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ALICE-MARY TALBOT, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation*. (Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation, 2.) Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998. Pp. xlii, 405; 1 map. \$35 (cloth); \$20 (paper).

In this second volume of the Dumbarton Oaks series *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation*, as in the first, *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, Alice-Mary Talbot capitalizes on the benefits of a unifying theme to produce a wonderfully useful volume. The eight saints' lives in this volume are divided evenly between the first period of iconoclasm (726–87), inaugurated by the Byzantine emperor Leo III, and the second (815–43), inaugurated by Leo V the Armenian. The contents of the two parts are very disparate in length and nature, however. Four brief notices from the Synaxarion of Constantinople (24 pages) represent the four saints of the first period: Theodosia of Constantinople (synaxarion for 18 July, *Bibliotheca hagiographica Graeca* [BHG] 1774e); Stephen the Younger (28 November); Anthousa of Mantineon (27 July, BHG *Auctarium* 2029h); and Anthousa, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Constantine V (12 April). By contrast, the second period is represented by extensive documents of diverse character: the life of Patriarch Nikephoros I by the repentant Ignatios, deacon and skeuophylax of the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople (BHG 1335, 102 pages); the anonymous life of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos, in fact a composite of multiple sources about historically unrelated figures (BHG 2163, 102 pages); the life of Ioannikios by the monk Peter (BHG 936, 97 pages); and the life with encomium of Empress Theodora (BHG 1731, 22 pages). The editor attributes this imbalance to the paucity of hagiographical sources about the first period, the fact that no accounts were actually written in the first period, and the fact that a new edition of the *Vita* of St. Stephen the Younger, the major extensive hagiographical text pertaining to the first period of iconoclasm, is currently in press.

The four short pieces from the Constantinopolitan synaxarion representing the first period of iconoclasm capture the retrospective assessment of the controversy that prevailed in the capital in the tenth century. They introduce the reader to the iconodule traditions that sustained the opposition to iconoclasm in the documents from the second period, while their editors' introductions place those later documents in perspective. The historical material provided in the introductions and notes are rich in reference to current research, bringing out the role that women played in resistance to iconoclasm and providing critical perspective on such issues as double monasteries and the persistent tensions between monastic leaders and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The four pieces representing the second period of iconoclasm offer very different contributions to this volume. Elizabeth Fisher's introduction to the *Vita* of Patriarch Nikephoros I (758–828) is a little gem of historiography, accounting for the bitter hostility evidenced in the *Vita* between Nikephoros and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Stoudite monks, who ought to have been his allies in their common opposition to iconoclasm. Fisher steers us through a labyrinth of political issues, including the elevation of Nikephoros, a layman, through a series of rapid ordinations to the patriarchate at the behest of Emperor Nikephoros I and over the objections of the Constantinopolitan Stoudios monastery; revocation of the earlier excommunication of a loyal courtier who had divorced and remarried contrary to canon law, again over the objections of the Stoudite monks; the emperor's exile of the Stoudite leader, Theodore, in the fourth year of Nikephoros's patriarchate; and Nikephoros's opposition to double monasteries. On the literary side, Fisher relates the remarkable overview of the Byzantine curriculum in higher education and the Socratic dialogue between the patriarch and the iconoclast emperor Leo V, both embedded in the *Vita*, to the ornate and archaic literary style of this work, preparing the reader for the Homeric allusions and vocabulary scattered through the text.

She maintains a focus on the viewpoint of the repentant author, the lapsed but recovered deacon Ignatios, whose closeness to the patriarch makes his perspective especially valuable. Nikephoros emerges as a dedicated churchman whose “feats of Christian achievement were intellectual and institutional in nature.” Finally, Fisher assesses the cult of Nikephoros, in keeping with the character of the patriarch himself, as the “object of official celebration and commemoration rather than of popular devotion and veneration.”

In her introduction to the *Vita* of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos, Dorothy Abrahamse offers more than a “compromise” between earlier theories, as she calls it; she gets it right, characterizing the text as a composite (“layered”) work about “three individuals whose relics came to be deposited together in the tomb at the monastery of the Mother of God in Mytilene.” Under her perceptive reading, the anachronisms and conflicts become valuable evidence for the history of this text and the cult it represents. Abrahamse also highlights its value as a vivid text that preserves from its sources early reflections of ninth-century events in spite of its eleventh-century compilation. Its value lies in its accurate information on relations between Lesbos and Asia Minor and its contemporary reportage on the events surrounding the imperial decision that finally ended iconoclasm. While the first and last named saints are otherwise unknown, Symeon was “an authentic iconophile hero,” known from several other texts. Abrahamse’s footnotes offer a substantial and wide-ranging supplement to the text, covering everything from medical prophecy based on pulse reading to letters as public documents to political history of the Aegean islands to the role of the Psalms in the Byzantine liturgy.

The *Vita* of Ioannikios was written, like that of Nikephoros, by an admiring associate, the monk Peter from the Agauroi monastery on Bithynian Mount Olympos, but there the similarity ends. Ioannikios was a shaman figure with supernatural powers, renowned for his ability to prophesy the death of his contemporaries, and apparently never formally tonsured. Numerous encounters with dragons and serpents reveal a monastic credulity reminiscent of the fourth-century apocryphal gospels. Ioannikios himself, apparently a deserter from the army, later moved frequently, avoiding persecution under the iconoclasts and prompting an accusation of cowardice from Theodore the Stoudite. The author calls the *Vita* an *epitaphion*, suggesting to its editor, Denis Sullivan, that it was written for presentation on the first anniversary of the saint’s death. Comparing another *Vita* of Ioannikios by a monk Sabas, also from Mount Olympos, Sullivan highlights Peter’s hostility to the Stoudite monks as “sowers of scandal,” his commitment to the pious fiction that the last iconoclast emperor, Theophilos, recanted on his deathbed, and his support for Patriarch Methodios, who was elevated on condition of recognition of that fiction. It is a valuable document for understanding the politics of recovery from the iconoclastic era.

Martha Vinson characterizes the concluding *Vita* of Empress Theodora as an imperial or courtly encomium with a political purpose. It was composed probably under the Macedonian emperor Leo VI, when Theodora and her son Michael figured in imperial propaganda to legitimize the orthodoxy of the new Macedonian dynasty. Its promulgation of the pious fiction of her husband’s deathbed recantation and its account of a miraculous defeat of an Arab naval expedition in 842 supported that propaganda, while the tale of the “bride show” by which she was chosen, with supernatural help, to be Emperor Theophilos’s bride validated her orthodoxy, her claim to the throne after his death, and her claim to sainthood.

No attempt has been made to coordinate the work of the individual translators, with the result that the introductions to the texts exhibit some redundancy and unevenness of detail and approach. This selection of documents would have supported a coordinated comparative approach, for example, to the phenomenon of prophecy of the death of a dignitary. George’s prophecy of Bardas’s death in the life of David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos seems, by contrast with the obvious *vaticinia ex eventu* in several of the other

documents, a clear case of intentional oracular ambiguity, a hallmark of genuine oracles, justifying Alexander Kazhdan's thesis that this text was written before 866 (pace Abrahamse, p. 230 f., n. 430). In general, however, the diverse perspectives and approaches of the contributors enhance the reader's understanding of the impact that this controversy had on the empire.

Alice-Mary Talbot has contributed a welcome addition to the growing body of Byzantine literature in translation. Her excellent introduction combined with these diverse yet thematically linked texts illumines the complex history of iconoclasm and its reversal in Eastern Christendom, revealing nuance in the political interactions of emperors and empresses, the military, the patriarchs, and monastic leaders of the era. Modern electronic resources (the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and the *Dumbarton Oaks Hagiographical Index*) have enabled the editors to enrich their notes with very full identification of allusions to patristic literature, pointing readers to additional sources and enhancing understanding. A map of northwest Asia Minor and the Sea of Marmara concludes the general introduction and orients the reader unfamiliar with some of the obscure topographical references encountered in this volume. Three indices ("People and Places," "General Index," and "Notable Greek Words") facilitate cross-reference within the volume and make it a useful reference work. Now that these translations are available, I cannot imagine anyone teaching this phase of Byzantine history without assigning them as primary readings.

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PINELLA TRAVAGLIA, *Magic, Causality and Intentionality: The Doctrine of Rays in al-Kindī*. (Micrologus' Library, 3.) Florence: Galluzzo, 1999. Paper. Pp. ii, 176; diagrams.

Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Kindī played a pivotal role in the earliest phases of Arabic science and philosophy. Along with a circle of colleagues and students, he produced heavily edited translations of some key Hellenistic treatises as well as a whole slew of original monographs. Nearly three hundred writings are attributed to him, covering a wide range of subjects, from metaphysics, astronomy, and music to sword making and perfumery. The greater part of al-Kindī's extant literary output has now been published, and research is being directed toward a more comprehensive assessment of his achievement. In particular, scholars are trying to discern the basic principles that underlie and inform his monumental and varied corpus.

For all of these reasons I looked forward to the monograph by Pinella Travaglia. She aims not only to describe the theoretical foundations underlying al-Kindī's treatise *De radiis*; she also wishes to show how the same theories are applied in two other works, one dealing with pharmacology, the other with optics. Travaglia's book does tell us something about these three writings, especially their Latin versions. Moreover, nearly one-fifth of the book is devoted to a useful, though incomplete, survey of al-Kindī's works, listing manuscripts, editions and translations, and studies. Nonetheless, in the opinion of this reviewer, there are some serious flaws in Travaglia's work, making her contribution to the subject of only limited value.

These flaws are of several kinds. First, some of the expressions employed are questionable, for example, the characterization of al-Kindī as the first philosopher "of purely Arabian thought." More generally, Travaglia's work assumes a dichotomy between "Eastern" and "Western" thought that is very problematic. Is it correct to say that the Hermetic corpus is "unrelated to the Western tradition"? Need one remind Travaglia that the Sabian culture of Harran was founded upon Hellenistic philosophy? In addition, the question of how to approach the subject of magic is belabored unnecessarily. There now exists a consensus that, functioning within an appropriate causal framework, magic is just another