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emotional reactions. Medieval literature often confronts audiences with displays of emotion that are improbable, physiologically impossible, or simply unfathomable in modern social contexts. The intent of such episodes is not always clear; medieval texts rarely explain emotional responses or their motivations. The implication is that the meanings communicated by such emotional display were so obvious to their intended audience that no explanation was required. This raises the auestion of whether such meanings can be recovered. This is the task to which the contributors to this book have put themselves. In approaching this question, this book does not set out to be a collection of literary studies that treat portrayals of emotion as simple tropes or motifs, isolated within their corpora. Rather, it seeks to uncover how such manifestations of feeling may reflect cultural and social dynamics underlying vernacular literatures from across the medieval North Sea world. Erin Sebo is Associate Professor of Early English Literature and Language at Flinders University, Australia. Matthew Firth is Associate Lecturer in Medieval History and Literature at Flinders University, Australia. Daniel Anlezark is the McCaughey Professor of Early English Literature and Language at the University of Sydney, Australia.