

the word *local* had been inserted in front of *history* the volume's focus would have been clearer, though I imagine that the marketing crew at Cambridge Scholars Publishing would have resisted that qualifier as potentially limiting of sales. That aside, the book is well presented, and while a few of the essays bear signs of revision, they are for the most part reissued in their original form (which bibliographically is a positive). I spotted only one slight error, in the rendering of J. E. Neale's name (145), and a few instances where one or two letters in footnote titles had missed being italicized. While the price for a volume of little more than two hundred pages and only three black and white images is a bit high, those interested in any of the subjects discussed here will want to consider adding *Varieties of History* to their library's collection, and if they have an interest in historiographical subjects more generally, to their private shelves. It is a worthy reminder of the variety of Richardson's historical interests over a lengthy scholarly career.

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LEVI ROACH. *Forgery and Memory at the End of the First Millennium*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. Pp. 360. \$45.00 (cloth).
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Among the numerous merits of *Forgery and Memory at the End of the First Millennium*, Levi Roach's main achievement is probably to be found in his successful adoption of a carefully crafted comparative framework, something that many medievalists aspire to but few actually manage to implement with the confidence that Roach demonstrates here. Through five case studies from different regions of western Europe, presented in successive chapters, Roach provides the reader with a detailed discussion of the reasons for (and significance of) the production of forged records that characterized the period between the second half of the tenth and the early eleventh centuries. The reader is thus taken first to the episcopal see of Worms, in the Upper Rhine Valley; then to the episcopal see of Passau, in Bavaria; next to the monastery of Abingdon, in England; then to the abbey of Fleury, in modern France; and finally, to the cathedral church of Vercelli, in northwestern Italy. In all five cases, Roach identifies specific bishops or abbots behind the initiatives that led to the production of forged documents, and he provides detailed reconstructions of the historical context within which these initiatives took place. In each of the cases studied, Roach also directly engages with earlier scholarship on the same documents, occasionally adding important and hitherto unnoticed evidence, demonstrating in the process his skill in carefully dissecting the technicalities of paleography and diplomatic research published in at least four different European languages.

This is just one of the many challenges that Roach had to address in order to write this important book. Another significant challenge emerges from the introduction, and, more specifically, from the efforts made to provide a definition of the term *forgery*, which takes on board the numerous developments that in the past century or so have substantially transformed the study of charters. Roach rightly notes that labels such as *authentic* or *forged* can obscure as much as they inform and that there can be considerable middle ground between the two, including imitative copies and authentic recipient production. Furthermore, it is necessary to bear in mind that medieval forgers may have acted with the conviction that they were doing good, tampering with documents to protect rights and lands that—they believed—rightly belonged to their respective churches and patron saints. Here Roach introduces a distinction between pious motives and duplicitous intentions, with the latter allowing one to identify forgery proper. Slightly surprising in this otherwise very useful introduction is the claim that “forgery remains

largely absent from the many studies of medieval memory in which manuscript and narrative history loom large” (16). In fact, one need think only of the numerous publications that in the past thirty years or so have described the construction of institutional memory as a major motive behind the production of medieval ecclesiastical cartularies and of the importance that many scholars have attributed to the inclusion of forged and spurious charters in such documentary collections as part of the creation of a useful past needed to address current issues.

Roach makes a convincing case for the identification of the end of the first millennium as an essential step in the history of forgery, one in which it is possible to witness similar activities taking place across several regions in western Europe, albeit aiming to address different issues: at Worms, Bishop Anno needed to construct a past history for his see’s immunity rights; at Passau, Pilgrim created one of the most famous medieval complexes of forged papal bulls in the (failed) attempt to obtain metropolitan status for his bishopric; at Abingdon, Abbot Wulfgar’s forging activities were directed at restoring land and rights he believed rightly belonged to the monks; at Fleury, Abbo and his successors forged papal bulls to create a long tradition of papal exemption; while at Vercelli, Bishop Leo wrote several diplomas in favor of his see, which Roach treats as specimens of authentic recipient production even though they contain a number of manufactured claims casting Vercelli in the best possible light. Roach deals with each of the five case studies separately but with frequent and elegant cross-referencing, which allows the reader to see both similarities and differences among these forgeries. This is where the reader sees Roach at his best, thanks to his ability to make different documentary collections (and related historiography) speak to each other. Possibly somewhat overstated, however, is the novelty of forgery at the end of the first millennium, as emerges, for instance, from the analysis of the English case in chapter 3. Here Roach claims, “such activity certainly was new” because before the second half of the tenth century “we only know of forgery at Canterbury (and possibly Rochester)” (152). In fact, forgery was certainly also known in Mercia in the early ninth century, as attested by a surviving single sheet (Sawyer no. 59), which is preserved in the cathedral church of Worcester, where it was produced.

In a book covering so much ground, both geographically and metaphorically, it is, however, inevitable that any reviewer will notice statements with which they take issue. These should not detract from the significant achievement that *Forgery and Memory at the End of the First Millennium* represents. Roach describes it as “an exercise in serial microhistory” (19), but it is probably more than that, with his careful weaving of diplomatic and paleographical analysis (which, incidentally, would have sometimes needed larger illustrations than those provided) with detailed historical and historiographical discussion. What this reader remains unsure about is whether Roach has succeeded in his “attempt to discuss the material in a manner accessible to the non-specialist” (xv), or even whether any author could succeed in such an attempt given the complex technicalities that any discussion of these materials must address. Not all books can be written for nonspecialists, but this does not make them any less important.

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EDMOND SMITH. *Merchants: The Community that Shaped England’s Trade and Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021. Pp. 376. \$32.50 (cloth).
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Long-distance seaborne trade was fraught with peril in the early modern period. These perils ranged from the more obvious and immediate dangers of storms, sickness, and shipwreck to