

Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki, eds. *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378–1417)*.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 17. Leiden: Brill, 2009. viii + 468 pp. index. illus. bibl. \$225. ISBN: 978-90-04-16277-8.

This wide-ranging and fascinating collection deserves a large readership, offering much to everyone from neophytes to seasoned scholars. Each of the eleven contributors examines and carefully evaluates earlier research, and then presents new contexts and materials for analyzing various aspects of the Schism.

The first two essays focus on the events and circumstances surrounding the election of Urban VI and the subsequent election of Clement VII. Joëlle Rollo-Koster continues her innovative work on the tradition of pillaging of the houses of prelates, both deceased and elect, closely examining the exact timing of various personages' presence, statements, and actions in Rome, 1378. Neither the cardinals nor the papal chamberlain comes off very well in her analysis. Stefan Weiss bluntly and convincingly argues that Urban's financial reforms, starting as they did at the top, were too extreme for either cardinals or the Curia to bear. When faced with Roman austerity or Avignonese luxury, the cardinals chose the latter, as did members of the papal household.

The next section offers several approaches to gauging the impact of the Schism. Philip Daileader aims to assess the Schism's local impact on five levels: regional, diocesan, monastic and mendicant, urban, and university. He states his desire to serve as a guide for other scholars by looking at the existing literature and providing direction for them, and his careful dissection should prove useful to many. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski uses the words and images of poets and visionaries to demonstrate that genuine concern about the Schism existed for at least some of the lay population, and her examples are evocative and intriguing. Michael Hanly presents a very sympathetic portrait of one of the countless personages who labored in midlevel positions of diplomacy and legal research, Honorat Bovet. This

principled character who worked steadily for a peaceful resolution to the Schism serves as a foil to the self-serving papal contenders and monarchs of his day.

Michael Ryan steps outside the context of Western Christendom, offering insights into perceptions of the Schism by Byzantines and Muslims. After the Ottoman Turks' victory at Nicopolis in 1396, the need for unity in the Western Church became ever more urgent for Orthodox Christians as they sought a strong ally. Islam appears in two very different guises, each fascinating. First is the appearance in the writings of Bovet of a "Sazzarin" who, as an outsider, can voice criticisms aimed at shaming those perpetuating the Schism. Second are the unusual life and writings of Anselm Turmeda, a Franciscan friar who converted to Islam but retained a lively interest in the West. Finally, Cathleen A. Fleck concludes the section on the impact of the Schism by surveying the cultural activities of Clement VII and Benedict XIII, most engagingly when she investigates the papal libraries and manuscript production.

The final four superb chapters focus on ecclesiology and reform. Christopher M. Bellitto emphasizes that first, reform always addressed head and members, though scholarship usually emphasizes one over the other; and second, that reform was an integral part of the Church from its beginning, and that the inclusion of institutional as well as purely personal reform originated in the eleventh century, not suddenly with the Schism. David Zachariah Flanagan carefully and masterfully untangles soteriology from ecclesiology. What emerged forcefully during the Schism was a distinction between the universal Church, with Christ as its head, and the Roman or Apostolic Church, with the pope as its; this distinction in turn paved the way for a general council.

Thomas M. Izbicki's ingenious analyses of two biblical passages concerning circumcision make for equally lively reading. This crystal-clear examination of two seemingly marginal texts is a masterpiece of investigation, close reading, and exposition of the many ways in which the same texts could be turned to vastly different ends. Finally, Phillip H. Stump provides a lively and suspenseful account of negotiations, comings and goings, and crises averted at the last minute at Constance. He turns what could be a pedestrian account of various diplomatic maneuvers and confrontations into a real page-turner, even though we know the ending.

Sadly, this generally excellent volume is riddled with careless errors ranging from infelicitous word choices and improper punctuation to basic spelling and factual errors. An incomplete list includes: featire (57); seiz (205); thye (221); agasint (230); mention of the *via cessionis*, when the following pages make clear it should be the *via facti* (172–78); and assigning the Treaty of Canterbury to 15 August 1415, rather than 1416, which confuses and dilutes the author's point (424). A volume that contributes this much, and costs this much, deserves far more editorial care than it evidently received.

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