

Brown University Department of French Studies Presents

"Sheep of Human Descent": Sovereignty and Population in Late Medieval France



Daisy Delogu

University of Chicago

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

5:30 PM (EST)

via Zoom – Registration Required

This paper will read Jean de Brienne's treatise on ovine husbandry as a mirror for princes, one that effects a powerful transposition of the figure of the good shepherd of John 10 from the theological to the secular realm by insisting that the king has a duty of care towards his "oeilles de l'umain lignage", for whom he is accountable to God. I will place this work in dialogue with the *Préceptes cisterciens d'économie rurale* and the poetry of Eustache Deschamps to suggest that the analogy of people to sheep, one which troubles the human-animal distinction upon which theories of subjectivity are founded, defines subjects as a kind of population, one to be managed with an eye towards optimizing resource extraction.



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