

Introduction

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In July 2006, the International Medieval Society—Paris held a symposium at the Ecole nationale des chartes on the theme of “Foreigners, Strangers, and Others.” Focusing particularly on France and Carolingian West Francia, the symposium provided a venue for a multi-disciplinary discussion of difference and identity formation by scholars from three continents, eight countries, and several different linguistic backgrounds. This collection contains a selection of chapters developed from the papers presented at that conference, as well as additional contributions solicited for this volume. The impetus for the symposium and the resulting volume was to revisit the now fundamental realization that medievalists’ traditional focus on the culture and history of elites neglected the experience of most medieval people, as well as that of minority groups and other excluded constituencies. Yet we also hoped that looking toward the periphery of medieval society would generate new ideas about the center and about the dynamics of inclusion, as well as exclusion. In the event, the resulting collection is about not just the existence of difference in medieval France, but about the variety of ways that difference could create solidarity and sympathy among groups, as well as disaffection and disgust.

In taking up problems of exclusion and difference, the chapters in this book participate in what has been called the “new medievalism.”¹ Focusing on topics ranging from minorities and outlaws to pilgrims and prostitutes, this field of research took shape as the result of several different intellectual currents in the last quarter of the twentieth century, including the rise of social history, the linguistic turn, and the growing importance of anthropological perspectives. Social history broadened the lens of enquiry to include constituencies, such as women, minorities, and the poor, that had previously been perceived as peripheral to traditional historiographical problems like state building.² Simultaneously, the rise of French postmodernism called into question basic assumptions about knowledge, canonicity, and power, thus encouraging scholars in many fields not only to look beyond traditional topics, but also to consider the ideological and

¹ The term seems to have been coined in Stephen G. Nichols, “The New Medievalism: Tradition and Discontinuity in Medieval Culture,” in Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols (eds), *The New Medievalism* (Baltimore, 1991), pp. 1–26.

² For the rise of American social history in relation to its European counterparts, see James A. Henrietta, “Social History as Lived and Written,” *American Historical Review*, 84 (1979): 1293–322. More recent perspectives can be found the *Journal of Social History*, 37/1 (2003) and 39/3 (2006), both devoted to historiographical problems.

linguistic power structures encoded within the sources.³ Both social history and postmodernism were partly driven by the development of feminist scholarship and helped, in turn, to illuminate problems of visibility and interpretation that beset studies of women and gender.⁴ A final parallel development was the “new cultural history,” which adopted methods and perspectives from anthropology, including both traditional functionalism and the post-structuralism associated with Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz.⁵

For medievalists, these developments created an impetus to “de-center” the Middle Ages and to focus on the experience and cultural production of those who had been omitted from narratives focused on kings, the nobility, and elite artistic canons.⁶ New topics, like sexuality and the body, the remembrance of the dead, and festivals and rituals, came to the fore. In France, the first generation of this new scholarship included Jacques Le Goff and Bronislaw Geremek (who studied in France), as well as Natalie Zemon Davis and Roger Ian Moore. Rejecting the royalist and institutional focus of medieval French history, they chose instead to write about outcasts, heretics, the transgressive, and the strange.⁷ As the scholarship has developed in France and elsewhere, interest has come to

³ See the debate “History and Post-Modernism” in *Past and Present* comprised of contributions by Lawrence Stone, 131 (1991): 217–18; Patrick Joyce and Catriona Kelly, 133 (1991): 204–13; and Lawrence Stone and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 135 (1992): 189–208, now collected with other relevant material in Keith Jenkins (ed.), *The Postmodern History Reader* (New York, 1997), pp. 242–73.

⁴ For the initial fit between gender in history and social history and its problems, see Joan W. Scott, “Women’s History: The Modern Period,” *Past and Present*, 101 (1983): 141–57, esp. 150–52. For feminist scholarship and postmodernism, see Kelly, “History and Post-modernism.” See also the recent retrospective analyses focused on Scott’s impact published in the *American Historical Review*, 113 (2008): 1344–429.

⁵ Bernard S. Cohn, “History and Anthropology: The State of Play,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22 (1980): 198–221; Marshall Sahlins, “Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History,” *Islands of History* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 32–72; and Lynn Hunt, “Introduction: History, Culture, and Text,” in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 1–22.

⁶ Paul Freedman and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies,” *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998): 677–704; Paul Freedman, “The Return of the Grotesque in Medieval Historiography,” in Carlos Barros (ed.), *Historia a debate: Medieval* (Santiago de Compostela, 1995), pp. 9–19; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages,” and Lee Patterson, “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies,” *Speculum*, 65 (1990): 59–86 and 87–108.

⁷ Bronislaw Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1987 [French edn 1976; Polish edn 1971]); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London, 1975); Jacques Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age: Temps, travail et culture en Occident: 18 essais* (Paris, 1977); Roger Ian Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent* (rev. edn, Oxford, 1985 [first edn, 1977]).

encompass not just the reconstruction of marginalized individuals or communities, but also the relationship between society's normative center and its marginalized periphery.⁸ The processes by which exclusion was effected—from violence to legal fiat to discursive technique—have also become increasingly important avenues of inquiry.⁹

To a great extent, this constellation of research interests and associated disciplinary explorations grew out of the experience of contemporary movements for social justice and political inclusion, as well as the remembrance of the Holocaust.¹⁰ In the United States, these were also developments related to the social reconfiguration of the American academy in the 1960s and 1970s, as the first generation of scholars from non-white, non-elite, and/or non-Christian backgrounds brought their own experiences to bear on medieval studies.¹¹ Yet while modern social and ethical concerns influence all of the chapters included here, and make overt appearances in some of them, all of the contributors demonstrate that the problems of belonging and exclusion were as central to the Middle Ages as they are to our own period of globalization and immigration. Although Latinity and Catholicity ostensibly united medieval Europe, beneath this veneer lay religious antagonism, ethnic conflict, and socio-economic struggle, as well as an intense localism that has all but disappeared from our well-connected world.

That difference (however constituted) mattered in Francia and medieval France, though, does not mean that it mattered in the same way that it does today. Much of the scholarly work to date has focused on difference as an oppositional quality that delineated group membership, creating conditions for the exclusion and oppression of those designated as outsiders. As Paul Freedman and Gabrielle Spiegel put it in an important review article,

⁸ See for example, the essays in Stephen J. Milner (ed.), *At the Margins: Minority Groups in Premodern Italy* (Minneapolis, 2005). For France, see William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia, 1989); Claude Gauvard, *“De grâce especial:” Crime, état, et société en France à la fin du Moyen Age*, 2 vols (Paris, 1991); and Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca, NY, 2002).

⁹ Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London, 1992); Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge, 1993); David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996); and Bob Scribner, “Wie wird man Außenseiter? Ein- und Ausgrenzung im frühneuzeitlichen Deutschland,” in Norbert Fischer and Marion Kobelt-Groch (eds), *Aussenseiter zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans-Jürgen Goertz zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 21–46.

¹⁰ See William Chester Jordan, “Why ‘Race’?” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31 (2001): 165–73. David Nirenberg argues that much of the work on medieval and early modern minorities assumes a “teleology leading, more or less explicitly, to the Holocaust” (*Communities of Violence*, pp. 4–5).

¹¹ See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 71, 78–9.

Unlike the attention devoted to the state or individuality, the distinction between a tolerant and an intolerant Middle Ages has survived and even flourished ... What has not survived is the optimistic belief in a progressive Middle Ages embodying pluralism, rationality, and self-knowledge. In its place is a renewed emphasis on a reiterated strangeness.¹²

The chapters in this volume join with some of the more recent scholarship in seeking to move beyond that paradigm by exploring how difference functioned within groups and individuals to shape heterogeneous identities that could encompass difference, as well as or instead of excluding it.¹³ Together, the sick and the healthy, the foreign and the native, and even the Jew and the Christian actively created mixed communities in which such differences were integral to communal identity, and this dynamic tension could also function within individuals possessing ties to various, seemingly contradictory, constituencies. As these chapters show, difference could produce social and psychological spaces in which charity, altruism, and even humor could meld society's varied parts into a universal whole.

These constructive uses of difference certainly did not obviate the possibility of exclusion and marginalization. Ethnic rivalry, religious deviance, and bodily ailments could all result in devastating social and psychological consequences. As William Chester Jordan's chapter discusses, it is also true that those on the medieval margins were rarely able to contest publicly the negative image that was imputed to them. Yet, like marginalized groups in contemporary society who have sometimes proudly embraced the somatic or social markers of their exclusion—a practice for which Jordan adopts the term “double negation”—some of medieval Europe's Christian *exclus* embraced their alienation, associating their outsider status with the ascetic sacrifice required for spiritual transcendence. Again, though, differences are as instructive as parallels: Those who espoused black power in the 1960s and 1970s did so largely so as to achieve tangible political goals that would eliminate their communities' suffering. Medieval practitioners of “double negation,” such as pilgrims, hermits, beggars, the sick and their caretakers,

¹² “Medievalisms Old and New,” p. 693.

¹³ For instance, David Malkiel finds that medieval Ashkenazic Jews “traversed the religious boundary with a nonchalance that bespeaks a high degree of social and cultural intimacy with their Christian neighbours” (“Jews and Apostates in Medieval Europe—Boundaries Real and Imagined,” *Past and Present*, 194 (2007): 3–34, quote at p. 33). See also, Cary J. Nederman, *Worlds of Difference: European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100–c. 1500* (University Park, 2000) and the work of Albrecht Classen, including: “Introduction: The Self, the Other, and Everything in Between: Xenological Phenomenology of the Middle Ages,” in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2002), pp. xi–lxxiii and “Toleranz im späten 13. Jahrhundert, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Jans von Wien und Ramon Llull,” *Mediaevistik: Internationale Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Mittelalterforschung*, 17 (2004): 25–55.

sometimes perceived the indefinite continuation of their individual suffering in this world as an avenue to glory in the next.

Indeed, the religious dimension is perhaps the most important dissimilarity between medieval and modern reactions to difference. It is true that religious persecution was one of the more repugnant realities of medieval Europe, but Christianity's impact on social relations was both subtler and more positive than the incidence of pogroms or the establishment of the Inquisition would suggest. The value placed on humility and suffering in a culture devoted to Christ crucified meant that some differences, such as poverty or disability, could be considered indicators of spiritual distinction, and Christianity itself was for most medieval Europeans a binding force that cut across ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic barriers. While Jews, Muslims, pagans, and heretics were debarred from this overarching community, the possibility of conversion meant that opportunities to incorporate a formerly excluded individual were always open. Christianity could as easily play an integrative role in medieval identity formation and communal solidarity as an exclusionary one.

The chapters in this collection address inclusion and exclusion from a variety of perspectives, ranging from ethnic and linguistic difference in Charlemagne's court, to lewd sculpture in Béarn, to prostitution and destitution in Paris. This panoply of subjects is held together partly by the authors' common effort to address the role of difference in social relations, but also by the simultaneously problematic and productive conceit "France." Because the new medievalism has been largely an Anglophone and particularly North American phenomenon, it has participated in the long-running American tendency to privilege France over other regions of continental Europe, though this predilection also reflects French scholars' role as the seminal figures in this field.¹⁴ But of course, in the Middle Ages, France—whose *civilisation* has been so often deployed in the cause of national solidarity over the past two centuries—was a geographically and culturally fractured collection of regions. In the earlier period, indeed, it does not make sense to talk about France at all, but rather about Franks and West Francia. And even centuries later, regions like Languedoc, Brittany, and Flanders retained cultural and linguistic differences even when they did not remain distinct political entities. For most of the Middle Ages, then, one cannot legitimately talk about French society, let alone the effects of exclusion from that society.

Yet, rather than circumventing the question of French identity or treating the French context as incidental, nearly all authors have applied themselves to this problem in some way. In the chapters that investigate such topics as the production of the "Gallic self" (as Peter Scott Brown puts it) or "what it meant to be a Frank" (to borrow from Nirmal Dass), the correspondence between identity and later

¹⁴ See discussion and bibliography in Freedman and Spiegel, "Medievalisms Old and New," pp. 685–6. For the disproportionate influence of postmodernism and the new cultural history on American and French scholars, see Joyce, "History and Post-Modernism," pp. 204–5.

political boundaries has a central place in the discussion. Perhaps ironically, those authors addressing the multi-ethnic Carolingian empire seem to be the most drawn to such treatments, while none of those writing about the twelfth through fourteenth centuries engage directly with the relationship between cultural and political identity. Yet, because there was significant development in the relationship between France as a political entity and the region's social and cultural identity, those focusing on the later period write with reference to a specifically French context: Mark O'Tool's blind beggars played a role in the development of the French royal cult with their fleur-de-lys badges; William Chester Jordan's Jewish would-be convert wrote verse in French according to *trouvère* conventions; and we know Keiko Nowacka's prostitutes especially well because they lived alongside the scholars and courtiers engaged in constructing France as a coherent polity.

We have elected to group the chapters in this volume thematically rather than by geographic or chronological affinity. There are certainly arguments for the latter methods, but it seemed preferential to highlight the commonalities among chapters that suggest larger questions with appeal to scholars broadly interested in exclusion and belonging, rather than to balkanize the collection into chronological or regional sub-specialties. We have therefore arranged the chapters roughly according to how they approach the work that difference performed in society, moving from the most psychologically negative and alienating examples of exclusion, to instances in which marginalization was tempered with acceptance, sanctity, or even humor. In both the earlier and the later Middle Ages, difference could function in a multitude of ways, marking some people as despised but others as blessed, marginalizing certain constituencies while binding others together.

The first part of the collection, entitled "Marginalization and Persecution," considers the disruptive and damaging aspects of social exclusion, focusing on instances in which hatred and shame shaped the identity of both the excluded and those who belonged. As William Chester Jordan opened the symposium, here his chapter opens the collection. In "Exclusion and the Yearning to Belong," Jordan considers the responses of both modern and medieval people to marginalization. As he outlines, some options open to modern minority groups—such as proudly affirming one's minority identity or appealing to a social solidarity that transcends group identity—were sometimes available to those on the margins of medieval society. Yet just as in contemporary history, many excluded people in the Middle Ages yearned for or even actively sought assimilation. Jordan explores the psychological and social pressures on an individual yearning to assimilate—to belong—through a thirteenth-century *chanson pieuse* of a Jewish man wishing to convert to Christianity. Caught between both Christian society's suspicions of his motives and the Jewish community's fear of persecution, the *chanson's* author appeals to the Virgin to aid him in attaining baptism and to take vengeance against those who have prevented his conversion. Although he makes no value judgments, Jordan's sensitive treatment of the text and its author illuminates the emotional toll that exclusion took on many of its victims.

Richard Matthew Pollard's chapter, "One Other on Another," considers problems of alienation and isolation from the excluder's perspective. Pollard focuses on Petrus Monachus' *Revelationes*, a late Merovingian translation of a Greek and Syriac text that portrays Muslims as a viciously depraved people who eat horrible diets and engage in unheard of cruelties. Although one might imagine that this was the usual fare for Frankish monks trembling at the fall of Spain, Pollard demonstrates that the *Revelationes'* attitude to Islam was quite unusual in the early Middle Ages; rather than being hostile toward the religion and its adherents, most authors were simply not interested in the subject. As Pollard argues, Petrus Monachus' hateful but eccentric attitude toward Muslims suggests that he was himself an outsider to his Frankish monastery, quite possibly a refugee from the East. His chapter thus demonstrates that because attitudes toward difference are a constitutive aspect of identity, even the most vicious medieval xenophobia can be useful in answering questions of authorship and intellectual heritage.

The negative, oppositional uses of exclusion in the consolidation of group identity are also at issue in Einat Segal's art historical consideration of identity formation during the Albigensian Crusade in Provence. Examining the sculptural program in the cathedral cloister at Arles, Segal links it to the contemporaneous struggle against the Cathar heretics. She argues that portrayals of such figures as Judas and Herod functioned as analogs for the Cathar betrayal that the archbishops saw taking place among the Provençal elite. The archbishops also juxtaposed these representations of vice with figures representing military victory. The sculptural program thus reflects the increasingly violent and oppressive progression of the Church's intolerance toward heresy.

The second part of the collection, "Foreigners and Outsiders," is devoted to ethnicity and demonstrates the wide variety of responses that difference in origin could provoke. In "Wanderers between Two Worlds," Linda Dohmen considers the relationship of "foreignness" and "strangeness" as it applies to the Irish and Anglo-Saxon scholars at the court of Charlemagne. Aware of the problems inherent in applying modern conceptual categories to early medieval societies, Dohmen nonetheless argues that the insular monks were seen as foreigners within the court and that foreignness was central to the monks' self-identity. Dohmen uses a variety of sources and a case study of the famous scholar Alcuin to show that the dress, language, and even the food of the *Scotti* marked them apart. Yet, she suggests that the monks also cherished their identity as outsiders because their presence at the court was part of the ascetic insular *peregrinatio* (pilgrimage) tradition. As *peregrini* or voluntary exiles, these scholars left their homelands to become both strangers *in* this world—as foreigners in a different *patria*—and strangers *to* this world—as ascetic wanderers. For Alcuin and others like him, their strangeness was inextricable from the sacrifice they made in order to move closer to God.

The complex workings of Christianity on the relationship between foreignness and strangeness—and the values attached—are also the focus of Nirmal Dass's chapter devoted to a neglected epic poem on the Viking siege of Paris in 885–6. This was a key moment in the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire, which

severed West Francia's destiny from that of Charlemagne's other former lands. As Dass argues, the poem's author, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, wrote his poem partly as an exhortation to the Franks to renew their commitment to "Romanity," a cultural identity based on Christianity and their Roman heritage. Dass suggests that Abbo thought that the Franks did not possess this identity by ethnic inheritance, but constantly had to reaffirm their commitment to it, mainly by rejecting sin. Frankish identity was thus not an immutable, ethnic characteristic, but rather a cultural practice. Dass explores the implications of this insight by turning to Abbo's treatment of the Vikings. Although Abbo was not interested in understanding the Vikings' point of view or valorizing their experience, his understanding of Romanity as something to be achieved, rather than something inborn, allowed him to consider the possibility that even these violent, despised foreigners might be able to become part of civilized society through conversion.

In the final chapter in this section, Claire Weeda discusses the role of ethnic stereotypes in forging group identities among students in late twelfth-century Paris. Since Paris played host to students from all over Europe, it saw frequent encounters between those of different provincial and national backgrounds. Drawing on social and anthropological theories that describe the formation of group identity through opposition to the Other, Weeda argues that the Latin Quarter's international setting did not necessarily lead to greater inter-ethnic understanding. Rather, it often seems to have increased ethnic self-awareness, group solidarity, and inter-group animosity among the students. That twelfth-century grammar books, whose contents provided an initiation into the liberal arts, illustrated their examples with the ethnic stereotypes then current in Paris probably both reflected and intensified these national prejudices. Yet, as Weeda is at pains to point out, students and masters had numerous other allegiances: to the *nationes* that were actually comprised of numerous ethnic groups, to their colleges and houses, and even to the commitment to learning that theoretically united them all. Membership in these other groups frequently cut across ethnic lines. Ethnic animosity thus emerges as only one element in the multi-faceted construction of student identity.

The last section of the volume, "Strangers and Neighbors," groups together chapters that consider marginalization within the context of acceptance and even valorization of the markers of difference. Elma Brenner's chapter on the lepers of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Rouen shows that although the city's *leprosaria* lay outside the city walls, the lepers' relationship to Rouen's physical and social spaces was much more complex than this initial impression of exclusion indicates. In fact, Rouen had expanded extensively beyond its walls by the early twelfth century, which meant that the *leprosaria* were actually part of highly settled areas. One *leprosarium* held an annual fair, bringing healthy citizens into space dedicated to the sick. Even within the walls, the leper communities owned property throughout Rouen, and functioned as landlords and neighbors to a diverse group of the city's inhabitants. The centrality of the lepers to Rouen's social structure was reinforced by extensive patronage from the city's lay inhabitants, which caused these benefactors to become involved in the *leprosaria*'s religious life. As Brenner

argues, the lepers' ambiguous position in Rouen suggests the wider complexity of physical and social boundaries within the city and indicates that group identity could promote social cohesion, as well as exclusion.

A similar set of problems informs Mark O'Tool's chapter on the Quinze-Vingts, a late medieval Parisian hospital for the blind that was partly supported through its inmates' begging. O'Tool argues that the inmates' status was paradoxically elevated by their disability and their poverty. Although blindness was often the subject of vicious medieval satire, the Quinze-Vingts actively promoted its institutional association with blindness, and those who lived there—a substantial number of whom were actually sighted—embraced a communal identity as blind. This positive valuation of the inmates' disability seems to have been shared by the wider community. The royal family founded and supported the hospital explicitly to house the blind, and allowed its residents to advertise the connection by wearing the fleur-de-lys while begging. And while the blind beggars may have created some annoyances, donation records show that bourgeois Parisians considered the hospital a locus of spirituality, frequently requesting memorial masses to be said there and leaving bequests for the inmates. In this case, the Christian imperative to transcend the material world meant that a potential marker of social exclusion could also be perceived as sign of spiritual favor.

In her chapter on prostitutes in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Paris, Keiko Nowacka looks at a group of the marginalized poor who could make no claim to the spiritual grace that might accrue to the leprous or the blind. Yet, while she does not claim that prostitutes were wholeheartedly accepted in Paris, Nowacka argues against the historiographical tradition that increasing intolerance pushed prostitutes to the margins of society in the high Middle Ages. Nowacka suggests first of all that the marginalization that prostitutes experienced was qualitatively different from these other groups because it was based on gender and poverty. She further argues that much of what has been said about prostitutes during this period has been based on prescriptive texts that employed the prostitute as a metaphor for sin and that had little to do with actual women working in the sex trade. The evidence for real prostitutes and the geographic and demographic realities of medieval Paris suggest rather that these women were well integrated into the life of the city and habitually mingled with the rest of its population. Citing evidence for the charitable support of prostitutes, Nowacka argues that many people saw these women as objects of pity, as well as manifestations of vice. While prostitutes were not welcomed by Parisian society, let alone valued for their undoubted poverty and suffering, their exclusion was tempered by the familiarity and the charity of their neighbors.

The section concludes with Peter Scott Brown's lively chapter about the bawdy figures that decorate a Béarnaise church portal. Brown situates these figures both within the architectural tradition of southwestern France and in relation to the church's proximity to the *via Tolosana*, a Pyrenean road to Compostela frequented by pilgrims, merchants, and other foreigners. The figures' presence on the portal—just above a *Traditio legis* on the tympanum—suggests the dualities of sacred/

profane and included/excluded which the door's liminal function reinforces. Interpreting these figures as obscene and inappropriate, many scholars (and modern tourists) have read them as personifications of vices that the Church was to purify. They have thus been considered images of the despised Other whose exclusion reinforces social norms. Brown argues instead that it is our modern self-identification with the sculpture that leads to this negative assessment. Relating these figures to literary analogs in the *fabliaux* and in travel guides, he suggests that medieval audiences did not view the figures' alterity as threateningly inappropriate but as humorously foolish, as scurrilous rather than obscene. In this instance, alterity did not necessarily serve some sinister social purpose, but may have been invoked simply to entertain.

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It is the editors' and the contributors' hope that this collection will cast fresh light on old questions and open up new areas for investigation. Over the course of the symposium and collaboration on the volume, it has become clearer that marginalization and exclusion constitute less a single subject for research than concepts with which the past can be better understood. Rather than gesturing toward a final judgment about difference and identity in the Middle Ages, we hope that this volume suggests further perspectives through which to view medieval social relations. Difference does seem to have always functioned in a relational way by identifying groups to themselves and to others, but it did not always do so through opposition or exclusion. It seems that such differences could sometimes create cohesion among groups, as well as within them. The societies considered here often incorporated their Others to a great degree and, in some cases, this internalization of difference took place within individuals, as well as among them. These internal Others give us a glimpse not only of their own diversity but also of the variety of ways that heterogeneous groups approached differences among and within themselves.