**Despair as an altered state of consciousness? Some clues from late-medieval guidance texts – Abstract**

This presentation will focus on a group of late medieval texts of religious guidance, which constitute the corpus of my doctoral research. Based on the mid-fourteenth-century treatise *De remediis contra temptaciones* by the Austin friar William Flete, these treatises are set on offering religious and spiritual guidance with regards to feelings of doubt in the faith as well as a particularly troublesome issue known as "wanhope" – or despair of the Christian promise of salvation. After offering a working definition of "wanhope" and the moral implications thereof, this talk will outline the ways in which the texts under scrutiny describe the mental processes at work in the despairing mind. According to these accounts, despair stems from the cooccurrence of devilish harassments as well as one's predisposition to mental "blindness" – a state of psychological and rational impairment derived from one's humoral constitution. The presentation will conclude by questioning the significance of presenting despairing individuals as mentally "altered" and will argue that medicalising despair, in the context of these treatises, participates to the texts' endeavour to comfort and ultimately remedy the experience of despair in these same individuals.