

**“Defining Ourselves”
International Anchoritic Society &
Early Middle English Society Conference**

Brandeis University
September 18-20, 2025



I would like to thank the Brandeis Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department, the Medieval and Renaissance Studies program, the Department of Classics and Early Mediterranean Studies, the Department of English, the Mandel Humanities Center, the Film, Television, and Interactive Media Program, and the Rahv Hughes Fund, for their generous support of this conference. A special thanks to Kyle Moore, Aurora Soriano, and Jack Wiegand for help in organizing the program.

Cover image: Virgin and Child with Saint Anne, c. 1475. Part of the George F. Harding Collection in the Art Institute of Chicago. Public domain image. <<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/102101/virgin-and-child-with-saint-anne>>

Brandeis University Locations

Faculty Center

[The Faculty Club Main Dining Room](#)

Epstein Building

[Women's Studies Research Center \(WSRC\) Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall](#)

537 South St.

Waltham, MA 02453

Sachar International Center

[Wasserman Cinematheque \(Room 117\)](#)

415 South St.

Waltham, MA 02453

All scheduled events are in Eastern Standard Time

Thursday, September 18

8:30-9:00am Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Registration

Coffee & Light Breakfast

9:00-9:30am (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Welcome from Brandeis University Administration

Sabine Von Mering, Chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Director
for the Center of German and European Studies (Brandeis University)

Welcome from IAS and EME Presidents

Michelle M. Sauer and Carla María Thomas

Welcome from Conference Organizer

Dorothy Kim

9:30-10:45am (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 1: Sex & Saints in Early Hagiography

Presider: Kersti Francis

Self-Conversion in the *Lives* of St. Mary of Egypt

Margaret Cotter-Lynch, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Defining the Harlot Saint: Thais Inside and Outside Enclosure

Alicia Smith, University of Bergen

(Mis)Uses of the Erotic: Black Female Flesh in the Old English “Life of Saint Mary of Egypt”

Thelma Trujillo, University of Iowa

10:45-11:00am (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

11:00-12:15am (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 2: Comparative Religious Discourse

Presider: Margaret Cotter-Lynch

Imagining Egypt and North Africa in Merovingian Francia
Gregory Halfond, Framingham State University

Intimacy with the Divine in Christian and Islamic Hagiography
Ayoush Lazakani, University of Oxford

Intimacy to No-Body: Disembodied Asexual Union in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Essence of Reality*
Tasrif (Aivan) Mahmud, University of North Dakota

12:15-1:45pm

Lunch on your own

or

The Faculty Club
Faculty Center Main Dining Room

Must have pre-purchased Thursday lunch ticket when registering

1:45-3:25pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 3: Creatures, Sex, & the Supernatural

Presider: Susannah Mary Chewning

Which Witch is Witch: Feminist Erasure of Old English *Wiccecraft*
Emily Gerace, New York University

Abnormal Bestiaries: Unusual Manuscripts and Creative Adaptations
Ilya Dines, Independent Scholar

“A Wolf with the Mind of a Man:” *Ingenium* and Identity in *Arthur et Gorlagon*
Kersti Francis, Boston University

I am *Creatur*. Hear me Roar!: The Animality and Edibility of Margery Kempe
Victoria Wamsley, University of Kansas

3:25-3:40pm (Outside of Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

3:40-4:55pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 4: Gender, Desire, & Margery Kempe

Presider: Aimee A. Galloway

Medieval Love or Convenience and Romantic Desire in *The Book of Margery Kempe*
and the Paston Letters

Elizabeth Talbert, Winthrop University

Margery Kempe's Desire for Reassurance through anchoress Julian of Norwich

Rachel Scoggins, Lander University

The Passion of Margery Kempe: Language and Defining the Concept of Originality

Josephine Koster, Winthrop University

5:15-6:30-Wine Reception at Dorothy Kim's house/garden.

Directions and address will be given at the conference.

6:30pm

Dinner

We are organizing dinner groups for this evening. This is an idea that has previously been used at Babel Conferences and it allows people to get together in groups of 4-5 and go to dinner together. Please fill out the form. We will announce the groups on Thursday at the conference. We will appoint a group leader to take the group (through public transit, carpool, etc.) to the chosen local restaurant. We will also try to keep it inexpensive. Please fill out this form (<https://forms.gle/aLRcgHKtEstb7wCAA>) by the evening of September 17th at 8pm.

Friday, September 19

8:30-9:00am (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Pastries & Coffee

9:00-10:15am (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 5: Gender, Sexuality, & Medicine

Presider: Alicen Davis

The Miraculous Abortive Churching within the Liminal Space of the Nun of Watton
Aimee A. Galloway, University of North Dakota

Yvette of Huy's *Imitatio Magdalenae* and the Female Life-Course
Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, Shizuoka University and Meiji University

Margery Kempe's Trans Thermalities
Micah Goodrich, Boston University

10:15-10:30am (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

10:30-11:30pm (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 6: Gender & Mysticism

Presider: Josephine Koster

Marguerite Porete and the Queer Art of Mysticism
Elizabeth Hubble, University of Montana

Julian of Norwich and the Anchoritic Imagination: Beholding the Ineffable in Word and Image
Raphaela Rohrhofer, University of St. Andrews

11:30-1:00pm

Lunch on your own

or

The Faculty Club

Faculty Center Main Dining Room

Must have pre-purchased Thursday lunch ticket when registering

1:00-2:15pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Plenary

Presider: Dorothy Kim, Brandeis University

Postmedieval Anchorites: Nostalgia and the Art of Scholarly Attachment

Michelle M. Sauer, Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor of English, University
of North Dakota (USA)

Liz Herbert McAvoy, Professor Emerita of Medieval Literature, Swansea
University (UK)

2:15-2:30pm (Outside of Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

2:30-3:45pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 7: Religious Medievalism & the Americas

Presider: Samuel M. Amendolar

Defining a Recluse in Colonial North America: Jeanne LeBer and
Early Modern Montreal

Laura Moncion, Eberhards Karls Universität Tübingen

Martyrdom and Sainthood in *Everyone Knows I am a Haunting*
Bailey Ludwig, Wellesley College

Waxy Figures and Tactical Sainthood: Relics and Saints in Latin America
Will Rogers, University of Louisiana, Monroe

3:45-4:00pm (Outside of Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

4:00-5:15pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 8: The Body & Sexuality in Medieval Christian Literature

Presider: Micah Goodrich

Body/Horror: Un-Feeling Torture in the Katherine Group
Alicen Davis, University of Texas, Austin

A Woman's Sin: Sloth, Passivity, and Female Spirituality in *Ancrene Wisse*
Kyle Robert Moore, University of North Dakota

Found Selves: Self-Writing Divine Union in Mechthild of Magdeburg's *Flowing Light of the Godhead* and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*
Catherine Introcaso, The City University of New York

5:15-5:30pm (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)
Coffee Break

5:30-6:45pm (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 9: The Body & The Wooing Group

Presider: Michelle M. Sauer

'Ah ouer alle oðer þinges makes te luuvewurði to me þa harde atele hurtes': Disability and the Abject in the Wooing Group
Susannah Mary Chewning, Union College of New Jersey

'Mi bodi henge wið þi bodi': Alternate Temporalities and Dying with Christ in Þe *Wohunge of ure Lauerd* and Richard Rolle's *Meditation B*
E. Alice Grissom, Rutgers University

Beauty As Mysticism
Eleanor Forestell, Boston College

7:30pm

Conference Dinner at [Peppino's Dosa](#)
434 Moody St
Waltham, MA 02453

Must have pre-purchased tickets when registering

Saturday, September 20

8:30-9:00am (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee & Pastries

9:00-10:00am

Session 10: Reading Manuscripts: Past & Present

Presider: Carla María Thomas

Gregorian Books, Roman Foundations, and the Formation of Ecclesiastical Identity in Medieval England

John Gallagher, University of St. Andrews

Marguerite Porete's post-medieval philosophical afterlives: Simone Weil, Luce Irigaray, and the hermeneutics of reclamation

Emily Griffiths, University of Antwerp

10:00-10:15am Coffee Break

10:15-12:00am

Session 11A: Creative Writing Workshop (online only via Zoom)

Presider: Aurora Soriano

A workshop on using medieval devotional texts as stimuli for creative writing. Recent examples include *Matrix* by Lauren Groff and *For Thy Great Pain Have Mercy on My Little Pain* by Victoria MacKenzie.

Artemis Writers (Sophia Adamowicz and Heather Clark-Hope)

Session 11B: The Monastic Archaeology Field School at Lindores Abbey (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Presider: Victoria Yuskaitis

Field Training in Monastic Archaeology: The Monastic Archaeology Field School at Lindores Abbey

Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, Brandeis University

Using Estuarine Physical Oceanography as a Tool to Understand Water use in the Lindores Abbey

Sally Warner, Brandeis University

‘With Common Pasture for Animals’: An Archeological and Textual Analysis of Food Sources at Lindores Abbey

Allison Gentry, Brandeis University

A Case for Getting History Students into the Dirt

Natalie Greenfield, Brandeis University

12:00-1:00pm (Women's Studies Research Center)

Lunch provided in the Women's Studies Research Center

1:00-2:00pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 12: Anchoritic Digital Humanities

Presider: Kyle Robert Moore

Geospatial Inquiry & the Medieval Anchorhold: Mapping Enclosure in the Islands of the North Atlantic

Michelle M. Sauer, University of North Dakota

Justin Wigard, University of North Dakota

An Open *Ancrene Wisse* Corpus Project with AI and Data Visualization

Dorothy Kim, Brandeis University

2:00-2:15pm (Outside of Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Coffee Break

2:15-3:30pm (Lieberman-Miller Lecture Hall)

Session 13: Anchorites & Space

Presider: Tasrif (Aivan) Mahmud

Anchorites and the City: Archaeological Interpretations and Lived Experience, Then and Now

Victoria Yuskaitis, DigVentures

Three Days Beyond a Cell: Connecting an Anchorite with His Times
Clare M. Dowding, King's College London

Merging Living Spaces: Aligning Performances and Spatial Practices in Goscelin of St.
Bertin's *Liber Confortatorius*
Samuel M. Amendolar, University of North Dakota

3:30-3:45pm (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)
Coffee Break

3:45-5:00pm (Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)
Session 14: Approaches to Julian of Norwich
Presider: Bailey Ludwig

Female Modesty and the Vernacular in the East and West: *The Diary of Murasaki Shikibu* and Julian of Norwich
Fumiko Yoshikawa, Hiroshima Shudo University

Wounds that Heal: Julian of Norwich's Theology of Productive Pain
Josi Carder, Brooklyn College

Keep this Precious Stone in the Nest of your Heart: Defining the Eucharist in Julian of
Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*
Eduardo de Oliveira Correia, Kings College London

5:00-6:15 (Outside of Liberman-Miller Lecture Hall)
Dinner, Snacks, & Beverages
Provided in Women's Studies Research Center

6:15-6:30pm
Walk to Sachar International Center

6:30-8:30pm (Wasserman Cinematheque, Room 117)
Film Screening of *Revelations of Divine Love*
Ticket included in conference registration or purchased separately for non-conference attendees

8:30-8:40pm (Outside of Wasserman Cinematheque)

Break

Snacks & drinks available

8:40-9:30pm (Wasserman Cinematheque, Room 117)

Film Q&A with Director Caroline Golum

Caroline Golum is a filmmaker and writer living in Brooklyn, NY. She is a contributing editor and occasional podcast co-host for Screen Slate. Her debut feature, *A Feast of Man*, is streaming on Amazon Prime, Vimeo, and Tubi. *Revelations of Divine Love*, is her second feature.

Read an interview with Caroline from the Spring 2023 International Anchoritic Society newsletter here:

<https://commons.und.edu/ias-newsletter/>