

Edited by Michelle M. Sauer and Jenny C. Bledsoe

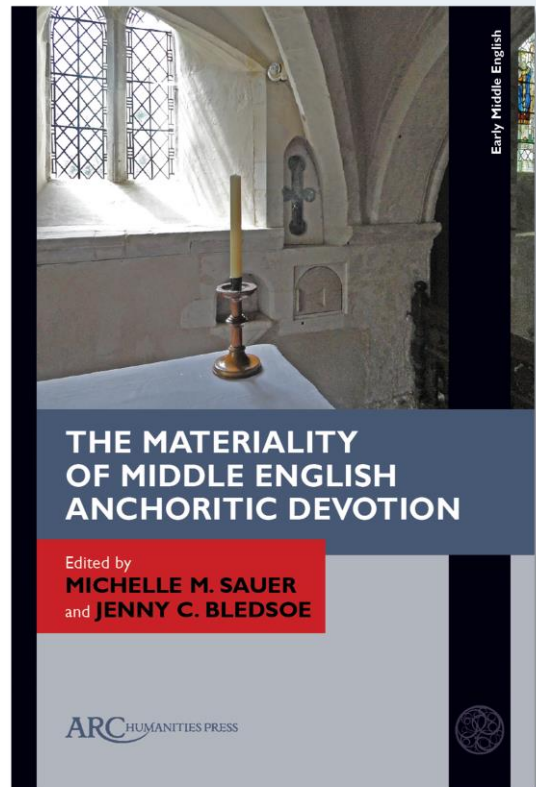
The Materiality of Middle English Anchoritic Devotion

Anchorites and their texts, such as *Ancrene Wisse*, have recently undergone a reevaluation based on material circumstances, not just theological import. The articles here address a variety of anchoritic or anchoritic-adjacent texts, encompassing guidance literature, hagiographies, miracle narratives, medical discourse, and mystic prose, and spanning in date from the eighth through the fourteenth centuries. Exploring reclusion and materiality, the collection addresses a series of overlapping themes, including the importance of touch, the limits of religious authority, and the role of the senses. Objects, metaphorical and real, embodied and spiritual, populate the pages. These categories are permeable, with flexible and porous boundaries, demonstrating the conflation of ideas, concepts, and manifestations in medieval materiality. In fact, the permeability of these categories demonstrates how materiality can reshape our approach to medieval texts. It leaves room for directions for future study, including the application of material analysis to previously unstudied objects, spaces, and literary artifacts.

BIOGRAPHY

Michelle M. Sauer is Chester Fritz Distinguished Professor of English & Gender Studies at the University of North Dakota. A specialist in medieval reclusion, she is recipient of the Thomas J. Clifford award for research excellence, and also authored *Gender in Medieval Culture*.

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