

Jesse W. Torgerson: *The Chronographia of George the Synkellos and Theophanes. The Ends of Time in Ninth-Century Constantinople*. Leiden/Boston: Brill 2022 (Brill's Series on the Early Middle Ages 28). XVII, 458 p., 20 ill., 13 tables. € 142.00/\$ 170.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-50169-0.

The title of Jesse W. Torgerson's "*The Chronographia of George the Synkellos and Theophanes*" draws attention to its major point, that what are traditionally seen as two distinct chronicles need to be studied as a single work which Torgerson calls *Chronographia*, with its initial part by George and its continuation written by Theophanes very much under George's influence. Torgerson uses a sensible set of terminologies for distinguishing the different parts, but in this review I will for clarity continue to refer to the separate sections as being by George and by Theophanes while accepting that the total is in effect a single work. Torgerson's study is densely written with admirable passion and conviction that in places gets in the way of clarity. More perceptive readers may manage better than I have, but I do acknowledge from the outset that, despite my occasional difficulties with comprehension, I found it to be an excellent study. My main concern arises from what I see as a tendency to overstate or exaggerate, which leads to my rejection of some of his overall conclusions while still being willing to accept a modified version of them.

It is much more about George than it is about Theophanes, but it concentrates on exploiting the text attributed to Theophanes to discover and explain George as the force behind Theophanes. That explanation will probably surprise: "[T]he *Chronographia* cannot be understood if it is thought of as a way of telling history, for it is a way of telling time" (p. 410). Rather the *Chronographia* by George the *Synkellos* and Theophanes, covering Creation to 813 CE in about a thousand pages, was originally written as a call to rebellion against the ninth-century Byzantine emperor, Nikephoros I, with later alterations to meet changing circumstances after Nikephoros' death. Neither George nor Theophanes ever said that this was their purpose, and this highly unusual notion of a chronicle being written as a call to rebellion rather than being a history relies entirely on attentive Byzantine readers being able to pick up George's supposedly deliberate clues, which now need pointing out to a modern audience. I remained unaware of this hypothesis until well into the book, but eventually found the suggestion of a political purpose with regard to George's intentions unexpectedly persuasive, though decidedly

overstated if crystallised as a call to rebellion, and I remain less confident about his readers' reactions and understanding.

The subtitle, "The Ends of Time in Ninth-Century Constantinople," is also highly relevant although this too remained a puzzle, at least to me, until near the end of the book. Torgerson draws attention to George's apparent invention of a holy First-Created Day on Sunday 25 March (and 1 Nisan and 29 Phamenoth), on which occurred Creation, Noah's descent from the Ark, the Incarnation and the Resurrection both consecutively and simultaneously,¹ marking periods of time. A fifth and final First-Created Day would be marked by the presence of the Antichrist, with the First-Created-Day thesis enabling perceptive readers to recognise from the start Nikephoros' portrayal "as both the fulfillment of Pharaoh's type and as the image of the Antichrist" (p. 310). I lacked that degree of perception. There is, however, illuminating discussion of the significance of Theophanes' portrayal of earlier emperors' links to their sons and to their empresses and other women, though to my mind this is again rather overstated. Torgerson also notes importantly that *synkellos* is George's title rather than his name, its use indicating that he should be trusted as someone who writes with authority and from a position of authority. But for me Torgerson's most important point related to the manuscript tradition, that the earliest manuscripts separated the last part of George's chronicle and joined it instead to Theophanes' chronicle, in effect making that combination a new chronicle, something that neither critical editions nor translations have dealt with adequately. So a challenging book in which there is much to take in.

The clearest way of commenting on these somewhat unexpected but generally persuasive conclusions is to describe the contents. In the standard critical editions of their respective *Chronographiae* George covers Creation to 283 CE and Theophanes 284 to 813 CE as a deliberate continuation. Of the 478

1 It does need noting that George does not precisely state that the first created day is the same as the day of Noah's disembarkation, Christ's Conception, and his Resurrection, but rather that it is *συστοιχον* (389.21) with them. The Adler/Tuffin translation is "corresponds with" which has strong lexical support (The Chronography of George Synkellos. A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation. Translated with Introduction and Notes by W. Adler and P. Tuffin. Oxford/New York 2002, pp. 463–464). "Corresponding with" does not mean the same as identical. That considerably weakens Torgerson's whole understanding and representation of the first-created-day thesis.

pages of George in Alden A. Mosshammer's fine 1984 critical edition,² 398 deal with the period prior to the Resurrection, with only a further 80 pages covering the next 250 years. So it is scarcely surprising that previous scholarship's appreciation of George's erudition and wealth of material (as distinct from Theophanes') has concentrated on the early material. Not nearly so much attention has been given to his chronicle of events after the Resurrection, for which better more reliable accounts exist elsewhere. Torgerson's book reverses this, drawing attention particularly to George's continuation by Theophanes, written in Torgerson's view very much under George's impetus, a key word for Torgerson, occurring an excessive 44 times,³ a rather dubious way of enhancing his argument. Torgerson's aim is to reveal George's outstanding achievement: "to allow [...] the work's genius to be understood on its own terms" with the hope by Torgerson that his "unveiling the creativity and intelligence invested in this indelibly Byzantine work might finally permit the *Chronographia* to stand in its rightful place as one of the most complex and carefully constructed [...] works of the Middle Ages" (p. 412). That is a very different judgement from that of earlier scholarship (though both the Mosshammer edition and the William Adler/Paul Tuffin translation are properly appreciative), but it is based on examining the complete work including, in fact emphasising, its continuation by Theophanes rather than just the early section. I think Torgerson succeeds, but this revelation of the aim of his book only comes at page 412. To me Torgerson's complex argument was not really clear until near the end of book when he helpfully repeats much of it in his concluding chapter. Other more careful readers may not have my problem of not having spotted hints in the earlier part of the book and my only having appreciated bits at a second and further reading, after struggling with various earlier arguments without recognizing their significance for the total work.

George the *Synkellos* planned ambitiously to replace Eusebius' chronicle by compiling within a year a version "from the first-created day up to AM [*anno mundi*] 6300"⁴ (p. 99), i.e. from Creation to 807/808 CE, presumably the

2 Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographica. Ed. A. A. Mosshammer. Leipzig 1984 (Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana).

3 "Impetus" occurs on pp. 36, 39, 40, 136, 150 x 3, 151, 153, 154 x 3, 160, 165 x 2, 171, 174, 228 x 2, 230, 258, 265, 284, 303, 310, 312 x 2, 313 x 3, 317 x 4, 331, 333 x 2, 350, 356, 357, 363, 372, 389, 396.

4 Mosshammer (note 2), p. 2; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 3.

current year in which he commenced work. Later by implication he extended this by a couple of years to AM 6302 (809/810 CE),⁵ probably because he was, unsurprisingly, still writing two years after he began. He still intended the chronicle to reach his own age and the current year and perhaps just forgot to revise his earlier introductory date, as Torgerson suggests. (The material of AM 6302 is, however, essential for Torgerson's interpretation to be convincing). By then (809/810) he had, however, only reached AM 5777 (283 CE) and realised that imminent death would prevent him from completing his task. That led to his asking his friend Theophanes to complete the chronicle for him to which Theophanes agreed reluctantly, aware of his own "lack of learning and [...] limited culture" (Theophanes' preface). Along the way George had, however, also decided to make an extra new beginning to his chronicle, with a new heading and title,⁶ from the supposed reign of Julius Caesar or more precisely from Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE (AM 5434), effectively both continuing the original chronicle in combination with simultaneously beginning a brand new one (arguably planned from the outset for the First-Created-Day theory to work).

The seemingly odd choice of Pompey's capture of Jerusalem as a starting-point is explained and justified through the appointment of Herod, a non-Jew, as ruler of the Jews which appeared to fulfil the patriarch Jacob's prediction about that situation marking a new Age beginning with the Incarnation (*Genesis* 49.10)⁷ occurring under Roman rule. In both forms this later version only extended to (but did not include) the first year of Diocletian in 284 CE (AM 5777), the point to which George had apparently reached by 809/810 CE. According to Torgerson that date (284 CE, AM 5777) was not to mark the end of the chronicle, despite George's new preface stating specifically that it did. George still had in mind its reaching AM 6302 (809/810 CE) as originally planned, whoever the author, in the reign of Nikephoros I (emperor 802–811 CE), but would need Theophanes to write this for him. What George offered Theophanes in the way of help for this task depends on the meaning of *ἀφορμὰ* in Theophanes' preface which is still in dispute, with 'materials' and 'starting-point' being two main contenders but for which Torgerson suggests *impetus*, which then becomes a key word for his narrative,

5 See Mosshammer (note 2), p. 244; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 301.

6 Mosshammer (note 2), p. 360; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 431.

7 Mosshammer (note 2), p. 362; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 362.

as mentioned above,⁸ to imply that George pressured Theophanes to write what he did in the way that he did. Nikephoros' death creating a new situation then led to someone, most probably Theophanes himself, adding a further three years of narrative to take the chronicle to AM 6305 (812–813 CE) into the reign of Michael, as noted by Theophanes in his own preface, with further posthumous alterations in the 840s to meet further changing circumstances.

Much of the above has long been widely accepted. Torgerson's main innovations are (i) to take note of the original AM 6300 date (based on George's early statement at p. 2 of the edition); (ii) to note the revised end at AM 6302 (based on George's statement that this was the current year⁹ and the way AM 6302 is narrated), which leads to (iii) Torgerson's argument that the narrative of AM 6303 to 6305 is a deliberate extension to meet a new political situation, and likewise the further modifications to the text in the 840s. I find all three arguments convincing. All three are, however, relatively insignificant for the book as a whole.

Torgerson's starting point for the book is to consider the implications of the dates and contents of Theophanes' manuscripts based on studies that are more recent than those used for Carl de Boor's critical edition of Theophanes and the Cyril Mango/Roger Scott translation.¹⁰ The two main points are (i) that the chronological rubrics that are such a distinguishing feature of Theophanes are absent from the earliest manuscripts and so were not part of Theophanes' original text, with Theophanes' basic structural unit being the reign of an emperor rather than the narrative of individual years; and (ii) that manuscripts of Theophanes always also contain George's new chronicle that began with Pompey's capture of Jerusalem. So 63 BCE would have been the starting point for Byzantine readers of the chronicle rather than where Theophanes began his chronicle with Diocletian in 284 CE. From this Torg-

8 To my mind the plural *ἀπορροαί* must surely represent examples of something concrete to justify the plural and certainly not an abstract noun in the singular but I accept that views differ.

9 Mosshammer (note 2), p. 244; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 301.

10 Theophanis Chronographia. Vol. 1: Textum graecum continens. Ed. C. de Boor. Leipzig 1883; The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813. Translated with Introduction and Commentary by C. Mango and R. Scott. With the Assistance of G. Greatrex. Oxford/New York 1997.

erson stresses that de Boor's critical edition of Theophanes and its translation by Mango/Scott both deny the modern reader what would have been a Byzantine reader's experience of reading the text and so the modern reader is given a misleading impression of what they are reading. (The Mango/Scott translation is said to be particularly misleading through a "major intervention" [p. 67] in providing the modern reader accurately with names where the manuscripts only provide numerals, instead of requiring readers to remember from earlier entries and identify all the names to which the stream of numerals apply).

Although Theophanes does set out at the beginning of his preface exactly where his chronicle begins, a Byzantine reader of Theophanes would have begun at least 118 pages earlier than this at Mosshammer p. 360 (in terms of the modern critical edition), with George's text extending to p. 478 in Mosshammer's edition, and Byzantine readers would only have begun there if they also skipped George's first 360 pages, admittedly in a different manuscript. To my mind Torgerson makes a completely convincing case in terms of George's intention and understanding of his chronicle and of the content of the manuscripts, though I am far less confident about what would have been the reading practice of his Byzantine audience or the practicalities of any new edition of Theophanes that adds at least the extra 118 pages of George's new chronicle, if not the complete 478 pages of the original, to de Boor's edition of Theophanes which already contains 503 pages of Greek. That amounts to a lot extra to read or to put into an already large book. In self-defence I also suspect that most readers are grateful that the Mango/Scott translation demands less than Torgerson requires of them by accurately linking names to the stream of otherwise unidentified numerals, misleading and a "major intervention" though this may be.

The earlier part of the book draws attention to various other features, most notably the implications of George being a *synkellos* (chapter 2, "Author: The *Synkellos* and His Imperial Critique," pp. 78–113), demonstrating that he wrote from a position of authority; and especially the significance of George's innovative and creative use of the holy First-Created Day, with George putting forward a new more biblical understanding of time by harmonising philosophical belief and historical measuring of time with the practice of chronography, thus linking the idea of time with astronomy – the measuring of time (chapter 3, "Thesis: The First-Created Day," pp. 114–148). I did have difficulty in following Torgerson's analysis here and may not

have done justice to it. The early discussion of these aspects makes good sense in terms of the structure of the book. I would, however, have found it helpful if Torgerson had also provided in the early part of the book a clear summary of his later claims and particularly of the First-Created Day. For a term that Torgerson sees as essential for understanding the complete chronicle it does need noting that it does not occur anywhere in the 503 pages of the Theophanes section, which is where its application is important. Perhaps George's impetus failed to work.

As it stands Torgerson's understanding of George's purpose in writing his chronicle only becomes clear near the end of the book. Torgerson makes a strong case for the entire chronicle being polemical. "Historical polemic was the *Chronicle's* entire rhetorical goal," (p. 311) but it takes over 300 pages before we learn this. For George it is supposedly all aimed at demonstrating to his readers from the start that their current emperor at the time he was writing, Nikephoros I (emperor 802–811), is the worst of all emperors, in fact the Antichrist, with George preparing his readers for this through the way he presents earlier rulers and with readers understanding his typology. This might be more convincing if George had given Nikephoros even a single mention somewhere in his chronicle, but he didn't. Nikephoros has to wait until Theophanes page 476 (de Boor) to score his first mention, and there is no reason why he should appear any earlier. So it is demanding a lot from Byzantine readers to state they would have been aware of their being groomed to meet Nikephoros as they read the previous almost 600 pages (the final 118 of George, plus 476 of Theophanes) without his being mentioned. Certainly Nikephoros' evil is immediately made clear once his rebellion is introduced, with authorial doubts about God's judgement in permitting its success, and his evil is stressed for the rest of his life across the next twenty or so pages. But it is also worth noting that at no point is Nikephoros precisely called "Antichrist," the closest being a reference to Constantine V as "the precursor of the Antichrist"¹¹ at his birth and Leo III being implied to be "the precursor of the Antichrist"¹². Neither of course was Nikephoros' immediate *precursor* as emperor.¹³

11 De Boor (note 10), p. 400; Mango/Scott (note 10), p. 551.

12 De Boor (note 10), p. 407; Mango/Scott (note 10), p. 564.

13 Theophanes' other two references to the Antichrist are also both to precursors: Timothy the Cat back in the mid fifth century (de Boor [note 10], p. 111; Mango/Scott

Given my difficulties in interpreting the First-Created Day thesis it may be helpful to provide Torgerson's account in his own words.

The *Chronographia*'s First-Created Day thesis – and its defining the present age from AM 5434 (63 BC) through the fulfillment of a prophecy – would indicate to a Byzantine Roman to read the *Chronographia* in a typological-prophetic mode. This mode would mean that the past had meaning for the present through 'types and shadows': the past is lesser, the shadow of its future (p. 145).

That much is fine, though I remain hesitant about accepting that a Byzantine Roman would "read the *Chronographia* in a typological-prophetic mode" rather than as straight history. What immediately follows is important to Torgerson's overall interpretation and may well be a valuable insight. I again remain uncertain about both its interpretation and its significance but leave it to readers to decide.

But this did not mean that the idea of time in the *Chronographia* was backwards-looking. In fact, just the opposite. The Incarnation is not celebrated as a "type" of the Creation; the Resurrection is not celebrated as a "type" of the opening of the Ark. The earlier "types" of the First-Created Day (Creation and Exit from the Ark) do not dominate the latter ones (Incarnation and Resurrection). Instead, the latter dominate the former; typological thought holds the end of the past to be the future present (ibid.).

In his First-Created Day thesis George the Synkellos combined the idea that Christians experienced God's eternity in liturgical worship with a linear historical chronology. As such it was unprecedented in chronography. Not only did the First-Created Day redefine the first day of calculable time, but it also proposed a new way of thinking about the relationship between eternal divinity and human history. No previous chronographer had asserted that the way to make sense of divine occurrences in the human past at the Incarnation and Resurrection was to understand them as the same day, as multiple instances of a day on and in which temporally disparate historical events were gathered together as though the linear thread of time was a drawstring cinching together the fabric of time itself. And yet, that is exactly what the First-Created Day thesis asserted (ibid.).

This all makes understanding the chronicle far more complex than I understood.

[note 10], p. 170), and Mahommed (de Boor [note 10], p. 417; Mango/Scott [note 10], p. 577).

Torgerson's interpretation of George is centred on the presentation of Nikephoros in Theophanes, but with an assumption that George's readers were already aware of this as they read George's own section. "The original impetus of the project was to level an invective against Nikephoros I, to sweep the blinders from the eyes of the elite of Constantinople and show them what a monster their emperor was" (p. 313), culminating in implying he was the Antichrist at the end of time. That in turn justified rebellion against him, with the chronicle itself being a call to that rebellion. Hence "historical polemic was the *Chronicle's* entire rhetorical goal" (p. 311). The invective against Nikephoros is presented in various ways. The emphasis is on his greed. He is the all-devourer (παμφάγος, *pamphagos*), described in some detail before and during his reign and summed up in his final full year by his ten vexations (a collection of Nikephoros' evil actions at AM 6302) that arouses much commentary, which is followed immediately with the final story of his greed in the meeting with the candlemaker (κερουλλάριος, *keroullarios*). That made a fitting climax to the chronicle. Or it should have done and would have been the original plan, but was rendered void by Nikephoros' death. "The lesson from his reign could no longer be a warning that doom was impending" (p. 313). "[...] God had destroyed the evil Nikephoros. An impending Antichrist is cause for worry; a present Antichrist is cause for revolt; but a dead Antichrist is no Antichrist at all. The first end of the *Chronographia* had vanished. The final First-Created Day was yet to come" (p. 332). So that resulted in the additional three years of narrative being added to provide a new conclusion that fitted the new circumstances.

For Torgerson those circumstances involved Leo V becoming emperor in 813 through the support of those involved in opposition to Nikephoros, particularly those who took part in the revolt of 808 and most notably the *quaestor* Arsaber and also a *synkellos*, who is arguably George. "Arsaber, had been punished, beaten, and banished in AD 808. However, in AD 813 this same Arsaber would find himself the father-in-law to the new emperor, Leo V" (p. 313). Torgerson sees this group as not only iconophile and supporters of Irene but as closely linked to the chronicle and its political aim. As Theophanes refers to Leo as "pious" in AM 6305 (812–813 CE), it is usually argued that the chronicle must have been completed before 814 when Leo revealed his support for iconoclasm. Torgerson instead sees the reference to "pious" as being written after Leo revealed his iconoclasm by

someone from Arsaber's group, probably by Theophanes himself, in an attempt to get Leo to change his mind. So the new ending would have been written after 814, probably in 815. Torgerson states he "read[s] the new second ending as a means whereby the group which brought Leo to power – Irenic in their political commitments – then attempted to use the *Chronographia* to bring him back to their way of thinking" (p. 360). It is an intriguing theory and may well be correct (and is more complex than my presentation of it). Although I accept that the changed circumstances lay behind the revised ending and that it had a political purpose, I am yet to be convinced that the group went so far as to use the chronicle as a weapon that they expected Leo to read and then change his views as a result, just as I cannot accept that the earlier purpose of the chronicle was to incite revolt.

Torgerson then exploits the known instability of Theophanes' text in the ninth century, pointing to differences that "tell us that the surviving Greek recensions preserve a version of the *Chronographia* edited during the mid-ninth-century" (p. 366), especially Paris gr. 1710 (the earliest surviving manuscript), from which he "articulate[s] a possible third end for the *Chronographia* by reading PG 1710 as a source on its own moment of creation" (p. 363). As the key example of this instability he uses the story of Pope Stephen's journey which proves to be "the more egregious chronological errors [*sic*]" (p. 369). It occurs at various places in the manuscripts but is placed at AM 6216 (723/724 CE) in both de Boor and consequently in Mango/Scott, whereas it actually occurred in 753/754 with both edition and translation pointing out the preserved text's error. Torgerson's subsequent discussion concentrates not on a new end but on "what end this new placement *does* serve, hypothesizing the reasoning behind the new placement" (p. 369). His eventual conclusion is that the version in the Latin translation by the ninth-century Vatican librarian Anastasius is probably the closest to being accurate in its placement, but that the movement of the story was probably linked to the empress Theodora's attempt to shift the blame for iconoclasm from her late husband, the emperor Theophilus, to those in the West. This is argued at considerable length and detail and is beyond what can sensibly or usefully be discussed in this review, but overall I concur with the judgement of Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro: "We cannot follow the recent attempt at reevaluating the place of Paris gr. 1710 in the

transmission by Torgerson, The *Chronographia*, passim, without a thorough philological analysis.”¹⁴ Torgerson also acknowledges that he may not be right and that further discussion may well lead to different answers. What he regards as more important is that the evidence of continuing interference with the text does underline its continuing significance.

The *Chronographia* continued to be read, altered, and recopied because it continued to be seen as relevant to the politics of the Roman empire [...]. This point stands regardless of whether or not my exact hypothesis for who re-edited the *Chronographia* in 843–847 proves reliable through the tests of time, criticism, and further reflection. What we can already know without a doubt is that the *Chronographia* project continued to matter to groups of the powerful (whether in the middle of the ninth century, the end of the ninth century, or the eleventh from whence our other manuscripts survive) and that these groups gained insight into their present by reading and editing the *Chronographia*. Changes to the text are evidence for how the *Chronographia* continued to matter to and for the powerful elite of the Roman Empire (p. 364).

That the text went through alterations in recopying and editing across the ninth to eleventh centuries is strong enough evidence to support Torgerson’s claim for its continuing importance. The groups who read the chronicle may well also have been powerful and an elite, although I suspect they may have been more concerned about manipulating the way their present was depicted rather than gaining an insight into it. Torgerson does make a strong case for George’s wanting to establish his chronicle as the authoritative work on the past and for his success in doing so lasting for several centuries. He particularly notes that the *Chronographia* was

an incredibly ambitious project. It was explicitly written to supplant the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius’ *Chronicle* had served as the definitive reference work on historical time for nearly half a millennium [...]. But in the final decades of the eighth century, Eusebius’ oeuvre had been charged with iconoclast sympathies. This was the opportunity for the *Chronographia*’s revisionism, the opportunity to supplant an ancient, internationally acclaimed record of human time with both a new conception of time and a new definition of the present (p. 396).

14 M. Jankowiak/F. Montinaro: The *Chronicle* of Theophanes. In: R. Tocci (ed.): A Companion to Byzantine Chronicles. Leiden/Boston 2025 (Brill’s Companions to the Byzantine World 14), pp. 325–346, p. 337, n. 46.

Torgerson's account of George's success, and especially in replacing Eusebius for several centuries, is probably best confirmed by what appears to have been an eventual successful attempt at challenging the George/Theophanes interpretation of Byzantine universal history by replacing it. The *Chronicle* of Kedrenos of the late eleventh or early twelfth century did set about restoring Eusebius as an authority and providing a deliberately slightly different account of the past, its deliberateness showing that it was very much aware of the general acceptance of the George/Theophanes version. Kedrenos' preference for Eusebius over George and Theophanes is revealed on several occasions, most clearly on Origen where George is particularly severe in his criticism of Eusebius' praise of Origen,¹⁵ whereas Kedrenos offers surprising praise (ed. Tartaglia §270:1), but also on numerous other occasions.¹⁶ Kedrenos seems to be totally unaware of the First-Created Day theory and any new concept of time, which is presumably because he rejected them for whatever reason rather than because of ignorance. Although Kedrenos follows the Theophanes account of most reigns to the degree of apparent plagiarism, far more important and revealing are his accounts of reigns where he differs which is limited to just seven reigns across four dynasties.¹⁷ But they are highly significant dynasties, those of Constantine the Great, Theodosios the Great, Justinian the Great, and that of Herakleios, which Kedrenos makes clear he regards as responsible for Byzantium's greatest disaster with the rise of Islam and the loss of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. (The other emperors where Kedrenos differs from Theophanes are Constantius, Justin II and Constans).

Like Theophanes Kedrenos does draw attention to the significance of women, but it is to different women from those in Theophanes and the treatment is different, most notably of Constantius' Eusebia and Theodosios I's Flaccilla who scarcely score more than a mention in Theophanes. Of all emperors Kedrenos makes Theodosios I the role model, who first discovers by trial and error (largely error) the obligations of a Christian emperor, again a

15 See Mosshammer (note 2), pp. 445–446; Adler/Tuffin (note 1), p. 525.

16 The Adler/Tuffin (note 1) index p. 621 under "Eusebius, errors of" has 32 entries, some covering several pages.

17 For a more detailed treatment see R. Scott/J. Burke/P. Tuffin: Kedrenos' Substitution for Theophanes' Chronicle. In: L. James/O. Nicholson/R. Scott (eds.): *After the Text. Byzantine Enquiries in Honour of Margaret Mullett*. London/New York 2022 (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies 32), pp. 95–114.

treatment very different from that in Theophanes. Each of these differences individually may not amount to much but taken cumulatively they surely mark a deliberate rejection of the George/Theophanes account. Whether contemporary Byzantine politics played any role in that rejection is not known. For near contemporary events Kedrenos had simply copied Skylitzes. But whereas Skylitzes, whose chronicle continues Theophanes from 811 to 1057, had in effect told his readers to turn to George and Theophanes for the only reliable version of earlier history, so that to read all history required tackling three separate volumes by three different authors, Kedrenos appears to have aimed at making all history available in a single, if enormous, volume, by a single author, while using the opportunity to provide his own revision of earlier history. That he felt the need to do so does underline the lasting strength and importance of “The *Chronographia* of George the Synkellos and Theophanes”, as Torgerson has argued and brought vigorously to Byzantinists’ attention with this book. The publisher, Brill, should certainly be thanked for making an e-version available free.¹⁸

18 <https://brill.com/display/title/58361?language=en>.

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