

*Encountering Others, Understanding Ourselves in Medieval and Early Modern Thought*. Nicolas Faucher and Virpi Mäkinen, ed.  
Helsinki Yearbook of Intellectual History 3. Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2022. ix + 290 pp.  
\$102.99.

In December 2019, the University of Helsinki's Centre of Excellence in Reason and Religious Recognition hosted an international conference entitled *Encountering Others, Understanding Ourselves in Medieval and Early Modern Thought*. This volume compiles revised versions of papers presented on that occasion. Compared to the conference, which saw a greater focus on an extended early modern period, this volume primarily centers on the Middle Ages, with the exception of three contributions (those by Päivi Räisänen-Schröder, Jukka Ruokanen, and Emanuele Lacca). Räisänen-Schröder focuses on Lutheran authorities in Württemberg who managed Anabaptist communities; Ruokanen examines the limitations of religious toleration in Johannes Althusius (1557–1618), who reduced it to a matter of political prudence, provided that the beacon of true religion was preserved; and Lacca offers insights into Dominican Pedro de Ledesma's (1544–1616) doctrine of justice in his *Suma Moral* (1598).

With only one further exception (explained further below), the remainder of the volume presents an articulated, symphonic, and interdisciplinary exploration of medieval history, thought, and mentalities regarding the construction of collective identities, particularly those marked by religious belief. In their thorough introduction, editors Nicolas Faucher and Virpi Mäkinen commendably unify the diverse range of topics and approaches under two overarching purposes: first, highlighting the significance of understanding ourselves when encountering others; and, second, exploring medieval and early modern ideas of toleration (and their limitations).

In medieval times, emerging identities were often forged through defining religious orthodoxy—a long-term, not necessarily consistent process anchored in the othering of social groups that emerged as different over time. The process of othering was ambiguous and multifaceted. The essays, grouped by the editors into three parts, aim to map examples of these ambiguous meanings. One possibility is repulsion and conflict (part 1, “Evil”); another is the blurred boundaries of mutual understanding (part 2, “Toleration”); and a third is embrace and inclusion (part 3, “Altruism”).

The othering of the Waldensians opens part 1, with a comprehensive essay by Reima Välimäki, who employs the concept of lived religion to examine church hierarchy concerns about the social and moral models Waldensians could project of their personae within communities. Michael Dunne's fascinating essay focuses on Richard FitzRalph's (1300–60) evolving thought

on understanding other faiths, an understanding where ultimately, though, “the other remains other” (53).

A merit of this volume is its inclusion of perspectives beyond the Western Catholic (or Protestant) tradition. Marienza Benedetto offers a perspective on medieval Jewish thought by accurately discussing Maimonides’s (1138–1204) controversial metaphors in the context of the modern concept of racism. Serafim Seppälä’s intriguing essay explores Eastern Christian self-understanding, focusing on Theodore Abu Qurrah (b. ca. 750), an Orthodox saint and a patristic author who lived in the Abbasid period and wrote in Arabic. Maria Joana Gomes investigates how medieval translations of Arabic terminology reveal multicultural interactions in the Iberian Peninsula.

Major figures such as Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–74) and Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64) are central to the volume, with articles by Nicolas Faucher and Isabelle Mandrella on Aquinas’s theory of knowledge and ethics. Faucher analyzes the development of a theory of moral introspection from Aquinas through Peter John Olivi (1248–98), contrasting it with Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308)’s conclusions. Mandrella emphasizes Aquinas’s ethics, which, despite his awareness of human social nature, remains individualistic and particularistic. Susan Gottlöber concludes the philosophical contributions with an analysis of Cusa’s theory of individuation and diversity in human customs.

Virpi Mäkinen and Ritva Palmén contribute insights into potential medieval altruism, blending social history and theology. Mäkinen examines the definition of poverty and the profiling of the poor, contextualized within the theological-political concept of charity. Unlike the Renaissance approach (e.g., Juan Luis Vives’s [1493–1540] *De Subventionem Pauperum*), medieval aid to the poor remained within soteriological and locally limited boundaries. Palmén explores the theological virtue of hope, examining its social-emotional dimension and its development by major theologians in the Middle Ages.

This volume offers a comprehensive panorama of medieval (and early modern) forms of othering and social self-understanding, revealing numerous potential research directions and further developments, which one can only hope will result in further volumes. One key epistemic premise is the overlapping and mutual interaction between past and present: exploring medieval othering practices can illuminate contemporary othering traits, while crafting historical images (and even caricatures of the past) often reflects current othering attitudes, especially in the realm of politics. Figures from the recent past (or present) who do not commonly appear in historiographical papers about the medieval or early modern period emerge throughout the volume—such as recent popes, philosophers, psychologists, and even politicians such as Nicolas Sarkozy and Vladimir Putin—highlighting the intertwining of historical and contemporary perspectives. Jukka Korpela’s contribution on

medieval Russian images and their role in current Russian politics underscores the volume's interdisciplinary nature and the overlapping interactions between historical epochs.

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*Aldus Manutius: The Invention of the Publisher.* Oren Margolis.  
Renaissance Lives. London: Reaktion Books, 2023. 208 pp. \$25.

Aldo Manuzio (1449/50–1515, name Latinized to Aldus Manutius) has been a perennial favorite of scholars of the Renaissance, who chant his name (along with that of Vespasiano da Bisticci) as a savior of classical literature, or, to understand their more commercial sensibilities, as a purveyor of humanism. Part of the fervor over Aldus has long been driven by bibliophiles, who strive to amass the *libelli portatiles*. These are among the most prolific, and comparatively affordable, objects of Renaissance material culture available today: specimens of Francesco Griffo's italic and Greek types, significant editions of humanist texts, special copies printed on vellum (or blue or large paper), and copies still in their original bindings. The books embody the commercialization of classical and humanist texts, as well as several centuries of preservation through scholarly and bibliophilic libraries. Aldus provided a lot of fodder for collectors in his own day and up to the present: Jean Grolier (ca. 1489/90–1565) and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503/04–75) (see Anthony Hobson, *Renaissance Book Collecting* [1999]), Antoine-Augustin Renouard (1765–1853), George Spencer, Second Earl of Spencer (1758–1834), J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), and, most recently, the collection of T. Kimbell Brooker, bibliophile and philanthropist, whose library of about 1,300 Renaissance books began hitting the auction block at Sotheby's New York in October 2023, with further sales in the US and Europe expected for several years to come.

Exhibitions devoted to Aldus rarely focus on Aldus. Commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of Aldus's death in 2015 was *Aldus Manutius: A Legacy More Lasting than Bronze* at the Grolier Club of New York, an institution devoted to book collectors, where, unsurprisingly, the books took center stage. The following year, the Gallerie dell'Accademia's *Aldo Manuzio: Il Rinascimento di Venezia*, to which I was fortunate enough to deliver two of the Morgan's Aldine editions, highlighted the vibrant artistic world in which Aldus's press resided. Libraries rather than art museums have long taken the fore in Aldine