2019 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Medieval Encounters. Since its beginning in 1995, it has published over sixty issues (distributed across twenty-five numbered annual volumes) totaling over ten thousand pages. This has included approximately 370 individual research articles and 165 book reviews and review articles. Among its numbers have appeared some two-dozen special thematic issues on topics ranging from astrolabes, to Fatimid-dhimmi relations, to mendicant orders and mercantilism, to comparative views on historical transformations, among various others. A number of articles have also included critical textual editions of Latin, Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and Hebrew sources. Apart from a few lean years, the journal has continued to grow in size, publishing between 300–400 pages annually for the first five years, and now averaging 500 annually over the last five, with the longest annual volume appearing in 2018 (679 pages) and the largest single thematic issue (nearly 500 pages) appearing in 2017.

The growth of Medieval Encounters has mirrored that of the broader trends in the social sciences and humanities. The last quarter-century has seen changes big and small in the fields of Medieval Studies, history, and language study, including changes both in the attitude of researchers and students as well as in the priorities encouraged at the institutional level of universities, departments, and funding bodies. One of the most significant developments has been the emergence of the distinct field of “Mediterranean studies” outside of its traditional home in Classical Studies. Although a unique role for
the Mediterranean as a field of influence in European history was proposed by Henri Pirenne in his 1937 study *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, Mediterranean studies was properly established by the path-finding book of Ferdinand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, which appeared in 1949 and was quickly translated into Spanish and Italian. In Braudel’s formulation, the Mediterranean emerged as a sphere of cultural activity and social and economic history that encompassed many aspects of premodern cultural interaction, including religious contact and conflict. Braudel’s innovative approach has served as the basis for many studies, most notably Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea* in 2000, which has been followed by an explosion of scholarship dedicated to Mediterranean Studies in the last two decades. When viewed as part of a larger history of the postmodernist turn toward the margin as a locus of signification, as well as part of the “cultural turn” in the social sciences and humanities more broadly, the rise of Mediterranean studies reflects the attempt to find a historically grounded model of intercultural contact that does not require the existence of post-medieval national states, cultures, territories, or languages. As an open, fluid, and multifaceted arena of interaction, the Mediterranean lacks a certain center and so demands a dynamic analytical model premised on movement and exchange rather than a static one assuming fixed identity and unidirectional influence. (For an exploration of such ideas, see Catlos/Novikoff et al. in our most recent issue, 24.5–6).

Another influence of Braudel’s scholarship was to encourage the rise of world-systems theory through the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and others, which itself gave way to new trends exploring a global perspective on medieval history. Two prominent examples include Samir Amin’s *L’Eurocentrisme*, published in 1988, and Janet Abu-Lughod’s *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350*, published in 1991. Research on long-distance trade, cultural and ethnic diversity, contact and migration across pre-modern political divisions, and transmission of intellectual and cultural goods between south, east, and central Asia, the Islamic Middle East, north and east Africa, the Byzantine eastern Mediterranean, and Latinate western Europe, has also given rise to new theorizations of race, ethnicity, and other categories of identification in a premodern context. Building on a postcolonial understanding that decenters Europe as the de facto point of reference in world history and
geography, a global approach to the Middle Ages seeks to redefine the medieval as a period of complex economic and cultural growth in many regions rather than as the period of the emergence of European cultural and economic dominance.

In 1998, Gabrielle Spiegel and Paul Freedman also noted the trend in Medieval Studies—evident in Europe and in North America but with even more prominence in the latter—consisting of a return to a characterization of the premodern period as “foreign” and distant rather than familiar and proximate. Rather than seeing the medieval as a “seed-bed” of modern ideas and institutions, medievalists in the 1980s and 1990s tended more to stress the alterity of the Middle Ages as an unfamiliar world defined by the grotesque, the monstrous, and the strange. Part of this trend, they explained, derived from a broader interest in identifying the relevance of Medieval Studies in the scope of global history. The medieval, in this view, is not simply a European matter, but is also a period in which European civilization begins to participate more directly in a world system of cultures. The growth of Medieval Studies in the wake of the poststructuralist insights of the 1960s and 1970s—characterized by the rise of gender studies, a turn away from universalist history toward micro-history and “cultural studies,” and the rise of “discourse” studies in the wake of the linguistic turn—reflects a cumulative trend that seeks to position Europe within a broader world history of global cultural interaction.

The postmodernist turn at the heart of this stress on alterity was manifest in at least three prominent shifts in medievalist research: first, it included a broadening of the traditional canon of literatures to include works by more women, ethnic “minorities,” and non-Europeans, as well as more types of writing that did not fit the traditional category of belletristic literature, such as chronicles, archival documents, and polemical and philosophical treatises. Secondly, it also was defined by a keener interest in the perceived margins of medieval societies, including a focus on private life, domesticity,

poverty, slavery, and other forms of quotidian experience that fell outside of the historical record. Third, it encouraged participation in critical discussions about categories and hierarchies of power and exclusion, including studies of race and racism, postcolonial approaches to political and cultural history, and new directions in the history of sexuality and gender. A key element of the turn to alterity has also been an increased attention to non-Christian religious communities both within and beyond the borders of Latinate western Europe. This has led to a sharper focus on Europe's perceived marginalities and minorities and has included, in medieval historiography and literary studies, a treatment of Jewish and Muslim history as an essential part of, rather than a supplemental annex to, the history of Latin Christianity. To stress the “strangeness” of the Middle Ages has been to see it as engaging, often violently and even anxiously, with the foreign and the unknown at the margins of its own categories of knowledge.

*Medieval Encounters* has been at the vanguard of these developments over the last few decades, and a survey of its output shows significant correspondences with innovative trends in the discipline. Dominant topics include: Christian-Jewish relations (see Cohen in issue 4.1, Gow in 2.3, Stone in 5.3, Barzilay in 22.5), Christian-Muslim relations (Mann in 8.1, Tolan in 8.2–3, George-Tvrtković in 22.4), and Jewish-Muslim relations (Husain in 8.1) as expressed in polemics, disputations, and dialogues (Resnick in 2.3, Martin in 8.2–3, Hames in 15.2–4, Sadik, Lasker, and Wilke in 22.1–3, Palmén in 22.5, Jaffe-Berg in 24.5–6); the rise of Mendicant orders and the transformation of Western monastic structures (Vose in 18.2–3); minorities in ecclesiastical and royal legal policies (Burns in 6.1–3, Irish in 19.5, Boloix-Gallardo in 20.4–5); non-Christians and the Spanish Inquisition (Hasenfeld in 7.1, Berco in 8.2–3, Surtz in 12.3, Green-Mercado in 19.1–2); Jewish-Christian relations in specific regions such as Iberia (Viera in 5.2, McMichael in 12.2, Yisraeli in 24.1–3), France (Moore in 3.1, Kroemer 18.1, Resnick in 24.5–6), England (Levy in 7.2–3), and Germany (Baumgarten in 18.1); Muslim societies and Muslim-Christian relations in specific regions such as Iberia and the western Mediterranean, including minority categories such as mudéjares and moriscos (Hasenfeld in 7.1, Berco in 8.2–3, Wiegers and Narváez Córdova in 12.3, Alvarez in 13.3, Green-Mercado 19.1–2, Colominas Aparicio in 24.5–6); parallel relations in Sicily and Italy (Zeitler in 2.2, Newby in 3.2, Mallette in 9.1), and in the eastern
Mediterranean (Samir, O’Mahony, and Dadayan in 2.3, Griffith in 3.3, Villagomez in 4.3, Anderson in 15.1); parallel studies of “medieval” cultures outside of western Europe and the Mediterranean, such as in the far north (Wicker in 17.1–2, Bagge in 10.1–3, Lindkvist in 10.1–3, Cole in 20.3), Ethiopia (O’Mahony in 2.2, Knobler in 19.4, Weber in 21.2–3), Central Asia (Knobler in 7.1, Holod/Rassamakin and Michailidis in 18.4–5), India (Pollock in 10.1–3, Shefer-Mossensohn/Hershkovitz in 19.3, Sarma in 23.1–5), China (Jakov Smith and Arnason in 10.1–3, Purtle in 17.1–2) and Japan (Adolphson 10.1–3).

Iberia, which has for over a century been a region of particular relevance in the discussion of cultural exchange, religious “tolerance,” and interreligious violence, has been the object of numerous theoretical studies assessing the particular nature of Iberian multi-confessionalism and the meaning of historiographical theories of “cohabitation” (convivencia) (Novikoff in 11.1–2). Such discussion forms part of a larger theoretical debate over Orientalism in Medieval Studies (Clark, Pick, and Odell in 5.3).

Interest in religious movements deemed “heretical,” such as the Cathars in northern Italy and southern France, or Nestorian and Monophysite Christianity in the Middle East (Mugler 21.1, Rouxpetel in 21.2–3) has driven research on the forces of social exclusion and the evolution of conceptual distinctions between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Numerous studies have also included discussion of minority groups within religious traditions, such as, in the Christian tradition, the Copts (Den Heijer in 2.1, Swanson in 2.3 and 21.4–5, Iskander in 4.3, Zaborowski in 14.1, Lev, Den Heijer, and Shenoda in 21.4–5) or the Armenians (Maranci in 17.1–2, Osipian in 20.1, Bais, La Porta, and Bueno in 21.2–3), the Qaraites in the Jewish sphere (Astren in 1.1), or Shi’ites in the Islamic world (Bertaina in 19.4), as well as contact with other ethnic groups such as the Mongols (Biran in 10.1–3, Shmieder in 12.2, Knobler in 19.4).

Such trends and images of representation have been chronicled in architecture (Harris in 3.2, Mongollon Cano-Cortes, Gorras Gualis, and Ruiz Souza in 12.3, Crites in 15.2–4, Georgopoulou and Redford in 18.4–5) and the visual arts (Lipton in 1.3, Mathews in 5.2, Hilsdale in 5.3, Harris in 8.2–3, Robinson/Pinet et al in 14.2–3, Shalev-Eyni in 16.1, Pereda in 16.2–4 and 24.1–3, Kogman-Appel and

Apart from polemical and religious questions, studies documenting multilingualism (Gallego in 9.1) and inter-confessional contact and collaboration have focused on intellectual and scientific fields as well, including studies of translation movements involving Greco-Arabic (Goodman in 1.3), Arabo-Hebrew (Zonta in 1.3, Stroumsa in 4.1, Glasner in 4.2, Lev/Chipman in 13.2, Pearce in 19.1–2), Arabo-Latinate (Wilcox and Riddle in 1.1, Weber and Buijs in 8.2–3) and Hebrew-Latin encounters (Ziegler in 3.1, Marvin in 24.5–6), as well as Hebrew, Arabic, and Latin medical texts (G. Bos in 1.2, Ferre/Martínez Delgado 21.1, Cohen-Hanegbi in 22.1–3, Freudenthal in 24.1–3). Studies have also explored scriptural translations (Martínez-Gásquez in 21.1, Szpiech in 22.1–3, Starczewska in 24.1–3), calendars and timekeeping (Nothaft/Isserles in 20.1, Nothaft and Stern in 22.1–3), and astronomical texts (Mead in 5.3, Goldstein in 15.2–4, Burnett/Ackerman/Rodríguez-Arribas et al. in 23.1–5). Transmission between literary traditions through translation or imitation has also been approached from a variety of angles, including Hebrew-Arabic relations (Tobi and Einbinder in 1.2), comparative mysticism (Fenton in 1.2, McGaha in 3.1, Rosenthal in 5.3, Barger on in 9.1, Boon and Hames in 12.2, Robinson and López-Baralt
in 12.3), and religious and political ritual (Ward, Tottoli, Meri, De la Puente, and Goldman in 5.1, Meri in 5.3, Soussen-Max in 13.2, Cardoso in 24.4).

As this partial survey makes clear, *Medieval Encounters* has, over the last two-and-a-half decades, provided a vibrant forum for global, multi-confessional, and multilingual approaches to the cultural and social history of the Middle Ages and has actively supported research on contact and conflict between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It has shared the field with other academic journals such as *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* (founded in 1988 and known until 2014 as *Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean*), *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (founded in 2005), *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (founded 1990), *Mediterranean Studies* (founded in 1989), and most recently, the *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* (founded in 2014, and which will be, as of 2019, a book series platform rather than a journal). Among its peers, however, no other journal has maintained the broad focus of *Medieval Encounters* on inter-cultural contact not limited by geography, genre, or discipline. The mission of the journal since its inception has been to promote discussion and dialogue across cultural, linguistic and disciplinary boundaries on the interactions of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures during the period from the fourth through to the sixteenth century C.E. It thus includes studies on contact within the Mediterranean sphere but is not limited to that region. In addition to its broad geographical focus, *Medieval Encounters* is also unique in its wide-ranging survey of disciplinary approaches and scholarly methodologies. It takes an expansive approach to period as well, covering not only the medieval period in a wide sense, but also spanning back to late antiquity and forward through the sixteenth century. This broad, multi-disciplinary and multi-period approach has made *Medieval Encounters* a point of common reference for researchers from a wide variety of disciplines and academic departments.

Over its twenty-five years, the journal has also evolved along with changes in the technology and distribution of reading and research. At its founding in 1995, the Internet was not yet a reliable or widely distributed medium for scholarly reading and research. Over the course of the subsequent decade, as bibliographic information began to appear online in library search databases, the means by
which scholars began to search for sources and conduct research started to change. Upon the emergence, in the mid-1990s, of journal repositories such as JSTOR and Project MUSE, access to journal articles slowly began to shift online. This trend accelerated in the early 2000s and was driven forward by the founding of Google Books (then called Google Print) in 2004 and its full text search capabilities. Now all of Brill's content, including all issues of Medieval Encounters, is available online. This shift to digital access has naturally changed the subscription base of most scholarly journals, and Medieval Encounters is no exception. While the journal still does appear in print form as well as online, the majority of its subscription base and usage is digital. As this shift has also coincided with radical advances in browsing algorithms and searchability, the content of the journal is more accessible and more widely disseminated than ever before. Brill has, moreover, through its Brill Open program, developed a path for purchasing open access rights for its content, and Medieval Encounters now offers more open access content than any of Brill's Medieval Studies journals.

Over its twenty-five years, Medieval Encounters has been led by seven different editors. Founding editor Gordon Newby (Emory University) served as chief editor for four years, from the first issue in 1995 through volume 4 in 1998. Larry J. Simon (Western Michigan University) took over with volume 5 (1999), continuing as editor through the first issue of volume nine (2003). After a transitional two-year period in which the journal, contracting operations, was edited by a general staff of Brill editors, a new period of growth began in mid-2005. This included a large, new editorial board as well as a new team of alternating co-editors from the Center for Medieval Studies at the University of Minnesota (Susan J. Noakes, Kathryn L. Reyerson, and Barbara F. Weissberger), who took the helm for three years, through volume 13 (2007). The journal returned to sole editorship in 2008 when Cynthia Robinson (Cornell University) took over, leading the journal through issue 19.3. Since mid-2013, the journal has been edited by Ryan Szpiech (University of Michigan). Book review editors have included Ross Brann (Cornell University, 1995–1999), Thomas E. Burman (University of Tennessee-Knoxville, 1999–2002), Joëlle Rollo-Koster (University of Rhode Island, 2005–2007), Theresa M. Vann (The Hill Museum and Manuscript Library at St. John's University, 2005–2010), Anna-Marie Wolf (University of Portland, 2005–2007), Thomas Glick (Boston University, 2010–2018), Ana Echevarría (Universidad Nacional de
Educación a Distancia, Spain, 2011–2014), Gerard Wiegers (University of Amsterdam, 2014–present), and beginning in 2019, Uriel Simonsohn (University of Haifa).

With each editor, the general direction of the journal has shifted slightly, with a more textual-philosophical focus on Arabic material in the early years, a stronger Iberian focus during the years under the Minnesota Center for Medieval Studies, and a clear emphasis on art history under Cynthia Robinson's editorship. Recent years have seen more studies dedicated to religious interaction and polemical writing. This focus has been reflected in the rankings of the journal by the Scientific Journal Ranking service, Scimago, which has ranked the journal as a Q1 or Q2 source in Religious Studies in nine out of the last twelve years.

Over the past twenty-five years, *Medieval Encounters* has been a pioneer in cross-cultural and comparative approaches to Medieval Studies. It has continued to stand out among its peers for its conceptual scope that transcends linguistic and geographical boundaries and disciplinary divisions. Its growth has reflected the trends in the fields of history, literary studies, and cultural studies, and it has developed into a recognized source of top-tier research on questions of comparative religion, transcultural contact, and migration across the Mediterranean and beyond. As it celebrates its twenty-fifth year, the editors and contributors look forward to continuing to play an active role in research and discussion of intercultural and interreligious contact. In the current climate of expanding global economies and blurring linguistic and cultural boundaries, *Medieval Encounters* reflects the interests and questions that are most relevant to researchers today from all over the globe. At the same time, as the world witnesses a sobering resurgence of nationalism, political populism, and cultural nativism, the journal's mission to document and analyze the history of intercultural contact, conflict, and dialogue between Jews, Christians, and Muslims will continue to play a valuable—indeed, a vital—role for the next generation of scholars and students.