

edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, does exactly that. The editors have coordinated an outstanding group of scholars from different but converging disciplines, such as philology, literature, Arabism, art history and the history of religions. Each of their contributions reveals their authors' extensive knowledge of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. Their sense of purpose is unmistakable, following Novikoff's proposal for framing religious dispute within a broad cultural context, and of asking new questions from the perspective of 'polemical encounters'. The work's goal is to prove that, for the three monotheistic religions professed in the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean and Atlantic Europe (both in their disputes with one another and within their own bosom), the other community, the one that practised a different religion, was fundamentally wrong. For this reason, one should reaffirm one's faith and exclude the others from the possibility of salvation. The authors amply demonstrate that these matters went beyond the strict boundaries of theology, spilling out into other areas of social life and making sense of Ryan Szpiech's notion of 'polemical communities'. The polemicists – whether intra- or inter-religion – tried to raise barriers between the groups to which they belonged and the group which they considered to be deviant or discordant. The book is divided into three sections and thirteen chapters. The first section focuses on the Hispanic kingdoms in the Middle Ages and, more specifically, the viability of coexistence of the three religions, the expectations generated by the 'dream of conversion', and radical transformations in the management of religious minorities. The second section deals with some of the polemicists and the 'visual policies' that made 'forced conversions' possible on the basis of the religious uniformity imposed by the rulers. Finally, the third section analyses points of contact and boundaries among different religions. These liminal spaces facilitated contact and exchange, but also resistance and rejection. In conclusion, this is an interesting book that presents a broad perspective on religious diversity while analysing the processes triggered by religious controversy. Ultimately, the editors ask themselves whether it is possible to argue that the absence of sharp religious categories in Iberia can be explained, in part, by the extensive number of polemical works published there.

UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA

JUAN HERNÁNDEZ FRANCO

*Hospitaller Malta and the Mediterranean economy in the sixteenth century.* By Joan Abela (foreword Maria Fusaro). Pp. xxviii + 263 incl. 10 figs, 3 charts, 2 maps and 8 tables. Woodbridge–Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2018. £75. 978 1 78327 211 2

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Influenced by Fernand Braudel's work, the current historiographical approach to Mediterranean history explores the sea as an area that facilitated transculturalism as well as the interaction of diverse political, legal and economic spheres. Joan Abela's *Hospitaller Malta* contributes to this trend and contests the traditional historiographical interpretation that following 1530, when the island was given to the Knights of St John by Charles v as a free fief to be used as a Christian frontier against the Muslim infidel, the island continued as an isolated hub, free from external non-Christian influence. Instead, Abela presents Malta as an island that was

transformed into a commercial centre after 1530. Its location, close to the Sicilian straits, a central crossing point for travelling across the Mediterranean, made it a key theatre for international influence. During the Italian Wars, whilst also witnessing constant Ottoman-Habsburg competition, – Malta was forced to shed its medieval skin, as these early modern powers transformed its society. Its location made it an ideal base for the Order of the Knights of St John, where the Hospitallers could both attack the Ottomans and other Muslim powers that threatened the sea, and provide a line of defence. Yet, as Abela makes clear, the very same group that the Knights fought against was also vital to Malta's commercial network. Malta was a key trading post with Muslims, as well as with both Jews and Christians.

This book, therefore, largely avoids the traditional military-dominant focus of Maltese history attributed to the prominence of the Knights of St John, and instead provides an account of socio-economic development, a topic that has not hitherto been addressed in such rich depth. This is made possible due to the recent opening of Malta's Notarial Archives which together with the author's work at the National Library of Malta, facilitated the production of a text based on original research. The book is well presented and structured; many readers will be pleased with its accommodating size, which is not overburdensome. In addition to its introduction and conclusion, *Hospitaller Malta* consists of four chapters and a short foreword by Maria Fusaro. The book provides a fascinating exploration of sixteenth-century Maltese social and economic history. Included are chapters dedicated to the roles and opportunities available to women, while the final chapter highlights that the island, far from being socially and commercially isolated, in fact expanded its trading networks with both North Africa and the Ottoman-dominated Levant after 1530. Overall then, this book reveals that Malta needs to be acknowledged as having greater importance to early modern history than merely as having a strong military role in the Mediterranean. Malta was an open island that profited from its open trading networks. Abela shows that as research into Mediterranean history progresses, Malta's prominence within the field deserves to be featured more prominently.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

BENJAMIN W. D. REDDING

*Beyond indulgences. Luther's reform of late medieval piety, 1518–1520.* By Anna Marie Johnson. (Early Modern Studies Series, 21.) Pp. xii + 227. Kirksville, MI: Truman State University Press, 2017. \$50. 978 1 61248 212 5  
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In this revised dissertation, written under the direction of Scott Hendrix at Princeton Theological Seminary, Anna Marie Johnson seeks to address an important problem in the interpretation of the early Luther. Johnson argues that until very recently scholars have largely ignored Luther's pastoral and practical works as they have examined crucial years of his theological development, 1518–20. Luther the academic theologian and controversialist has received a great deal of attention, but not Luther the 'practical theologian', whose primary mission was 'to foster authentic faith' (p. 3). Most treatments of the early Luther focus on his conflicts with the papacy, not on his work as a pastor. Yet we know that he published many more pastoral writings than controversial works and that the public