

Pelikan, arguably one of the most influential church historians of the 20th century, who came from a Slovak Lutheran background and eventually embraced the Eastern Orthodox faith at the age of seventy-five (170).

This study will be of special interest to Roman Catholic scholars and students of theology looking for an introduction to Eastern Orthodox thought that positions the latter in the broader context of the main theological trends of the 20th century.

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Canon Law and Episcopal Authority: The Canons of Antioch and Serdica. By Christopher W. B. Stephens. Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs. New York: Oxford University, 2015. Pp. xi + 288. \$105.

Stephens provides an in-depth analysis of two early church councils held in Antioch and Serdica from the perspective of canon law, an “important and critical aspect of the development of the imperial Church” (4). To achieve this purpose, the text is divided into three distinct parts: the Canons of Antioch and Serdica, canon law, and episcopal authority.

In dealing with the two councils, S. necessarily addresses the vexed and disputed questions concerning their chronology/dating; specific content; and the author’s position that the “Council of Antioch” was a circumlocution for a series of synodal assemblies, each of which was considered to have the authority of a full episcopal synod. From his analysis S. concludes that the Council of Antioch was “explicitly pro-Nicene” (118) and the dispute rather focused upon “the place of authority within the episcopal structures of the Church” (155). Given the more common perspective that the Councils of Antioch and Serdica primarily concerned doctrinal teaching and to an extent were anti-Nicene, S.’s position is thought-provoking but he importantly highlights the issues of synodality and episcopal authority as these influence contemporary church debate.

For S., the Councils of Antioch and Serdica express a fundamental confrontation between differing concepts of synodality: for the Eastern Church and in general, no appeal from one synod to another was possible, thus guaranteeing the autonomy of each church. For the Western Church, rather, a hierarchy of synods existed and the decisions of a lesser synod could be annulled by a greater synod, involving the entire church which could be called after an appeal to the bishop of Rome.

From the perspective of canon law, for S., the Canons of Serdica highlight the growing importance of canon law which nonetheless “was an unfixed entity and remained extremely subjective. Indeed canon law was both limited and, at times, infelicitous” (151). The Council of Serdica could determine that the Antiochene canons were null and void but obtaining the agreement of the Eastern bishops on this was a separate issue.

In part 3, S. intends to “shed light on the nature of canon law in the fourth century, the authority it could claim and the power it could command” (169); the “bishops at

Antioch and Serdica recognized an important developmental stage in bringing about a meaningful and effective canon law for the future regulation and protection of the Church” (170). S. offers a thought-provoking analysis on the place and role of canon law in the fourth-century church. S. emphasizes that the authority to issue canons on disputed issues—an authority related to synodality and episcopal power—did not include, at this point, the means to enforce adherence and application.

S.’s analysis suffers from the lack of a description of “canon law”; he uses the phrase frequently in general (e.g., in discussing synodality) and in reference to the Councils of Antioch and Serdica. This lack is problematic in as much as applying “canon law” as a specific field of study, a subject in and of itself, to the fourth century is anachronistic. Problematic also is S.’s use of the technical term “codification” in reference to canon law (197–203), again without an articulation of its meaning in this context. “Codification” in reference to canon law more usually refers to the 1917 *Codex Iuris Canonici*, in which the law of the entire church was removed from its historical context (the original documents), summarized in succinct statements (“canons”) and which for the first time abrogated all previous law.

With the Constantinian recognition of the church, the church “became an institution of the state; its leaders and its body of the faithful became an integrated part of the state; and developments in the institutional bureaucracy of the church were influenced again and again by those of the empire” (204). This quotation offers an understanding of the “imperial church” to which S. refers in his introduction but which is distinct from the specific relationships between the Western Church/Empire and the Eastern Church/Empire.

By focusing on the nature of synodality and episcopal authority in the church combined with a serious consideration of canon law’s influence on these and other fundamental issues, S. offers a different and thought-provoking perspective on the Councils of Antioch and Serdica.

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The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity, and Reform in England and Normandy, 1066–1300. By Jennifer Thibodeaux. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2015. Pp. viii + 230. \$59.95.

A few years ago, while spending some months in Chicago, I walked into a barbershop in which the service was quick but so too was the barber’s barrage of seemingly irrelevant questions. It was no more than query number three or four when he asked bluntly, “Are you a priest?” With my affirmative reply I asked how he knew. “Your demeanor,” came a confident and self-satisfied answer. I am not sure what kind of supposedly priestly comportment he detected in me, but this new book from Thibodeaux is a fascinating case study of the historical development of certain ideals of clerical embodiment of “a manly demeanor” and a “chaste virility” (112).