nineteenth century, and contemporary scholarship. Through this intervention, we are asked to question both *how* and *why* we may understand an early Christian past through the sedimentary processes of deposition, rediscovery, and interpretation. In the end, Denzey Lewis reveals unacknowledged suppositions within the field by demonstrating the power of the lens of its early modern progenitors, extending not only to burials in and around the city of Rome, but its effects on our understanding of the history of the Christian city itself.

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Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism. Edited by **Andreea Badea**, **Bruno Boute**, **Marco Cavarzere**, and **Steven Vanden Broecke**. Scientiae Studies 4. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021. 336 pp. $144.00 cloth.

This volume is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarly and critical work being done on forms and practices of early modern Catholicism at the intersection of intellectual history and cultural materialist methodologies. The ambitious overarching project traces adventures in the post-Tridentine Church's complexly held position as the privileged locus and arbiter of truth in a cultural habitus increasingly marked by intra- as well as inter-confessional plurality and emerging forms of knowledge production. Tellingly, the editors' introduction makes clear that the assembled case studies and analytical accounts of theo-political conflict and mitigation (or strategic temporizing) take a concerted interest in teasing out the manifold ways in which the task at hand turned not so much on the question of truth per se as on the question of credibility and finding the optimal means to produce and disseminate engines of credibility under newfound challenges.

One of the volume's aims is to amplify critical understanding of the blind spots in the residual claims of the secularization thesis—the grand narrative that too facilely identified early modern Catholicism as a unitary and retrograde opponent of the emergent shapes of modernity and consequently gave short shrift to what the abundant archival evidence suggests: that virtually every level of the post-Tridentine Church's scaffolded hierarchy became involved in what the editors call "a deeply praxeological approach to credibility" (13). This approach, as the wide-ranging contributions to the volume make clear, entailed not only robust engagement with "the new epistemic ambitions of modern science" (15) but also ingenious repurposing of established concepts in scholastic thought and moral theology to address evolving conditions of uncertainty.

Mindful of the editors' caveat not to expect the particular range of topics to present an exhaustive picture of an avowedly dynamic and often circumspect phenomenon (the shift from the "what" and "whether" of the magisterium's purchase on truth to the "how"—that is, the conditions under which credibility was sought and sustained), this reader found the ensemble of topics to be satisfyingly anchored to what could be called a conceptual kinship structure: a coherent interest in examining scenes of

engagement where the Church nourished the aura of its nominal theo-political central-ity by assimilating, attenuating, disavowing, or disguising challenges that arose not only from disputes at vulnerable locations (e.g., how to be a Catholic Copernican in the Spanish Netherlands, as Steven Vanden Broecke's essay vividly relates) but also conflicting gauges of judgment within the core body of ecclesial administrative precepts (exemplified in Brendan Röder's absorbing account of petitions involving deadlocks over which criteria should prevail in deciding whether an individual with a physi-cal impairment should be disqualified from clerical office: in what amounted to a dis-torted echo of contemporary Eucharistic debates, medical expertise on the occult etiologies—and "truth"—of a given anomaly was pitted against ecclesial attention to public perception and the ensuing risk of scandal).

In addition to the just-mentioned items, particularly persuasive contributions to the volume include Rudolph Schuessler's lucid overview of the deployment of probabilism in early modern moral theologians' prescient interest in what analytic philosophy would later identify as conditions of reasonable disagreement, which finds contrapuntal extensions in Marco Cavarzere's ethnographically oriented approach to the uses of casuistical (and probabilistic) reasoning in addressing the operative function of oaths on false gods in the colonial networks of cross-cultural trade. In an adjacent vein, Cecilia Cristellon's essay carefully unpacks the casuistical virtuosity deployed by the Benedictine Declaration of 1741 to address, with prudential discretion, the problem of mixed marriages in the Northern and Southern Low Countries. It is no accident that several of the essays incorporate aspects of early modern casuistry into their modes of analysis, for the casuistical strand of moral theology seems organically connected to the dynamic negotiations between theory and practice in the domain of truth that inform the volume's stated project. The editors acknowledge as much, by pointing out the range of practices—such as "equivocation, deletion, dissimulation, and modes of conflict" (16), all within the province of casuistry—that could have been marshalled as organizing categories for the volume.

Instead, the volume opts for three high-concept categories: "Accommodating," "Performing," and "Embedding." The gerundive / participial resonance of the terms feels intuitively right, and the introduction glancingly situates each term in plausible historical contexts, while it also acknowledges the indistinct boundaries separating the categories. Indeed, it was often hard to know why a given essay was placed in one section rather than another. My sole complaint with the volume turns on this mat-ter, and by this I do not mean that the wrong categories were chosen, but rather that their theoretical inspiration was not adequately engaged. The introduction begins with a promising nod to the critical legacies of Michel de Certeau and Bruno Latour. But the introduction eschews offering a substantive account of how the volume's emphasis on "a deeply praxeological approach to credibility" (13) includes investments in de Certeau's influential focus on the rhetoricity of strategies and tactics in social prac-tice. Nor does the introduction situate Latour's legacy—presumably his contributions to actor-network theory—in meaningful detail or specific relation to the contributors' work. (The concluding essay, by Rivka Feldhay, offers the sole sustained engagement with Latour's legacy and its relevance to the volume, in the context of a fascinating account of the place of pre-classical mechanics in the development of early modern ideas of the sovereign state in relation to papal authority.) Crucially, the introduction does not offer expository insight into how, precisely, a dialogic grasp of de Certeau's and Latour's work offers fertile methodological ground for cultivating new forms of literacy into the archive on early modern Catholicism's efforts to remain both

contemporary and transhistorical in its cultivation of credibility, if not truth. In this one regard, a missed opportunity.

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Good Government and Church Order: Essays on the Role of Secular Authority in the German Reformation. By **James M. Estes**. Essays and Studies 53. Toronto: CRRS Publications, 2022. 326 pp. $49.95 CAD paper.

James Estes's work has made wide-ranging contributions to our understanding of the Reformation's effect on political authority. Including eleven essays and an appendix that span five decades, this compilation offerings a fitting overview to Estes's research. The chapters focus on three major figures of the magisterial Reformation: Johannes Brenz, Martin Luther, and Philipp Melanchthon. Collectively, the articles chart numerous connections between these three theologians and a fourth major thinker, Erasmus of Rotterdam. The overarching theme of the volume is the relationship between church and state broadly conceived. They discuss not only the theoretical arguments made by these four authors about the duties and prerogatives of secular authority, but they also engage with how Brenz, Luther, and Melanchthon sought to turn those theories into reality through the institutionalization of religious reform. Estes's analysis of the interplay between theory and action in the world represents one of the most valuable contributions of these articles and serves as a crucial reminder of the benefits of combining a study of theology with political and social history. The selection of essays is well-balanced chronologically, stretching from the 1510s and Luther's first attempts to grapple with the role of secular authority in supporting church reform to the Interim Controversy of the late 1540s and early 1550s. The articles, most of which were previously published individually in journals or edited volumes and have undergone light revision for inclusion here, are organized in the order in which Estes wrote or published them, which allows the reader to see the development of various strands of analysis over the courses of several decades. Alongside the previously published articles, the collection includes two pieces never published before: an article on Brenz and the Interim in the duchy of Württemberg, and an English translation of Melanchthon's important 1539 tract, *De officio principum*. The book also includes several color plates that complement its themes. Taken together, the articles serve as a wonderful introduction to the breadth of Estes's research and offer a fitting tribute to his career.

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