

Call for Posters

„Mauerfälle der Mystik. Looking for Mechthild (of Magdeburg) and her book in the monastic landscape, religious networks and literary discourses of 13th cent. Middle Germany“

Interdisciplinary Workshop, September 9th – 11th 2016, University Library Leipzig

organized by Jun.-Prof. Dr. Caroline Emmelius (Düsseldorf) and Dr. Balázs J. Nemes (Freiburg i. Br.) in cooperation with the Handschriftenzentrum Leipzig

Over the past years research on the transmission and reception of medieval German mysticism has been challenged by the discovery of manuscripts in both Eastern Germany and Russia. These newly found texts make it necessary to reevaluate established concepts and assumed facts on one of the most important medieval women authors, Mechthild (of Magdeburg?), and her book “The flowing light of the godhead” (FLG).

Points of discussion comprise:

- Mechthild’s biography, as it still claimed that she was of lower nobility living near Zerbst in Sachsen-Anhalt; that she left her family in order to live as beguine in Magdeburg; that she finally moved to the Cistercian monastery of Helfta to become a nun in her old age,
- the individual, social and religious networks mentioned in the FLG, focusing for ex. on Mechthild’s relations to Dominican priests,
- the bilingual existence of the FLG in a German version and a Latin translation from the 13th cent.,
- the manuscript transmission of both texts that up to only lately seemed to be dominated by Alemanic and Southern German manuscripts,
- the Low German / Middle German dialect of the FLG that seemed to have been lost in the translation process of 14th cent. Basel redactors,
- intertextual references to both devotional and secular literary texts that allow to fit an aesthetically most unconventional text into the broader outlines of Medieval literary history, for ex. the monastic tradition of rhymed prose.

In order to reevaluate the historical, religious and literary contexts of Mechthild and her book the workshop is bringing together experts specializing in medieval history, literary history, linguistics and theology as well as paleography and codicology. The cooperation with the Leipzig Center for Manuscript transmission and description, especially its projects on manuscripts from middle German convents, helps to focus on the material basis of research on Mechthild and the Helfta mystics.

Using the traces that Mechthild and her book left in 13th and 14th cent. manuscripts to find out about social networks as well as intellectual discourses might not only enable us to reformulate our concepts of Medieval authorship and textual understanding, however it might as well help to shape an image of 13th cent. Saxony and Thuringia as a culturally and spiritually most dynamic area.

Speakers and participants: Wolfgang Beck (Jena), Nikolai Bondarko (St. Petersburg), Matthias Eifler (Leipzig), Natalia Ganina (Moskau), Burkhard Hasebrink (Freiburg), Ernst Hellgardt (München), Claire Taylor Jones (South Bend, Ind.), Racha Kirakosian (Cambridge, Mass.), Sandra Linden (Tübingen), Freimut Löser (Augsburg), Almuth Märker (Leipzig), Tanja Mattern (Düsseldorf), Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (Leiden), Cornelia Oefelein (Kremmen), Nigel F. Palmer (Oxford), Sara S. Poor (Princeton, N.J.), Regina Schiewer (Eichstätt), Walter Senner OP (Rom), Klaus-Bernward Springer (Münster), Catherine Squires (Moskau), Almut Suerbaum (Oxford), Markus Vinzent (London), Jörg Voigt (Stade), Annett Volfing (Oxford)

Young researchers with a background in devotional or regional history, German or Latin literary studies, religious or philosophical studies and/or Paleography are welcome to apply for taking part in the Workshop as well as submit a proposal for presenting and discussing a poster on their respective projects. Posters may be presented in either German or English. A multidisciplinary panel will make a selection of the submitted proposals. In case the workshop gets successful funding expenses for travel, hotel and catering may be covered for up to 5 applicants.

If you are interested in taking part please hand in your proposal to the organizers by **December 15th 2015**. Your paper may be written in either German or English and should contain the following information:

- name, adress, email-address, name of your home institution
- a short CV of your academic career
- title of your research project, name of your advisor
- short draft of your research project (max. 250 words)
- list of publications on your project
- draft of a poster presentation (thematic disposition, visual presentation).

Successful applicants will be informed in the spring 2016.

We are looking forward to getting your proposal!

Caroline Emmelius (caroline.emmelius@phil.hhu.de)

Balázs J. Nemes (balazs.jozsef.nemes@germanistik.uni-freiburg.de)