

BASIC INFORMATION ON SUB-PROJECT

NAME OF PROGRAMME/FUND	Scholarship Fund - Sciex NMS ^{ch}
RESEARCH FIELD AND OTHER RESEARCH FIELDS INVOLVED (if applicable)	Human Sciences
TITLE OF THE SUB-PROJECT	Interpreting and Appropriating Obscurity in the Middle Ages: The Case of "Versus Maligni Angeli" (IAOMA)
REGION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC (according to the location of the home institution)	Prague
GRANT AMOUNT SPENT	49 305,77 CHF
INTERMEDIATE BODY	Swissuniversities
HOME INSTITUTION	Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague
HOST INSTITUTION	Universität Zürich Mittellateinisches Seminar
NAME OF THE FELLOW	Lucie Doležalová

ABSTRACT OF THE SUB-PROJECT

The project develops around a case of medieval reception of a brief but very obscure Latin poem, sometimes entitled "Versus maligni angeli" (Verses of a malign angel), surviving in at least 34 medieval manuscripts often accompanied by commentaries and interlinear glosses. The most "meaningless" part of the poem was originally perhaps an exorcist formula but later the whole was approached as written by a demon rather than against demons. Its medieval readers then interpreted the poem as hiding Christian mysteries, and they gradually appropriated and changed the text itself. I shall analyse the scribal appropriations of the text, as well as the glosses and commentaries to it and examine them as evidence of the text's reception. I will offer a critical edition of the poem and its commentaries, using a number of medieval manuscripts that were not noticed so far. I will also study in detail the contents of the codices where the poem appears, and search for other possible evidence of its reception. An in-depth analysis of medieval approaches to and interpretations of this particular obscurity will serve as a starting point for a more general enquiry into the character of medieval text interpretation and appropriation of "obscurity". I plan to substantiate my claim that our notion of obscurity as extraordinary, doubtful, and even disturbing substantially differs from the medieval one, which primarily due to the influence of the Bible and biblical exegesis, saw obscurity as a natural and even sought-after part of everyday life. At the same time, I aim to use this case study for more general methodological considerations on medieval scribal culture, the distinction between a mistake and an attempt at correction, as well as on possible conceptualizations of studying literary reception and appropriation today.

MAIN RESULTS

Publications:

Monograph:

L.D. *Obscurity and Memory in Late Medieval Manuscript Culture: The Case of the 'Summarium Biblie'*. Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband 29. Krems: Institut für *Realienkunde* des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2012.

Collective monograph:

L.D., Jeff Rider and Alessandro Zironi, eds. *Obscurity in Medieval Texts*. Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband 30. Krems: Institut für *Realienkunde* des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2013.

Studies:

L.D. "The Devil as a Christian Author? The Case of *Versus maligni angeli*," in *Auctor et auctoritas in Medii Aevi litteris. Author and Authorship in Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. Edoardo D'Angelo and Jan Ziolkowski (Florence: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014), 321-330.

L.D. "Manuscript Transmission and an Analysis of the Pseudo-Joachimite *Expositio versuum extraneorum*," in *Joachim posuit verba ista. Gli pseudoepigrafi di Gioacchino da Fiore dei secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. Gian Luca Potestà and Marco Rainieri, Roma: Viella, 2015, p. 201-213.

L.D. "Multilingualism and Late Medieval Manuscript Culture," in *The Medieval Manuscript Book. Cultural Approaches*, ed. Michael van Dussen and Michael Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 160-180.

(Two more studies are being prepared for publication.)

The project also resulted in a number of invited lectures (Fiore, Benevento, IHR London and others). The cooperation with the Swiss partner has been maintained.

DATE OF REALISATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

1.8.2010 - 31.1.2011

MORE INFORMATION ON THE
PROGRAMME

www.sciex.ch