

central chapters examine works attributed to Rublev by others and works Milner-Gulland believes should be included in Rublev's oeuvre, such as figures on the walls of the Dormition Church in Vladimir (illus. 40–43, 45), and the design of the cathedral of the Andronikov Monastery, still standing in Moscow (illus. 22). Some of his attributions are based more on possibilities than empirical evidence, but the possibilities that Milner-Gulland presents are historically believable, such as his hypothesis that Rublev and Andronikov's superior, Alexander, may have worked together to design a cathedral that resembled churches where Rublev had worked such as at the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery (illus. 53) and the Cathedral of the Dormition in Zvenigorod (illus. 55 and 56).

The author leaves the reader with an "Afterwords" and "Summing Up." He discusses the importance of Rublev and Old Russian icons to modern scholars (starting in the mid-nineteenth century), and the icons' links to the aesthetic sensibility of Russia's artists of the early twentieth century, especially the Suprematists. Milner-Gulland emphasizes the importance of Rublev's work to Soviet figures such as P. Florovsky, and film director Andrei Tarkovsky, who steeped his film, *Andrei Rublev*, in knowledge of Rublev's period, without being bound to historical accuracy. Even Stalin coopted Rublev and his work after he loosened the chains on the Russian Orthodox Church during World War II and initiated the Rublev Museum in the compound of the Andronikov Monastery, where Rublev had worked and died.

The book's brevity inhibits thorough discussions of points of contention in historiography or art history, although they are mentioned, but brings Rublev and his works to life. Toward the end, Milner-Gulland describes his own reaction to Rublev's creations as giving a "sense of big-heartedness, openness to all experience, gravity, and a classically based decorum mixed with a certain playfulness."

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***Matthew Spinka, Howard Kaminsky, and the Medieval Hussites.* By Thomas Fudge. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. 352 pages, \$103.91.**

Thomas Fudge's recent book, *Matthew Spinka, Howard Kaminsky, and the Medieval Hussites* (Lexington Books, 2021) contains three different books that sit together somewhat uneasily. Primarily, this is an impassioned argument for the relevance of Hussite studies to the study of the medieval period as a whole. To this plea are appended two biographies of ground-breaking Anglophone scholars of the Hussite movement, Matthew Spinka and Howard Kaminsky. This rather unusual grouping of subjects is meant to accomplish a unified goal: to illustrate "the historiographical evolution of the Hussites" (3) while addressing the subject of writing history more generally. But there is a discernible edge here: Fudge is really writing about how Hussite scholarship ought to be done.

Divided among chapters 1, 2, and 5, the historiographical reflection seeks to answer the question “Why study the Hussites?” The author argues that the “Hussite movement is integral to understanding the general history of medieval Europe,” and even that it was “a critical event for the development of western civilization.” (9) I do not think this is as controversial as the book makes it sound; most medieval surveys tend to contain a mention of Jan Hus and the rebellion that he had inspired.

For that reason, I think Fudge is really arguing along slightly different lines, namely against scholars who discourage Anglophone research on the Hussites. Who these scholars are is made abundantly clear. They are

medieval Czech historians [who] form a fortified castle and the castle keep is defended by Hussite specialists who protect the essence of a culture that paradoxically reflects an air of superiority belied by a nagging uneasiness of inferiority. The result is intellectual isolationism often animated by a blinkered Soviet style ideology and driven by nationalist arguments and commitments. (21)

These are some fighting words, but Fudge is not wrong here. The Czech Academy has long considered Anglophone scholars of Hus to be interlopers on their sacred territory and has seldom accepted them into their fold. Fudge illustrates his point on the example of Spinka and Kaminsky, who refused to “rely on precedent or traditional understandings” (22). What Fudge is arguing is that Spinka and Kaminsky (true greats in Hussite studies by anyone’s reckoning) were great *because* they refused to follow the well-worn ruts of Czech-speaking Hussite research.

Their biographies occupy chapters 3 and 4, respectively. They focus on the historians’ academic pursuits with other aspects of their lives mentioned only as related to their development as historians. This approach results in two somewhat selective chapters that seem driven by Fudge’s own interests in the historians. However, both biographies contain robust discussions of their subject’s published work, which are helpful as are summaries of their important contributions to the Hussite scholarship. Thus we find out that Spinka’s main contribution was to demonstrate that “a native Czech reform tradition had existed long before Wyclif appeared in Bohemia” (78), which had long been a contested issue. Kaminsky, in turn, is praised for maintaining that “medieval society cannot be studied in terms of modern constructs” (174) and for concluding that the Hussite movement was “both a form of reformation and manifestation of revolution” (182).

As much as I enjoyed the biographies, their usefulness is limited. They are too short and patchy to offer an in-depth treatment in the manner of Robert Lerner’s recent biography of Ernst Kantorowicz. And while Fudge collects an impressive array of documents, and the previously unpublished photographs are fun, my main concern is that the biographies are crafted to serve an agenda. Without fail, they praise those achievements that the author himself has championed (often over against a staunch opposition from Czech-speaking scholars). Furthermore, where Spinka and Kaminsky diverge from the author’s own perspective, they are criticized. Most notably, Fudge takes on Spinka for not being able to “conceive that Hus was heretical” (114), unlike Fudge, who dedicated an entire book to Hus’s heresy trial and concluded that Hus was indeed guilty as charged. And so one begins to suspect that the biographies are put forth as evidence that it is by disagreeing with established Hussite orthodoxies (as professed among Czech scholars) that scholarly greatness can emerge. And while

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.

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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