desire to become masters to the character of the urban revolts after the Black Death. He also links technological innovation to the competition and emphasis on quality fostered by guilds. In both these discussions, he connects guilds to large and significant issues in European history.

Such connections are the great contribution of *Wage Labor and Guilds*. Epstein's work refocuses scholarly attention on an old topic (guilds) in medieval history. But by looking at guilds in their social, economic, political, and cultural contexts, he raises an array of important questions. How did guilds and the economic structures they created contribute to the marginalization of women, Jews, and other outgroups? Were guilds the cradle of a capitalist ethic and technological innovation? Like any book that takes on a huge and important topic, this one is at times difficult and frustrating: it darts across more than a millennium and bounces from London to Paris to Genoa. But like the European tour which leaves the traveler exhausted and dazed, it also provides much to ponder and many vivid images to savor (my favorites being pigs assembled at the gates of Siena and London aldermen dealing with the "false caps" crisis). *Wage Labor and Guilds in Medieval Europe* is a fine and provocative book.

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John K. Evans — *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Pp. xvi, 263.

In his introduction, Professor Evans points out that although much has been written about women in antiquity in the last two decades and undergraduate courses on the history of women in the ancient world have proliferated in American universities, there is the "tendency to treat the history of women in antiquity as a discrete topic" divorced from the "broader fabric of Ancient History at large" (x). This is the deficiency that the author intends to rectify by linking the study of Roman women and children to the history of Roman imperialism from the end of the Hannibalic war to the Principate of Augustus. He finds it impossible to believe that Rome could send abroad huge numbers of men for over two hundred years without significant changes occurring in the status of the women and children left behind.

In order to prove his thesis, Evans must first discuss the legal position of women in early Rome and the changes which had occurred by the early Principate. Beginning with the Twelve Tables, he traces the laws concerning guardianship, marriage, and property (dowry) as found in the ancient sources. This, of course, requires a certain amount of interpretation since the sources are not always clear and contemporary scholars do not always agree. The one indisputable fact, however, is that all children needed guardians, and women never rose above the status of children. Evans claims that even a woman in the late republic who married *sine manu* was still restricted in many ways by the authority of the husband and her own family's interest in the dowry-property. Roman men believed that women remained in a perpetual state of immaturity (*levitas animi*) where passion substituted for reason. If, then, a husband

had so little faith in his wife's ability to handle matters of property, and if marriage *sine manu* did not clearly free women to do so, what did? According to Evans — war.

By 186 B.C., ten legions, a total of 123,000 men including both upper and lower classes, were in the field. The prolonged absences of these men freed women from male authority and left them to cope with day-to-day problems of running the house or farm and the more important decisions of, for example, the choice of husbands for daughters. Evans recognizes, however, that a woman's ability to cope often had to do with her status in society. In two separate chapters, he looks at the effects of war on women of property and working women.

As seen by the Law of the Twelve Tables, women could inherit property. What had changed greatly by the second century was the increasingly generous dowries. Neither law nor customs regulated the distribution of loot after a victorious campaign. The general usually shared a certain amount with the troops, set aside a larger amount for himself and deposited the rest in the *aerarium*. The loot from eastern campaigns was especially bountiful, leading to the increase in dowries. By the middle of the second century, a general's political career could be endangered if he failed to provide what was literally an exorbitant outlay. Plautus saw clearly the negative effect this would have on the relationship between a husband and wife: the well dowered wife is not a submissive wife. Yet the senate did nothing to regulate the size of dowries, no doubt because the political benefits overrode the social and economic damage.

The same might be said for property inherited by women. Daughters and widows stood to gain control of a great deal of land due to the heavy loss of manpower in the Hannibalic war and the succeeding conflicts in the East. Laws meant to control female inheritance were evaded in a variety of ways, seemingly without fear of prosecution. When it became clear, however, that daughters who had married *sine manu* had a definite economic advantage over their brothers, steps were taken to compensate the *sui heredes in potestate*. Evans mentions several women who were very wealthy, but he also points out that they were few in number.

The sources for peasant women, who must also have gained more independence through loss of husbands and fathers to warfare, are very limited. But although they might have attained more freedom, they were more liable to suffer economic loss rather then gain. It has generally been taken for granted that peasant widows as a whole lost their land to greedy aristocrats, but Evans disputes this theory. He claims that while this is true for Latium, always the most desirable property, those farms located away from highways and on marginally workable soil were ignored. The women who were evicted, however, would find it difficult to secure gainful employment, first because of the huge increase in slave labor resulting from the wars, and secondly due to the long-standing Roman prejudice against women working any place but in the home. They were also limited by the fact that for the majority, their only skills were domestic in nature.

Of the positions open to women in the cities, most required some sort of formal training. Evans cites a number of these to show that many involved family enterprises, and whenever the name of a woman does appear in the meager sources, it is usually linked with one or more men. Domestic servants were invariably slaves, while freedwomen made up the majority of employed females. There were two possibilities for homeless peasant women: the clothing industry (piece-work) and prostitution. The physical demands of the clothing industry were so arduous that even the ancient authors could see no other reason than extreme poverty for a woman to engage in this

occupation. The last resource, and sometimes the only one, was prostitution, a degrading step to take for any woman trained in traditional Roman social *mores*. Both garment workers and prostitutes earned only subsistence wages. Evans concludes that, contrary to the freedom that conquest brought to aristocratic women, thousand of nameless wives and daughters of the nameless men serving in the armies faced a bleak existence with little hope for the future.

Finally, just as the status of women changed due to warfare, so did the position of children in Roman society. It is clear from the earliest sources that unwanted babies were exposed, and there is also ample evidence of child abuse, both physical and sexual. Paradoxically, however, while the wars brought a huge influx of slave children to Italy to suffer abuse, they also seem to have encouraged an increasing affection by the elite for their own sons and daughters. According to Evans, this state of affairs did not occur, as has been suggested, because of the erosion of *patria potestas* since the authority of the absent father was usually replaced by *materna auctoritas* which tended to impose greater strictness on fatherless sons than greater indulgence. The author suggests that the affection shown to youths in the later republic was the result of children having been given over earlier to surrogate parents, slaves who did not share the same values of strictness toward children that their masters felt necessary, thus establishing a pattern for future generations.

Many of us who have taught about Roman women have no doubt compared their experience in the late republic with the emancipation of women in the United States during World War II. Professor Evans has given us a greater perspective on a subject which continues to influence societies even today. His research is thorough and his arguments convincing. An added bonus is that it is also enjoyable reading.

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Ricardo Falla — *Masacres de la selva: Ixcán, Guatemala (1975-1982)*. Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria, 1992. Pp. xii, 253.

Occasionally, a book of social history emerges that makes us realize how powerful the written word is, how important a weapon it can be. Ricardo Falla's *Masacres de la selva* is such a book. Not only is it a compelling and horrifying account of the terrors of Guatemala in the early 1980s, but its recent publication has provoked desperate measures from the Guatemalan government and the military.

The book itself is fairly simple in conception and research. Falla, a Jesuit and anthropologist who has worked for many years in villages in Guatemala and refugee communities throughout central America and Mexico, set out in 1983 to recount the military's activities in the Ixcán region of northwestern Guatemala which led to the flood of refugees from that area in 1982. He collected five months of testimony from refugees in the camp called Puerto Rico in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1983 and 1984. Using this testimony, he painstakingly reconstructs a series of army killings, tortures, and massacres stretching back to 1975, but concentrated in the months of March, April, and May of 1982. In doing so, he has created the most damning, most vivid, and, in