



# Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature

*Roberta Milliken*

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It has long been said that a woman's hair is her crowning glory. Indeed, throughout history, hair has remained an important cultural symbol of femininity. In medieval art, iconic images of long, flowing locks can express sexuality, and the cutting of a woman's hair often signals her feminine misbehavior. Artists of all kinds in the Middle Ages used women's long hair to manipulate their audience's estimation of their female figures. This interdisciplinary work explores the significance of women's hair in literature and art from the medieval period through 1525, putting into historical context the ways in which hair participates in construction of the female identity.

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