Greek merchant with that of the emergent Patriarchs, the stabilisation of their office and their explicit association with taxation. Green points out that this narrative demonstrates that the Patriarchate-as-political-entity was a creation of this period, alongside the emergence of a new urban elite. This was by no means just a Greek phenomenon, as Greene points out.

The eighth and final chapter concludes with the 'second' phase of Greek enlightenment, when education and 'intellectual life had moved out of the control of the elites and the church' (p. 195) and into the hand of the emergent new class of merchants influenced by the French enlightenment.

Greene's work follows on from Tom Papademetriou's final debunking of the *millet* system to turn the history of the Greek people in the Ottoman period to a history of Ottoman Greeks. She does this expertly, not by simply refuting the existing (if withering) dominant narrative which places Greeks as the disempowered, conquered minority, but by examining Greek communities within the wider Ottoman and Mediterranean contexts and their complexities. Greene's work should be a starting point for all new students of Ottoman social history, as it goes beyond the narrow scope its title suggests to reposition the history of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire in an integrated manner which acknowledges the delicate complexities of Ottoman society. This should be considered the final nail on the coffin of the nationalist narrative, which offers a narrow and inaccurate view. The fact that we keep revisiting it, however, demonstrates its lasting power and its deep roots.

Marios Hadjianastasis
University of Birmingham

Andrew Walker White, *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 278.
DOI: 10.1017/byz.2016.36

What happened to the ancient Greco-Roman theatre after antiquity? The absence of evidence has generated much discussion because scholars have had difficulty in accepting it as evidence of absence. Byzantinists with a background in classical philology find it hard to imagine a culture where ancient drama was intensively studied but never staged or imitated for performance purposes. Historians of the theatre are baffled by the fact that Orthodox Christianity apparently did not generate the kind of mystery plays that gave rise to Renaissance drama in Western Europe. Historians of the Byzantine city, like myself, wonder how urban culture managed to maintain continuity in the Greek Middle Ages without an institution that had been fundamental to the existence and even the identity of the ancient *polis*.

Andrew Walker White, a theatre historian with a background in classics, takes issue with the persistent idea that drama inspired or infused Orthodox ritual, so that the Divine Liturgy became a theatrical performance, and certain other services for special feasts took on the form of mystery plays. He starts from the general premise that ritual and drama are not necessarily linked by a process of evolution from the former to the latter as a higher cultural form. His first two chapters are devoted to arguing that Christian ritual followed a divergent track from the theatre of the Late Antique *polis*. Christian liturgy developed in a private, domestic milieu that shunned the theatre and the public, pagan pageantry that went with it. Even after the public culture of the *polis* was effectively secularised by the Christian emperors of the fourth century, and the Church went public with monumental places of worship and large-scale sacred processions, the celebrants of Christian worship, typified by the vociferous John Chrysostom, rejected any confusion or association with theatrical performance. The Christian basilica, adapted from the generic model of the civic audience hall, represented a thoroughly different conception and function of spatial dynamics from the theatre; the superficial resemblance between the ancient *scenae frons* and the late Byzantine icon screen reflects no continuity or imitation. The church building did include dedicated performance spaces, notably the ambo, and the liturgy included performative elements, particularly the sermon, but these were post-theatrical developments, representing the intellectual sublimation of popular entertainment that intellectual bishops like Chrysostom derived from their philosophical and rhetorical education. While the Latin mass evolved in ways that profiled the clergy as agents of the

Eucharist and performers of the sacramental narrative, the Orthodox rite emphasised the contemplation of the divine mysteries and the participation of all the faithful in harmony with the heavenly Liturgy of the angels and saints. Orthodox tradition consecrated acting only to the extent that it canonised actor-converts who abandoned the stage.

The texts and motions of Orthodox ritual thus marked a clear break with the ancient theatre. Only in liturgical music, which White discusses at some length in chapter 3, was there – despite the Church's ban on musical instruments – a discernible continuity with the Hellenic past and a significant overlap with Byzantine secular culture, which led, especially in the late Byzantine period, to the composition of chants that strove primarily for aesthetic effect.

In part 2, comprising chapters 4–6, the conclusion and seven appendices, White pursues the question of liturgical drama with a detailed examination of one late Byzantine ritual, which has been cited as the main evidence for a Byzantine tradition of *sacra rappresentazione*. This was the *Service of the Furnace*, a choral arrangement of texts from the biblical narrative (Daniel 3) of the three Hebrew youths who were cast into the fiery furnace of Babylon for their refusal to fall down and worship the golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar. The richly symbolic story of their miraculous preservation through the intervention of an angel, and the canticle and prayer ascribed to them in the Septuagint version, made them a favourite theme of Byzantine preaching, hymnography and iconography. By the late fourteenth century the *Service* had been instituted as an addition to Orthros (Matins) on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (Sunday before Christmas). As such, it was witnessed in Hagia Sophia by two foreign visitors, one of whom, Bertandon de la Broquière in 1432, describes it as a *mistere*.

White's analysis of the *Service* offers, in effect, a massive disincentive to take the Burgundian spy too literally. Apart from the fact that Bertrandon never delivers his promised description of the performance, he had evidently observed it with the superficial eye of a distracted tourist, and decided to identify it in terms that made sense to him and his French audience. The Byzantine evidence, consisting mainly of the order of service in five different fifteenth-century versions (reproduced and translated in appendices 1–5), shows quite clearly that it was not a mystery play in the Western style. There were no props other than the ambo and solea of the church, no script other than the biblical text with some short additional hymns, the only actors in addition to the regular church cantors were the unmasked choristers who sang the biblical words of the Three Children, and the only extra was the Angel, represented by his icon that was suspended above the Children's heads. True, the variations in the order of service show that there was room for flexibility of interpretation. Yet it was precisely the author of the most 'theatrical' interpretation, archbishop Symeon of Thessaloniki, who in chapter 23 of his *Dialogue in Christ* (reproduced and translated in appendix 6) denounced the crude, material theatricality of the Latin *sacre rappresentazioni* staged by the occupying Venetian clergy, while defending the *Service of the Furnace* as an essentially traditional, spiritual and liturgical rite. All the same, Symeon's need to justify the *Service*, along with Bertrandon de la Broquière's remark, show that its addition to the liturgical calendar was a not uncontroversial innovation. White is surely right to suggest that this reflected the terminal crisis of Byzantine culture in the last century of its existence, when what was left of Byzantium awaited enslavement and apostasy at the hands of a new Nebuchadnezzar.

As a presentation and contextualisation of the *Service of the Furnace* with a substantial historical introduction, Andrew White's book is an unqualified success. The author writes engagingly, he grounds his work in the classic twentieth-century scholarly literature on Byzantine history and architecture, he cites the primary sources to good effect, and he is well up to date with scholarship on liturgy, music and hymnography. He discusses the relationship between ritual and drama with a light theoretical touch that is fully sensitised to the Byzantine context. Thus he draws a most valuable analogy between the representational strategies of the Orthodox liturgy and those of the holy icon: just as the latter deliberately avoids not only the subject matter but also the aesthetics of the Greco-Roman statue, so the former goes out of its way to put on a different kind of show from the ancient theatre.

As a history of theatre (or non-theatre or anti-theatre) in Byzantium, however, this slim volume stimulates more than it settles the question of what happened to Greek theatrical culture after antiquity. Like ancient statuary and pagan cult, the ancient theatre vacated an important cultural urban space by its demise. While it is naïve and dated to suggest that Christianity simply restocked the void with its own brands - icons, saints' cults, and liturgical shows –, the fate of that space in the Byzantine world needs to be addressed, because it is *a priori* inconceivable as well as *de facto* untenable, that this whole area of human experience, and Greco-Roman civilization, simply shut down or contracted out of existence. So we need to continue to work from the assumption that Christianity did somehow make up for what it

https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2016.36 Published online by Cambridge University Press

abolished. In the present case, we need to identify the ways in which Christian, imperial culture somehow came up with an alternative version, or versions, of the theatre. This means, firstly, revisiting the secondary literature: not only the recent studies on the *logikon theatron* of Byzantine intellectuals, but also the older works on the Byzantine theatre, which, however misguided, may still have something to offer. Thus the book by Venetia Cottas (1931), who saw theatre in almost every aspect of Byzantine public life, bears re-reading in the light of some recent trends, for example the choice of 'display' as the theme of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies (London 2006), and an article by Anestis Vasilakeris on 'Theatricality of Byzantine Images'. Secondly, in literature as in art, the Byzantine religious tradition has important dramatic material that Andrew White does not consider: the texts generated by the contemplation of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. Leaving aside the para-liturgical drama of *Χριστὸς Πάσχων*, the hymns of the Orthodox Passion service, sung on the Thursday evening of Holy Week, are charged with emotion, to the point that they could spark anti-Jewish pogroms in the Greek communities of the Ottoman Empire. Thirdly, the Christian condemnation of the theatre must not be read in isolation from the many passages where John Chrysostom, its most severe and vocal critic, uses the metaphor of the theatre in a positive sense. The subject merits extensive study; here we may just note that he often refers to the Divine Liturgy as 'spiritual theatre', and, developing a metaphor of St Paul (1 Cor. 9, 24), likens the Christian life of virtue to an athletic contest, making frequent and detailed comparisons with the Olympic games that were still held in his home city of Antioch. In the spiritual and the agonistic sense, theatre was compatible with Christian values, and theatrical culture did have a future in Byzantium.

Paul Magdalino
University of St Andrews

Roderick Beaton, *Byron's War: Romantic Rebellion, Greek Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xviii + 338
DOI: 10.1017/byz.2016.37

Roderick Beaton's *Byron's War* has upended the traditional narrative of Byron and his role in the establishment of modern Greece, and for that alone it will remain one of the most important books about Byron and the Greek War of Independence. The conventional premise views the poet's efforts as so hesitant and his grasp of the realities of Greece so misguided, that in the end it was Byron's and Greece's good fortune that his early death prevented either abysmal failure or complete disillusionment. Against an almost unanimous chorus that Byron dead was worth more to Greece than Byron alive, Beaton makes a cogent case that it might have been better if the poet had lived longer. Beaton argues that while most philhellenes 'brought their prejudices and expectations with them.... What makes Byron's contribution unusual, if not unique, is his insistence that the new political realities in Greece should be allowed to forge a new form of government, never seen before' (265-66). For Beaton, Byron's goal was to establish a new national government in Greece, not simply the old structure with Greek chieftains replacing Turkish pashas. This new government would be the first of the new European nation states created in the nineteenth century, and therefore a model that could be used elsewhere on the continent.

The first of four sections covers Byron's first trip to the Greece and the Levant (1809-1811) and the poetry that emerged from it. Here Beaton lays the groundwork for his argument and, while very readable, it does not contain much new material. He notes Byron's fascination with the wildness of the Greek landscape and the klephts and pirates who became models for Byronic heroes. Beaton does not, however, see Byron making a commitment to Greek freedom, or to freedom generally, at this point. Beaton does stress that later on Byron had to consciously suppress his own natural affinity for the anarchic world of Greek klephts when he joined the Greek struggle. To move the cause of a new Greek nation forward, Byron discovered that he had to become a statesman and place the cause above personal freedom and desire.

The second section deals with the relationship between Byron and Shelley. This subject has generated thousands of pages of criticism and, here again, Beaton is providing the context for what is to come. His main point, that Shelley inspired in part Byron's political consciousness, is