

# Leeds Medieval Studies

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Editorial note: Introducing *Leeds Medieval Studies*

Catherine Batt, Alaric Hall, and Alan V. Murray

Corresponding email: [lms@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:lms@leeds.ac.uk)

ORCID iDs:

Batt: 0000-0001-9179-1474

Hall: 0000-0002-1479-4441

Murray: 0000-0003-1641-0891

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## Editorial note: Introducing *Leeds Medieval Studies*

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### Introduction

*Leeds Medieval Studies* is a free-access journal, published in print and online, and welcomes submissions reflecting the full intellectual range of the interdisciplinary Institute for Medieval Studies at the University of Leeds, including history, art, literature, and language in the period circa 500–1500 CE, and their reflexes in later medievalism.

*Leeds Medieval Studies* is the successor to and continuation of two journals: *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages* (founded 1932, ISSN 0075-8566) and *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research* (founded 1995, ISSN 1361-4460). *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages* began as an annual philological journal edited by Bruce Dickins, Alan S. C. Ross and Richard M. Wilson, all newly appointed to the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Leeds. They produced six issues before the outbreak of war in 1939, but publication was then suspended. Publication was resumed by Arthur C. Cawley and Harold Orton in 1952 with numbers 7 and 8 appearing as a combined volume, but this continuation did not take off. Yet in 1967, under the editorship of Cawley and Robin C. Alston, regular annual publication did resume, in a new series under the shortened title *Leeds Studies in English*. Meanwhile, the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* was begun in 1995 by Alan V. Murray, then assistant editor of the *International Medieval Bibliography*. Originally a means to keep in touch with the *Bibliography*'s widely dispersed contributors, facilitate the circulation of news among medievalists, and survey new research, the publication soon evolved also to publish peer-reviewed research articles.

The next volume of *Leeds Medieval Studies* will include a history of *Leeds Studies in English*, affording an extensive archaeology of the intellectual agendas of the new journal, reflection on which has informed the thoughts we offer here. The focus of this editorial, however, is on the present and future of *Leeds Medieval Studies*. As the educationalist Roy Lowe once commented,

in one important respect editors of a journal [...] find themselves in much the same position as leading politicians or, as I used to reflect, as heads of university departments of education. They may well have a policy, an idea of the kinds of agenda they wish to pursue. But in reality almost all of their time is spent responding to events; in our case, responding to whatever may be submitted and at the mercy of the whims of potential authors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roy Lowe, 'The Changing Role of the Academic Journal: The Coverage of Higher Education in *History of*

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*Leeds Medieval Studies* will not escape this fate; its future shape is in your hands as well as ours. This first volume strongly reflects the profile of submissions inherited from *Leeds Studies in English*, but we are committed to developing a wider embrace for the journal.

## Scope

We are particularly keen to advertise our openness to six kinds of contributions which readers might not assume that we would welcome. These reflect, on the one hand, the strengths of *Leeds Medieval Studies*'s parent journals and, on the other, recent developments in Medieval Studies: editions and translations, research driven by critical theory and/or on medievalism, surveys of scholarship, introductions to new resources and *instruments de travail*, guest-edited sections or volumes, and articles ranging beyond Medieval Studies' traditional European sphere.

### Editions and translations

Looking back on *Leeds Studies in English*, it is clear that the publications that have best stood the test of time are often the ones that have given researchers new access to overlooked primary texts. Journals seldom carry editions and translations, an aversion that perhaps reflects the fact that many have quite narrow parameters for article-lengths (themselves reflecting publishers' enthusiasm for predictable volume-lengths). Using print-on-demand technology for producing hard copies, *Leeds Medieval Studies* has no tight constraints on the length of individual articles or volumes, and we are excited to continue our long-standing tradition of making primary sources accessible. In the present volume, Charles Roe offers the *editio princeps* of a thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman treatise on the Mass. Meanwhile, Alan V. Murray affirms our willingness to support editions and translations aimed primarily at students, with a facing-text, glossed edition and translation of Konrad von Würzburg's *Heinrich von Kempten*.

### Medievalism and critical theory

Possibly the most striking addition to the stable of Anglophone Medieval Studies journals in recent years is *PostMedieval*, a largely closed-access Palgrave Springer publication begun in 2010. *PostMedieval* has provided a dedicated forum for theoretically orientated approaches to Medieval Studies and for the study of medievalism. Though work of this kind was never unwelcome in *Leeds Studies in English* or the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, both journals were rooted in empirical traditions of philology and history, and have not tended to attract submissions which put theory or medievalism at the centre. Yet investigation of and reflection on medievalism, along with the associated critical reflection on how we construct the past, has become an integral part of Medieval Studies, so falls naturally within the remit of *Leeds Medieval Studies*. Our investigation of and reflection on the century or so of medievalism represented by the *Leeds Studies in English* archive in the next volume of *Leeds Medieval Studies* constitutes one witness to our commitment to hosting investigations in this area.

### Surveys of scholarship

*Leeds Studies in English* and the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* have long published book reviews and review-articles, and continue to do so. In addition, however, as a journal arising from the *International Medieval Bibliography*, the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* has also specialised in articles surveying the state of the art in particular fields. *Leeds Medieval Studies* remains open to such contributions. In the last couple of decades, the stable of *Compass* journals published by Wiley has put the survey-article on the map (albeit, by default, behind paywalls) and emphasised its value. We are pleased to sustain our long-standing commitment to this valuable form.

### New resources and *instruments de travail*

Another commitment of the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* has been to report not only on new research but on new resources for research. As the digital revolution continues, such resources are proliferating, but discussion and documentation of their capabilities and limitations are often relegated to an online grey literature. We are open to continuing the *Bulletin* tradition of circulating news and views on resources that have the potential to be foundational to Medieval Studies research.

### Guest-edited sections or volumes

The *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, *Leeds Studies in English*, and the associated book-series Leeds Texts and Monographs have long collaborated with colleagues around the world to publish thematic collections of articles — including collections of scholarly importance that would not attract commercial book-publishers. Continuing this tradition, *Leeds Medieval Studies* invites expressions of interest from colleagues who would like to guest-edit a collection of articles, whether as a dossier within our regular annual volumes, or constituting a volume.

### The Abrahamic world — and beyond?

Covering the 1998 International Medieval Congress, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* labelled the rise of Medieval Studies programmes a ‘Renaissance of the Middle Ages’.<sup>2</sup> That ‘renaissance’ saw the first shoots of the field’s systemic response to the postcolonial turn set in train by Edward Said’s 1978 monograph *Orientalism* (particularly, in English Studies, Allen J. Frantzen’s seminal study *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition*).<sup>3</sup> Today, those shoots are yielding a harvest of fractious reassessments of the Eurocentrism of Medieval Studies, and the area is beginning systemically to build on a deep but often overlooked heritage of research and teaching that examines the period 500–1500 CE more widely in the world. At the end of the 1990s, the *International Medieval Bibliography*

<sup>2</sup> ‘Renaissance of the Middle Ages’, *Times Higher Education Supplement* (10 July 1998).

<sup>3</sup> (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990). It is a sign of our febrile moment that one feels obliged to pair this observation with recognition that Frantzen went on bitterly to disappoint the people whom his postcolonial and queer-inflected readings most inspired by publishing ostentatiously misogynistic sentiments in his old age: see for example Jennifer C. Edwards, ‘#Femfog and Fencing: The Risks for Academic Feminism in Public and Online’, *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality*, 53 (2017), 45–72 (pp. 50–59) and Eileen Joy, *CFP: Defenestrating Frantzen: A Festschrift* ([no place]: punctum, 2020).

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expanded its scope from ‘the whole of the continent of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals’ (along with European explorations and military campaigns further afield): it now included ‘material on North Africa, Iraq, Persia and the Arabian Peninsula for the entire chronological range, and dealing with the entire range of Islamic, Jewish and eastern Christian cultures and history’.<sup>4</sup> *Leeds Medieval Studies* aspires to at least the same scope. Likewise, while retaining its traditional commitments to teaching the Latin West, the Institute for Medieval Studies has greater strengths in Byzantine and Islamic history now than at any point in its past, and by drawing on master’s level provision in Leeds’s School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, the Institute is now able to offer teaching of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The International Medieval Congress has been proud to liaise with scholars across the globe to extend its range further again, hosting significant and wide-ranging discussions of Africa, East Asia, and the New World.

Accordingly, we welcome research that challenges the borders of a still Eurocentric field. Those borders are most obviously geographical but may also be chronological: both manuscript and oral cultures, for example, can at times helpfully be understood as part of what, in the terminology of Medieval Studies, we might think of as a ‘long Middle Ages’, despite falling outside the ‘medieval’ millennium.

In these aspirations, *Leeds Medieval Studies* perhaps most closely parallels two free-access journals founded in 2015: *Medieval Worlds*, based in the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and *Interfaces: A Journal of Medieval European Literature*, associated with Medieval Studies institutions at the Universities of Milan, Southern Denmark, and York. *Leeds Studies in English* has bequeathed the present volume an Anglophone bias, and since Medieval Studies in Britain has an inbuilt tendency to focus disproportionately on the Anglophone medieval world, we are at risk of giving the impression that we think that this is where the centre of gravity of the new journal too should lie. On the contrary, we recognise that it is our job as editors to work to broaden the scope of the journal, and we invite you to take up this challenge in the work you submit.

## Languages

While the main language of *Leeds Medieval Studies* is English, we are keen to consider submissions in other languages. For the *International Medieval Bibliography*, the use of English has always been firmly as a *lingua franca*: by abstracting in English research published in many languages, the *Bibliography* serves to facilitate rather than inhibit the thriving culture of scholarly multilingualism in Medieval Studies. We owe the multilingual scope of the *Bibliography* not only to the internationalism of the editorial team in Leeds, but also to a worldwide network of contributors, recruited from academics, librarians, and archivists. *Leeds Medieval Studies* too aspires to promote this multilingual culture.

For practical reasons, we will consider the viability of contributions in languages other than English on a case-by-case basis. Factors include the ability of the editorial team to ensure expert peer-review and suitable copy-editing (we are currently particularly well placed to support French, German, and the Scandinavian languages, but are happy to consider others). We will also consider the likely audience for the contribution. For example, an article in a

<sup>4</sup> Alan V. Murray, ‘Thirty-Five Years of the International Medieval Bibliography (1967–2002)’, *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 7 (2001), 1–9 (p. 6).

language that is not widely spoken might nonetheless have a substantial audience if its focus is literature in a medieval variety of that same language or the history of the speakers of that language. Likewise, a survey of Anglophone research which makes that research more accessible to speakers of another language may have a different value from the same survey written in English. We encourage prospective contributors to contact the editors to discuss the suitability of *Leeds Medieval Studies* as a forum for your work.

## Technology, accessibility, and design

*Leeds Medieval Studies* aims to maximise its accessibility to readers both in the sense of embracing free-access publication (in which neither the author nor the reader pays), and in the sense of catering to the needs of a diverse range of readers. The journal is available online in both PDF format, replicating the version of record, the journal's hard copy incarnation. But it is also published in HTML formats that provide maximum flexibility to readers with specific needs. We publish articles online in these formats on a rolling basis, making them available to readers as swiftly as possible. But the demand for print remains — not least because this has its own advantages for accessibility — and the journal is published in an affordable print format on an annual basis, via our long-standing partners, Abramis Academic.<sup>5</sup>

Like most humanities publishing, the work of *Leeds Medieval Studies* relies on academic editors, reviewers, and contributors offering their labour without direct remuneration. We are also supported by the University of Leeds, which enables our web-presence — not least our colleagues in IT, who, faced with the challenge of coining our Digital Object Identifier, took the prefix 10.57686 assigned by DataCite and suffixed it with the figure 256204 because that is the sum of the decimal code points for a castle emoji (🏰 127984) and a scroll emoji (📜 128220). We also record our gratitude to Brett Greatley-Hirsch for the design concept of our logo and to Florence Scott for realising it. We are conscious that we are only one of a great many institutions that lay claim to the symbol of the owl; in our case, it evokes the city in which we are based, the crest of whose coat of arms includes, 'on a wreath or and azure, an owl proper', and as supporters 'an owl proper ducally crowned or'.

The work of our editorial assistant Lisa Trischler — whose tasks include rising to whatever typographical challenges the internationalist field of Medieval Studies may throw at her — is supported by the income from hard-copy journal sales, both inherited from *Leeds Studies in English* and from sales of *Leeds Medieval Studies*. If you like what you read here, we encourage you to subscribe.

<sup>5</sup> <http://abramis.co.uk>.