gives great importance to the Empress Pulcheria as the one who introduces the girl to the emperor. This role of Pulcheria is generally accepted. Only Holum holds this to be a late addition,¹⁵ because there is no contemporary source which confirms Pulcheria playing a part in the marriage.

In his book about the Theodosian Empresses, Holum promotes a theory of a Traditionalist party and a Christian party, which had reciprocal tensions, the main issue of the conflict being the relationship to the pagans and classical culture. The traditionalists sympathised with the classical heritage and did not like the pressure which was put on pagans. Holum claims that they promoted (with the help of Paulinus) Athenais/Eudocia and hoped that she would support their politics. Malalas and also a contemporary source (Socrates' *Church History*) relate that Athenais was baptised and renamed Eudocia before her marriage, Malalas adds that she had been a pagan.¹⁶ In Holum's view the daughter of a pagan sophist would support paganism.

Cameron considers this kind of schema an over-simplification and denies the possibility of Eudocia being an agent of the traditionalists, a group which he rejects. He stresses the great influence of the Empress Pulcheria and accepts that she introduced the young Athenais.¹⁷ He does not consider there to be any irony in the story. Nor does he believe the story to have the function of emphasising the later clash between the Empresses. Politically speaking, Eudocia was unimportant.¹⁸ As the folk tale surrounding Eudocia is reminiscent of the Cinderella-type, she cannot have been a member of a very powerful family. None of her kin held supreme power. If Pulcheria wanted to forestall the powerful families from gaining more influence, a bride from outside those circles would have been an excellent choice.

The main problem with Holum's interpretation is, however, that there are scant contemporary sources. In fact, the first description of the Empress Eudocia after Socrates' *Church History* is found in Malalas' *Chronicle*. Marriage was not a private business to be undertaken without the permission of other members of the family.¹⁹ If the emperor had married a woman against the wish of his powerful sister, there probably would be some hints about this.

¹⁵ Holum (1982), 115.

¹⁶ Socrates 7.21, Malalas 14 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 355); Holum (1982), 84–86, 112–113. I discuss Eudocia's paganism later, see below, Chapter III.

¹⁷ Alan Cameron (1982), 271–273.

¹⁸ *Id.*, 276–277. Malalas does not tell us about any kind of clash between the Empresses.

¹⁹ There are, of course, examples of situations where the one holding power has been unable to influence the person whom the emperor will marry – Rufinus failed to wed his daughter to Arcadius. But that relationship is not analogous to the relationship between Pulcheria and Theodosius.

b) The Family Dispute

Another problem is whether or not the story about the inheritance has a core of truth in it. We have no other information about Athenais' motives for coming to Constantinople, but there would be no need to invent a family dispute: being orphaned would be reason enough for a young lady to move to her aunt's home, especially if her father Leontius and brothers had been incapable of arranging for a suitable marriage for her in Athens.

On the other hand, this episode demonstrates Eudocia's clemency. Athenais/Eudocia had been maltreated by her brothers, but she considered this to be due to fate; the instrument by which she met the emperor. When Eudocia brought her brothers Valerius and Gessius to Constantinople, instead of being punished they were given the high offices of praetorian prefects.

Eudocia seems to have had influential enough relatives in Constantinople, because it was quite difficult to arrange to meet the empress herself.²⁰ It is only in the legend that this paternal aunt is mentioned, but it is quite possible that Leontius had a sister. This relative of Eudocia, however, was by no means one of the close circle around the Empress Pulcheria. It was necessary to have a reason to ask for an audience: the story gives us a valid explanation.

c) The Role of Paulinus

What was the role of Paulinus, the friend and fellow-student of Theodosius? Is his role only to clearly show tension in the story, the ruined friendship between Paulinus and the emperor,²¹ or was he the traditionalist who introduced Athenais to Theodosius in spite of Pulcheria?²²

As stated above, there is no indication that Theodosius married without the approval of his sister. Furthermore, the story mentions that the groomsman Paulinus had free access to Eudocia. It is difficult, therefore, to think that the function of this episode is anything else but to ostensibly underline the clash between two old friends, the Emperor Theodosius and Paulinus. There is no hint that Paulinus had any connection with Eudocia before she entered the Court.

d) The Tragedy

The dramatic story of an exceptionally beautiful apple which was the cause of jealousy between Theodosius and Eudocia resulting in Paulinus' death is a typical folk tale. In Byzantine folklore the apple is a symbol of love and erotic attachment: the Phrygian apple especially is an allusion to the Trojan War and the love between Paris and Helen.²³ This story has raised the suspicion of Eudocia's adultery. The charge of adultery is a serious

²⁰ It seems that unofficial ways were the best and the quickest, see Bury (1923), 142–147.

²¹ Alan Cameron (1982), 277.

²² Holum (1982), 120.

²³ Littlewood (1974), 41, 46–48; Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (1989), 74, note 250.

one as it would imply that Eudocia wanted to replace her husband, and the correspondent would have been charged with high treason.²⁴

On the other hand, Alan Cameron points out that the function of the story is to emphasise Eudocia's innocence, and to exaggerate Theodosius' jealousy. It is, however, a proof that there were rumours of adultery.²⁵

Another question is when did these rumours start and is there any truth in them. There are no extant contemporary sources to confirm the rumours: only an obscure reference to "the death of the prince of adultery who put the empress in shame" in Nestorius' apocalyptic description about the miseries that had occurred after the giving up of the true religion, that is to say Nestorianism, written in about A.D. 450.²⁶ But it is not self-evident that Nestorius is referring to Eudocia and Paulinus; there are two other possibilities.

Firstly, Nestorius might refer to Pulcheria and Paulinus.²⁷ Before his views on the Virgin Mary were considered to be heretical by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople. At the end of the 420's he suspected Paulinus of having an affair with the most pious virginal Empress Pulcheria.²⁸ That is why Pulcheria and Nestorius were at odds on a personal level. Later in Nestorian historiography the Empress Pulcheria is suspected of having had seven lovers.²⁹

On the other hand, the Empress Pulcheria did retire from the Court in about A.D. 439 in a way that caused the historian Socrates not to mention her name in his *Church History*. The other church historian of the day, Sozomen, who wrote in the latter part of the 440's, praised Pulcheria for helping her brother to rule the empire, but he did not mention Eudocia. Neither Socrates nor Sozomen dares go beyond the year 439! As Pulcheria returned to power in A.D. 451, it is possible that these unpleasant rumours failed to survive except in the Nestorian chronicles.

The second possibility is that Nestorius is referring to a scandal in the Western Court. There the Empress Honoria had fallen into shame because of a love affair with a certain Eugenius (who was beheaded).³⁰

In the legend Paulinus is described as being young and handsome. In fact, he must have been about the same age as Theodosius as they were fellow-students. He may well have been handsome. He was executed either in A.D. 440 or 444.³¹ The earlier date is preferable, because it is given by Marcellinus Comes. The later date is usual in the later chronicles, but they are not too trustworthy as they extend their stories out of the time limits of a year. As Eudocia's second visit to Jerusalem can be dated in A.D. 440/441 and as it is probable that these events were almost contemporaneous, this would point to the earlier date.³²

²⁴ Holum (1982), 193–194; Alan Cameron (1982), 258–259.

²⁵ Alan Cameron (1982), 259. John of Nikiu claims (87.13) that historians lie about the reasons Eudocia left for Jerusalem.

²⁶ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* (transl. Nau (1910), 331).

²⁷ This explanation is preferred by Stein (1928), 445 and Seeck (1920), 201–202.

²⁸ Barhadbesabba 27 (*PO* 9, 565); *Lettre à Cosme* (transl. Nau (1910), 363–364); Holum (1982), 153. The tension between Pulcheria and Paulinus is indicated also in Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 340, and in *Suda*, Π 2145.

²⁹ Barhadbesabba 27 (*PO* 9, 565); *Lettre à Cosme* (transl. Nau (1910), 363–364).

³⁰ Priscus' fr. 17 (ed. Blockley (1983)); *PLRE* II, s.v. Iusta Grata Honoria.

³¹ Marcellinus Comes, *sub anno* 440; *Chronicon Paschale*, *sub anno* 444.

³² Eudocia's departure is firmly attested by the fall of the Prefect Cyrus in 441, also a detailed analysis of the trustworthiness of Marcellinus, see Alan Cameron (1982), 259–261; opposite view, see Holum (1982), 194.

Paulinus was executed in Cappadocia, which is far away from the Court. The usual explanation for the execution taking place so far away from the Court is that Theodosius wished to avoid an open scandal and that Paulinus was in exile. Alan Cameron even suspects that Eudocia had a son by Paulinus, called Arcadius.³³ After these miserable events, the unfaithful Empress Eudocia leaves for the Holy Land with all the dignities accorded to an empress, without a sign of shame or disgrace. How generous and gracious of the poor emperor!

With such meagre evidence, it is beyond our possibilities to discover the truth about these love affairs. However feeble the emperor might have been, it does not seem plausible that after such a scandal Eudocia would have been allowed to leave for Jerusalem with all the dignities accorded to an empress, especially as we know that she was later deprived of a part of her tenure, because she had killed an envoy of the emperor (in A.D. 444).³⁴ This latter episode resulted in her being forced to stay in Jerusalem until her death. But Eudocia did not lose her imperial status nor was there any *damnatio memoriae*. In the 450's Pope Leo addresses her in a letter as Augusta, and in the eighth century there was still a statue of Eudocia in the Tribunal of the Palace in Constantinople.³⁵

The tragedy regarding the apple seems to be a folk tale with very little foundation in actual fact. There were rumours about the reasons for Eudocia's leaving. The earliest version we know is from Malalas. But rumours of adultery seem to be a *topos*, they merely show that nobody knew what really happened.³⁶ Only John of Nikiu claims explicitly that Paulinus tried to rebel against Theodosius. On the other hand, Priscus tells us that Theodosius was harsh towards those who attempted usurpation. But he does not name any usurpator.³⁷ If Eudocia's leaving for the Holy Land and Paulinus' death occurred within one year, it was simple to connect the two events: each one is difficult to explain as a single unrelated event.

II. The Empress Eudocia of the Anecdotes

Anecdotes are a special brand of folklore. They need not be literally true, but they do characterise some basic relevant elements of their object. There are a couple of interesting anecdotes concerning the Empress Eudocia.

Theodore Lector (first half of the seventh century) tells in his *Church History* an anecdote (repeated in later chronicles) from the Court of Theodosius II. The main point of the anecdote is that the Emperor Theodosius signed papers without reading them. His sister Pulcheria decided to teach him a lesson: Theodosius signed a decree in which his wife Eudocia was given as a slave to Pulcheria! Afterwards Pulcheria accused him of carelessness.³⁸

Another anecdote (from the eighth century) tells of seven philosophers who came with Eudocia's brothers from Athens to Constantinople. They had a sort of competition in

³³ Alan Cameron (1982), 266–267. About the children of Eudocia see below, Chapter V.

³⁴ Marcellinus Comes, *sub anno* 444.

³⁵ Leo Magnus, *Epistola* 123 (*PL* 54, col. 1060), also in another letter he refers to Eudocia as Augusta: *Epistola* 117 (*PL* 54, col. 1038); *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 36 (ed. and transl. Averil Cameron and Herrin (1984), 96–97).

³⁶ Hunt (1984), 237; Pulcheria was blamed in Nestorian historiography.

³⁷ John of Nikiu 87.12; Priscus' fr. 16 (ed. Blockley (1983)).

³⁸ Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 352. *Suda*, Π 2145.

discussion with the Emperor Theodosius in the Hippodrome concerning the statues there. The pagan philosophers interpreted the old statues and their meaning to the Emperor Theodosius.³⁹

In later chronicles there are two more anecdotes concerning Eudocia and Pulcheria. Their theme is how the eunuch Chrysaphius used the inexperienced Eudocia as a tool to get rid of Pulcheria. First, Chrysaphius remarked to Eudocia that she did not have a chamberlain of her own unlike Pulcheria who did. When Eudocia asked Theodosius for one, he answered that Pulcheria was governing with skill and piety, and had earned a chamberlain, but Eudocia had not. Chrysaphius then suggested to Eudocia that Pulcheria should become a deaconess; had not Pulcheria devoted herself to Christ by her virginity? This was agreed upon by Theodosius, but the Patriarch of Constantinople warned Pulcheria. She retired from the Court to live a private life in the Hebdomon palace and sent her chamberlain to Eudocia.⁴⁰

These anecdotes are not in contradiction with the picture given in the legend of Malalas. They bring forth mainly new aspects of the life of the Court. They give an unflattering picture of the Court of the Emperor Theodosius II: the studious emperor is not governing properly, but trusts too much on his ministers and sister.

The trusted eunuch of Theodosius, Chrysaphius, is given a central role. The inexperienced Eudocia seems to have been easily provoked to jealousy and easily mocked, but Pulcheria by her timely retirement knew politics. Eudocia is associated with pagan philosophers.

What is rather odd in these anecdotes is the pious naivety of the emperor: ordaining his sister as a deaconess as a favour. It was much more usual in Byzantine politics that from an administrative office one was after *falling out of favour* ordained as a presbyter or a bishop.⁴¹ In fact this story of being ordained as a deaconess is almost the only hint of the disfavouring of Pulcheria, and this disfavour is confirmed by the fact that Socrates ignores her totally in his *Church History*. If we recall that retiring to a monastery was recommended to adulterous women, it becomes more tempting to consider Pulcheria to be behind the tragic fate of Paulinus.

III. The Empress Eudocia in the Eastern Court

Religion...

As there has been much ado about Eudocia's religious sympathies and paganism, they must be reconsidered. The young Athenais must have received a traditional classical education, as she was cultivated enough to write heroic poems to the Emperor Theodosius.⁴² But whether her education had been pagan or Christian is unclear. We have no firm information about the religious attitudes of her family.

Alan Cameron, who identifies Eudocia's father Leontius with the converted sophist mentioned by Damascius, believes that Athenais had an acquaintance with Christianity

³⁹ *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 64.

⁴⁰ *Suda*, Θ 145; Nicephorus Callistus 14.47; Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 352; Theophanes, *anno mundi* 5940; Alan Cameron (1982), 263–264; Holum (1982), 192.

⁴¹ From the time of Theodosius we know at least two: Antiochus and Cyrus, Priscus' fr. 7–8 (ed. Blockley (1983)), *Suda*, K 2776.

⁴² Socrates 7.21 praises her skill in versifying.

before her baptism and marriage.⁴³ The identification is by no means sure, though it is interesting. On the other hand Holum, who identifies a pagan governor Valerius mentioned by Olympiodorus with Eudocia's brother, holds it evident that Eudocia had a pagan background.⁴⁴ Even though the identification would stand, it was not uncommon to have both pagans and Christians in the same family.⁴⁵

First of all, we have to scrutinise Socrates' account. As Socrates was a contemporary of Eudocia and the Court was probably thought to be one of his audiences he must have been careful in his utterances about the emperor and empress. Socrates tells us that the Patriarch Atticus baptised Athenais, the daughter of the Athenian sophist Leontius, and gave her the new name Eudocia.⁴⁶ Also, in later chronicles it is always mentioned that Eudocia was a pagan and was baptised.⁴⁷

At the beginning of the fifth century, the custom of baptising children had not yet been established, although it was propagated already by some Church Fathers: John Chrysostom, Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzus (though Gregory considered that the child should be older than three years). Officially children were not expected to be baptised until the sixth century.⁴⁸ At the end of the fourth century, even the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nectarius was baptised only just before he entered this office.⁴⁹ Peter the Iberian, who spent his youth at the Court of Theodosius II and already at that time devoted his life to prayers, was not baptised until his visit to the Holy Land. At the end of the fifth century it was still common in the East to be baptised after one had reached one's thirties.⁵⁰ It seems that in some way one could be a Christian already before baptism.

Anyway, Socrates wanted to stress that Eudocia had been baptised.⁵¹ To be baptised by the orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople must surely have had a special meaning. It is probable that Eudocia had a background which looked too pagan in the eyes of her contemporaries, as she did her best to prove her Christianity.

The only church built by Eudocia in Constantinople of which we know the name is St. Polyeuctus.⁵² As Eudocia could have chosen any saint, the choice of St. Polyeuctus must have been significant. Especially as St. Polyeuctus was an unusual choice; there are very few churches dedicated to him. Polyeuctus suffered martyrdom during the suppression by Decius. He was converted to Christianity and he abandoned his family. He destroyed statues of pagan gods, and did so even in front of the Roman soldiers who then killed him. His bravery gave strength to others to become Christians.⁵³ Eudocia's choice of St.

⁴³ Alan Cameron (1982), 274.

⁴⁴ Holum (1982), 114–127; Olympiodorus' fr. 27 (ed. Blockley (1983)).

⁴⁵ Setälä (1993), 186–187.

⁴⁶ Socrates 7.21.

⁴⁷ Usually it is only said that Athenais was a Hellene, but a Hellene, Greek, meant pagan. The pre-judgements are clear in John of Nikiu: Eudocia "had been a pagan of the sect of philosophers" (*Chronicle* 84.33 (ed. Charles (1916), 94)). Only Marcellinus Comes, *sub anno* 421 says neutrally *Achivam*.

⁴⁸ Justinian I decreed that children should be baptised. Of course it took some time before this was carried out effectively. *ER* 2, s.v. Baptism; *EEC*, s.v. Baptism; *DACL*, s.v. baptême.

⁴⁹ Also the Bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose, was baptised just before entering this office.

⁵⁰ Athanasius, *The Conflict of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch* (PO 4, 600).

⁵¹ Baptism was not a common theme in Socrates, but connected with extraordinary situations: the Patriarch Atticus baptised a handicapped Jew, who thus recovered – this miracle is also related by Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 303. It is an interesting coincidence that Atticus baptised Athenais! Despite his name Atticus did not originate from Attica.

⁵² *AP* 1.10; Mango and Sevckenko (1961), 243–247; F. Deichmann attributes her also the church of Polyeuctus in Ravenna, see Deichmann (1976) II.2, 355.

⁵³ *DACL*, s.v. Polyeucte.

Polyeuctus was probably a sign to her contemporaries of her religious politics as the new empress. The propagandist value of the church would be at its peak soon after her own baptism. She also seems to have demonstrated the religious policy of the Court in Athens, something she did by choice rather than by necessity.

The Emperor Theodosius' three sisters had all devoted their lives to virginity and the life of the Court resembled a monastery. The emperor lived almost like a monk, regularly fasting and praying.⁵⁴ There is no evidence that Eudocia experienced any difficulty living in such a Christian atmosphere, nor are there direct sources concerning her activities in Constantinople except that in A.D. 422 she gave birth to her first daughter, and in A.D. 423 she was declared *Augusta*.⁵⁵ It seems that Eudocia was interested in theological questions and that together with the emperor she supported the Patriarch Nestorius. At least the Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril, who opposed Nestorius, considered Eudocia worthy of a long treatise about the orthodox faith.⁵⁶

Eudocia made her first pilgrimage to Jerusalem in A.D. 438 and a second one in A.D. 441. She was a close friend of St. Melania the Younger. Eudocia is known to have built and decorated many churches and monasteries during these pilgrimages.⁵⁷ She brought the relics of St. Stephen to Constantinople where they were deposited in a chapel which Pulcheria had built.⁵⁸ Eudocia has been connected with other relics, too. It has been said that she sent the chains of St. Peter to her daughter in Rome⁵⁹ and a picture of the Virgin Mary painted by St. Luke to Pulcheria.⁶⁰

...and Culture

Eudocia's own literary activities as far as they have been preserved,⁶¹ show very strict Christianity. In contemporary discussion about the value of a classical education Eudocia seems to have taken the line of the Apollinarii of Laodicea: she produced poetry which had a classical form but Christian content. It is extremely interesting that she most probably knew Proba's *Cento* (the life of Jesus in Virgilian verses) as there was a copy of it for educational purposes for the children of the Court.⁶² It is a tempting idea that Eudocia started her Homeric verses already at the Court of Constantinople in order to produce Christian material in Greek for her daughter. Since the historian Socrates criticises this literary genre, Alan Cameron takes this as proof that Eudocia had not written her Christian verses before A.D. 439.⁶³ On the other hand, Socrates, who does

⁵⁴ Socrates 7.22; Hunt (1984), 224.

⁵⁵ Marcellinus Comes, *sub anno* 422; *Chronicon Paschale*, *sub anno* 423.

⁵⁶ Seeck (1920), 214–215; *Éphèse et Chalcédoine* (transl. Festugière (1982), 69–111); Alan Cameron (1982), 281; Holum (1982), 159–161, 163–165 where Holum suspects that the treatise was only for Pulcheria.

⁵⁷ Socrates 7.47; *Vita Melaniae* 58; Evagrius 1.22; Nicephorus Callistus 14.50; John of Nikiu 87.21.46; Cedrenus 591; *Chronicon Paschale*, *sub anno* 444; Jean Rufus, *Plérophories* XI and XX (in *PO* 8, 27 and 39–40); see also note 125 below.

⁵⁸ Marcellinus Comes, *sub anno* 439; about the importance of owning relics see Clark (1986). It is possible that Eudocia gave one foot of St. Stephen to the church of Theodoroupolis (Gorce (1962), 246–247; Meimaris (1983), 11–12).

⁵⁹ *ILS* 818.

⁶⁰ Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 353.

⁶¹ These are in Eudocia Augusta, *Carminum Graecorum reliquiae* (ed. Ludwig (1897)).

⁶² Proba, *Cento* (Clark and Hatch (1981), 12–13, 100).

⁶³ Alan Cameron (1982), 283.

not praise the empress very much, regards Eudocia's literary activities, the encomium to the emperor in A.D. 422 worthy of mention.⁶⁴ After that Eudocia seems not to have done anything worth mentioning. Perhaps already at that time Eudocia supported the genre which Socrates disliked.

Eudocia has been connected with literary and philosophical circles from the early Byzantine historiography until modern times. Like many other daughters of sophists and philosophers Eudocia had been educated by her father in literature and rhetorics much more than women in general.⁶⁵ In later sources her father is a philosopher (in Eudocia's day there was still a distinction between a sophist and a philosopher, but later this difference tends to disappear). One of her friends, Cyrus, is known to have been a good poet.⁶⁶ Apart from this we do not have many sources about these circles.

Theodosius himself was very studious and his sister Pulcheria had not forgotten her own education, so Eudocia was by no means the only one in the Court interested in culture. At the Court there were many persons who wrote encomia to the emperor, but their poetry has not survived. The age of Theodosius has been seen as a watershed, not so much promoting poetry but history.⁶⁷ The famous poets at the Court were Eudocia and Cyrus, the third known by name is Ammonius. Most of the poetry of Eudocia that we know dates from her stay in Jerusalem (A.D. 440–460).⁶⁸

Eudocia has been associated with philosophy, which is quite natural as she was the daughter of a sophist or a philosopher, as later chroniclers relate. The anecdote above about the seven philosophers is a good example. As Alan Cameron has pointed out, it is a piece of a traditional folk tale, mixing the stories of seven Athenian philosophers in Justinian's time and the daughter of an Athenian philosopher, who became an empress. It has the function of crystallising Eudocia's piety on her pagan background, the Byzantine theme which underscores Eudocia's literal preference for Jerusalem over Athens.⁶⁹ In the so-called University of Constantinople (founded A.D. 425) there was only one chair for philosophy, but five chairs for Greek and three for Latin sophists.⁷⁰ Support of the Greek language might have been due to the Greek Empress, at least the use of the Greek language in the administration is attributed to her friend Cyrus.⁷¹

Administration and Politics

Though imperial piety held very exclusive orthodox views, these were not carried out effectively in the administration: a law of A.D. 415 denied pagans the right to hold office,⁷² as also were heretics.⁷³ In theory the imperial piety tried to suppress non-

⁶⁴ Socrates 7.21.

⁶⁵ *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 64 onwards, from modern historiography a good example is Lemerle (1971), 62; Marinus 9; of course the most famous case was Hypatia.

⁶⁶ Alan Cameron (1982), 217–257 has an excellent analysis of Cyrus.

⁶⁷ Harris (1991), 269.

⁶⁸ Downey (1958), 302.

⁶⁹ Alan Cameron (1982), 273, 279, see also the commentary in Averil Cameron and Herrin (1984), 253–259.

⁷⁰ *CTH* XIV.9.3. The "University" of Constantinople is good example of the tightening Christian atmosphere of the Court trying to control different aspects of life. About the non-significance of Eudocia's role in this there is nothing to add to Alan Cameron's analysis, see Alan Cameron (1982), 286.

⁷¹ Bury (1923), 228; Constantelos (1971), 453; Dagron (1974), 272.

⁷² *CTH* XVI.10.21.

orthodox elements, but there continued to be people in the administration who did not hold especially exclusive orthodox Christian views. At the time of Theodosius II there were less non-Christians in the administration than earlier,⁷⁴ which is a symptom of ideology becoming politics. But the suppression of non-orthodox views cannot have been very effective as laws were continuously issued prohibiting impious practices.

The strengthening of the civil administration continued to be the policy as a reaction to anti-germanism after the episode of Gainas. While Helio was *magister officiorum* (A.D. 414–427) the office became supreme, with control over almost all the other offices including the military ones.⁷⁵ It is also possible that the *magister* held some power in church politics.⁷⁶ If Eudocia had been actively promoting traditionalists, the post of *magister* would have been the first one to have been occupied.

On the other hand, it seems that many of those who *de facto* ruled in the Eastern court, did not receive official recognition.⁷⁷ Many whom we know from the official records have left too few traces, just enough to wake our curiosity, but too little to give any answers. Who was the illustrious Macrobius *praepositus* who in an enthusiastic law was given the first place among all others for his merits in A.D. 422?⁷⁸

It is true that Theodosius put favourite ministers in charge, and Malalas names them: Antiochus (408–414/421), Cyrus (438–441) and Chrysaphius (441–450). Malalas leaves a gap between Antiochus and Cyrus, which Cameron takes as proof that there was no special favourite during the long ascendancy of Pulcheria.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Helio (A.D. 414–427) seems to have been the trustee of the Empress Pulcheria and Theodosius. It is very interesting that Helio, who received his office when Pulcheria took over control of the state in A.D. 414, continued to hold power in the 420's. Helio was trusted with the coronation of young Valentinian III in the West in A.D. 424.⁸⁰ After Helio several men held the post of *magister officiorum* in the 430's. At that time Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria tried to bribe the old eunuch Chryseros because of the considerable influence which he exerted on Theodosius.⁸¹

There is a continuity in the persons involved in the administration. Some of them hold the high offices of prefects at intervals of ten years, such as Isidorus: in 410, 424, and 435. Men like Florentius seem to be in the closest circle and have long careers in high offices. We do not know very much about Florentius except that he was City prefect in A.D. 422 and praetorian prefect in A.D. 428 and 438–439; between 444 and 448 he was made patrician and in 451 he gave advice to the new Emperor Marcian.⁸²

73 CTh XVI.5.58; XVI.5.65. Heretics were also denied the right to make testaments etc.

74 Von Haehling (1978), 505, 507–510, 590, and 600.

75 Clauss (1980), 124.

76 *Id.* 155.

77 Jones (1964) I, 344.

78 CTh VI.8.1. Clyde Pharr identifies him with Aurelius Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius, author of *Saturnalia*, but this is not widely accepted (Pharr (1952), 128, note 5; PLRE II, s.v. Macrobius).

79 John Malalas 14 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 361); Alan Cameron (1982), 224.

80 Olympiodorus' fr. 43 (ed. Blockley (1983)); Jones (1964) I, 179.

81 The patriarch hoped to win the Court and Theodosius to his side during the Nestorian controversy. Barhadbesabba 22 (PO 9, 541); PLRE II, s.v. Chryseros 1.

82 PLRE II, s.v. Fl. Anthemius Isidorus; Florentius is addressed especially warmly in the laws and he holds important posts several times, e.g. CTh VI.8.1, VIII.4.29, NTh 1.1, 3.1, 5.2, 7.1; see PLRE II, s.v. Fl. Florentius 7.

Eudocia and Politics

As Eudocia has been regarded as favouring pagans and classical culture, the politics of the Court have been interpreted as having become more friendly towards pagans than they had been earlier. Kenneth Holum in particular in his *Theodosian Emperresses* promotes a theory of traditionalists, and sees the relationship to the old religions and classical culture as the main common element within them.⁸³ According to him the traditionalists gained more power in the administration thanks to Eudocia and her family. It is evident that members of Eudocia's family held high offices and ranks as was normal (κηδεῖα) in the imperial administration system. But they were few – we know of only one uncle and two brothers – and there is no proof of their opinions regarding the party politics of the Court. As stated above, Athenais/Eudocia was a bride outside of the noble and powerful families active in the politics of the day.

The schema of the two conflicting parties within the Court is a good one, although the situation probably was not as dichotomic as Holum claims. Tension did not exist between pagans and Christians though there probably was discord in their attitude to religion⁸⁴ and the corresponding politics. From Priscus' fragmentary history we know that political opinions were also diverse in questions other than religious ones.⁸⁵

a) Asclepiodotus, Eudocia's Uncle

The laws issued in the period when Eudocia's maternal uncle Asclepiodotus was praetorian prefect have been interpreted as especially liberal to non-Christians. The laws have been taken as proof of sympathy for paganism in the Court and evidence of the traditionalists holding power after Eudocia entered the Court.⁸⁶

In February A.D. 423 Theodosius issued a law, in which it was stated that no synagogues should be indiscriminately taken away from the Jews. Also, that if the synagogues had been recently seized or subsumed by the church, the Jews should be granted compensation, but that in the future no synagogues should be constructed.⁸⁷ In April A.D. 423 this and earlier laws against pagans (though the emperor believed that none existed) and against Jews were repeated, but the injuring and persecuting of Jews was prohibited.⁸⁸

The last series of these laws is from June (A.D. 423). The recent decrees are repeated and the surviving pagans were strictly prohibited from making sacrifices; failure to comply would be punished with the proscription of their goods and exile, though, it was stated, they should be subjected to capital punishment. But the most interesting is the last one. After other matters it commanded that those persons who are truly Christians should not dare to lay violent hands on Jews or pagans, who were living quietly and attempting nothing disorderly or contrary to the law. Also if their goods are plundered they must be

⁸³ Holum (1982), 84–86, 112–113.

⁸⁴ O'Donnell (1979), 48–49.

⁸⁵ Priscus' fr. 3 (ed. Blockley (1983)) makes it clear, that Theodosius was a coward, because he obtained peace by money, not fighting. An important question was whether the commander's post *magister militum* was occupied by a Roman or German descendant.

⁸⁶ Holum (1982), 124–125.

⁸⁷ *CTh* XVI.8.25.

⁸⁸ *CTh* XVI.8.26, XVI.10.22.

restored, and, after investigation, compensation up to triple the amount that had been robbed. Governors who did not try to prevent such crimes were to be fined.⁸⁹

Alan Cameron has noted that the issuing of laws prescribing exile and confiscation of property instead of execution did not show particular amicability towards pagans, as clemency was one of the virtues of the Emperor Theodosius. According to Socrates, Theodosius never inflicted capital punishment.⁹⁰ Nor do these laws show very much understanding of the Jews, but it does seem that decrees prohibiting the destruction of synagogues were needed now and then.⁹¹

This series of laws issued from February to June A.D. 423 seems to be connected to serious troubles in the East. The laws repeating the prohibition of persecution of Jews and pagans illustrate the situation quite clearly. It is not an image of a peaceful province, where an active prefect is improving the lot of pagans and Jews.

In Syria and Palestine the majority of the population was non-Christians, mostly Jews and Samaritans. The increasing number of pilgrims attracted vast numbers of poor people and monks to the area, as the pilgrims were known for their generosity.⁹² Sometimes militant monks caused great damage to non-Christians, and persecuted them. This seems to have been the situation when Asclepiodotus was praetorian prefect in A.D. 423.

A famous militant Syrian monk, Barsauma, made a trip to Jerusalem (around 422) with 40 brothers, and they destroyed the sacred places of the Jews, Samaritans and pagans.⁹³ It is possible that these "liberal" laws were caused by this movement comprised of plundering by zealous Christians. From the point of view of the state and the administration private war-like pursuits were dangerously anarchistic and endangered all aspects of normal life, not least tax-collection. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that the laws were issued in a series repeating the same principles: plundering and persecuting were forbidden, even though plunderers were Christians and the persecuted were non-Christians. Perhaps the purpose of imperial clemency, which preferred exile to capital punishment, was to prevent people from taking the law into their own hands: why wait, when according to the law the pagans should be killed? Evidently the last law was harsh: the punishment must have lessened the interest of the not so zealous followers to plunder, and the local governors became more active in preventing persecutions. The situation calmed down.

In the eyes of some Christians these laws were too friendly towards Jews: in a furious letter from St. Simeon Stylite to the Emperor this favouring of the Jews was criticised. Holum gives this as an explanation to the fact that Asclepiodotus disappears from the sources in the spring of 425.⁹⁴ But Asclepiodotus had already been a consul and a praetorian prefect, so he had acquired dignities enough to hold a high status. Also these laws which bothered St. Simeon were issued in the spring of 423 and Asclepiodotus was still in office in February 425. Though such a zealous Christian as St. Simeon blamed

⁸⁹ *CTh* XVI.8.27, XVI.10.23, XVI.10.24.

⁹⁰ Alan Cameron (1982), 266; Socrates 7.22. Socrates wrote his history in about A.D. 439, when there had been decreed new strict (capital punishment) laws against pagans and Jews, which caused riots in the East (Theodore Lector, *Epitome* 336).

⁹¹ *CTh* XVI.8.9 (A.D. 393), XVI.8.12 (A.D. 396), XVI.8.21 (A.D. 412).

⁹² Frend (1972), 152; Avi-Yonah (1958), 45–47.

⁹³ Nau (1927), 189–192.

⁹⁴ Holum (1982), 125; *CTh* XV.5.5.

Asclepiodotus for favouring Jews, we do not have convincing evidence for the religious views of Asclepiodotus.⁹⁵

b) Valerius, Eudocia's Brother

It has been commonly accepted that Valerius, *magister officiorum* in A.D. 435, was the brother of Eudocia mentioned in the legend.⁹⁶ In the same year Isidorus, whom Holum has identified as a traditionalist,⁹⁷ was the prefect of the East; thus it would be likely that there was sympathy for paganism in the government. In that year, however, Theodosius issued a law which ordered all temples to be destroyed and purified (with a Christian sign) by the municipalities, and anyone who mocked the law was to be punished by death.⁹⁸ This law is remarkable for its lack of sympathy to the pagans, as it required active measures against the old religions. It also tried to be extremely effective, as the municipalities were expected to act according to it and they, too, were to be punished if they did not comply with the law. In this way the law of A.D. 435 is much harsher than the law, which was issued three years later. The law of A.D. 438 which suppressed non-Christians and heretics strictly condemned paganism. Any person making a sacrifice in any place, would call up the imperial wrath against his fortune and his life.⁹⁹ But the law of A.D. 435 was active in suppressing, whereas the law of A.D. 438 is merely reacting against active paganism.

In the sources there is no evidence as to the religious views of Eudocia's family. Later, in the 450's, Valerius seems to have been orthodox.¹⁰⁰ The other brother, Gessius, to whom the legend attributes the prefecture of Illyricum has not left any other traces, so that is the only thing we know about him.

c) Antiochus, the *praepositus* of Theodosius

The one and only case where Eudocia is hinted to have been influencing to the administration is the fall of the powerful eunuch Antiochus. He was put aside by Theodosius right after the wedding according to Zonaras. Another later chronicler, Theophanes, attributes the fate of Antiochus to Pulcheria's influence.¹⁰¹ Antiochus had been very close to the Emperor for many years and his career had been a long one: already in A.D. 404 he was a *cubicularius* and later he was *praepositus sacri cubiculi*. Malalas tells us that Antiochus took care of the young Theodosius. Antiochus was in fact the one who ruled. Theodosius subsequently became displeased with Antiochus and he was put aside by

⁹⁵ *CTh* XV.5.5. If Eudocia's mother was an Athenian, we would have here an Athenian Asclepiodotus. We know one Athenian family who used to have names alluding to the god Asclepius and was pagan minded (see *PLRE* II, s.v. Theagenes, Asclepigeneia 1 and 2). But there is no proof these things have any connection. On Christian tombstones there are names like Asclepiodote and Asclepia! (See Gregory (1986), 239.)

⁹⁶ *PLRE* II, s.v. Valerius 6.

⁹⁷ Holum (1982), 120.

⁹⁸ *CTh* XVI.10.25. The law is addressed to the Prefect Isidorus.

⁹⁹ *NTh* 3.1. It is possible that Socrates' eulogy on Theodosius' clemency was a reaction to this law.

¹⁰⁰ Cyrillus Scythopolitanus, *Vita Sancti Euthymii* 47.11–14.

¹⁰¹ Zonaras 13.22; Theophanes, *anno mundi* 5905. Holum prefers Theophanes' version, Holum (1982), 91; *PLRE* II, s.v. Antiochus 5.

being given a priestly office.¹⁰² Furthermore, Priscus attributes the retirement of Antiochus to Theodosius himself, as he became angry at Antiochus and made him a priest of the great church of Constantinople.¹⁰³ The date of the downfall is vague, any time between Pulcheria's ascendancy and the wedding (that is between A.D. 414–421). Already in A.D. 422 there was a new favourite as *praepositus*, the illustrious Macrobius, who seems to have held that office already for some time.¹⁰⁴ The evidence for Eudocia having been involved in this affair is not very convincing.

d) Paulinus, the Fellow-student

Theodosius' fellow-student Paulinus, whom the tradition mentions, also remains a mystery. In addition to his love-affairs, he is known to have been *magister officiorum*. In the *Theodosian Code* he is mentioned only once in A.D. 430, though Alan Cameron has shown that he was *magister* in A.D. 440, too.¹⁰⁵ It seems that Paulinus made some renovations to the imperial administration including the secret service in the spring of A.D. 430. Apart from this his official career was very short: he had already been replaced by A.D. 431.¹⁰⁶ There seems to have been tension between Pulcheria and Paulinus, and in Nestorian historiography they are explicitly linked with each other. Though in the legend of Malalas it is stated that Paulinus was a good friend to Theodosius and also close to Eudocia, Pulcheria is omitted and it does not explain why she retired to the Hebdomon Palace. John of Nikiu alone claims that Paulinus tried to rebel against Theodosius, and if we connect this with the claim of Priscus that Theodosius was harsh against usurpators, he could be considered as an usurpator.¹⁰⁷ But if Eudocia had been involved in the fate of Paulinus, is it likely that Theodosius would have given the consulship in 441 to Cyrus, a man his wife admired?

e) Cyrus, the Poet and Favourite of Eudocia

The Egyptian poet Cyrus, who held the city prefecture and the praetorian prefecture simultaneously for four years (438/439 onwards) is a man who enjoyed special favours, as he was also a consul in A.D. 441.¹⁰⁸ It is explicitly stated that Eudocia admired Cyrus and that Cyrus was deposed from his office while Eudocia was away and, therefore, could not protect him.¹⁰⁹ Priscus relates that Theodosius envied the acclamations which Cyrus received at the Hippodrome and so Cyrus was plotted against and stripped of his office and ordained a bishop.¹¹⁰ Earlier in modern historiography Cyrus was considered

¹⁰² John Malalas 14 (ed. Dindorf (1831), 361).

¹⁰³ Priscus' fr. 7 (ed. Blockley (1983)).

¹⁰⁴ *CTh* VI.8.1.

¹⁰⁵ *CTh* VI.27.23; Alan Cameron (1982), 267, note 162.

¹⁰⁶ Clauss (1980), 141, 179. After Helio there was not another long-term *magister*, but there are seven persons recorded in the office between 427–446.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter I. c) "The Role of Paulinus" and d) "The Tragedy"; Priscus' fr. 16 (ed. Blockley (1983)); John of Nikiu 87.12.

¹⁰⁸ *PLRE* II, s.v. Fl. Taurus Seleucus Cyrus Hierax; a detailed analysis: see Alan Cameron (1982). Firm dates for his offices see *CLRE*, 417.

¹⁰⁹ *Suda*, K 2776.

¹¹⁰ Priscus' fr. 8 (ed. Blockley (1983)); *Suda*, K 2776.

a pagan, but now it is commonly accepted that he was not. In Christian discourse (as a builder of a church of Theotokos) he was an anti-Nestorian.¹¹¹

Cyrus' fall can be firmly dated to the autumn 441¹¹² which in turn dates Eudocia's leaving for the Holy Land to the spring of 441 (she was absent before autumn). It is evident that the *primus motor* behind Cyrus' fate was the chamberlain Chrysaphius¹¹³ who gradually gained the confidence of the Emperor Theodosius. Cyrus was a celebrated poet and favoured the use of the Greek language in administration.¹¹⁴

f) Theodosius II, the Husband of Eudocia

The emperor was studious and admired the monks. He was nicknamed "the Calligrapher", which tells us a great deal about his interests. Theodosius had a collection of theological literature and was deeply involved in the christological controversies of his day. As in the anecdote above (Chapter III) about Theodosius signing papers without reading them, the Emperor is described as a person who put too much trust in his ministers and sister when it came to governing. His non-involvement in political governing emerges also from other sources.¹¹⁵ It is noteworthy that when Socrates praises Theodosius as the sole ruler of the empire, he attributes virtues suitable for a Christian holy man to Theodosius.¹¹⁶ Clemency and piety are the main virtues of the Emperor.

In fact the first time the Emperor clearly had a policy of his own and opposed his sister was during the Nestorian controversy of A.D. 430–431.¹¹⁷ In his Nestorian policy he was supported by his wife. But this conflict finished with a solution of compromise, which the emperor supported. At least in religious policy Theodosius followed his own views and did not let either his sister or his wife repress him. But we know that there were other people who had a considerable influence over him.¹¹⁸

g) Pulcheria, the Sister-in-Law of Eudocia

The Empress Pulcheria had a great influence in the Court. She was declared *Augusta* in A.D. 414, however, as she had already devoted her virginity to God, she would not bring forth a male partner to rival with her brother Theodosius. She actively used her

¹¹¹ After the article of Constantelos (1971), also Alan Cameron has revised his earlier opinions and accepted Cyrus' Christianity (Alan Cameron (1982)). Holum identifies Cyrus as a traditionalist and keeps him nominally Christian (Holum (1982), 189–193). It is difficult to determinate whether he was a monophysite or an orthodox. Anyway he resigned from his bishopric after the death of Theodosius and after the Council of Chalcedon.

¹¹² Dagron (1974), 269.

¹¹³ *Vita Danielis* 16.

¹¹⁴ John Lydus II.12 (ed. Bandy (1983), 102) and III.42 (ed. Bandy (1983), 198); Constantelos (1971), 453; Alan Cameron (1982), 225; Zilliacus (1935), 25–26.

¹¹⁵ Priscus' fr.3 (ed. Blockley (1983)).

¹¹⁶ Socrates 7.22.

¹¹⁷ *Éphèse et Chalcedoine* (transl. Festugière (1982), 69–111). I have discussed this in my article Burman (1991), 51–59; Seeck (1920), 214–215; Holum (1982), 147–174.

¹¹⁸ Barhadbesabba 27 (*PO* 9, 541).

power, the imperial βασιλεία both openly and behind the scenes.¹¹⁹ The anecdotes above are illuminating. Her central role is clear from all of the sources.

The only source where Pulcheria's absence is striking is in the *Church History* of Socrates. This is a clear indication that something exceptional must have happened at the end of 439, where Socrates ends his history. The next church historian, Sozomen, who praises Pulcheria, does not go any further in his chronology, although he was writing at the end of 440's.

In the anecdote above the chamberlain Chrysaphius provoked disunion between the Empresses. With the rise of Chrysaphius the change in the close circle around the Emperor occurs; Paulinus, Cyrus, Pulcheria and Eudocia disappear dramatically. It seems that Chrysaphius caused Pulcheria to withdraw into private life outside the city. But Pulcheria got her revenge in A.D. 451, when she returned to power, after the death of Theodosius, and married Marcian, who was declared the new emperor.

h) Achaea, the Home Province of Eudocia

The admittance to the Court of an Achaean girl who became an empress profited the province of Achaea. The imperial interest is obvious in the laws. Only one month after the imperial wedding of Theodosius and Eudocia a law was issued where the churches of Achaea and Illyricum should come under the see of Constantinople.¹²⁰ This was protested both by the Pope and by the western Emperor Honorius. The law was withdrawn and thus Illyricum and Achaea stayed under the Roman Pope via the vicariate of Thessalonike until the eighth century.¹²¹

In A.D. 423/424 a law promised remarkable tax relief to the Achaeans: "But since Achaeans have protested that they are not able to pay more than a third part, they shall pay that amount. (...) This arrangement shall be observed for all future times..."¹²² This arrangement must have given the Achaeans some prosperous years. It seems evident also that the imperial interest continued to exist as in A.D. 435 the cases of ownerless and caducous property in Achaea should be especially carefully investigated and reported to the emperor.¹²³ This kind of special treatment implies that there were especially warm feelings towards Achaeans in the imperial administration. It was in this way that Eudocia used her power as an empress.

IV. Eudocia as a Benefactress

The later Byzantine chroniclers used Malalas and Evagrius, who were both Antiochians, as their source for Eudocia. So we have a good documentation of Eudocia's beneficence in Antioch, but very little about other cities. The concentration on Antioch may easily mislead us into thinking that Eudocia had a special connection to this city prior

¹¹⁹ Theophanes, *anno mundi* 5901. An excellent analysis of Pulcheria is in Holum (1982), 79–111, 130–146, 153–175, 195–216, and 224–226.

¹²⁰ *CTh* XVI.2.45.

¹²¹ Bardy (1948), 159; Jones (1964) II, 883–889.

¹²² *CTh* XI.1.33.

¹²³ *CTh* X.8.5.

to her visit to it on her way to the Holy Land in A.D. 438.¹²⁴ During the journey Eudocia gave donations to all the cities she visited.

Information about her activities in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land can be found in the hagiography. She spent about one third of her life in Jerusalem from A.D. 441 to her death in A.D. 460. She financed generous building activities and her role in the social and political life of Jerusalem was different from that in Constantinople. She held a much more central role. This is, of course, natural as in Jerusalem she was the only member of the imperial family.¹²⁵

Constantinople

It is possible that soon after her marriage Eudocia built the church of St. Polyeuctus.¹²⁶ The church was well situated in the heart of the city, and probably it was given an important role in the liturgical processions. There were several processions in which Imperial personages took part already at the beginning of the century. We lack material about the routes of these processions in the days of Eudocia, but we do know that the church of St. Polyeuctus was included in the later route.¹²⁷

As mentioned earlier Eudocia donated to the capital the relics of St. Stephen and a painting of the Virgin Mary, but we do not have any other information on her activities. We do not have a list of Eudocia's privately held properties in Constantinople, but as the other empresses had their own houses (*domus*),¹²⁸ it is likely that she owned several. At least a part of the city was renamed after her, Eudociana.¹²⁹

Athens

Traditionally Eudocia has been considered an Athenian, but this has been questioned by Kenneth Holum.¹³⁰ Holum suggests that Eudocia was from Antioch because according to Evagrius,¹³¹ Eudocia herself claimed in Antioch that, "I am from the same kin and blood". Eudocia is also known to have sponsored great building activities in Antioch.¹³² In her literary activities she was interested in the Antiochian Saint Cyprianus.

Evagrius explains Eudocia's words to be a reference to the Athenians, who were the ancient founders of the city. Alan Cameron supports this traditional view, too.¹³³ He

¹²⁴ Holum (1982), 117–118 rejects the traditional view of Eudocia being Athenian, his argument is based on his believe of Eudocia's special interest to Antioch.

¹²⁵ See Burman (1991). A comprehensive article has recently been written by Dr. Jane C. Biers (Biers (1989–1990)), it also includes Eudocia's building activities in the Holy Land.

¹²⁶ *AP* 1.10; Mango and Sevckenko (1961), 243–247.

¹²⁷ According to the tenth-century book *De ceremoniis* the church of St. Polyeuctus was in the imperial processional routes, see Baldwin (1987), 183, 200.

¹²⁸ Dagron (1974), 97–98; Janin (1950), 55, 57, and 61–62.

¹²⁹ Janin (1950), 61.

¹³⁰ Holum (1982), 118–119; Alan Cameron (1982), 278.

¹³¹ Evagrius 1.20.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Alan Cameron (1982), 278.

argues also that Malalas and Evagrius, as two loyal sons of Antioch, would surely have reported any hint of Eudocia being from Antioch.¹³⁴

The sources leave the question of Eudocia's family open, but from the point of view of Athens it is a rather trivial question. Expressions such as Leontius of Athens (Λεοντίου γὰρ τοῦ σοφιστοῦ τῶν Ἀθηναίων) or Orion of Caesarea do not always tell the place of birth, for example Orion was a native of Thebes.¹³⁵ It is possible that Leontius did his life-work in Athens. On her mother's side Athenais/Eudocia might well have originated from Athens anyway. Malalas tells us that after her father's death in Athens, Athenais went to her maternal aunt. Though sophists moved freely from one city to another it is less likely that women did so.

It seems evident that Eudocia's family had been living in Athens and so one could expect the Empress to have some relationship with that city. The laws concerning Achaëa show a special favouring of this province. It is a pity that there were no historians from Athens in Late Antiquity who could have reported Eudocia's benefactions to Athens; we have to rely on indirect evidence.

There is only one direct source about Eudocia and Athens: an inscription published by my husband and colleague Erkki Sironen in *Hesperia*, in this publication inscription no. 33.¹³⁶ According to the inscription a statue of Eudocia was erected in Athens. As the inscription is fragmentary it is impossible to say why the statue was erected, but the text proves that it was not an official imperial one. The inscription belongs to the dedicatory class. It is most likely that there was a special reason for the setting up of the statue.

We do not have any information to confirm the oral tradition of Eudocia's enormous building activities in Athens from the literary sources. Tradition attributes to Eudocia the building of twelve churches.¹³⁷ Ordinary public or imperial building activities are not listed in the chronicles, but something as numerous as twelve churches should have left some traces.

After Alaric's sack of Athens an active period of rebuilding the city began. By A.D. 412 the so-called Hadrian's library was restored by the Prefect Herculius,¹³⁸ and the city was recovering from the sack. At the beginning of the 420's, the new tax reliefs must have facilitated this kind of rebuilding. For example a building in the area of the old Library of Pantainos was restored and enlarged, but the new function of the building is uncertain.¹³⁹ At the same time the street from the old Panathenaic Way was rebuilt to enter through the Post-Herulian Wall and reached the Roman Agora. One colonnade of the house ran along the south side of the street. Apparently the street had been in ruins since the Herulian sack in A.D. 267. Just outside the Post-Herulian Wall a large palace was built, the so-called Palace of the Giants. It is very tempting to imagine that this had a connection to the building of the tetraconch in the Library of Hadrian. These buildings must have ostensibly beautified the city of Athens.

It must be more than a coincidence that after the marriage of Theodosius and Eudocia extensive building activities took place in Athens. But as there were building activities in

¹³⁴ Of course from a modern point of view it sounds rather odd that an Athenian would claim to be of the same blood as Antiochians, when their forefathers were from Athens. It would not be so strange, if it were an Antiochian claiming to be of the same blood as the Athenians.

¹³⁵ Downey (1958), 301.

¹³⁶ Sironen (1990). See here Sironen's inscription no. 33.

¹³⁷ Mommsen (1868), 68, note 1; 127.

¹³⁸ Frantz (1988), 65.

¹³⁹ Shear (1975); Camp (1986), 200–202. Frantz' description of the area is illuminating (Frantz (1988), 63–74). If not otherwise mentioned, I follow them.

Athens both before and after the time of Eudocia, it is likely that during the reign of Eudocia there were people other than the Empress shouldering the financial burden. The afore-mentioned tax relief might have played a part in this, though Eudocia may have given a donation of money, too. The evidence concerning Eudocia is meagre and because of this her role in these building activities remains speculative. Nevertheless, I shall propose a couple of good candidates which may have been built by Eudocia. They are possible, even plausible, but not demonstrable. It is unlikely that the family of Eudocia was forgotten. As the young Athenais and her family were not of the noblest and had been unable to find a suitable bridegroom in Athens, they may well have wanted to demonstrate their new social status in a visible way.

The identification of a profane building which could plausibly have been built by Eudocia is based on the dating, on the nature of the building itself, and on the fact that fragments of the above-mentioned statue base of Eudocia were found in front of it in a Late Roman context. This building, called the Palace of the Giants, is dated to the 420's. As Thompson pointed out, the architecture of the house seems to reflect imperial interest and to be very close to that of the tetraconch building in the Library of Hadrian.¹⁴⁰ This Palace would have been ideal for Eudocia's family, magnificent enough to demonstrate its new imperial status; it had a large entrance hall and also a clearly private residence. Eudocia's brother Gessius remained in Athens, but now enjoying his new prominent status. The argument that this building could have been the residence of Eudocia's brother is indirectly supported by the fact that the use of the building changes after 460, the time of Eudocia's death, when imperial influence would have ceased to exist.¹⁴¹

The archaeologist of our team, Ms. Arja Karivieri proposes some interesting arguments in support of the view that the tetraconch in the so-called Library of Hadrian was a church built by Eudocia (see Chapter VII. in Karivieri's article).¹⁴² This Christian church would well suit the Christian propaganda Eudocia practised after her marriage. Also the similarities between the tetraconch and the Palace of the Giants suggest a common origin. The architecture of these buildings is exceptional and suggests an imperial interest. Such a tiny and unimportant provincial town as the fifth century Athens would probably not have raised any imperial interest unless there was a special reason. An Athenian Empress might well be a good explanation. Also Garth Fowden has noted that the choice of the old library as the site for a church would be fitting for the literary Empress.¹⁴³ It would be interesting to know whether the four niches in the church symbolised the four evangelists: the writers of the truth. Of the Early Christian churches in Athens the tetraconch is the one most likely to be attributable to Eudocia. For the basilica of Ilissus the evidence for an attribution to Eudocia is more meagre. The other churches along the old Panathenaic Way, in Eleusis and in the monastery of Daphni are even more unlikely candidates, even though promoting monasticism in Athens might have required special resources.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Thompson (1988), 110–112.

¹⁴¹ The building was probably damaged by Vandals and the new owners (rich Athenians?) rebuilt it as a villa. See Frantz (1988), 78; Castrén (1991), 475–476; Fowden (1990), 497–498.

¹⁴² The tetraconch church has been attributed to Eudocia by other scholars, too: De Bernardi Ferrero (1975), 182–184, Delvoye (1967), 50, and Fowden (1990), 499.

¹⁴³ Frantz (1988), 73; Thompson (1988), 110; Fowden (1990), 498–499. It is tempting to think that the Christians in Athens practised the same kind of propaganda and liturgy as in other parts of the empire, *i.e.* processions. As the monumental centre in Athens got its first church, this must have become the ending point of a liturgical procession.

¹⁴⁴ Skontzos (1988), 50; Fowden (1990), 500, attributes the monastery of Daphni to Eudocia, earlier it has been attributed to Pulcheria by Millet (1899), 16.

V. The Children of the Eastern Court

It is well established that Eudocia and Theodosius II had one daughter who survived early childhood, Eudoxia, who became the Empress of the Western Empire as the spouse of Valentinian III. They also seem to have had another daughter, called Flaccilla. Her death in A.D. 431 is mentioned in the writings of Marcellinus Comes and in Nestorius.¹⁴⁵

The existence of a son called Arcadius is far less certain, although he has been included in *PLRE* II. Alan Cameron seems to think that he was the result of Eudocia's adultery, which would explain the fact that there are very few sources which mention him.¹⁴⁶ Kenneth Holum does find the evidence for a son convincing enough and I agree with him.¹⁴⁷ There are two places in which the mention of the name Arcadius has been suspected of denoting an otherwise unknown son of Theodosius II and Eudocia. The first is in the dedication on the copy of Proba's *Cento* and the other is in an inscription in the Church of St. John in Ravenna.¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, there is negative proof which speaks against a son. In his *Chronicle* John of Nikiu (seventh century) discusses the reasons why Theodosius and Eudocia did not have a male offspring.¹⁴⁹

The Dedication in the *Cento* of Proba

Faltonia Petitia Proba composed her Virgilian cento of the life of Jesus around A.D. 360 and later a calligraphic copy of it was given to an Eastern emperor. It has caused some discussion as to whether it was dedicated to Theodosius I, Arcadius or Theodosius II.¹⁵⁰ The interpretation of the dedication is problematic, as the emperor is not named.

The unnamed dedicant is described as the descendant of Romulus, governing the Eastern realms and being the glory of his brother.

At the end of the dedication, however, a son called the younger Arcadius is mentioned, to whom it is asked the poem be handed down.¹⁵¹ If Theodosius II is the dedicant, the dedication would prove that Theodosius had a son, Arcadius.¹⁵² But, Theodosius II did not have a brother.

The most likely explanation is given by Kenneth Holum: the dedicant is Arcadius (who had a brother, Honorius) and the younger Arcadius is his (at that time unborn) son to whom the *Cento* should be given and who should then transmit it to his sons.¹⁵³ These centos were meant to be used and they were used as educational material for children.

¹⁴⁵ Marcellinus Comes, *sub annis* 422, 431; *Chronicon Paschale*, *sub anno* 437; Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* (transl. Nau (1910), 259).

¹⁴⁶ Alan Cameron (1982), 266–267.

¹⁴⁷ Holum (1982), 178.

¹⁴⁸ Proba, *Cento* (ed. Schenkl (1888), 586; ed. Clark and Hatch (1981), 12–13); *ILS* 818.3 (=CIL XI, no. 276).

¹⁴⁹ John of Nikiu 87.14–16.

¹⁵⁰ Alan Cameron (1982), 266–267; Holum (1982), 178, note 14; Clark and Hatch (1981), 1, 98–99.

¹⁵¹ Proba, *Cento* (ed. Clark and Hatch (1981), 12–13).

¹⁵² Those who think the dedicant is Theodosius II, consider this to be proof for a son named Arcadius.

¹⁵³ Holum (1982), 178, note 14.

The Ravenna Inscription

The church of St. John the Evangelist in Ravenna was built to commemorate the safe deliverance from the storm at sea of the Western empress Galla Placidia and her children Valentinian III and Honoria in the mid 420's. As the dating of the church is crucial for the interpretation of the inscription, we are obliged to reconsider it. The dating of the church varies a great deal: Alan Cameron has dated the inscription and the church after A.D. 439, and Friedrich Deichmann in his history of the city of Ravenna dates the church of St. John around 430.¹⁵⁴

The mosaic inscription is very simple: *DN Arcadius DN Eudoxia Aug.* The problem is to identify which Arcadius and Eudoxia, the children or the parents of Theodosius II? The inscriptions of this church have survived only in the descriptions made by Agnellus which were collected and studied by Deichmann in his already mentioned excellent and monumental study of Ravenna, on which I base my interpretation.¹⁵⁵

As the apse is the most sacred area of the church it is likely that we can find the most important information from there and the immediate surroundings. In the apse there were: the dedication of the church to St. John (including the names of Galla Placidia and her children Valentinian Aug. and Honoria Aug.); pictures of Pantocrator above; the seastorm, St. John the Evangelist and biblical inscriptions. On the sidewall, under those inscriptions, there were three groups of pictures, in the middle bishop Chrysologus performing the mass or eucharist and on the sides imperial portraits. In the arch framing these there was a list of dead and divine emperors and some dead male offsprings of these emperors.

Our main interest is the portraits on the sidewall of the apse. On the left side were two portraits and the text *DN Arcadius DN Eudoxia Aug.* and on the right *DN Theodosius DN Eudocia* and portraits. The mosaics seem to have formed a pair.

As the late emperor Arcadius was mentioned in the list of divine emperors, it would be possible that this Arcadius was alive. Eudoxia could be the daughter of Theodosius and therefore this Arcadius would be his son.¹⁵⁶

The attribute *Augusta* (Aug.) is after the name of Eudoxia only, though Theodosius and Eudocia were also *Augustae*. The young Eudoxia was not *Augusta* before her marriage, but was conferred that rank in 439.¹⁵⁷ This would also date the church into that year (as Alan Cameron does).

One method of solving this problem (parents or children) is to consider the contextual possibilities for this decoration of the church. The mosaics were composed symmetrically.¹⁵⁸ When there was the ruling imperial couple of the East on one side, one would expect the Western imperial couple on the other. After the marriage of Valentinian and Eudoxia this would have been an ideal place for them. But Valentinian is mentioned

¹⁵⁴ Alan Cameron (1982), 266; Deichmann (1974) II.1, 93–94. Also in *PLRE* II, s.v. Arcadius 1, the inscription is dated after A.D. 439.

¹⁵⁵ Deichmann (1969–1989), vols. I–II.

¹⁵⁶ *CIL* XI, no. 276; Bury (1923), 220, note 3; Barnes (1974), 228; Alan Cameron (1982), 266.

¹⁵⁷ The attribute is also missing after the name of Arcadius, and that has been one reason for the identification of Arcadius as the son of Theodosius (the late emperor was of course *Augustus*). The son would be too young to be *Augustus* when the inscription was made. After the first child (named Eudocia!) this rank was conferred on Eudoxia, see Seeck (1909b) and *PLRE* II, s.v. Eudoxia 2.

¹⁵⁸ There is an illuminating reconstruction in Deichmann (1974) II.1, figs. 67–68.

only as a son, not as having a family of his own and this is a good reason for dating the inscription earlier than A.D. 437.

If it is correct to date the church before 437, at that time there was not a ruling couple in the West. Galla Placidia Augusta was a widow. The Eudoxia and the Arcadius of the inscription must have been the late Eastern imperial couple. In this way Galla Placidia could demonstrate her close relationship and friendship with the East showing as couples her nephew Theodosius with Eudocia and her brother Arcadius with Eudoxia.¹⁵⁹

Eudocia could not have produced a son by the time of the Nestorian conflict (around 430), as she was still seen as *a promise* of continuation of the dynasty.¹⁶⁰ A heir would be politically so significant that at least Socrates should have mentioned him. Evidently there was no living male offspring. There might have been purely physiological reasons for Eudocia not bearing more children.¹⁶¹

VI. Conclusion

The picture of the legend is in principle quite right. The great power of the Empress Pulcheria is visible in every source. The only relevant source from the fifth century where Pulcheria is not visible is the *Church History* of Socrates. But Socrates wrote his history after Pulcheria's retirement.¹⁶² As her retirement might have been looked upon unfavourably in the eyes of her contemporaries, it was surely better not to mention Pulcheria at all. On the other hand, Socrates tried to praise the emperor as an independent ruler.¹⁶³

Socrates mentions Eudocia in his *Church History* three times. Firstly, when he praises Eudocia's encomium to the emperor, and mentions her baptism and marriage to Theodosius.¹⁶⁴ Secondly, she is mentioned as the mother of Eudoxia,¹⁶⁵ and thirdly, when the Emperor sent her, with her agreement, on a pilgrimage.¹⁶⁶ Eudocia is by no means a central figure in the *Church History* of Socrates.¹⁶⁷ According to Socrates, Eudocia seems to have been involved with things other than ruling the empire.

The other contemporary sources indicate that Eudocia was more involved with the "women's sphere" than governing. Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, describes the Empresses in his letter to the Emperor in a way that agrees with the picture of the anecdotes. Pulcheria is the empress who governs, and Eudocia is the one by whom the dynasty is being continued.¹⁶⁸ In the list of those who were bribed for supporting Cyril's

¹⁵⁹ This would be a compliment to the East as Honorius had not accepted the imperial portraits of Eudoxia, see Deichmann (1974) II.1, 122–123. It seems that if the mention of Eudoxia as an *Augusta* is not due to a mistake by the copyist, it might be there because it was evident who Theodosius and Eudocia and Arcadius were, but there were two Eudoxias.

¹⁶⁰ *Éphèse et Chalcédoine* (transl. Festugière (1982), 72).

¹⁶¹ Holum (1982), 178 suspects that the reason was not physiological, but Theodosius' admiration of monks.

¹⁶² Alan Cameron (1982), 265–266.

¹⁶³ Socrates 7.22.

¹⁶⁴ *Id.* 7.21.

¹⁶⁵ *Id.* 7.46.

¹⁶⁶ *Id.* 7.47.

¹⁶⁷ There is an over-estimation of Socrates praising Eudocia and omitting Pulcheria. Socrates did not write an eulogy as Sozomen did to Pulcheria.

¹⁶⁸ *Éphèse et Chalcédoine* (transl. Festugière (1982), 72).

case no persons close to Eudocia were mentioned but there were persons close to Pulcheria and Theodosius.¹⁶⁹

In the anecdotes the picture of Eudocia is unflattering. The story about slavery implies that she could be mocked by her sister-in-law. Of course there may have been jealousy between them as Pulcheria might have been very attached to her brother. But there is little evidence about their relationship neither in private nor on the public level. On the other hand, the giving of such powerful relics as gifts as Eudocia did must be seen as a sign of friendship between the Empresses. There was a conflict between the imperial couple and Empress Pulcheria during the Nestorian controversy, but it seems to have calmed down. Pulcheria did not take any revenge on Eudocia when she nearly rebelled in Palestine after the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. Eudocia seems to have started a new active period of life in the Holy Land.

The anecdotes do not ascribe any role in governing to Eudocia: she was inexperienced. This is also the picture which emerges from other sources concerning Eudocia in Constantinople. Although Eudocia had been elevated to the rank of *Augusta*, she did not actively hold political power or have support from her brothers and Cyrus. She held a lesser role, but she was still an Empress. Her support helped her brothers and Cyrus to obtain powerful positions. The theory of Paulinus or Eudocia being the agents of the Traditionalists is unlikely as there does not seem to have been any dramatic changes in the administration after the imperial wedding. The picture of the Court of Constantinople being a battlefield of two politically active Empresses in opposition to each other is not confirmed by the sources. This picture has emerged mainly because of stereotypical prejudgements about two strong women with a weak man.

¹⁶⁹ Jones (1964) I, 346.