

reader, the first and third sections are the most useful, as they offer a broad view of cultural development and background on the Lycus valley. Without an intimate knowledge of Huttner's methodological and theoretical concerns, the second section of this volume takes a great deal of effort to fully comprehend.

A few gems stand out as exceptional here, particularly the essays of Harry Maier, "Salience, Multiple Affiliation, and Christ Belief in the Lycus Valley"; Michael Theophilos, "Employing Numismatic Evidence in Discussions of Early Christianity in the Lycus Valley"; and Michael Trainor, "Rome's Market Economy in the Lycus Valley." Maier's work takes a macroscopic view of cultural interaction and exchange, offering strong evidence for the existence of multivalent identities within the social strata of the Lycus valley. Theophilos shows the importance of numismatics to the philologically imbued field of early Christian studies, and Trainor's essay works in concert with that of Maier's to provide a useful introduction to economic activity as a social force.

The glaring issue with this edited volume lies not in its content but in its production. The work is rife with grammatical, orthographic, and stylistic errors, diminishing the overall quality of the essays. If one can ignore the seeming lack of consistent copyediting and proofing, this volume will serve as a useful introduction to the current methodological and theoretical debates within the field of early Christian studies.

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The Council of Ephesus of 431: Documents and Proceedings.

Translated by **Richard Price**, with an introduction and notes by **Thomas Graumann**. Translated Texts for Historians. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. xii + 696 pp. \$175.00 hardcover; \$65.00 paper.

In the absence of modern scholarly reconstructions of the well-documented 431 Council of Ephesus, this translation of its documents and proceedings aims "to present all the material of significance for an historian of the course and politics of the council" (viii). The latest installation of Liverpool University Press's well-reputed Translated Texts for Historians series offers another major resource for the general study of late antiquity and the particulars of the Ephesus council.

Price's translation shows exemplary consistency and readability. Graumann, in his extended introduction to extant manuscripts attesting the council, the course of its historical unfolding, and the theological concerns animating its proceedings, as well as in his notes on individual sources, provides a well-balanced perspective to readers with varying levels of familiarity. Price and Graumann organize the sources of the council chronologically into six periods: (1) "Before the Council"; (2) "The Sessions of 22 June"; (3) "After the Session of 22 June"; (4) "The 'Session' of 22 July"; (5) "From the End of July till Nestorius' Retirement"; and (6) "From the Colloquia at Chalcedon to the Dissolution of the Council." These primary sections are accompanied by a concluding epilogue and two appendices: (1) a report of attendance at the council

(621–627), and (2) materials from the Coptic Acts of Ephesus (629–642). The authors have even included a glossary (643–650), an instructive set of maps (667–673), an inventory of persons from across the *Acta* (675–692), and a listing of the documents in the order provided previously by the *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (693–696).

In organizing, translating, and commenting upon these crucial sources, Price and Graumann have performed a commendable service to the study of late antique history, culture, and religion. This volume bears utility for any level of approach taken to the Ephesus council, whether the in-depth study of an expert or the administration of an undergraduate course in which the council plays an important part. It promises to make a substantial contribution in areas such as the development of Christology, the politics and religion of the late antique empire, the means by which church leaders maintained relationships across the empire, the procedural customs of conciliar meetings, and the reception history of church councils.

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***The Beginning of the Cult of Relics.* By Robert Wiśniewski. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. xiv + 258 pp. \$93.00 cloth.**

The image decorating the book jacket of *The Beginning of the Cult of Relics* encapsulates several themes included in this engaging study. The object displayed on the cover is a late Roman stone reliquary discovered at Hippos in Palestine, complete with an ancient stick poking out of its case, a material vestige of an ancient practice; that is, attempts by the pious to interact directly with the remains of saints and martyrs. While such concrete examples of religious practice are often difficult to discern in the extant ancient sources, the material world of the later Roman Empire preserves vestiges of these rituals, thereby conjuring ghostly bodies of long-dead votaries of the saints who once used sticks and other objects to channel numinous power.

Robert Wiśniewski's survey of relics (ca. 300–700) zooms in on a variety of ritual approaches to and uses of the remains of biblical figures, martyrs, ascetics, and saints. His analysis centers on texts, inscriptions, and objects from the eastern and western Mediterranean with sensitivity to the importance of the northern (Merovingian) and southern (North Africa) zones as well. He approaches this spiritual topic with an empiricist eye, marshalling his evidence, weighing its reliability, and situating the data within broad historical and spiritual contexts. He offers a concluding chapter on the theological implications of relics during the epoch under review. Importantly, he highlights ancient voices contesting the validity of the relic cult and the practices surrounding it. Overall, the interpretive avenues Wiśniewski opens onto the cult of relics offer multiple paths for future research.

Wiśniewski's analysis meticulously revisits the standard narratives swirling around the origins and evolution of the cult of relics and does so in persuasive ways. This reader found the author's challenges to longstanding "truisms" about the timeline for the evolution of relic cults to be particularly satisfying. Specifically, the author deploys his diverse sources to trace transformations in ancient Christian practice: the earliest evidence for miraculous activity at shrines (late fourth century); the art of *translatio*, or transfer of