It is now widely acknowledged that individual subjectivity and collective remembrance are closely interwoven. Nevertheless, historians and literary critics often continue to operate with assumptions that place personal and public, private and communal memory in antithesis, rivalry and opposition. We will begin with the premise that this polarity is itself an historical artefact – a manifestation of the gradual estrangement of two pools of knowledge and modes of recollection of the past from each other. It focuses upon a series of texts in which these boundaries are porous and fluid and which illuminate the gradual cultural shifts that demarcated history and life-writing as separate spheres of consciousness and expression. It explores the manner in which the formulaic medieval genre of the chronicle functioned as a vehicle for the articulation of private opinion and feeling – for what, with conscious anachronism, we might call autobiography.

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Lunch will be served. To RSVP contact millercenter@umd.edu or 301-405-4299.