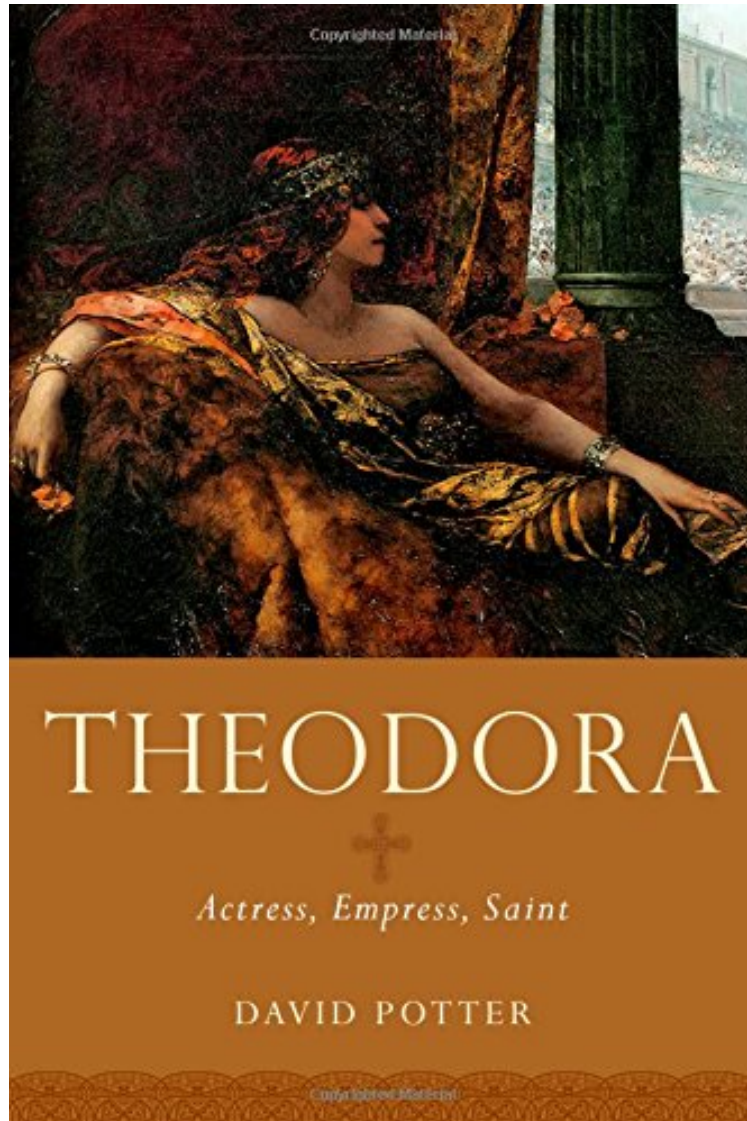


[Download pdf] Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint (Women in Antiquity)

Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint (Women in Antiquity)

David Potter

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#954265 in Books Potter David 2015-11-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.40 x .90 x 9.30l, .0 #File Name: 0199740763288 pagesTheodora Actress Empress Saint | File size: 59.Mb

David Potter : Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint (Women in Antiquity) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint (Women in Antiquity):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Illuminating history of era not well known to most people ...By bill durlinIlluminating history of era not well known to most people. Manages to convey how truly fascinating Theodora and husband Justinian were. Writing is sometimes not clear. Difficult to follow religious issues of the time.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not really a biography of TheodoraBy ErinThe book offers a lot of

information of the times in which Theodora lived, especially the male religious and political leaders of the era, cultural mores, etc. It's interesting in that light, but I was disappointed by how little mention was made of Theodora herself. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Tom Hansen A bit slow, but worth the read.

Two of the most famous mosaics from the ancient world, in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, depict the sixth-century emperor Justinian and, on the wall facing him, his wife, Theodora (497-548). This majestic portrait gives no inkling of Theodora's very humble beginnings or her improbable rise to fame and power. Raised in a family of circus performers near Constantinople's Hippodrome, she abandoned a successful acting career in her late teens to follow a lover whom she was legally forbidden to marry. When he left her, she was a single mother who built a new life for herself as a secret agent, in which role she met the heir to the throne. To the shock of the ruling elite, the two were married, and when Justinian assumed power in 527, they ruled the Eastern Roman Empire together. Their reign was the most celebrated in Byzantine history, bringing wealth, prestige, and even Rome itself back to the Empire. Theodora was one of the dominant political figures of her era, helping shape imperial foreign and domestic policy and twice saving her husband from threatened deposition. She played a central role trying to solve the religious disputes of her era and proactively assisted women who were being trafficked. An extraordinarily able politician, she excited admiration and hatred from those around her. Enemies wrote extensively and imaginatively about her presumed early career as a prostitute, while supporters elevated her, quite literally, to sainthood. Theodora's is a tale of a woman of exceptional talent who overcame immense obstacles to achieve incredible power, which she exercised without ever forgetting where she had come from. In *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint*, David Potter penetrates the highly biased accounts of her found in the writings of her contemporaries and takes advantage of the latest research on early Byzantium to craft a modern, well-rounded, and engaging narrative of Theodora's life. This fascinating portrait will intrigue all readers with an interest in ancient and women's history.

"[Empress Theodora's] greatest moment was when she stiffened the resolve of the weak Justinian, persuading him not to flee in the face of dangerous rioting in the capital. Admittedly, this limited set of details forms the basis of a fascinating story, even if a biographer has to pad it out with speculation. But Potter's learned yet highly readable book diverges from the familiar formula. Theodora is revealed as a skillful operator who knew how to build useful alliances and work through them. Procopius's hostile version cannot be the whole story. To be an empress in Byzantium was to understand where power really lay, and some, like Theodora, exploited power to the full." --Averil Cameron, *Common Knowledge* "David Potter is to be warmly congratulated on having written a book that offers a gripping portrait of a remarkable woman that is also the portrait of a remarkable age." --*New York of Books* "A notable biography of an overlooked figure." --*Publishers Weekly* "The most recent installment in Oxford University Press's *Women in Antiquity* is everything that one would hope for in a book designed to offer 'an accessible introduction to the life and historical times of women from the ancient world.'" --*America Magazine* "The book is carefully and clearly written, engaging, and well-founded on the astonishingly prolific scholarship of the past two decades." --*Bryn Mawr Classical* "Potter triumphantly extracts a convincing human being from Procopius' whore and the saint of the Syrian Orthodox tradition. Deep knowledge of context--from theatre to theology--combines with intense engagement with the sources to generate a superlative account of the life and times of Byzantium's most iconic empress." --Peter Heather, author of *The Restoration of Rome and Empires and Barbarians* "The offer to review a book on Empress Theodora did not set my heart racing. What new insights might be provided about Theodora's polarized reputation, and how could the considerable gaps in our knowledge of her life and actions be filled? The prospect, however, of seeing how one of our most perceptive and knowledgeable analysts of earlier imperial centuries would handle the topic persuaded me to take a look at *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Saint*. I am glad I did...fresh eyes, impressive command of the bibliography, and easy familiarity with imperial and literary precedent all contribute to a book that is well worth reading...by anyone interested in the mechanics of the later Roman Empire...This is a very impressive volume, indeed a triumph. It avoids the inevitable limitations of the biography of any ancient character, eschews the sensationalism that threatens a study of Theodora, and keeps Justinian firmly in the supporting cast." --Michael Whitby, *American Historical* "The interest of Theodora lies not only in Potter's evidence, but also in his skillful historical method in dealing equitably with a daunting subject." --*Christian Century* "This gripping portrait of the empress Theodora captures the beauty, brilliance, and piety of one of history's most compelling figures. The empress and her capital come alive as Potter retraces the path that brought Theodora from obscurity to the center of imperial power and her role in shaping Byzantium's most celebrated age." --Edward Watts, University of California, San Diego "This book is much more than a straightforward biography or an apology for an empress who has been slandered as over-sexed or over-ambitious. Writing with palpable delight and a deep knowledge of the period, Potter weaves Theodora into networks of athletes and entertainers, generals and aristocrats, bishops and monks, showing her as level-headed, driven by self-interest, and fiercely loyal to her close circle of supporters. In the process, he offers new perspectives on the larger historical framework of the Later Roman Empire during a time of challenges and transformations, spiked with colorful insights into the daily life of women." --Claudia Rapp, University of Vienna "A comprehensive and well-informed presentation

of the Empress in her historical, political, social and cultural context, readable and extremely enjoyable to a much broader public than the community of classicists." --Classical Journal Online
About the Author David Potter is Francis W. Kelsey Collegiate Professor of Greek and Roman History and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan. His books include *Constantine the Emperor*, *The Victor's Crown*, *Emperors of Rome*, and *Ancient Rome: A New History*.