

**XXIII. Anglo-German Colloquium:  
*Lehren, Lernen und Bilden in der Literatur des deutschen Mittelalters* (Teaching, Learning and  
Educating in the German Middle Ages)  
University of Nottingham, 4–8 September 2013**

The latest meeting of this well-established forum on the medieval conference circuit explored the processes of instruction, teaching, and learning that were represented in and engendered by the literature of the German Middle Ages. One of its central achievements was to show that their significance extends beyond the relatively narrow context of didactic writing that has been highlighted in much recent scholarship. This was evident not least from the scope of the programme, which traversed the possibilities of textual production in the period, covering manuscript and printed material that ranged from historiography and fictional narrative to musicology and the sermon, from the *Aeneid* to seventeenth-century Ireland. The papers will be published together in an anthology edited by the organizers, Nicola McLelland, Henrike Lähnemann, and Nine Miedema, so this brief review of the proceedings is necessarily selective and is intended to draw out some defining strands in the discussion rather than passing judgement by inclusion or exclusion.

After Christoph Huber's opening lecture on fictionality, a crucial point of reference was provided by Manfred Eikermann and Silvia Reuvekamp, who discussed the concepts and images which were associated with teaching and learning in sources from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. They concentrated on a recurring motif which visualizes the belief that early experience is at least as influential on how people develop as innate disposition: the image of a vessel that retains the taste or smell of what is first put into it. This 'anthropological' approach provided a background against which to see the more specific case studies in other papers, where further interrogation of concepts and terminology might have been desirable. These subsequent presentations can be divided broadly into two groups, one focusing on religious writing, the other on more 'secular' genres. Nigel F. Palmer, for instance, showed how a late-fifteenth century cycle of prayers could serve as a source of internal *aedificatio*, whereas Ricarda Bauschke traced how Hartmann von Aue employs metaphors of illness and healing to express the processes of learning that take place in the heroes of his Arthurian romances. This broad perspective, which covers both the canonical classics of the courtly period and other aspects of medieval German literary culture, has become characteristic of the Anglo-German colloquia and was particularly important in opening up new perspectives on this occasion. What was not always apparent, though, was the way in which the strategies of instruction and learning in the 'secular' and 'spiritual' texts are related to each other: are we dealing with similar techniques in different contexts, or are there marked differences between them? One way to address such questions (it is by no means the only one) would be to consider the significance of the medium of the text and the context of its transmission. These factors were highlighted by Alderik Blom and Franz-Josef Holznagel in papers on interlinear glosses in the Old High German *Altalemannische Psalmenfragmente* and the place of didactic songs in the *Rostocker Liederbuch* respectively: it became clear that the visual and/or material status of the text as object can be as important for instruction as the language it contains.

There could, at times, have been more explicit reflection on the terms in the overarching theme, but the very diversity of papers was also one of the strengths of the colloquium's programme and participants: it was, as in previous years, a reminder of just how profitable the exchange of ideas between different generations and academic cultures on a personal level can be. In this light, it is fitting to conclude by noting that it was agreed that the next colloquium will be run by Nine Miedema in Saarbrücken in collaboration with two young scholars from the UK, Sarah Bowden and Stephen Mossman.