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## HISTORIA ECCLESIAE

ALBERIGO, GIUSEPPE – MELLONI, ALBERTO, ed., *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta. Editio Critica. II/1. The General Councils of Latin Christendom. From Constantinople IV to Pavia-Siena (869-1424). II/2. The General Councils of Latin Christendom. From Basel to Lateran V (1431-1517)*, Corpus christianorum, Brepols, Turnhout 2013; pp. xii + 1518. € 740,00. ISBN 978-2-503-52527-3.

Volume 2 brings COGD to completion. Vol. I, with the councils from Nicea I in 325 to Nicea II in 787, was published in 2006; vol. III, covering Trent to Vatican II, in 2010. This vol. II is divided into two parts, which are headed «From Constantinople IV to Pavia-Siena (869-1424)» and «From Basel to Lateran V (1431-1517)».

The councils that are recognized as ecumenical by both the Catholic and Orthodox churches (that is, councils authoritative for and representing the whole church, following the meaning of «ecumenical» as world-wide) were treated in volume 1. This second volume moves to more disputed councils. The first of them, Constantinople IV (869-870), has been included as ecumenical in the traditional listing of the Catholic Church but not in that of the Orthodox church. Ten of the medieval councils that are included here, from Lateran I in 1123 to Lateran V in 1512-1517, have also traditionally been regarded as ecumenical by the Catholic Church (that is, following the traditional listing that has prevailed since the *Editio Romana* of the councils was published with papal authority in 1608-12) but never by the Orthodox Church, coming as they do after the beginning of the East-West schism in 1054. But to these are added in this volume II a number of councils that have not been regarded as ecumenical, at least with any consistency, by either the Catholic or the Orthodox church: the council of Constantinople in 879-880, which is here called unusually «Constantinople IV» even though it is distinct from the Constantinople IV of 869-870; the council of Pisa of 1409; the council of Pavia-Siena of 1423-1424; and the later sessions of the council of Basel after Pope Eugenius had transferred the council to Florence.

As well as mixing within this volume two councils that have for long been regarded by the Catholic church as ecumenical with others that have not been so regarded, the heading of the volume describes them all as «general councils of Latin Christendom» rather than as ecumenical councils. Sometimes «general» and «ecumenical» have been used synonymously, as in the full title of the *Editio Romana* where the two words are included with synonymous meaning. But in COGD a clear distinction is intended. Thus the heading of vol. I reads «The Oecumenical Councils: From Nicaea I to Nicaea II», and that of vol. III «The Oecumenical Councils of the Roman Catholic Church: From Trent to Vatican II», in contrast to



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the lower grading of «The General Councils of Latin Christendom» of volume II. Some review of the standing of these later councils after Nicea II has been under way for half a century, encouraged by the words of Pope Paul VI in 1974 when he referred to the medieval councils as general councils of the western church (*Generales synodos in Occidentali orbe*) rather than as ecumenical councils (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 66 [1974] 620). The implications of this review of their status are important, notably for dialogue with the Orthodox and Protestant churches.

How does COGD compare with its predecessor, *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. G. Alberigo and others (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1973), and the bi-lingual versions thereof, including the Italian version published by EDB in 1991, and *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. Tanner (1990)? There is a huge difference in price. The cost of the volumes of COGD approaches ten times as much as that of the earlier bi-lingual versions, which are still in print. Also, the conciliar texts in COGD are given only in the original language, principally Greek and Latin, without the additional translation into a modern language, facing each page of the original text, which is provided in the bi-lingual versions. COGD also lacks the invaluable «Index of Subjects» which is included in the Italian and English bi-lingual versions; and, for the most part, the useful descriptive headings for each document, which were added by various editors and are included in the bi-lingual versions. On the other hand, COGD provides five extra (non-ecumenical) councils, as mentioned. The introductions to each council (in English except for the German introduction to Lyons II) are fuller in COGD than in the bi-lingual versions; and the bibliographies, coming at the end of each introduction, are fuller and more up-to-date. There are also some changes — mostly of limited significance — in the texts of the decrees for some of the councils. Since all the texts except those for Lateran V are based on manuscript sources, before the advent of printing, precision is often hard to reach; but the changes are explained in the introductions to each council in this volume II.

In short, university and seminary libraries may do well to purchase this new edition. But scholars with more limited budgets, or who like a translation into Italian or English to help with the Latin and Greek of the original text, can rest secure with *Decrees* and EDB.

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