

Marcian

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Marcian (Latin: *Flavius Marcianus Augustus*;^[2] 392 – 27 January 457)^[1] was Byzantine Emperor from 450 to 457. Marcian's rule marked a recovery of the Eastern Empire, which the Emperor protected from external menaces and reformed economically and financially. On the other side, the isolationistic policies of Marcian left the Western Roman Empire without help against barbarian attacks, which materialized in the Italian campaigns of Attila and in the Vandal sack of Rome (455). The Eastern Orthodox Church recognizes him as a saint.

Contents

- 1 Biography
 - 1.1 Rise to power
 - 1.2 Rule
 - 1.3 Marriages
- 2 Depiction in fiction
- 3 See also
- 4 Notes
- 5 References
- 6 External links

Biography

Rise to power

Marcian was born in 392^[3] in Illyricum^[4] or Thracia.^[5] The son of a soldier, he spent his early life as an obscure soldier, member of a military unit located at Philippopolis.^[5] Marcian was dispatched with his unit for a war against the Sassanids (probably the Roman-Sassanid war of 421–422),^[6] but along the road East he fell ill in Lycia;^{[7][8]} at this time he might have already been *tribunus* and commander of his unit.^[6]

After recovering from his illness, he went to Constantinople, where he served for fifteen years as *domesticus* under the generals Ardaburius and Aspar.^{[7][9]} In 431/434, while fighting in Africa under Aspar, Marcian was taken prisoner by the Vandals; according to a later legend, he was brought before King Geiseric (428–477), who knew by an omen that Marcian was to be Emperor and was released on his oath never to take up arms against the Vandals.^{[5][10]}

Through the influence of these generals he became a captain of the guards, and was later raised to the rank of senator. On the death of Theodosius II (450) he was chosen as consort by the latter's sister and successor,

Marcian

Emperor of the Byzantine Empire



Solidus of Emperor Marcian

Reign	450–457
Coronation	25 August 450
Full name	Flavius Marcianus Augustus
Born	392
Birthplace	Thracia
Died	27 January ^[1] 457 (aged 65)
Buried	Church of the Holy Apostles, Constantinople
Predecessor	Theodosius II
Successor	Leo I
Wives	unknown Pulcheria
Issue	Marcia Euphemia
Dynasty	Theodosian dynasty

Pulcheria,^[5] and called upon to govern a Roman Empire greatly humbled and impoverished by the ravages of the Huns.

Rule

Upon becoming Emperor, Marcian repudiated the embarrassing payments of tribute to Attila the Hun (434–453), which the latter had been accustomed to receiving from Theodosius II in order to refrain from attacks on the Eastern Empire. Aware that he could never capture the eastern capital of Constantinople, Attila turned to the west and waged his famous campaigns in Gaul 451 and Italy (452) while leaving Marcian's dominions alone.

Marcian reformed the finances, checked extravagance, and repopulated the devastated districts. He repelled attacks upon Syria and Egypt in 452, and quelled disturbances on the Armenian frontier in 456. The other notable event of his reign is the Council of Chalcedon in 451, in which Marcian endeavored to mediate between the rival schools of theology.

Marcian generally ignored the affairs of the Western Roman Empire, leaving that tottering half of the empire to its fate. He did nothing to aid the west during Attila's campaigns, and, living up to his promise, ignored the depredations of Geiseric even when the Vandals sacked Rome in 455. It has recently been argued, however, that Marcian was more actively involved in aiding the Western Empire than historians had previously believed and that Marcian's fingerprints can be discerned in the events leading up to, and including, Attila's death.^[11]

Shortly before Attila's death in 453, conflict had begun again between him and Marcian. However, the powerful Hun king died before all-out war broke out. In a dream, Marcian claimed he saw Attila's bow broken before him, and a few days later, he got word that his great enemy was dead.

Marcian died on 27 January 457^[1] of a disease, possibly gangrene, contracted during a long religious journey. He was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, together with Pulcheria.^[6]

Despite his short reign and his writing off of the west Marcian is considered one of the best of the early Eastern Roman Emperors. The Eastern Orthodox Church recognizes him and his wife Pulcheria as saints, with their feast day on 17 February.

Marriages

Marcia Euphemia was the only known daughter of Marcian, and she was married to Anthemius, later Western Roman Emperor.^[12] The identity of her mother is unknown.^[13]

Pulcheria was his second wife.^[5] Pulcheria had taken a religious vow of chastity. The second marriage was a mere political alliance, establishing Marcian as a member of the Theodosian dynasty by marriage. The marriage of Marcian to Pulcheria was never consummated, consequently Euphemia never had younger half-siblings.^{[13][14]}

Depiction in fiction

Marcian was played by the Hollywood star Jeff Chandler in the film *Sign of the Pagan* (1954).

See also

- Flavia (gens)

Notes

- [^] ^{*a b c*} Theodorus Lector, 367. Theophanes AM 5949 gives 30 April.
- [^] In Classical Latin, Marcian's name would be inscribed as FLAVIVS MARCIANVS AVGVSTVS.
- [^] *Chronicon Paschale*, s.a. 457.
- [^] Theodorus Lector, 354.
- [^] ^{*a b c d e*} Evagrius, II.1.
- [^] ^{*a b c*} Jones.
- [^] ^{*a b*} Theophanes AM 5943
- [^] Cedrenus I.63; Zonara, XIII 24.5.
- [^] Procopius, *Bellum Vandalicum* I.4.7.
- [^] Procopius, *Bellum Vandalicum* I.4.2; Theophanes AM 5931, 5943; Zonaras, XIII.24.12–16; Cedrenus I.604.
- [^] Babcock, Michael A., *The Night Attila Died: Solving the Murder of Attila the Hun*, Berkley Books, 2005.
- [^] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* II 194-7, 216, 481–482.
- [^] ^{*a b*} Geoffrey S. Nathan, "Marcian (450–457 A.D.)" (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/marcian.htm>)
- [^] Geoffrey Greatrex, "Pulcheria (Wife of the Emperor Marcian)" (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/pulcheria.htm>)

References

- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Marcian" (<http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Marcian>). *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold Hugh Martin Jones, "Marcianus 8", *The Prosopography of the later Roman empire: A.D. 260–395, Volume 1*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, ISBN 0-521-20159-4, p. 714-5.

External links

- Marcian at the DIR (<http://www.roman-emperors.org/marcian.htm>)
- Media related to Marcian at Wikimedia Commons
- "Marcian". *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. 1913.

<p>Marcian</p> <p>House of Theodosius</p> <p>Born: c. 390 Died: January 457</p>		
<p>Regnal titles</p>		
<p>Preceded by</p> <p>Theodosius II</p>	<p>Byzantine Emperor</p> <p>450–457</p>	<p>Succeeded by</p> <p>Leo I</p>
<p>Political offices</p>		
<p>Preceded by</p> <p>Imp. Caesar Flavius Placidus Valentinianus Augustus VII, Gennadius Avienus</p>	<p>Consul of the Roman Empire</p> <p>451</p> <p><i>with Valerius Faltonius Adelfius</i></p>	<p>Succeeded by</p> <p>Flavius Bassus Herculanus, Flavius Sporacius</p>

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Marcian&oldid=567927941"

Categories: 392 births | 457 deaths | 5th-century Christian saints | 5th-century Roman emperors

| 5th-century Byzantine emperors | Burials at the Church of the Holy Apostles | Greek Roman Catholic saints

| Greek saints | Theodosian dynasty | Flavii | Imperial Roman consuls

- This page was last modified on 10 August 2013 at 09:52.
- Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.
Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.