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**Statement of Purpose**

The *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* publishes work across the disciplines on topics ranging from late antiquity to the seventeenth century, work that is both historically grounded and informed by the broad intellectual shifts that have occurred in the academy. Theoretical inquiries and a wide range of political initiatives have transformed the contexts in which we work. These transformations have profound consequences for our attempts to understand past cultures even as they encourage our critical reflections on the present and its relations to the pasts that we study. We aim to foster the rigorous investigation of past cultural forms and their historiographical representations, representations whose political dimensions will be of special interest. The particular pasts on which we focus are those of medieval and early modern Europe and western Asia. They are the pasts of material objects as well as texts; of women as well as men; of merchants, workers, and audiences as well as patrons; of Jews and Muslims as well as Christians.

We seek to publish articles that are both informed by historical inquiry and alert to issues raised by contemporary theoretical debate. We expect that essays will be grounded in an intimate knowledge of a particular past; their argumentation will reveal a concern for the theoretical and methodological issues involved in interpretation. Indeed, we are particularly committed to work that seeks to overcome the polarization between “history” and “theory” in the study of premodern Western culture. The journal should be a home for empirical studies informed by theory. It should also be a locus for theoretical debates that are illuminated by an understanding of medieval and early modern culture or that contribute to our knowledge of that past.