Converts, Cleaners, Cannibals: Jewish Women in Medieval Books

Adrienne Williams Boyarin

Thursday, November 1
5:00-6:00 p.m.
Clearihue, Room C112

Some scholars have argued that Jewish women are present in medieval Christian books only as femme fatales, pliant converts, or sorrowing mothers. In fact, Jewish women play many complex roles in medieval Christian literature. Focusing on England in particular, this lecture will examine “Jewess” types in surviving illustrations and textual records and discuss how Christian readers and viewers understood them. More broadly, it will address what is at stake now in the study of medieval anti-Jewish traditions.

Adrienne Williams Boyarin is Associate Professor of English at UVic. She is author of Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends, editor and translator of The Siege of Jerusalem and Miracles of the Virgin in Middle English, and founding Executive Editor of the journal Early Middle English. She specializes in medieval gender studies, Christian-Jewish polemics, and manuscripts.

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