

D. M. Nicol, *The End of the Byzantine Empire*. London 1979. *Foundations of Medieval History*. Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd. 109 pages. 1 map, 2 tables.

The *Foundations* series was designed to provide its readers with a sound basic knowledge of various periods of history and to leave each of its contributors free to write extensively on one specific period of a General History, addressing themselves to a wider readership than specialists and scholars. Its publications, in short, aim at a certain popularisation of history.

D. M. Nicol deals with a period in Byzantine history which is not only the most tragic but also the most difficult to write about — the twilight of a brilliant empire, from its first short-lived conquest by the Franks of the IVth Crusade in 1204 until its ultimate disappearance under the Turks in 1453. The narrative is critical in spirit and though terse in style it makes enjoyable reading.

This outline of the book comprises a summary of each chapter, accompanied by comments on a few points of minor interest.

The Introduction explains the viewpoint from which events are considered (it is the Byzantine viewpoint, but general rather than individual) and includes a map of the Byzantine world. Chapter 1 (The New Constantine) deals with the IVth Crusade and its consequences, the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire in 1261, the western threat in the form of Charles d'Anjou's planned invasion, the Lyons Synod of 1274 for the unification of the Churches, the eastern threat in the form of the Turkomans, who were beginning to move in 1270-1280, and finally the invasion from the west, the Sicilian Vespers and the death of Michael VIII Palaeologos (the "New Constantine") in 1282.

In the Introduction, on p. 7, the author writes the following: "Greece and the Balkans were temporarily lost to the Slavs. The Byzantine Empire, now effectively reduced to the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, was isolated from the rest of the Christian world". This is no more and no less, in 1979, than a return to the monstrous and quite properly refuted old theory of Fallmerayer dating back to 1830-35. Were the few Sclavinians in Macedonia, Thessaly and the Peloponnese sufficient to enable the whole of Greece to be lost to the Slavs? And how could the Byzantine Empire have been reduced to the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, when all the large towns of Greece, from Thessaloniki to Athens and Patras, not to mention the whole coastline, were Byzantine? And it is D. M. Nicol who tells us this!

In Chapter 1 (p. 12) we read the following: "The Byzantine ruler in exile in Northern Greece had his moment of glory in 1220 when he recaptured Thessalonica, the second city of the empire, from the crusaders and was there crowned as emperor". This was, of course, Theodore Doukas Angelos of the Despotate of Epirus. But it was not in 1220 that he captured Thessaloniki; he entered the town victorious sometime between 1st October and 31st December 1224, as J. Lognon roughly determined in "La Reprise de Salonique par les Grecs en 1224". *Actes du VIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines*, I, Paris 1950, 141-156. See also B. Sigonowitz, "Zur Eroberung Thessalonikes in Herbst 1224", *BZ* 45 (1952), 28.

Also, on p. 20, we read: "But Michael's diplomatic network was still effective and he had friends elsewhere. The King of Hungary was his son-in-law". Stephen Vth of Hungary was not Michael VIII's son-in-law. He gave his daughter Anna in marriage to Michael's son Andronicus, so therefore Michael VIII and Stephen V were fellow fathers-in-law.

In Chapter 2 (The Old Order Changeth) the author deals with the re-establishment of Orthodoxy after the death of Michael VIII, the social changes, the activities of Byzantium's exploiters, Venice and Genoa, and of its enemies, the Despotate of Epirus and the Serbs, the collapse of the eastern frontier in Asia Minor, the activities of the Catalanian Society,

the relations between the Church and the Empire under the influence of Patriarch Athanasius I, and finally the first civil war, between the two Andronicus's.

In his account of the social changes, the author states (p. 23): "The class of free peasant farmers... was virtually extinct by the end of the thirteenth century". This has never been proved, and in fact does not seem to be true. In the documents of the Athos monasteries in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries there is evidence, naturally, only of the monasteries' own lands and their serfs; but this does not mean that there were no free peasant farmers, and moreover some, albeit few, bills of sale to free peasant landowners have been preserved from that time. The whole matter is discussed in A. E. Laiou-Tomadakis, "Peasant Society in the Late Byzantine Empire. A Social and Demographic Study". Princeton, New Jersey 1977. (Princeton University Press). Page 12 is of particular interest. See also P. Lemerle, "Esquisse pour une Histoire Agraire de Byzance". *Revue Historique* 219 (1958). Juillet-Septembre 1958, p. 89 de l'extrait.

In Chapter 3 (A Kingdom Divided) the author relates the loss of Asia Minor to the Turks, the recapture of Northern Greece, the internal changes and reforms, the second civil war, Cantacuzene's battles, the Zealot uprising in Thessaloniki, the end of the civil war, the Hesy-chast Discord, the reign of John VI Cantacuzene, Byzantium's economic dependence on Genoa and Venice, and finally the abdication of John Cantacuzene.

Concerning the loss of Asia Minor to the Turks, we read on p. 32: "The fact was proved in 1329 when Cantacuzene and his emperor took an army across the water. In June they were routed by Orchan and his warriors in two battles near Nicomedia". However, neither the battle of Pelekanos at the beginning of June 1329, nor the battle of Philokrini immediately afterwards resulted in defeat for the Byzantine troops. Pelekanos was a clear victory for the Byzantines and Philokrini was not an outright victory for the Ottomans. The Byzantines were unlucky. See Cantacuzene's own account of events, II, 6-8, Bonn I, 347-354, which makes no mention either of troops in battle array or of defeated Byzantines.

Concerning internal changes and reforms, we read on p. 35: "The judges themselves were soon found to be corruptible. They were brought before the emperor and dismissed". This incident concerned Andronicus III's four high-court judges, whom Nikiphoros Grigoras, XI, 3, Bonn, I, 537, presents as guilty. Cantacuzene himself makes no mention of the condemnation, but we do possess an application by Leon Bardales, nephew of Metochites, sent to the emperor for the re-instatement of the unjustly condemned high-court judges (see I. Ševčenko, "Léon Bardales et les juges généraux ou la corruption des incorruptibles". *Byzantion* 19, 1949, 247 et seq.). We also have a recently discovered copy of their defence addressed to the emperor and sent from their place of exile, complaining that they had been arbitrarily and unjustly condemned by the Patriarch (see G. I. Theocharides, "Die Apologie der verurteilten höchsten Richter der Römer". *BZ* 56, 1963, 69-100). It seems that these condemned high-court judges were exonerated, since they later returned from exile; it is History's duty to make repair to their memory.

Concerning the second civil war, we read on p. 36: "He (Cantacuzene) declined to take the crown, insisting that... he was no more than the guardian of the legitimate heir John Palaiologos. From this principle he never deviated". The brevity of the narrative here impairs its accuracy. He was not always John's guardian and nor is it true that he "never deviated". It was true in the beginning, but the facts are as follows: In Adrianople on May 21st 1346 Cantacuzene was crowned Emperor of the Romans by the visiting Patriarch of Jerusalem, Lazarus (the author himself says as much on p. 39). Previously, his army had unofficially

proclaimed him as emperor in Didymoteichon (this was the cause of the vicil war in 1341), but at that time he had refused the crown. In accepting it now his intention was to reign alongside John V and not to overthrow the House of Palaeologos; and in accordance with his loyal principles the names of John V and his mother were recorded before his own. After John's intolerable affront, however, in April 1353 in the Palace Matthew Cantacuzene was proclaimed joint emperor (see p. 44) and it was decided that his name would be substituted for John V's in the Court and Ecclesiastical Charters. The Charters, however, were to retain the name of Empress Anna and that of Andronicus, John V's eldest son, again in accordance with loyal principles. (Cantacuzene, Bonn III, 256-270. See also F. Dölger, "Johannes VI Kantakuzenos als dynastischer Legitimist". *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov*, 10, 1938, 19 et seq.). So he eventually accepted the crown and later dethroned John V, but preserved his principles of loyalty to the House of Palaeologos until 1353. The author's laconic comment gives an erroneous impression, though he does ultimately say himself on p. 44: "The dynasty of Cantacuzene seemed at last (1353) to be replacing that of Palaiologos".

In Chapter 4 (Cultural and Spiritual Revival) the author deals with spiritual and educational patronage, the recovery of the Ancient Greek heritage, intellectual and spiritual cultivation and the revival of spirituality. It is a chapter which reveals a deep knowledge of the Byzantine spiritual world of the age and the few instances of exaggeration or underestimation do not merit discussion in such a brief review as this.

In Chapter 5 (The Enemy at the Gate) the author recounts the reign of John V Palaeologos and the request for help from the west, the emperor's conversion to the Catholic faith, the advance of the Ottomans into Eastern Europe, the Byzantines at the mercy of the Ottoman Turks, the Nikopolis crusade and Manuel II's journey to the west, the battle of Ankara and the Turk's defeat at the hands of the Mongols.

At this point one might legitimately complain about the author's brevity. The whole dramatic battle of Nikopolis, so decisive for the Christian nations, with the opposing forces' magnificence, Count Nevers' rash attack, the catastrophic (for the Christians) intervention at the battle's crucial point of Stephen Lazarevich's Christian Serbs, who were fighting with the Turks, the whole day of frightful butchery of the prisoners after the battle and in the presence of Vayazit — all this the author sums up in a couple of cool sentences on p. 70: "(The Sultan) was ready for them near Nikopolis in Bulgaria; and there on 25 September 1396 their vast army fell into his hands. King Sigismund escaped, but of the other leaders and their men most were massacred". On p. 72 no mention at all is made of the destruction of Smyrna, occupied for 50 years by the Knights of Rhodes, and the slaughter of the citizens by Tamerlane's Mongols. The author confines himself to: "The Mongol hordes... swept through it (Asia Minor) like locusts, until they reached the coast".

In Chapter 6 (Into Captivity) the author writes about the last interval in Byzantium's agony following the Ottomans' defeat at Ankara in 1402, the Byzantine Despotate of the Morea, the Turks' renewed offensive, the Florence Synod for the unification of the Churches, the Varna crusade, the last Byzantine emperor's accession to the throne, and the siege and capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

Concerning Manuel II, who on his return from Europe in June 1403 proclaimed the agreement made with Suleyman and John VII, we read on p. 73: "He made one new condition, however, John VII was to leave Constantinople and reign as emperor in Thessalonica". This was not, however, a "new condition" made by Manuel, but rather the solution to the hostility between Manuel and John VII, which Vousiko achieved for the future before Manuel

set off for Europe and left John VII reigning in Constantinople.

There follow a Conclusion, dealing with the last advanced Byzantine outposts (Mystra and Trebizond) and the causes of the death of the empire, and an Epilogue. These in turn are followed by a Bibliography, a Chronological Table of Events, a Genealogical Tree of the Palaeologos Dynasty and an Index.

With the pleasure one derives from the narrative, which though terse is nevertheless captivating, one can appreciate the author's sound diagnosis of the causes of the death of the Byzantine Empire and muse on his epigrammatic words in the Epilogue: "Great and noble men often die as tragic invalids after long illnesses bravely borne. So it was with the Byzantine Empire".

G. I. THEOCHARIDES

Panayotis K. Christou, *Greek Patrology*, vols I and II, Thessaloniki 1976, 1978, pp. 399 and 1009, pictures and tables 36 and 34.

Panayotis Christou is renowned both in Greece and internationally for his valuable contribution to the field of Christian literature. Now professor emeritus in the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki, with a long history of dynamic activity both as a scholar and in public affairs, he continues as director of the Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies at the Patriarchal Monastery of Vlatadon in Thessaloniki's Byzantine town. From this administrative position his unrelenting and selfless labours have constructed a bridge between the Greek present and the spiritual Byzantine past, with Thessaloniki as its epicentre. His constant presence and extensive contribution have stamped his mark upon the city. The Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies produces a periodical entitled *Κληρονομία* (Heritage), which clearly expresses the mission of Professor Christou and his select colleagues, under the surveillance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Thanks to Professor Christou's methodical and extremely scholarly work, the Orthodox and the Christian world in general have long been able to savour the fruits of the wisdom of the Greek Fathers of the Original Church, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Through the studies and articles which the Institute has been publishing for years now, through its unique microfilm collection of manuscripts of classical and christian works from Athos and elsewhere, and through its programmes of palaeographical, patrological and historical research, Thessaloniki, that natural extension of the Greek culture of medieval Constantinople, has become established as the most representative centre for the promotion of the Church Fathers' spiritual heritage.

Professor Christou's present work, *Greek Patrology*, emphatically sets the seal upon the above estimations. It is to be completed by three further volumes and clearly reflects not only the author's erudition but also Byzantine wisdom and thought. Being published here, in the "eternal" Thessaloniki, it establishes the city as the pre-eminent Orthodox centre of patristic studies. As far as the methodology is concerned, Professor Christou's is an unrivalled and pioneering Patrology, an absolutely Personal work and quite original in its exposure, description, analysis and evaluation of Christian literature.

The first volume is essentially introductory and is in six parts: 1. Patrology and Church