

programme of *renovatio* is a striking example of this "cultural and intellectual compromise" (120). Notably, the foreword of Justinian's *Institutes* includes both the mention of Christ, a litany of honorific adjectives essentially deriving all the way back from the Republic, and an allusive echo of Vergil *Aen.* 6,851–53. Regarding the demise of Phocas and the ascent of Heraclius, Takács observes quite brilliantly that (like in so many cases of earlier imperial changes of dynasties, e.g. the Flavians and Severans), it was the periphery that injected back into the faltering centre the traditional and defining values (127f.) and restores the *status quo ante*; echoes of Domitian and Trajan as portrayed in Pliny's *Panegyricus* invite comparison. The religious and moral overtones in Heraclius' conflict with Persia are also well treated, though now Glen Bowersock (*Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity*, 2012) should also be consulted. The following short detour in the Carolingian west (134–39) seems abrupt, but is certainly thought-provoking, especially if studied with the last section regarding the motifs of divine providentiality and virtuous rulership in Greco-Frankish and Greco-Bulgarian relations.

If Takács' book does not endeavour to challenge all scholarly simplifications or schematisations, it should be remembered that it nowhere promises to do so in the first place. The book's literary style and its division of the subject matter invite favourable comparisons with such classicists-turned-essayists as Daniel Mendelsohn and Anne Carson. The flow of the prose carries the argument beautifully, with occasional touches of almost Symean irony. The footnotes are sparse but always well structured and pertinent (another factor reminiscent of Syme), and much the same can be said of the Bibliography. Some omissions are striking, however: for example, one would have expected some engagement with McCormick's *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (1986), and Ando's *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (2000). But in a work aimed at a general interested readership, these omissions and others like them are not so much a defect as a conscious and judicious way to keep this attractive and useful book approachable and slim, as well.

*Antti Lampinen*

LESLIE BRUBAKER – JOHN HALDON: *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850. A History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011. ISBN 978-0-521-43093-7. 980 pp. GBP 100, USD 165.

In recent years, we have seen numerous multidisciplinary studies on Medieval Mediterranean history. Yet, the iconoclast era of Byzantium has not attracted a significant amount of interdisciplinary research. This comprehensive joint publication by the Byzantine scholars Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon aims to fill this gap. The volume sets an ambitious goal for itself (to say the least) by claiming to challenge a number of conventional views on iconoclasm. Essentially, this means a notable deconstruction of the triumphant iconophile view of iconoclasm. The main argument of the book is that iconoclasm was not as significant a phenomenon as both the iconophiles and the previous modern scholarship have presented. Throughout the book, critical reading of a wide range of sources from texts to visual and material sources of various types is granted a pivotal position.

In addition to the introduction and the concluding 12th chapter, the book entails eleven chapters. The chapters can be divided into two groups: the five opening chapters provide a

historical overview while the remaining chapters are categorised thematically. The historical chapters underline the significance of the official and imperial actions regarding the implementation of iconoclasm and the transformation of the Byzantine Empire. A reader might think that the authors somewhat neglect the unofficial aspects of iconoclasm, but the authors' view that imperial politics had a major role in both sides of iconoclasm is argued in detail and mostly convincingly. The discussion of Leo III is exceptionally interesting, as he is shown to have been less of an iconoclast than what is normally thought. The thematic chapters emphasise especially the socio-economic, political and administrative contexts of iconoclasm. Indeed, the book is actually at least as much about Byzantium in the iconoclast era as it is about iconoclasm itself (hence the title). In the final chapter, the representational aspects of iconoclasm are discussed together with the seminal issues of what iconoclasm was about, and why the phenomenon existed at all.

From relatively minor issues such as the dating of individual sources to wider challenges such as the influence of the rise of Islam on iconoclasm, the authors' different fields of expertise successfully complement each other. However, as the authors freely admit (p. 7), some topics are granted more limited attention. For example, the authors do not really focus on literature. Despite the complexity of the subject matter, the authors manage to write in an academically uncompromising yet notably reader-friendly style. The book does demand a decent amount of previous knowledge of the subject, but does not exclude readers who are not specialised in the iconoclastic era of Byzantium. Another laudable feature of the book is the substantial and most useful bibliography (pp. 815–906). Some points of criticism regarding editorial choices can, however, be mentioned. As a very minor annoyance, the footnotes are not always justified. A more unfortunate aspect of the book is the decision to quote the original texts of the written sources very sparingly. The praiseworthy critical reading of the sources would have been even more praiseworthy had the Greek more often been made visible in order to further convince the reader. Another slight weakness of the book is the relatively frequent use of hedges. Nevertheless, the merits of the volume easily transcend the rare points of complaint. *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* is a genuinely major contribution to the field of Byzantine studies and an absolutely must-read. Whether a reader agrees with all of the presented arguments is questionable, but scholars and students interested in iconoclasm and Byzantine history cannot afford to ignore this volume. Thus, the book is likely to encourage future contributions to the field.

Kalle Knaapi

PAGE DUBOIS: *Out of Athens. The New Ancient Greeks*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. – London 2010. ISBN 978-0674035584. X, 236 pp. EUR 25, GBP 20.

Page duBois has already established herself as one of the most nimble appliers of new theoretical frameworks into the study of classics, operating with a wide and stimulating selection of interpretative paradigms from postcolonial studies and Butlerian feminism to globalization theory and Vernantian comparative anthropology. Her *Out of Athens*, a wide-ranging, open-ended exploration of classical and post-classical modalities in nine case studies, is bound together by duBois' carefully chosen but cleverly oblique viewpoints and her uncompromising drive to jettison scholarly myths wherever they are encountered. Likewise, duBois is remark-