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Verlorene Bücher – Über imaginierten und tatsächlichen Verlust deutschsprachiger Texte und  
Handschriften des Mittelalters

Abstract

Every medieval manuscript represents a unicum. In contrast to the printed book that can exist in thousands of identical copies, the handwritten manuscript is per se endangered by its singularity. The dissertation project focuses on this threat. It deals with lost medieval German manuscripts, texts and literary works and examines real and imagined loss. The aim is to take a close look at the loss of books on two different levels: the transmission history on the one hand and literary study on the other hand. The former concentrates on real loss of medieval manuscripts and textual witnesses, the latter on the narration about loss. The close reading of the text sources reporting the loss (examples of the text corpus are Heinrichs von Veldeke *Eneasroman*, *Wolfdietrich D*, *Otnit*, *Legend of Brandan* and others) allows a detailed literary analysis and interpretation to elaborate the motif of 'Buchverlust'. The thesis reveals medieval ideas of 'book' and 'text' that can relate to these stories of loss. The basis of a reflection about medieval book culture is formed by calculations of the transmission loss, the exemplarily visualised loss of manuscripts as well as narrations of imagined loss. The main aim is to reconstruct the medieval discourse about the loss of books.