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Editor's Preface

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

CAROL SYMES

THE MEDIEVAL GLOBE grew out of a conference hosted by the Program in Medieval Studies at the University of Illinois, in April of 2012: "The Medieval Globe: Communication, Connectivity, Exchange." The articles in this issue are products of that meeting and, like the papers from which they grew, represent significant contributions to the study of a medieval world whose interconnected regions, peoples, and cultures we are only just beginning to understand. They also exemplify the collegiality, generosity, and critical rigor embodied by the people who made that conference an extraordinary experience.¹ Indeed, the opening dialogue on periodization, by Kathleen Davis and Michael Puett, captures the essence of the lively discussions that followed all the individual conference presentations. In it, the authors help to frame one of *TMG*'s core missions by examining two historiographical/imperial discourses in which the construct of "the medieval" has played a crucial role. The articles that follow this dialogue appear in more conventional scholarly formats, but they display a similar commitment to asking big questions, modeling portable methodologies, and looking at specific topics and problems from new angles. I hope they will inspire many readers and future contributors.

Carol Symes (symes@illinois.edu) is the founding executive editor of *The Medieval Globe*. She is the Lynn M. Martin Professorial Scholar at the University of Illinois, where she is an associate professor of history with joint appointments in medieval studies, global studies, and theatre. Her own research focuses on the history of communication technologies, the social and cultural history of western Europe from c. 1000 to 1300, and the abiding influence of medievalism in the modern world.

I In addition to the scholars whose work appears in the present issue, this conference was enriched by the contributions of Jonathan Conant, Margot Fassler, Geraldine Heng, Linda Komaroff, Eleanora Stoppino, and Nicolás Wey Gómez. Perennial thanks are due to my co-organizers, Elizabeth Oyler, D. Fairchild Ruggles, and Nora Stoppino, and (as ever) to Charles D. Wright, then Director of the Program in Medieval Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.