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Selected Proceedings from ‘The Maladies, Miracles and
Medicine of the Middle Ages’, March 2014

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Foreword.

The Maladies, Miracles and Medicine of the Middle Ages:

A Postgraduate and Early-Career Conference, March 2014

Maintaining and restoring good-health was something which concerned every individual no matter what their social rank, profession, gender or age. Afflictions could come in all shapes and sizes and with varying levels of impact upon the lives of both the sufferers and, it could be said, on their families, friends and communities too. A number of options were open to a medieval sufferer, from herbal remedies, to physicians and barber-surgeons, and, of course, the miraculous medicine of the saints. With such a wide range of remedies to hand we might wonder on the medieval understanding of medical theory and practice, the levels of knowledge regarding health and healing, and how this might culminate in the care and treatment of afflicted individuals.

This volume of selected proceedings is the concluding result of a two-day international conference (held 14th-15th March 2014) entitled ‘The Maladies, Miracles and Medicine of the Middle Ages’. Just under thirty doctoral and early-career researchers responded to the ‘Call for Papers’ leading to twenty-three papers being presented across the span of the two days. With around forty researchers, both delegates and attendees, present on both days it made for a great atmosphere and resulted in a lot of interesting discussion. One key aim of ‘Maladies, Miracles and Medicine’ was to build a network of researchers who were at the start of their academic careers and who were working on various aspects of medieval health and healing. This, I would like to think, was done successfully and that these selected papers stand as a testament to this.

Within this foreword I would like to express my gratitude again to all those who were involved in making the conference, and these resulting proceedings, a successful endeavour. I am, of course, greatly thankful to all of those who presented papers at the conference. You all shone a light on to the many and marvellous aspects of medieval medicine and did so in both informative and entertaining papers which were thoroughly enjoyed.

Thanks also should be given to those who supported 'Maladies, Miracles and Medicine' financially: The Graduate School through their Student-led Events Fund; the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Professor Hugo Tucker; the Department of History; and, of course, the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies (GCMS). My special thanks though to Amanda Harvey (School of Humanities Postgraduate Administrator) and Anne Lawrence-Mathers (Director of the GCMS) for their continual support in the run-up to, and during, the conference.

My final thanks, however, must go to both the writers of the papers found within this volume, who have produced some fascinating research and have put up with my editorial 'pernickiness', to the peer-reviewers, who so kindly volunteered to review these papers, and finally to Catherine Léglu without whom these papers would not be online.

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