

this may be true, here it is based entirely on the author's own views of what does and does not constitute a great contribution to Hussite studies.

In conclusion, Fudge's book introduces two leading Anglophone scholars of the Hussite era and highlights their contributions to the field while making an impassioned argument against the insularity of Czech academia. This is an important point that is no doubt applicable to other medieval sub-fields, in which scholars from the "home country" seek to exert an oversized influence on their field. However, the difficulty with this particular book is that I am not sure who it is actually intended for. As an introductory text to Hussite studies it is too convoluted and hard to read. As a message to well-informed practitioners it is not nuanced enough, and as a more general example of how biography informs historiography, it serves an overly specific agenda. All in all, in trying to do too many things, the book has not done any of them well. It is a shame, because Fudge's warning against ethnically motivated insularity in academic research is an important one, and I hope that it sparks a long overdue conversation among medievalists about how we might be able to combat it.

Marcela Perett
North Dakota State University
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Religious Transformations in New Communities of Interpretation in Europe (1350–1570). Bridging the Historiographical Divides. By **Élise Boillet** and **Ian Johnson**. *New Communities of Interpretation*, vol. 3. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. 275 pp. €85.00.

In October 2015, the Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance at the University of Tours hosted an international conference dedicated to "Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe." The conference was in turn part of a larger project (under the auspices of EU COST funding) dedicated to "Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies, and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe." This volume is a product of that scholarly collaboration. Its interventions focus on the still contested chronological space between the "late Middle Ages" and "early modernity," and in particular on what is framed here as the "long fifteenth century." John Van Engen and others have now sketched new interpretive possibilities for this period, but relatively few studies aim, as this one does, to transgress its traditional boundaries so explicitly. In broadly interpretive but still focused ways, these essays move across the tenacious divide of 1500, and across the lingering national and disciplinary boundaries that have so long fragmented the study of this chapter in European history.

The volume's introduction frames eleven essays that focus on the laity as key catalysts in the era's religious transformations, and on following wherever its multifaceted textual traditions might lead. Within that general approach, the essays group themselves within five thematic clusters: on the divide (and the interconnections) "between heaven and earth"; on lay literacy; on vernacular texts and censorship; on the intertwining of political and religious cultures; and on daily life in the multi-confessional settings of the sixteenth

century. Considerations of space preclude any detailed summary of each of the essays, but a few general points regarding their collective merits deserve emphasis. First, their primary (if not exclusive) focus on the textual worlds of the laity provide a fresh purchase on the workings of “reform” in this era, which are still too often framed in terms of a clerical/monastic perspective. Second, their dedicated effort to genuinely rupture the divide of 1500 provides still more concrete evidence of the complexities of continuity and change across the period. Third, the essays range broadly in geography, complementing a more traditional focus on France and Italy with studies that center themselves in Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Bosnia, and beyond.

The result is a challenging range of materials and approaches, presented from often strongly interdisciplinary perspectives. For all these reasons, this volume stands as a collection that will be not only useful as a whole, but also for its individual contributions. The concrete examples in these essays will help both newcomers and specialists see more clearly the richness and diverse possibilities of studying this contested era.

James Mixson
The University of Alabama
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***On the Edge of Eternity: The Antiquity of the Earth in Medieval & Early Modern Europe.* By Ivano Dal Prete. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. 320pp. \$37.99.**

This and other recent publications indicate that the New York branch of Oxford University Press has abandoned entirely copyediting or other editorial oversight. Only that can explain the presence of full stops instead of commas (116); short titles appearing before their full counterparts in endnotes (e.g., 250, nn. 12–13; 255–6, nn. 13, 15); the shortening of Diodorus Siculus to “Siculus” (226, n. 13); or the failure to correct the frequent use of the non-word “Noetic” for “Noachic” (“Noachian” also appears: 3, 13, 127, 204).

A shame: Ivano Dal Prete’s (DP’s) *On the Edge of Eternity* is a most important book that deserved better. Its thesis is best summarized by the author: “Historiographical common sense has long placed the discovery of ‘deep time’ in the decades between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. . . This book argues instead that the idea of an immensely old Earth circulated openly in medieval and early modern times; that for most of those centuries, it was largely unproblematic; and that the notion of a deep fracture between a pre- and a post-nineteenth-century Earth history. . . was a product of the cultural and political tensions of the Enlightenment” (203).

DP’s narrative ranges from antiquity to the present, with primary focus on the period c. 1300–1800, and especially Italian sources. For areas outside his expertise DP relies mostly (but far from exclusively) on secondary literature. Unlike much recent Anglophone history of science, many of those secondary sources are not in English. Equally gratifying is the absence of Anglocentrism when DP reaches early modernity: we hear little about Hooke, but a lot about Antonio Vallisneri, a Padua medicine professor who supported Fracastoro’s old thesis about fossils having been deposited by