

**Timothy Pawl, *In Defence of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay***, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pages: xv and 251. ISBN: 978-0-19-876592-9

Does the Christology of the first seven ecumenical councils (Nicea I in 325 to Nicea II in 787) stand up to philosophical analysis? Pawl is not concerned with the truth of their Christological teaching but rather with philosophical objections to this teaching — a neat but difficult distinction. The focus is on three objections. First, how can one being be both God and man since their attributes seem irreconcilable? Secondly, how can the immutability and atemporal nature of the second Person of the Trinity be reconciled with the mutability and temporal nature of the human Jesus Christ — how can these two differing natures be combined in a single Person? Thirdly and consequent upon the second objection, if there is a single Christ (divine and human), how can the will and nature in the human Jesus Christ be distinct from the will and nature of the second Person of the Trinity? Pawl argues that conciliar Christology can be defended on philosophical grounds against these objections.

The council of Chalcedon declared in 451. “We teach ... one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body ... acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, change, division or separation ... so the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person.” Regarding the key words of person and nature, the definition of Chalcedon represents the most concise and authoritative statement of the first seven councils. However, their Christological teaching was more spacious, or open to development, than is generally assumed. Greek, not Latin, was the language of Chalcedon as it was for all the first seven ecumenical councils. For the key words of person and nature, the Greek words in Chalcedon’s definition are “hupostasis/prosopon” and “physis”, words that are more spacious than the Latin “persona” and “natura” — or at least the meaning these Latin words have acquired. Thus the following variety of meanings for “hupostasis” are listed in a Greek-English dictionary: support, resistance, lying in ambush, confidence, courage, resolution, wealth or property ... reality or nature, and many others. Augustine recognized that in Latin “persona” and “natura” were the best words to use while acknowledging that they were imprecise translations of the Greek and therefore should be used with caution. Here and in other cases Rawls might have given more attention to the elasticity of the Greek original in the conciliar

definitions. rather than relying on the words in English or Latin translation.

The argument of the book is sophisticated and complex but clearly set out. The interaction of philosophy and theology is a common theme: the originality of this book is the focus of this interaction upon Christology in the first seven ecumenical councils. It is an original but also very important theme in view of the central role of Christology in Christian teaching and practice as well as the high authority accorded to these seven councils by Catholics, Orthodox and, for the most part, churches of the Reformation. The book is well produced and properly documented with references to the original sources. It concludes with an extensive Bibliography and an Index including topics as well as persons.

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**Raisa Maria Toivo, *Faith and Magic in Early Modern Finland***, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pages: ix + 183. ISBN: 978-1-137-54726-2

Early Modern is taken to mean the early sixteenth to the mid eighteenth century. Finland requires more explanation. The country first declared independence in 1917 and from 1809 onwards the 'Grand Archduchy of Lithuania' was an independent region within the Russian empire. Before that, during the early modern period, the country had been part of the kingdom of Sweden. However, cultural, geographical and other factors, notably the Finnish language, had given the area (largely but not entirely coterminous with modern Finland) a certain identity. Faith means mainly Lutheranism, which was 'adopted' by Sweden at the Diet of Västerås in 1527 and 'cemented' by the council of Uppsala in 1593, though it was not until the accession of king Charles IX (1599-1611) that Lutheranism was established as the state religion (pp. 7 and 147). But it was Lutheranism with distinct Finnish characteristics. There were also Calvinist (for a short period), Catholic and Orthodox contributions.

The concept of magic is discussed in chapter 1 'Introduction'; its place within religion in Finland is covered in chapter 5 'Conclusion: The Continuum of Magic and Religion'. The middle three chapters focus on the links between magic and, respectively, Lutheranism, Catholicism and Orthodoxy.

The book makes fascinating reading. Magic may have had its roots in pre-Christian beliefs in Finland but then appears to have been