

period from 1261 to 1453, these three capitals became even more important and proved exceptionally rich in artistic terms. Each here receives a full description of its major churches, their significance in architectural terms, with numerous colour illustrations of both exterior and interior decoration, though the quality of the photographs leaves much to be desired. Some readers may query whether Mount Athos was really a Byzantine capital, but this section, the longest of the book, provides an extremely useful guide to monuments often inaccessible to visitors. Through the physical setting of the monasteries, the plans of their churches and the symbolism of their decoration in fresco, sculpture and icons, the significance of the Holy Mountain and its role in sustaining Orthodox spirituality is amply illustrated. This section would have benefitted from the important analysis of fortifications, towers and monastic structures by Slobodan Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans: from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven 2010). Although *Sacred architecture* is more of a catalogue than a serious art historical survey, it will be a useful guide to a wide range of Byzantine churches, especially for those unfamiliar with Greek Orthodox building traditions.

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*Historiography and identity, III: Carolingian approaches*. Edited by Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz and Graeme Ward. (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 29.) Pp. viii + 399 incl. 1 table. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021. €100. 978 2 503 58655 7; 1378 8779  
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This book is the third in a series of six edited volumes examining how the writing of history related to the construction of identity in Eurasia from antiquity to the early modern period. Like its siblings, it emerges from the 'Visions of Community: Comparative Approaches to Ethnicity, Region and Empire in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism (400–1600 CE)' research cluster based in Vienna.

The remit of this volume is the writing of history in the Carolingian Empire. This relatively narrow subject compared to other entries in the series brings with it a number of advantages. Although the contributors rightly stress the variety in Carolingian history-writing, being able to focus on a fairly clearly defined moment helps in the creation of a tight and cohesive volume. Nor does it hurt that the contributors, who range from established luminaries to new voices in the field, are well-versed with each other's work. This familiarity has the potential to become forbidding to the outsiders this volume is presumably also aimed at (one might question whether Frechulf of Lisieux and Walahfrid Strabo are quite the household names the introduction implies, p. 3). For the most part this danger is avoided, and the result is an extremely productive conversation that can be very profitably read as a whole by those with non-Carolingian specialisms.

Despite the advantages outlined above, the editors should receive considerable credit for their labour, particularly for the tight structure of the volume. We begin with Helmut Reimitz's introduction, which usefully outlines the role of modern scholarship in constructing a distinctively Carolingian *corpus* of history-writing

through the early publication of these texts by the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. This is followed by four chapters on the use of earlier histories in the Carolingian period. Mayke de Jong considers the rhetorical employment of the Roman past by Paschasius Radbertus in the *Vita Adalhardi* and the *Epitaphium Arsenii*. Matthias Tischler examines the legacy of the Ostrogothic past in the Carolingian world. Robert Evans and Rosamond McKitterick investigate the vision of the past revealed by an epitome of Orosius preserved in Leiden, ms VLQ 20, while Richard Corradini explores the personal relationship to history found in Walahfrid Strabo's personal handbook.

The next section is concerned with the writing of Carolingian history, particularly with texts that have often been marginalised in earlier scholarship. A neglected eighth-century *Chronicon universale* receives some much needed attention from Sören Kaschke. The *Chronicon moissiacense* provides a Septimanian perspective to the coronation of Charlemagne in Rutger Kramer's chapter. Also from the southern edge of the Carolingian world is the work of Ado of Vienne, which Sukanya Raisharma analyses as a universal chronicle adapted for the needs of a single city. Frechulf brings this part to a close, as Graeme Ward perceptively examines the question of why the bishop of Lisieux's world history ends in the seventh century.

Despite their diversity of subject, these chapters fit neatly with each other because of their shared concern with a number of important themes related to the way people in the period engaged with and used the resources of the past. We encounter many different types of history-writing, with their authors and compilers making careful decisions in the expression of their understanding of the past. Many of the chapters bring out the significance of manuscript studies and textual transmission, the importance of examining texts as a whole and the value of considering interpretations of the writing of history in the period that do not centre the agenda of the ruling dynasty. Although these points are not new in Carolingian scholarship, they become all the more compelling from the variety of the case studies provided and the demonstration of their value for the practising historian.

If these two sections have a weakness, it is a tendency in some of the contributions to leave interpretation of their findings as an exercise for the reader. To unfairly single out one example among several, towards the end of his otherwise excellent study of the *Chronicon universale*, Kaschke observes that the decision to include the preface and final section of Bede's *De temporum ratione* in all manuscripts containing the *Chronicon* 'is a vital clue for the intentions and perceptions of contemporary compilers, editors, and readers of the text alike' (p. 219). The conclusion this clue leads us to remains unstated, leaving the reader trapped in the role of Dr Watson, waiting for a solution that never comes. This recurring issue is a particular problem for a volume with aspirations to be read by non-Carolingianists.

The final section of the volume is billed as a consideration of evolution of history-writing in the later Carolingian period. The two chapters it contains are among the strongest in the volume, but neither fit neatly with the other pieces. Walter Pohl examines the importance of Lombard identity in Erchempert's southern Italian *Historiola*, while Eric Goldberg reopens the cold case of the 'accident' in 864 that ended the career of Charles the Bald's son, also called Charles, by examining the discrepancies in the annalistic sources. Both are fascinating, but they come slightly awkwardly after the cohesion of the previous sections. This is particularly

noteworthy in the case of Pohl's chapter, which is one of the few to really make the theme of history and identity its major focus, despite this being one of the stated aims of the volume.

In spite of the minor difficulties mentioned above, this is a very impressive volume that manages to create a whole greater than the sum of its (already very strong) parts, and repays reading from cover to cover. Assessing how well it fits in with the rest of the series will have to wait until all the other volumes are published, but anyone interested in the writing of history in the early medieval period will benefit from this book.

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*Le Bienheureux Herluin. Fondateur et premier abbé du Bec. Vita Herluini de Gilbert Crispin. Traduction et études.* Edited by Raphaël Flaujac, Jean-Hervé Foulon and Véronique Gazeau. Pp. 177 incl. 14 figs. Le Bec-Hellouin: Ateliers du Bec, 2020. €18 (paper). 978 2 908109 16 0

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This slim but impressive volume, written in French, is a noteworthy addition to contemporary studies of medieval Benedictine monasticism. Its focus is on the foundation and early years of the abbey of Bec in Normandy; and its interest and significance for English medieval scholars and students are enhanced by the fact that two among the first generation of monks, contemporaries of the founding abbot Herluin, went on to become archbishops of Canterbury. Lanfranc, prior of Bec and later abbot of Caen, was appointed archbishop by William the Conqueror in 1070, and Anselm, Herluin's successor as abbot, followed Lanfranc to Canterbury in 1093. The earliest surviving biography of Herluin was written by Gilbert Crispin, a monk contemporary of Herluin, who went on to become abbot of Westminster (1088–1117). Crispin's biography is included here in a French translation based on the English text edited by J. Armitage Robinson in *Gilbert Crispin, abbot of Westminster: a study of the abbey under Norman rule* (Cambridge 1911), 85–110. Also included here is a brief commentary by a contemporary abbot of Bec, Dom Paul-Emmanuel Clénet (1996–2020). This is followed by four essays on various aspects of Herluin's life and after-life and cult written by two French professors, one being one of the editors mentioned above, and one a contemporary monk of Bec. These provide additional evidence surrounding the development of the cult of Herluin, who still awaits canonisation, along with copies of five of his epitaphs several of which are reprinted here from Vatican manuscripts. Also included in this volume are the details of the several examinations of Herluin's tomb in 1707, and in 1792 when it had to be moved to a parish church as a result of the French Revolution's closure and destruction of the abbey church; and once again, most recently in 1959, when it was brought to rest in a place of honour in the newly reconstructed abbey church. The editors have also provided a chronology of Herluin's life and bibliographies of the primary source material and printed modern references.

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