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Preface: Living, Creating, Storytelling and Writing in the Middle Ages

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Narratives and histories of the Middle Ages comprise myth and imagination, indicating a rich spectrum of vivid and lucid senses in various narrative forms. Medieval stories insinuate narrative frames, motifs and allegorical boundaries to incorporate quests behind surviving or lost manuscripts, which invites the modern reader to revisit and reconsider medieval issues, notions and habits. Any scholarly attempt into the mysterious and somewhat enigmatic Middle Ages signposts an act of discovery and deviation, construction and deconstruction in a way that concedes the challenges for ultimate comprehension. That is, on the one hand, due to the “immeasurable remoteness of the distant medieval mirror,” in Umberto Eco’s terms, and on the other hand, due to its potential to explore the contemporary reception of the age. Whether orally transmitted or protected in the surviving manuscripts, Medieval stories highlight the crucial role of the storyteller and audience, underestimating the performative aspect of storytelling, which paves the way for the circulation of the stories throughout the ages and accounts for ongoing interest in the medieval world. Although the era is accepted to end with the beginning of the Renaissance, it was the Middle Ages when this rebirth was triggered by the same period itself. Leading medieval thinkers, writers and artists produced copious peerless works on literary, historical and artistic grounds, which are still the source of inspiration for scholars worldwide.

The present volume foreground a broad profile of the entire medieval world. The authors highlight, discuss and analyse the issues of living, creating and writing in the Middle Ages in many respects. Moreover, they problematise the mysterious epoch through a comparative dialogue on the fringes of transcultural conversation. The articles explore medieval narratives and habits and investigate temporal, thematic and spatial boundaries. As the corporeal, social,

temporal, spatial and political restrictions punctuated with elements of myths and imagination, research presented in this volume acknowledges reflection on the contemporary critical notions and narrative analysis.

Lastly, the issue indicates a thorough and industrious collaboration between distinguished colleagues from a variety of perspectives to foreground new critical issues and raise fresh questions about the Middle Ages. In support of this remit, the issue has invited research engaging with broader cultural contexts at the time and analysis of particular texts from a contemporary perspective. Some of our editors also appear as an author, ensuring no involvement in the peer review process (having a recusal process in place) and that they are carefully excluded from the editorial decision-making.