

# ILLUMINATED CUTTINGS

at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg:  
Case Studies and International Research Opportunities



Bildquelle: GNM (<http://objektkatalog.gnm.de/objekt/0h5>)

# Abstracts

29-30 April  
2024

## **SESSION 1: WORKING WITH ITALIAN, FLEMISH, AND BOHEMIAN ILLUMINATED CUTTINGS AT THE GNM**

**Maria Theisen** (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Institut für Mittelalterforschung /  
Abt. Schrift- und Buchwesen)

### ***Some observations on the "Bohemian" fragments of the GNM in Nuremberg***

With a view to the Nuremberg fragments labelled as "Bohemian" or "possibly Bohemian", the paper will present the basic characteristics of Bohemian illumination and the development of hybrid forms in Central Europe, especially in the 15th century. One specific work from the Nuremberg collection will then be at the focus. This work, known as „Miniatur Nr. 159“, is preserved as a complete folio with two miniatures as well as tendril and penwork decoration of the highest artistic quality. We will examine to what extent Bredt's categorization as "South German, probably Bohemian" is still valid or can be specified in terms of the place and time of its creation. According to the research currently undertaken for this symposium, the traces seem to lead to the Austrian/Hungarian region (work in progress).

**Beatrice Alai** (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)

### ***Discovering the Italian Fragments Collection at the GNM***

The GNM holds around 70 Italian illuminated cuttings from the 13th to the 16th century, which entered the museum before 1903. The paper will consider the most relevant leaves and initials from Tuscany, Umbria and Lombardy, showing how they are related to fragments in other collections and identifying them in 19th-century auction catalogues. In particular, the presentation will suggest a provenance from the collection of Johann Anton Ramboux, an artist affiliated with the Nazarene group in Rome and, later on, the renowned curator of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne. During his stays in Italy, he thoroughly studied the monuments of art focusing especially on the Middle Ages and on Primitive Art, assembling a collection panel paintings and graphic collections, also encompassing illuminated cuttings. These were auctioned a year after his death, in 1867, by Heberle in Cologne: while a consistent group was bought by the MAK in Vienna, at least 20 fragments joined the collection of German miniatures at the GNM.

**Peter Kidd** (Peter Selley Fellow, Bodleian Library, Oxford)

### ***Scattered Leaves: The Hastière Bible as a case-study***

In 1908 the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, published a catalogue of its medieval manuscript leaves and cuttings – one of the first catalogues of such a collection. It includes a group of 7 leaves and 6 cuttings from a large 14th-century Netherlandish Bible, one of which depicts a layman holding a scroll with his name, "Johannes de Hastiere". In recent years it has been possible to trace a total of about 60 illuminated leaves and cuttings from the same manuscript, now divided between six public and three private collections in Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Singapore, the UK, and the USA. This presentation will show how four leaves at the GNM make a significant contribution to our understanding of the Bible from which they come.



## **SESSION 2: WORKING WITH GERMAN CUTTINGS AT THE GNM**

**Regina Cermann** (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Institut für Mittelalterforschung / Abt. Schrift- und Buchwesen)

***Alte und neue Bekannte: Wiedersehen mit Fragmenten des Spätmittelalters aus Mitteleuropa im Germanischen Nationalmuseums in Nürnberg.***

My paper will discuss various German fragments of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum that have come to my attention over time. Starting from the with Ernst Wilhelm Bredt's catalogue of 1903, I first illustrate the progress of the research over the past 120 years; then I will suggest new attributions and also some siblings in other international collections.

**James Marrow** (Professor Emeritus, Princeton University)

***Little-known Cuttings at the GNM and Their Siblings: New Insights into Manuscript Illumination at the Turn of the 16th Century from the Rhenish Lowlands.***

**Jeffrey Hamburger** (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA)

***The Birth of God in the Soul in Newly Discovered Devotional Drawings from St. Walburg in Eichstätt.***

Since the publication of *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (1997), devotional drawings made by nuns (Nonnenarbeiten), once largely ignored or derided, have enjoyed something of a renaissance. Of those that have attracted attention, however, too many have been associated with St. Walburg in Eichstätt. In style, however, as well as iconography, three recently discovered drawings reveal a clear relationship with the previously published group. One proves of special interest in that it represents the sole surviving depiction of a motif of fundamental importance in German mysticism of the late Middle Ages, the birth of God in the soul, a concept developed in sermons by the Dominican Meister Eckhart that are still attested in the library of the Benedictine nuns of St. Walburg.

## **SESSION 3: CATALOGUING COLLECTIONS OF GERMAN MINIATURES: ON-GOING PROJECTS IN GERMANY, AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

**Matthias Eifler** (Universitätsbibliothek, Leipzig)

***The collection of manuscript fragments and cuttings of the „Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum“ in Leipzig – Workshop report: results and open questions.***

The German National Library in Leipzig is home to the “Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum” (“German Museum of Books and Writing”), which holds a collection of medieval fragments and cuttings, once belonging to the library of the “Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler” (“German Publishers’ and

Booksellers' Association") in Leipzig. The paper will analyze some of the most relevant leaves of the collection, discussing their possible relationships with cuttings from other international collections. It will also discuss the possibilities and challenges of cataloguing the collection as part of the project at the Leipzig Manuscript Centre, as well as the presentation of the results in the "Handschriftenportal".

## **Christoph Mackert** (Universitätsbibliothek, Leipzig)

### ***Making manuscript fragments in museum collections online accessible: Web portals for the presentation of the European manuscript heritage.***

Many museums keep remnants of medieval books in their graphic collections: single leaves with special pictorial decoration or cut-out initials. These objects are managed by the museums like other art objects: as individual works of art. At best, they are accessible to researchers via the museums' object databases. These museum collections are often poorly catalogued or not catalogued at all. And if they are catalogued, then according to museum standards.

Separate from the world of museums is the world of libraries, where the majority of handwritten books from the Middle Ages are kept: codices, but also remnants and fragments of codices. They are made accessible to researchers via library databases. In recent decades, special supra-regional and international portals have emerged in the library sector with metadata and cataloguing standards focused on this group of materials. The manuscript remains of museums are a blank space here.

The presentation looks at these separate worlds and attempts to present possibilities for connecting and linking them.

## **Marina Bernasconi Reusser** (Fragmentarium)

### ***Fragmentarium and the GNM. The possibilities of digital cataloguing.***

In the future, cataloguing will be increasingly digital and collaborative. For an institution that wants to put its collections online, there is usually the option of creating a new portal or using existing portals. In my contribution, I will present the functioning and possibilities of the international co-operation project Fragmentarium.ms, which is exclusively dedicated to fragments. The possibilities of this portal can be demonstrated using a fragment from the GNM collection, which is brought together with others of the same manuscript in different institutions to form a virtual reconstruction.

## **Christine Jakobi-Mirwald** (Independent Scholar)

### ***Display Scripts and how to Describe them.***

A larger historic collection of manuscript fragments was usually put together to create a repository of either script samples or illumination – be it in initials, historiated or otherwise, and miniatures. Significantly, it is a third element which yet again falls neatly between the fields of script and illumination. Display scripts, a highly visible and significant feature structuring the layout of manuscripts at least until the 13th century, have a history of being ignored both by palaeographers and art historians. Since they will readily appear on the smallest scraps of parchment, they are quite useful for fragmentologists, and a reassessment of their terminology, patchy at best, is in order.

## Catherine Yvard (V&A Museum)

### ***Framing the gaze: some thoughts on Illuminated manuscript cuttings in a museum context.***

Following *Fragmented Illuminations*, an exhibition of manuscript cuttings at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2022, this paper will present some considerations on the ways in which these artefacts are framed in a museum context, past and present. This framing will be understood in the physical and literal sense, but also in the digital sense of online presentation. How does or should one frame a cutting for physical display? What are the steps involved and the questions raised? And how does their online arrangement, choice of framing and cropping, impact our understanding of these pieces? If these two kinds of framing have different implications for the artworks themselves, they both exert an often-imperceptible influence on our gaze.

## Gaudenz Freuler (Universität Zürich)

### ***Painting and Illumination in Nürnberg in the time of Albrecht Dürer's artistic formation. The activity of Hans Traut as illuminator in the light of five recently rediscovered fragments from a broken – up missal.***

The present paper, despite it does not focus on fragments from the collection of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, presents a case-study of five recently rediscovered cuttings from a splendid Missal produced in a leading painter's workshop in Nurenberg. Nevertheless, these miniatures are closely related to a most prominent altarpiece in the collection of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, the splendid *Augustiner -Altar* painted in 1487 by Hans Traut and his workshop for the church of the Augustinian Hermites, S. Veit in Nurenberg. In fact, a detailed stylistic analysis of the five cuttings from a Missal together with two further fragments excised from a broken-up prayerbook will furnish the evidence, that they were painted by Hans Traut's workshop and that illumination in Nurenberg during the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century was not, as has been generally believed in the past, exclusively dominated by the workshop of Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff and slightly later by Jacob Elsner. The hitherto unknown and unexpected activity of Hans Traut as illuminator, who undoubtedly produced illuminations of greatest quality and significantly superior to what has been produced on parchment by Wolgemut's workshop, opens new aspects into the status of his workshop in Nurenberg. This new insight offers us a firmer ground to reassess Hans Traut's career as a leading painter in Nurenberg not alone in the field of panel painting but also of painting on parchment, which might have produced his most charming artistic creations. Furthermore, it opens some questions of Albrecht Dürer's artistic formation before his apprenticeship in Wolgemut's workshop as well as of the relationship between Michael Wolgemut's and Hans Traut's workshops during the last two decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.