

crisis, as well as [into] our seemingly strange, resilient, persistent fascination with apocalypse” (6).

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The Life of Patriarch Ignatius. By Nicetas David. Text and Translation from the Greek by Andrew Smithies with Notes by John Duffy. Dumbarton Oaks Texts 13. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2013. Pp. xxxvii + 194. \$30.

This fine critical edition, translation, and commentary purports to be the *vita* of the conservative anti-intellectual Byzantine patriarch Ignatius. In effect, however, it is a vituperative pamphlet against Photius, arguably Byzantium’s greatest mind, written by the prolific Nicetas David, author of some 50 hagiographies, who was highly skilled at distorting evidence. Hence *The Life* offers a witness (of sorts) to an intriguing period when Roman pope and Constantinopolitan patriarch excommunicated each other, their rival churches descended into the *filioque* schism, and rival patriarchs Ignatius and Photius succeeded each other for two periods each of mutual abuse. Also at this time we witness a playboy emperor manipulated by his mother, uncle, and upstart usurper. A great deal else can be gleaned, with political and religious factors constantly interacting. Each and every statement in turn involves an emotive wider context, so that even an obscure European king’s urge to replace wife by mistress resulted in a document strengthening Patriarch Photius’s case against the pope.

D.’s informative commentary (called “notes” by D.) consistently directs readers to appropriate further literature, especially J. B. Bury’s, *History of the Eastern Roman Empire* (1912) and Francis Dvornik’s *The Photian Schism* (1948). These two works are generally more informative and relevant than more recent studies, though D. also makes good use of the latter. Prior to Smithies’s excellent edition, this difficult text was available only in Migne’s inadequate *Patrologia graeca*. S.’s highly readable translation will greatly assist those attempting the facing Greek. Above all, the book now allows proper access to a vital text that probably most readers know only through secondary accounts and so were unable to appreciate and assess Nicetas’s skill at vituperative bias against Photius and unqualified praise for Ignatius.

The book’s background is also remarkable. S. submitted the critical edition and translation for his 1987 doctorate before a career as librarian for the Australian Antarctic Division in Hobart, Tasmania. To annotate and make the unpublished thesis available, D. focused a 2003 Dumbarton Oaks reading group on it, leading to this fine publication.

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