

Cities, Saints, and Communities in Early Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Alan Thacker. Edited by **Scott DeGregorio** and **Paul Kershaw**. Studies in the Early Middle Ages 46. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2020. 408 pp. €105 hardback and ebook.

This celebration of Alan Thacker's scholarship is a well-edited, fitting tribute to a scholar whose work has and will continue to influence generations of researchers. Beginning with an intellectual biography and appreciation of Thacker's pivotal role in the study of the early Middle Ages, the volume includes sixteen essays on topics and themes indebted to the honoree's research on the cult of saints, Rome and its churches, and the Venerable Bede, bringing depth and new insights to "the hint[s] he dropped" (129). The strengths of this volume are those of its contributing authors, a star-studded cast of scholars including Thacker's interlocutors and mentees whose work defines the state of the field today.

The papers speak to one another across the volume and are well ordered; for one example, Jennifer O'Reilly's posthumous essay demonstrating that Bede knew more than he let on about the seventh-century heresy of monotheletism follows Catherine Cubitt's new interpretations of that heresy in contemporary synods and *vitae*. These first essays also highlight the competing political uses of the cult of saints in the context of a closely connected early medieval world from Saragossa to Rome, from Ravenna to Constantinople. Several essays then focus on Bede's nuanced understandings of heresy before the volume transitions to studies of early medieval religious and secular authorities in Bede's bishops and kings—such as Acca and Cædwalla—and how Bede's own authority as an exegete informed his historical writing. Particularly highlighted is Bede's understanding of the role of Christian teachers and preachers, a familiar theme but one expanded here by investigating how these leaders prevented heresy, ensured right pastoral care, and longed for the unachievable heaven on earth. The volume concludes by returning to the broader European contexts of Thacker's influence beyond the age of Bede, with notable essays on Bede's Carolingian legacy, the politics of Carolingian Istria, the later Anglo-Saxon presence in Rome, and the early Christian and medieval resonances of altarpieces in Renaissance Venice. Overall, this volume encapsulates and honors Alan Thacker as a scholar and mentor while the exceptional essays themselves stand alone as important contributions to the field.

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Hearing the Scriptures: Liturgical Exegesis of the Old Testament in Byzantine Orthodox Hymnography. By **Eugen J. Pentiu**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. xx + 450 pp. \$37.99 paperback.

Eugen Pentiu is widely regarded as the dean of scholarly reflection on the place and use of Scripture within the Orthodox Christian tradition. In his landmark *The Old*