This is a remarkable and important book. The first four chapters contain a series of introductions, after which Eich develops his views and theses about the Roman imperial administration in six more chapters, which are followed by an elaborate bibliography (pp. 391–441) and useful indexes (pp. 442–467). The author starts his analyses of the administrative structures of the Roman Empire under the Principate with a chapter on theories and models that have to do with bureaucracies and bureaucratisation (pp. 20–47). Using theories about proto-bureaucratic phenomena in early modern Europe as eye-openers Eich asks himself whether Roman emperors from the days of Augustus developed a personal bureaucracy, i.e. an apparatus that was tied to and dependent on the rulers alone and not on traditional aristocracies, and was able to extract enough money, goods and services from the provinces of the empire to pay for standing forces of some 300,000 men. In the author’s own words: «Mit dem aus den beschriebenen Bausteinen zusammengesetzten Diagnoseinstrument soll nun die römische Administration untersucht werden, um die ... Frage zu klären, ob das Imperium Romanum zu irgendeiner Zeit seines Bestehens der administrativen 'personalen Bürokratie' zugerechnet werden kann.» In this chapter the author leans heavily on publications by S. N. Eisenstadt, not at all a bad choice.¹

Before treating the procuratorial system and the familia Caesaris, which of course both are among his main topics, Eich gives a short survey of late republican Roman administrative structures and habits (chapter 2, pp. 48–66). In this chapter he strongly accentuates patronage and clientelism as main characteristics of late republican government. To compensate for a lack of apparatus Roman aristocrats ruled through horizontal and vertical personal ties and networks. The government of the empire was in this way completely embedded in the social structure of the Roman republic. This view is not wrong, of course, but it is one-sided. In Rome as well as in the provinces Roman republican government had some outspokenly formal characteristics, and was not completely dependent on horizontal and vertical personal connections. Imperium was at the heart of any provincial governor’s power, and so was provincia, which used to denote the task and sphere of action of a magistrate, but started to define the region in which a governor exercised his authority.² Groups of soldiers were motivated not only by individual and collective material interests, demagoguery, and vertical ties with commanding generals, but also by formal arguments and right or wrong formal positions of their leaders. Letters that were written to and by Cicero show how

1 In the following footnotes the book is referred to as Eich 2005.
anxious officers and soldiers were about formal competences, even in the midst of civil war, and in my view independently of any ties or connections. Besides Late Republican political magnates had at their disposal personal retinues consisting of comites from the upper layers in society, military men, bankers, foragers, specialized slaves and freedmen of their own, and local assistants. Eich himself shows that Julius Caesar and other republican magnates – for example the triumvirs who succeeded Caesar – were using personal staffs of some importance (chapter 4, particularly pp. 86ff and 89ff). After the Ides of March 44 B.C. Caesar’s satellites, as Cicero calls them, were a determining factor in Roman politics. Such retinues should be seen as forerunners of the imperial personal bureaucracy, which came into being from the times of the emperor Augustus onwards. This brings us to chapter 3, where Eich gives us a short survey of »Herrschaft und Regierung im Imperium Romanum der Kaiserzeit«. He argues that the early Principate was a phase of transition between the patronage-system of the Republic and proto-bureaucratic developments that characterized the Roman system later on. A nice idea, but in my view the author underestimates the bureaucratizing tendencies that were already visible in the Augustan Principate. Augustus was very successful in raising money to pay for his military forces, just like sixteenth century AD princes did, and he used procurators and members of the familias Caesaris to do so.

Chapter 3 is followed by one of the main parts of this book, the clever and well-documented chapters on the procuratorial system (chapters 4–8, pp. 85–217). Eich convincingly argues – on the basis of a series of cases, mostly about conflicts between governors and procurators on the one hand (chapter 4, pp. 126–135), and a handful of important equestrian and freedmen’s functions on the other – that procurators were normally not hierarchically subordinated under the command of provincial governors, but were juxtaposed to them, and were standing in direct contact with the emperors. Only if procurators had additional military charges, with additional titles, for example praepositus praetenturae, they were put under the command of nearby military commanders (duces or governors). Some passages in this part of the book are rather intricate and not easy to read, for example pp. 124ff (chapter 4), in which the author interprets evidence coming from papyri from the Near-East.

Chapter 5, pp. 159–179, contains an exposition on the a rationibus, who was more than the main imperial bookkeeper, but did not have the widely ranging

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3 On p. 98, Eich mentions that already H.-G. Pflaum was of this opinion. See his ‘Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain’. Supplément (Paris 1982), 22.
powers that are sometimes ascribed to him. Another sound case study is given in chapter 6, pp. 189–210, on the praefectus annonae, who – in the author’s view – did not administer the entire military food supply. His main task was the provisioning of the city of Rome. The office of this praefectus seems to have had a hierarchical structure, but the evidence to prove this is tiny indeed. In chapter 7, pp. 211–237, Eich sketches the position of the praefectus praetorio, which he describes as a paradigm of «schleichende Institutionalisierung». And indeed, the praetorian prefect started under Augustus as the commander of the imperial guard, but became the most important equestrian bureaucrat, in the administration of justice, and in the coordination of the imperial staff (pp. 232, 249), a development that took about 200 years. The scope of this prefect’s actions is not very clear, and his competences are rather vague, but anyhow he was an important administrator. This chapter contains another one of Eich’s useful case studies, on CIL IX 2438, an inscription from Saepinum about the molestation of imperial sheep herds by local people from this town, in which imperial freedmen, but also the praetorian prefect became involved (pp. 227ff).

A very useful chapter is ch. 9, on the internal structure of the procuratorial system (pp. 288–337), which contains passages on imperial domains, especially in Northern Africa and Asia Minor, and on imperial mines and quarries, for example in Spain. A number of well-known texts, which have been published among others by Peter Herrmann and Tor Hauken, or in FIRA, are used as evidence. Eich convincingly argues that the evidence – scarce as it may be – shows similar hierarchical structures in Asia Minor, Northern Africa and mining areas. In his view in provinces that have produced some evidence there were two procurators, the lower one mostly being a libertus, under whom operated a hierarchically structured group of caesariani, largely freedmen.

Unfortunately the available evidence is too meager to sketch the development of the procuratorial system over time, as Eich himself admits in two concluding passages (pp. 154–158; 180–188). As a matter of fact, a lack of evidence precludes much more, as Eich keeps saying. That raises the question, whether there is enough evidence to show and prove a parallelism between early modern princes, who used new academically trained jurists instead of aristocrats as a tool of their own personal power on the one hand, and knights and members of the familia Caesaris who directly served the Roman emperor, either as provincial procurators or as administrators of imperial domains on the other hand. In other words,
is it possible to argue that the Roman Empire from the days of Augustus developed a proto-bureaucratic structure that is analogous or equivalent to early modern personal bureaucracies? Eich thinks it is (p. 287, a concluding passage; cf. p. 337). In my view there is just enough evidence to show that analogies exist. Although early modern academically trained jurists were in many ways different from imperial slaves and *liberti*, if only because they lacked the stain of slavery, and had a much more pronounced academic, if not professional training, they may in one important activity be considered equivalent to knights, slaves and freedmen who served the emperor. In a ‘Zwischenbilanz’ (pp. 180–188) Eich rightly accentuates financial and fiscal activities as the main focus of the imperial proto-bureaucratic structures. Both early modern princes and Roman emperors used their apparatus, in whatever way it was made up, to extract means to pay for armies and fleets. Both of them used personnel from lower non-aristocratic social layers to do so, personnel that was tied to them and not to traditional magistrates or aristocracies. A weak point is that we cannot make a reliable estimate of the amount of written material that was produced by the Roman imperial administration. This is a pity, because written documentation and bookkeeping are among the main characteristics of early modern bureaucracies. In this respect a comparison cannot be made, and would be too speculative. Another weak point is professionalism. On the basis of extant evidence it is not possible to make an exact estimate of the degree of specialist, professional skills that equites who served the emperor and members of the *familia Caesaris* obtained during their careers. We may suppose, however, that they were more specialized than the amateur gentlemen from the senatorial order (see ch. 8, pp. 258–287, particularly pp. 269ff., the discussion about Peter Brunt’s rejection of the use of modernizing anachronistic terms such as ‘Beamtenstand’ and imperial bureaucracy). So we cannot establish whether there was a Roman equivalent to a ‘Kompetenzhierarchie’. Something to that effect may have existed within the *familia Caesaris*, as Eich indicates (pp. 178ff, 294ff, 321ff).

Chapter 10 (pp. 338–390) contains important viewpoints about third century AD militarization and bureaucratization in the Roman Empire. The author seems to think that the Empire was entering a phase of crisis from about AD 235, until 284 (pp. 339f). That is a rather traditional opinion. In my view the first half of the third century was a period of increasing tensions under a veil of continuity. Those tensions escalated into a crisis after about 249, which led to unavoidable changes that materialized and took their definite shape under the Tetrarchy.¹

One of the main important hypotheses in this chapter is the idea that the Roman Empire needed more money and other means in order to withstand attacks from abroad. The traditional military superiority had disappeared and so a more elaborate defensive structure was necessary. The emperors, particularly in the second half of the third century, had to raise more funds and so had to tighten fiscal administrations in the provinces. From about 260 it became normal practice to appoint equestrian *praesides* to the posts of provincial governors, in any case in smaller provinces. Military tasks were progressively entrusted to *duces* and so

most praesides had to fulfill the tasks of former provincial procurators as well as the administration of justice and the maintenance of public order, which had been traditional tasks of senatorial governors. Only in a few larger provinces senators were appointed, as before. From now on most senators concentrated on Rome and Italy, if they opted for an administrative career at all. The emperors could more easily embark on this political course, because Rome was now where the emperor was, no longer where the city of Rome, the mainstay of the senatorial order, was. Other people, such as military men and equestrian bureaucrats, now surrounded the emperors, wherever they went. In this way military-fiscal needs combined with a change in the definition and location of the concept ‘empire’ led to a more developed imperial personal bureaucracy, on the lines of a coercion-extraction model which reminds us of the policies of early modern princes. According to Eich, this development was not equivalent to a process of ‘militarization’. Military personnel had always been charged with all kinds of incidental tasks in Roman provincial administration, and the officia of provincial governors of the new type probably contained even more equestrian civil servants, many of whom were juridically trained bureaucrats. In my view this is an admirably clever hypothesis, which, however, cannot be corroborated with sound evidence. On pp. 369–370 Eich mentions the few scraps that support the idea that the emperors already during the period 260–284, way before the reforms of the Tetrarchy, reorganized their own apparatus into a more coordinated bureaucracy, and gave provincial officia a definite coherent shape. In my view Eich underestimates the importance of Diocletianic policies and over-accentuates the endeavors of his immediate predecessors. Up to 284 emperors and governors used the heterogeneous personnel that was at hand, and some kind of militarization cannot be denied. Military personnel was always used by provincial governors, that is true, but in the consilium of the emperors military men and foragers such as Timesitheus took the position of scholarly jurists like Papinian and Ulpian, and middle cadre officers had more chances to have a good career in the imperial administration.

These critical remarks do not take away, however, that Peter Eich should be complimented with his excellent work.

Nijmegen

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