

The story of the Christian ‘new martyrs’ of the early Islamic period is thus a fascinating and important one for the religious history of the Middle East. It may, however, be a source of some present comfort that ‘the new martyrs of the early medieval period are all but invisible in the spiritual life of most Middle Eastern churches’ (p. 249) today.

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Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick, ed. Elina Screen and Charles West (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2018; pp. xvi + 315. £75).

This volume is the present offered to Rosamond McKitterick by her former students upon her retirement from Cambridge in 2016. The decision to include only contributions by her former Ph.D. students active in scholarship was a fortunate one: the sixteen articles in the book take the reader on a tour of the full range of McKitterick’s research interests over her long career. At the centre of this collection, which includes chapters on subjects as diverse as history-writing, liturgy, numismatics and pharmaceutical manuscripts, is, therefore, the emerita herself. The book as a whole portrays the work of one of the most important early medieval historians of the last generation through the research of her *Nachwuchs* (some of whom now hold professorships themselves)—a better way of honouring the new emerita and her work is hard to imagine.

The volume, edited by Elina Screen and Charles West, comes in three parts, each of which opens with a short introduction: knowledge of the past, manuscript transmission and the use of texts in rulership. As Marios Costambeys and Matthew Innes in the introductory Chapter One, these are three areas in which McKitterick has done pioneering work. Perhaps most importantly, she has put the early Middle Ages on the map as a period in which the written word was immensely important, and has shown time and again how research should take entire manuscripts (and not just editions of individual texts) on board in order to understand *how* written texts mattered in societies of the past. These questions and insights are important and influential for current research, to which the book as a whole bears witness.

Part One, ‘Knowledge of the Past’, centres on the question of how the past mattered for the early medieval present. In Chapter Two, Richard Matthew Pollard shows the unexpectedly high ‘impact’ of the work of Flavius Josephus in the Carolingian world. The next two chapters discuss the images of Rome used by Bede (ch. 3, Paul Hilliard) and Paul the Deacon (ch. 4, Marios Costambeys), respectively. Ingrid Rembold in Chapter Five analyses the uses of the past by Folcuin of Lobbes, who tried to make his *Gesta* into a vehicle of reconciliation by selectively remembering and forgetting the past. That the liturgy is also a form of history is made clear by Christina Pössel (ch. 6), who offers important perspectives on Walahfrid Strabo’s perception of the liturgy as by definition diverse and changing over time. Graeme Ward (ch. 7) continues this theme, by showing how Amalarius of Metz’s *De ordine antiphonarii* ‘amounts to a sort of universal history’ (p. 110).

Manuscripts and text transmission take centre stage in the second section, emphasising how the contents of codices are the result of active processes of

choice and selection. An excellent case in point is the creative and active ways in which pharmaceutical texts were copied and reformatted throughout the early Middle Ages, as Nicholas Everett shows (ch. 8). How manuscripts can be used to reconstruct networks of knowledge is discussed by Sven Meeder (ch. 9) on the basis of the case of Monte Cassino's earliest extant manuscripts. Anna Dorofeeva (ch. 10) brings to life the allegedly 'dead' genre of glossaries, which, quite to the contrary, were very much alive and continuously expanded and revised for new uses. Moving to Carolingian conciliar records in Chapter Eleven, Charles West discusses a unique case of a council (held at Aachen in 862) for which we have two different records that reflect two different opinions on the main theme of this gathering, the divorce-case of King Lothar and his wife Theutberga.

Part Three, titled 'Texts and Early Medieval Rulers', contains four chapters that highlight how (expectations of) rulership can only be understood through texts and their transmission. Andy Merrills (ch. 12) discusses three forms of epigraphy in early medieval Mauretania, produced by distinct social and cultural groups who in this way formed textual communities. In a provocative contribution (ch. 13), Yitzhak Hen discusses the 'liturgical anxiety and mayhem' (p. 203) caused by Charlemagne's failed attempts to reform the Frankish liturgy. A rather more successful 'reform', that of Charlemagne's coinage, is discussed by Simon Coupland (ch. 14), who shows how new coins struck after 793 were produced in fewer mints, but were used in a much larger area than before. Matthew Innes (ch. 15) draws attention to the way in which different Carolingian authors dealt with conflicts remembered for a long time through the case of Queen Fastrada, who was the victim of *damnatio memoriae* after her death. The theme of selective remembering and forgetting through the reconstruction of history (in this case of Emperor Lothar I) is the theme of the closing chapter by Elina Screen.

This very short summary, of course, cannot do justice to the many innovative and interesting chapters of this book. In the variety of its themes and approaches it reads as a true *florilegium*, a bunch of carefully picked flowers for a much-loved and respected scholar.

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Dragon Lords: The History and Legends of Viking England, by Eleanor Parker
(London: I.B. Tauris, 2018; pp. 267. £20).

'Why did the Vikings come to England?' Eleanor Parker's monograph opens with the question that continues to spark debate. This book, however, does not aim to answer that question (the endnotes of Parker's introduction direct the reader to various influential studies that do attempt this) but rather a different one, hitherto untreated to this extent: how did medieval English writers from the eleventh century onwards imagine and interpret the arrival and impact of Scandinavians in England?

This book, then, is more about the people of medieval England than the Vikings; it explores the role of 'the Danes'—as we are told the early medieval Scandinavians now popularly named 'Vikings' were commonly labelled