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Sommario/riassunto	For half a millennium it has been customary for many historians to refer to the period between the fall of Rome and the end of the fifteenth century as 'medieval', a tradition which hardened into a professional orthodoxy during the nineteenth century. In the late twentieth century, it also seemed convenient to many to describe the first half of a steadily lengthening modern period as 'early modern', which also hardened into an orthodoxy among English-speakers, at least, by the 1980's. Both ter...