

Feeling Medieval

The Inaugural Conference of the Society for the Study of Medieval Emotions
University of St Andrews, Tuesday 31 May–Wednesday 1 June 2022

In 1941, Lucien Febvre called on scholars to place emotions at the very centre of their work; until they did so, he famously insisted, 'there will be no real history possible'. Today, the 'affective turn' has seen the emergence of new methodologies and the destruction/adaptation of old ones; attempts to chart emotional continuities and changes over the *longue durée*; and a widening of geographic scope beyond western Europe. Nevertheless, the field finds itself at an important juncture, at least regarding the study of the Middle Ages: with the initial wave of scholarly interest having passed, scholars need to decide upon the most pressing research questions to be addressed, and thus the contours along which the field should develop. The history of emotions need not be only, or even primarily, about investigating past emotional experiences or standards: it can simultaneously serve as a framework to cast new light on much broader and traditional themes within medieval studies—religion, law, gender, politics, family—and thus play a far more diverse and prominent role in the historian's toolkit by, for example, facilitating a deeper understanding of our sources.

The *Feeling Medieval* conference provides a framework to do this work and simultaneously launches the newly-formed Society for the Study of Medieval Emotions (SSME)—the first such society in the UK. We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers (to be delivered in English) on any topic relating to the emotions and affective displays (real or imagined) of the Middle Ages (500–1500 CE) in any geographic setting, although preference will be given to papers which address the methodological frameworks scholars can (or should) utilise to explore medieval passions.

Please send paper proposals, including a title, abstract of c.150 words, and a short bio, to socmedievalemotions@gmail.com by **30 September 2021**. If you would like any further information, please contact the conference organisers, Hailey O'Harrow (St Andrews) and Stephen Spencer (KCL), via the email address above.

We currently anticipate that this event will take place in-person at the University of St Andrews. However, if circumstances dictate, we may decide to pivot to an online format.

Membership of SSME is free. To join, please visit <https://www.socmedievalemotions.com/>

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