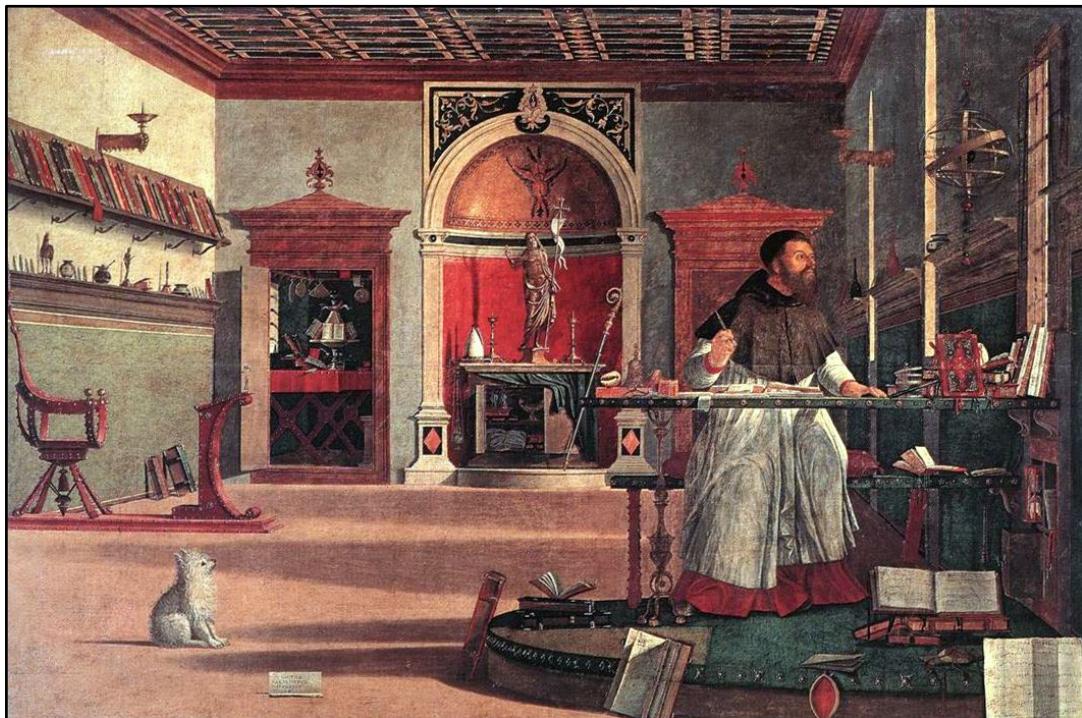


7th Annual Medievalists @ Penn Graduate Conference: The Medieval Archive 2/27/15



Keynote address: Jessica Brantley, Associate Professor of English, Yale

Medievalists depend on archives. Our work must always negotiate between, on the one hand, our need for stable, authoritative editions of texts and, on the other, our recognition of the inherent instability of a corpus formed through the manuscript tradition. The popular modern-day image of bespectacled medievalists poring over manuscripts in the university archive echoes our tonsured forebears, represented in medieval illustrations poring over manuscripts in the monastery library. For twenty fevered years since the publication of Derrida's *Mal d'Archive*, archival technology and theorizations have increasingly come under the critical gaze. Developments in archival creation, curation, and research, as well as broader advances in computing have transformed our thinking about the essence, origins, and practical uses of archives. The manuscript itself, that once-hallowed and once-untouchable relic, is being democratized through readily-available digitized editions. Projects such as the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, the *Archive of Early Middle English* and Penn's commitment to an expansive program of digitization are already opening up manuscripts from the few with institutional library cards to the many with Internet access, and other similar projects are being announced. This conference aims to bring these issues and challenges to bear on the practice of medieval studies.

Who guards these archives? Who creates them? What ideological forces have shaped them? Whose voices have been silenced? Whose ideas suppressed? The medieval archive has changed dramatically over the last twenty years: we now have fully formed corpuses of Lollard writing, women's writing, and vernacular

theology. From Poggio Bracciolini's manuscript hunting at the Council of Konstanz to Hope Emily Allen's unearthing of *The Book of Margery Kempe* in 1934, chance, opportunity and luck have defined our discipline. How can we conceptualize something as contingent as the 'manuscript discovery'? What other nascent archives are waiting to be discovered? What do we do when we know these archives have been destroyed, and forever lost?

Topics for papers may include but are not limited to:

- The creation, curation, and authority of archives
- Discoveries in the archive
- Non-textual archives of the medieval (images and artifacts)
- Temporalities of the archive
- Minoritized/alternative archives
- Digitizing and disseminating medieval manuscripts
- Medieval organizations of knowledge
- Lost archives

We invite abstracts for 15-20 minute papers that engage with these and/or other questions concerning medieval archives. Please submit abstracts as attachments to pennmedieval@gmail.com by December 15, 2014. Submissions should include your name, paper title, email, and institutional and departmental affiliation. The deadline for full paper submission, not to exceed 10 pages, is February 15, 2015.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Daniel Davies, Mariah Min, and Samantha Pious at pennmedieval@gmail.com.