

Editorial

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Writing, signing, burying, touching, speaking before witnesses – these were all methods employed during the Middle Ages to make oaths visible and effective. Scholars today distinguish between various types, such as »promissory oaths«, »probatory« or »purgative oaths« but also have evidence for mixtures of both. Oaths might be unilateral or bilateral, they might be taken by an individual or by a group. In short, oaths were versatile means to achieve a variety of ends, and changed over time as people made use of them. With established scholars and upcoming talents in this field contributing, our thematic section *Oaths in Premodern Japan and Premodern Europe* not only presents case studies, which showcase examples of this wide array of oath-taking practice, but also provides in-depth analyses of changes over longer periods of time. Thus, material, social and spiritual aspects of oath-taking are elucidated in their Japanese and European contexts, enabling a comparison of their differences and similarities, which is skilfully provided.

In our individual articles section, we present a normalization and commented translation of an Icelandic fragment of the *Nikuláss saga erkibiskups*, the Saga of Bishop Nicholas. In time for Saint Nicholas Day it contributes to the lively scholarly discussions around this universal saint.