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Introduction

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Introduction

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This issue marks another new step in the history of *The Year's Work in Medievalism*. We welcome guest co-editor Dr. Gale Sigal and our two new associate editors, Dr. Shiloh Carroll and Dr. Renée Ward, as we continue to settle into our new electronic platform, Google Sites, which makes the journal fully independent of any individual academic institution and fully openly accessible to all readers world-wide. We hope to continue to expand our readership and encourage scholars to offer contributions, and we hope you will also consider participating in our annual conference. Last year's (2014) Richard Utz hosted at The Georgia Institute of Technology, and Lauryn Mayer from Washington and Jefferson College will be hosting the 2015 conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While by no means all of our essays begin as presentations at our conferences, those venues provide excellent opportunities for scholars new and experienced to share their ideas and receive feedback toward preparing their essays for publication. *Year's Work* editors remain especially interested in works in the 3000-5000 word range—please feel welcome to explore the innovative as well as the traditional, speculative as well as scholarly—while authors may want to direct longer work to Karl Fugelso of Towson University for *Studies in Medievalism*.

This volume includes a suite of five essays on Shakespeare's medievalism (with a special emphasis on teaching applications) derived from conference sessions sponsored by the Medieval Association of the Midwest at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University—our thanks to both for providing the venue for the presenters. Glenn Steinberg's essay encourages historically informed understanding of Shakespeare's sources and contexts. Bill Hodapp explores the performance history and conditions of the history plays. Bonnie Erwin shows ways to assist undergraduate readers in gaining empathy with early works. Leigh Smith shows the value of one's knowing Saxo Grammaticus and challenging prevailing readings of *Hamlet*. Brandon Alakas argues for the importance of considering Shakespeare's relationship with monasticism, especially in the study of *Measure for Measure*.

We've also included three other essays that have come to *YW* through the more typical channels. As always we're proud to have an art history contribution from Karl Fugelso, this one on Cecco Bonanotte's painted illustrations of Dante's *Commedia*. We're equally glad to have Heta Aali's international contribution on the later reception of Merovingian queens Brunhilde and Fredegonde and Sandra Gorgievski's study of recurring icons in Arthurian manuscripts and films. We hope to continue to encourage diverse submissions, either as groups of essays or individual submissions; we want *YW* to represent the great variety and range of medievalism studies going on around the world. May the field grow and gain strength, live long and prosper.