

the absence of undisputed criteria. The existence of a certain degree of overlap in the discussions of specific texts gives one a sense of the difficulties in classifying these writings. To a certain extent, such overlaps are due to the dual design of this handbook, which cannot avoid that certain 'popular' texts mentioned in the first part, such as the *Protevangelium of James*, the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the 'major' non-canonical acts and the *Acts of Philip*, and the apocalypses attributed to Peter and Paul, receive a more elaborate treatment from a specific perspective in several of the essays included in the second part. Already in the first part, however, various texts are presented more than once: both Frey and Pervo discuss the epistolary correspondence between Jesus and king Abgar from Syria, texts like the *Protevangelium of James*, the *Gospel of Mary* or the *Acts of Pilate* that became part of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* have a place both among the texts about Jesus and among the texts about other gospel characters, and the *Acts of Pilate* turns out to be relevant as well to the epistles discussed by Pervo. The fact that these overlaps have not been smoothed out, forms an excellent illustration of the vague boundaries between the so-called 'subgenres' of apocryphal literature, which in itself remains a very flexible term that merely indicates what these texts are not, or more correctly did not become, i.e. canonical. Seen from this perspective, the volume has rightly been entitled a 'Handbook of Early Christian Apocrypha' rather than a 'Handbook of the Early Christian Apocrypha'.

H. DEBEL

Norbert OHLER (ed.). *Frauen im Leben der Kirche: Quellen und Zeugnisse aus 2000 Jahren Kirchengeschichte*. Münster, Aschendorff, 2015. (23×15), 351 p. ISBN 978-3-402-13080-3. €30.00.

In diesem Band hat der Freiburger Historiker Ohler 445 Quellentexte über Frauen im Leben der Kirche vorgelegt. Ausgewählt wurden in chronologischer Reihenfolge Quellen von der Alten Kirche bis in die unmittelbare Gegenwart (2014, 20. Jhd. auf S. 214-313), teilweise gekürzt und/oder paraphrasiert. Den Quellenausügen aus erzählenden sowie Recht setzenden Quellen, aus Legenden und Lehrschreiben usw. folgen jeweils Erläuterungen in unterschiedlicher Ausführlichkeit (gelegentlich Erläuterungen ohne vorausgehende Quellen um Verbindungslinien zwischen Texten oder dem jeweiligen historischen Zusammenhang zu ziehen). Der Band will „eine nachdenklich machende, unkonventionelle, bunte Ergänzung zu herkömmlichen Kirchengeschichten“ (7) bieten. Neben unterschiedlichen literarischen Gattungen, wurden Texte mit enormer inhaltlicher Bandbreite ausgewählt. Sie zeigen, in welchen unterschiedlichen Kontexten sich Vertreter der Kirche zu Frauen geäußert haben bzw. Frauen sich selbst zu Wort gemeldet haben oder als Frauen in Quellen eingeschlossen sind ohne direkt erwähnt zu werden (etwa „alle Sachsen“). Ferner gibt es auch einige Beispieltex te „der allzu vielen frauenfeindlichen Äußerungen törrichter Männer“ (9) und der nicht-christlichen Wahrnehmung von Christinnen. Texte aus der Alten Kirche sind kaum vertreten, etwa aus apokryphen Apostelgeschichten oder der Märtyrerliteratur. Nicht römisch-katholische Quellen kommen kaum vor (dies müsste sich im Titel des Bandes widerspiegeln). Die Texte aus der Gegenwart stammen vorwiegend aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum. Obwohl diese Auswahl aus Platzgründen verständlich ist, gehen so wichtige Stimmen aus der Weltkirche

verloren, etwa die Rolle von Frauen in der weltweiten Mission oder der latein-amerikanischen Befreiungstheologie. Der Band endet mit einem knappen Ausblick, Zusammenstellung wichtiger Bibelstellen, Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis, einer detaillierten Zeittafel (mit Zuordnung der Quellen, 328-346) und einem Register (hier fehlt etwa Edith Stein).

Ohler präsentiert eine teilweise faszinierende und zugleich zu breit angelegte und verwirrende Mischung an Gattungen, Fragestellungen und Positionen, darunter vieles (wohl zu viel) aus dem Kuriositätenkabinett, was bestenfalls von historischem Interesse ist, aber zur Klärung gegenwärtiger Fragen kaum beiträgt, auch wenn dieses Anliegen in den Erläuterungen immer wieder deutlich durchscheint. Die Zielsetzung des Bandes ist wichtig und richtig, die Umsetzung problematisch. Eine zweite Auflage durch mehrere Herausgeber/Herausgeberinnen, die die Auswahlkriterien klar definieren, die Erläuterungen neutraler fassen und gründlicher recherchieren, mit knappen Literaturangaben versehen und nach nüchterner Durchsicht des Vorhandenen weitere Texte ergänzen (siehe oben), wäre wünschenswert.

Die Sammlung zeichnet ein vielseitiges und schillerndes Porträt von Frauen im Leben der Kirche (das immer und vielfältig Vorhandene, das hier auch deutlich zu Tage tritt, wird heute oft vernachlässigt), aber auch in ganzer Schärfe ein heute zumeist als problematisch empfundenes Erbe.

C. STENSCHKE

Giuseppe ALBERIGO – Alberto MELLONI (eds.). *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta. Editio Critica* (Corpus Christianorum: Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta, 1-3).

I. *The Oecumenical Councils: From Nicaea I to Nicaea II (325-787)*, curantibus G. ALBERIGO – A.M. RITTER – L. ABRAMOWSKI – E. MÜHLENBERG – P. CONTE – H.-G. THÜMMEL – G. NEDUNGATT – S. AGRESTINI – E. LAMBERZ – J.B. UPHUS. Turnhout, Brepols, 2006. (16×25), XIV-373 p. ISBN 978-2-503-52363-7. €150.00.

II/1. *The General Councils of Latin Christendom: From Constantinople IV to Pavia-Siena (869-1424)*, curantibus A. GARCÍA Y GARCÍA – P. GEMEINHARDT – G. GRESSER – T. IZBICKI – A. LARSON – A. MELLONI – E. MIETHKE – K. PENNINGTON – B. ROBERG – R. SACCENTI – P. STUMP. Turnhout, Brepols, 2013, (16×25), XII-661 p. ISBN 978-2-503-52527-3; II/2. *The General Councils of Latin Christendom: From Basel to Lateran V (1431-1517)*, curantibus F. LAURITZEN – N.H. MINNICH – J. STIEBER – H. SUERMANN – J. UHLICH. Turnhout, Brepols, 2013. (16×25), 669-1518 p. ISBN 978-2-503-54504-2. €740.00.

III. *The Oecumenical Councils of the Roman Catholic Church: From Trent to Vatican II (1545-1965)*, curantibus K. GANZER – G. ALBERIGO – A. MELLONI. Turnhout, Brepols, 2010. (16×25), XI-739 p. ISBN 978-2-503-52528-0. €360.00.

With the publication of the double volume II three years ago, a huge project came to its end, well in time for the celebrations and academic manifestations on the

occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the last council of the Catholic Church. Initiated by Giuseppe Alberigo and continued by Alberto Melloni, *COGD* actually is a revision and extension of the volume on the *Concilliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta (COD)* that was prepared between 1959 and 1962 by a team of mainly, at that time "young", Italian scholars, among them Alberigo himself, and that appeared just in time for the opening session of the council. The editor in chief recalled this initial project in the Preface to the first volume where he also evokes the success *COD* met all over the world, with reprints and editions that also included translations of the Greek and Latin texts in modern languages. Alberigo also briefly explained the reason why this new edition is now extended also to include the "General Councils" and a number of more local councils from the Middle Ages. He points out another not unimportant difference, which also met with some resistance – the decision to make the introductions more accessible by no longer using Latin but English as the common language of the volumes.

For each council the reader will find an Introduction evoking the historical circumstances in which the gathering took place as well as the theological issues at stake. Also provided is a basic Bibliography that includes references to the major dictionaries and a selection of older and more recent (classical) studies. It was not the intention to produce a complete critical edition, but various sets of apparatuses give variant readings, references to biblical passages, cross-references to parallel texts, and occasionally also historical information that helps to clarify the text. The reproduction of the canons is preceded by a *Monitum* that informs the reader about the edition in *ACO* or other editions (where applicable with *CPG*). The pagination of the third edition of *COD* (1973) is added in the margin.

As one can expect, each set of texts poses its own problems. These are addressed in the Introduction and can take different forms. By way of example, one could mention Constantinople II (553), of which there exists two Latin versions. The debate concerns the authenticity and presence in the original of Vigilius' libels to the emperor and empress, the authenticity of two other documents by the same author confirming the decisions of the council, and the question if the famous fifteen canons against Origen were ever part of the original acts of the council. Pietro Conte, the editor responsible for this chapter, answers the first three positively and joins the majority opinion that the canons against Origen are technically not a part of the acts. This one example may prove the difficulties editors (and readers) have to face, and also shows that readers should best consult the Introductions before going to the texts themselves, in order to make sure they will find what they are perhaps looking for.

The second volume contains a longer editor's note by D. Dainese that offers some further explanation on the layout and points out some minor differences in approach compared to the previous volumes. Again it is worth first to consult the Introductions, as it turns out that for some councils the editors have not just worked from existing editions but also from manuscripts. This is the case with Lateranense III (1179), for which Larson and Pennington added two more manuscripts to those used by W. Herold for his edition of 1950. The editors also recall that the canons of this council were later on incorporated in several collections of canon law, to begin with Bernard of Pavia's *Compilatio prima* of 1190. The importance of this work for itself and for reconstructing the text of the canons is such that the editors have decided not only to work from Friedberg's edition of it, but again went to check some passages on the manuscripts.

One should also realize that the volumes in principle contain all the official documents published under the auspices of a particular council. These usually consist of a series of canons and decrees on matters of theology and religious praxis, but may also include some purely political documents, as is the case with the Council of Vienne of 1311-12. Historically more important than the decrees is the official condemnation of the Templars at that council which had been agreed upon by Pope Clement V in return for the support of the French king at his election. It is also good to remember that not all councils were equally successful. The Council of Pisa in 1409 (actually it was the culmination of preparations that had taken place at various locations and it lasted till 1410), which was meant as an initiative to reconcile the different fractions in the curia that had led to the election of two popes, succeeded in getting elected a single pope (Alexander V), but was not able to put an end to the fractions. An anonymous author noted that the council had created, in a most monstrous way ("monstruosissime"), out of a "dualis infamis" a "trinitas non benedicta sed ab omnibus maledicta" (II/1, p. 482).

The Council of Ferrara/Firenze of 1438-1445 is singled out not only by the fact that it was the first attempt to have the West and the East brought together in a council after the split of 1054, but also by the fact that parts of the text were also translated (in some cases, awfully) in Greek (sessions 4, the decree that declared the council to be ecumenical; and 6, the decree on the union of the Latin and the Greek Church, which was read in both languages at the end of a liturgy in the Duomo of Firenze), in Armenian (session 8, on the unity with the Armenian Church), and in Arabic (session 11, on the union with the Copts).

One could easily extend the number of examples that should demonstrate the kind of information the reader will find in this new edition of the decrees of the councils. This three-volume work in four parts has now come to an end, but it is not the end of the project as a whole. Indeed, there seems to be no limit to the enthusiasm of the editor-in-chief who in volume II announces similar volumes with the decrees of the councils and synods of the Orthodox and Eastern Churches, this too a most needed project in its own right.

J. VERHEYDEN

Anthony DUPONT – Matthew Alan GAUMER – Mathijs LAMBERIGTS. In collaboration with Nicolas DE MAEYER – Bart VAN EGMOND (eds.). *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity (Late Antique History of Religion, 9)*. Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT, Peeters, 2015. (16,5×24,7), xv-388 p. ISBN 978-90-429-3155-8. €94.00.

In the past century, and even more so in the past thirty years, the fields of early Christianity and patristics have welcomed a new sub-discipline, the study of ancient African Christianity. For concerns of biblical exegesis and polemics, socio-cultural, ethnic and regional contextualization, sacramental and political theology, this emerging area of specialization now attracts fresh, interdisciplinary reconsideration of the entire milieu of Mediterranean religion, within the broader context of late Roman history. To be sure, the legacy of Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage, who wrote in the second and third centuries, was to have lasting impact in the fourth and fifth centuries, when Augustine of Hippo and all of North Africa with him faced the