

# Marcia Euphemia

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**Marcia Euphemia** was the wife of Anthemius, Western Roman Emperor.

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## Family

Marcia Euphemia was the only known daughter of Marcian, Byzantine Emperor, with an unknown woman<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> Her stepmother was Pulcheria, second wife of her father, a relationship that was a mere political alliance to establish Marcian as a member of the Theodosian dynasty by marriage. As Pulcheria had taken a religious vow of chastity, the marriage was never consummated and Euphemia never had younger half-siblings.<sup>[1][4]</sup>

Evagrius Scholasticus quotes Priscus, stating that Marcian was "*by birth a Thracian, and the son of a military man. In his desire to follow his father's mode of life, he had set out for Philippopolis, where he could be enrolled in the legions*".<sup>[5]</sup> However Theodorus Lector reports Marcian to be an Illyrian.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Marriage

Her wedding to Anthemius is estimated to about 453.<sup>[6]</sup> Her new husband was son to Procopius, *magister utriusque militiae* ("Master of Soldiers of both armies", commander of both cavalry and infantry) of the Eastern Roman Empire from 422 to 424. According to Sidonius Apollinaris, the *magister militum* was a namesake descendant of Procopius who had served as a rival emperor from 365 to 366.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

Father and son are considered possible descendants of Artemisia, mentioned by John Chrysostom in about 380 as the widow of a failed Roman usurper reduced to poverty following the end of a rebellion. By the time John mentioned her, Artemisia was living the life of a blind beggar. Zosimus reports that Procopius had been survived by his unnamed wife and children, thus the possible identification of Artemisia as his widow.<sup>[9]</sup> The reference comes from the "**Letter to a Young Widow**": "It is said also that Artemisia who was the wife of a man of high reputation, since he also aimed at usurping the throne, was reduced to this same condition of poverty, and also to blindness; for the depth of her despondency, and the abundance of her tears destroyed her sight; and now she has need of persons to lead her by the hand, and to conduct her to the doors of others that she may obtain the necessary supply of food."<sup>[10]</sup>

Anthemius' namesake maternal grandfather was Anthemius, Praetorian prefect of the East and effective regent of the Eastern Roman Empire during the later reign of Arcadius and the first years of Theodosius II. He is better known for the construction of the first set of the famous Theodosian Walls.<sup>[8]</sup>

Following their marriage Anthemius was appointed a *Comes rei militaris* and was sent to fortify the Danube frontier, still in disarray following the death of Attila the Hun. He returned to Constantinople in 454 and was rewarded by Marcian with the offices of *magister militum* and Patrician. He served as co-consul with Valentinian in 455. Historians interpret the list of honors to mean that Marcian was preparing his son-in-law for eventual elevation to the imperial office. John Malalas considered that Marcian had named Anthemius emperor of the Western Roman Empire, however this is considered an anachronism of the chronicler.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Death of Marcian

In January, 457 Marcian succumbed to a disease, allegedly gangrene and was survived by Euphemia and Anthemius.<sup>[11]</sup>

With the death of her father, Euphemia was no longer a member of the imperial family. Anthemius continued to serve as *magister militum* under Leo and is credited with defeating Valamir, King of the Ostrogoths during the early 460s and Hormidac, a leader of the Huns who had led an invasion of Dacia, in the winter of 466-467.

## Empress consort

According to Priscus, Geiseric, King of the Vandals had been leading annual raids into Sicily and Italia since the Sack of Rome in 455. He annexed a number of cities into his kingdom and pillaged many others. But a decade later the two western provinces "had become destitute of men and of money", unable to offer sufficient plunder for the Vandals. He expanded his raids to include Illyricum, the Peloponnese, Central Greece and "all the islands that lie near it". Leo had to deal with the new threat and decided to set a new Western Roman Emperor - the Western throne had been vacant since the death of Libius Severus in 465 - to face Geiseric.

Leo chose Anthemius, who Anthemius headed to Rome with an army under the command of Marcellinus, the *magister militum* of Dalmatia and was proclaimed emperor on 12 April 467. Cassiodorus places his proclamation at the third milestone from the city of Rome, naming its location as Brontotas. Hydatius places it at the eighth milestone. Marcellinus Comes mentions the proclamation but not its location.

Euphemia was featured as an Augusta in Roman currency from c. 467 to 472. However her role as an Empress is only confirmed by these Archaeological evidence as the literary accounts cease mentioning her by the point Anthemius moved to Italia.<sup>[8]</sup>

According to the fragmentary chronicle of John of Antioch, a 7th-century monk tentatively identified with John of the Sedre, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch from 641 to 648<sup>[12]</sup> in 472 Anthemius was slain in a civil war.<sup>[8]</sup> Whether Euphemia survived her husband is unknown.

## Children

Euphemia and Anthemius would have five known children, one daughter and four sons:

- Alypia, wife of Ricimer.
- Anthemiolus
- Marcian, married to Leontia, younger daughter of Leo I and Verina. The couple led a failed revolt against Zeno in 478-479. They were exiled to Isauria following their defeat.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Procopius Anthemius
- Romulus.

Royal titles		
Preceded by <b>Licinia Eudoxia</b>	<b>Western Roman Empress consort</b> c. 467–472	Succeeded by <b>Placidia</b>

## References

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- <sup>^</sup> Cawley, Charles, *Profile of Marcian and his daughter* ([http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/BYZANTIUM.htm#\\_Toc176857611](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/BYZANTIUM.htm#_Toc176857611)), Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (<http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/Intro.htm>), retrieved August 2012,
- <sup>^</sup> R. B. Stewart, "My Lines: Aelia Marcia Euphemia" (<http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cousin/html/p83.htm#i10635>)
- <sup>^</sup> Geoffrey Greatrex, "Pulcheria (Wife of the Emperor Marcian)" (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/pulcheria.htm>)
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- <sup>^</sup> Thomas M. Banchich, "Procopius (365-366 A.D.)" (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/procopis.htm>)
- <sup>^</sup> <sup>*a b c d e*</sup> Ralph W. Mathisen, "Anthemius (12 April 467 - 11 July 472 A.D.)" (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/anthemiu.htm>)
- <sup>^</sup> Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, vol. 1
- <sup>^</sup> John Chrysostom, "Letter to a Young Widow.", 1886 translation by W.R.W. Stephens (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf109.vi.iii.html>)
- <sup>^</sup> Geoffrey S. Nathan, Marcian (450-457 A.D.) (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/marcian.htm>)
- <sup>^</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia, "John of Antioch" (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08468a.htm>)

## External links

- Profile of her father in the Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire ([http://books.google.gr/books?id=QCIABQTCg0IC&pg=PA598&lpg=PA598&dq=Marcian+Prosopography&source=web&ots=5PL9nl7zv3&sig=uyuU5-XiVgovSBu1Ai\\_G9f3roCQ&hl=el#PPA714,M1--](http://books.google.gr/books?id=QCIABQTCg0IC&pg=PA598&lpg=PA598&dq=Marcian+Prosopography&source=web&ots=5PL9nl7zv3&sig=uyuU5-XiVgovSBu1Ai_G9f3roCQ&hl=el#PPA714,M1--))
- Article on her father by Geoffrey S. Nathan (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/marcian.htm>)
- Her profile in the Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire ([http://books.google.gr/books?id=QCIABQTCg0IC&pg=PA598&lpg=PA598&dq=Marcian+Prosopography&source=web&ots=5PL9nl7zv3&sig=uyuU5-XiVgovSBu1Ai\\_G9f3roCQ&hl=el#PPA423,M1--](http://books.google.gr/books?id=QCIABQTCg0IC&pg=PA598&lpg=PA598&dq=Marcian+Prosopography&source=web&ots=5PL9nl7zv3&sig=uyuU5-XiVgovSBu1Ai_G9f3roCQ&hl=el#PPA423,M1--))
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| 5th-century Romans

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