



VII. Forum Kunst des Mittelalters, Jena, 25. bis 28. September 2024

Licht: Kunst, Metaphysik und Naturwissenschaft im Mittelalter

(Juliane von Fircks, Svea Janzen, Seminar für Kunstgeschichte und Filmwissenschaft der
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena)

Call for Papers

Deadline: 15.11.2023

Details for submission see below

Session 1: Light and Time (Double session)

Session 1.1: Light and Time. Narrating in light and darkness

Session organizer: Christian Freigang (Berlin)

The daily alternation of light and darkness, between sunrise and sunset, rhythmized both secular and spiritual time in the Middle Ages: the opening and closing of city gates corresponded in this respect to the liturgical division of the day, which until the end of the Middle Ages was based on the temporal, not the modern equinoctial, division of hours. Darkness and dawning light were thus closely connected with secular and spiritual rituals and their artistic decoration. Moreover, the course of the sun contained salvation-historical dimensions, insofar as redemption and 'enlightenment' were assumed to come from the east and paradise was accordingly located there, while in the west, at sunset, the mythical region of the Last Judgment was assumed. Such changing light dispositions have influenced certain spatial and pictorial designs. For example, stained glass windows illuminated differently by sunlight depending on the time of day show a striking east-west contrast in some cases, when Christological scenes shine when the sun rises, while in the evening the Last Judgment dominates the light in the west (Sainte-Chapelle in Paris). Double-sided pictorial works inside the room, such as triumphal cross groups, also receive strikingly changing light effects according to the time of day. Riemenschneider's altars in Creglingen and Rothenburg, which were calculated for changing light incidence, are also well-known. In some prayer manuscripts, such as the Très Riches Heures of the Duc de Berry, certain scenes appear in deep darkness because this corresponds to both the scene depicted and the illustrated prayer time (nocturnal Gethsemane miniature for Matins). But also in the area of profane picture cycles, the change from darkness to light can be activated narratologically, for example when in the Viennese Livre d'amour epris only a sunrise - virtuously depicted - allows the protagonists to explain the preceding nocturnal disaster by reading an inscription. Contributions are desired, on the one hand, on spatial dispositions that meaningfully activate various light effects of the sun's course, and, on the other hand, on pictorial representations of this theme, for example, in narratological terms. The focus will be on the meaningful awareness of the relationship between light or darkness and time of day, for example in relation to religious, liturgical or literary temporality. – This first part of the double section addresses the topic in aspect-rich diversity, while the second part (Light and Time II) will focus on the significance of evening light in the church space.

Session 1.2: Light and Time. “Evening Light” in Medieval Churches: Theological, Ritual, and Practical Implications

Session organizer: Daniela Mondini, Mendrisio (CH)

Studies on the symbolism and use of light in the Christian tradition focused on morning and nocturnal liturgical services. Thus, both the notion of “evening light” and its experiencing in medieval churches in the context of Vespers remain unexplored. Found in the oldest preserved Christian hymn — the third-century Phos Hilaron, which the Catholic and Byzantine liturgical traditions made central to their evening rite — the formula “evening light” and the action that accompanied it, namely the lighting of candles, reference the Jewish tradition. Mentioned by Zachariah as a symbol of the Day of the Lord (Zachariah 14:7), “evening light” was welcomed in ancient Israel through the lighting of candles in the Temple (Exodus 30:8). Thus, Vespers emerges as a privileged context for studying how Christian liturgical traditions integrated Jewish precedents, beginning with the notion and use of “evening light.” In addition, the East-West alignment of many medieval churches allowed the setting sun to cast its rays across the length of the nave. Entering the church from a different direction than the morning ones and having a distinct, soft and golden quality, these sunrays brought to the fore specific elements inside the space through interaction with their materiality, texture, and hue (cf. the Purkinje effect). Thus, it is worth exploring how church interiors appeared in the play of soft contrasts created at dusk, and how the lighting of lamps and candles at this time was used to focus attention and establish the consecrated character of specific areas, objects, or people inside the spaces. Finally, in recognizing “evening light” as a concept and phenomenon pertaining to medieval churches, we open the discussion on the changing appearance of church interiors over the daily liturgical cycle and invite consideration of how the morning, evening, and night services complemented each other in a phenomenological perspective. Papers addressing these and other implications of the notion and use of “evening light” in medieval churches are welcome.

Session 2: Semantics of Light and Light Openings in Early Medieval Sacred Buildings

Session organizer: Kristin Böse (Frankfurt am Main)

The façade of early medieval sacral complexes was obviously understood as a sensitive contact zone between the inside and the outside, this world and the next. Shapes and architectural of the window openings, as in the Hatto window (Dommuseum Mainz), inscriptions, but also ornamented window grids testify to the fact that one played with the incident natural light in the interior and at the same time to show sacrality to the outside by regulating accessibility. But the painterly decoration of early medieval architecture, such as in Lorsch, also addresses the relationship to outdoor space.

The session would like to invite contributions that, starting from built and painted facade openings, investigate the semantics of light in early medieval art and architecture. To what extent is sacred space distinguished, structured, transformed by light openings and changing light conditions? How do painted openings and architecturally designed windows reinforce or structure the liturgical experience, or vice versa: how do ritual processes provide semantic points of orientation? What role do transcultural processes play, think for example of the ornamented window grilles in both Muslim and Christian dominated areas of the Iberian Peninsula? Finally, it should also be discussed to what extent insights into the modular role of light in early medieval art can be derived from the remains of wall-paintings, but also from mobile artifacts that refer to the rite (objects of goldsmith's art, illuminated manuscripts).

Session 3: Stained Glass and Light (Double Session)

Session organizers: CVMA Freiburg and Potsdam; Lisa Horstmann (Mainz / Darmstadt)

Due to its special material properties, stained glass is linked to the topic of light like hardly any other genre. For strictly speaking, medieval stained glass is not only painting on glass, but also painting with light. The daylight entering through the windows makes the paintings glow and creates a play of colours that is of timeless fascination.

The achievements in the field of medieval architecture also stemmed from the desire to make use of the special materiality of glass and the visual qualities of coloured window glazing. But theologians, too, often took the contemplation of stained glass as an occasion to elaborate the allegorical and anagogical significance of light, glass and colour in their writings. The research on this is numerous and has decisively shaped art history's views of the genre, as the debate on the role of light metaphysics in the creation of the Gothic cathedral exemplifies. It seems promising to further discuss the interplay between theological-programmatic statements and visual evidence.

In the two sessions, we want to explore in two different directions. The first session will focus on light in sacred space from a perspective that is both culturally and temporally comparative as well as related to the specific building. The second session will be devoted to the specific materiality of coloured glass as an object of medieval (image) theology and inquire into its implementation in pictorial work.

Session 3.1: Light in space – space in light

Session organizers: Maria Deiters (Potsdam), Daniel Parello (Freiburg)

Coloured window glazing is primarily associated with the age of Gothic cathedrals, which became the epitome of medieval architecture of light. Recent research, however, has exposed the idea as wishful thinking that the evolution of Gothic architecture was only stimulated by the study of Neo-Platonic ideas. It is the culmination of a centuries-old endeavour to assign light in its manifold refractions a supporting role in the enclosed space. Suger's famous dictum "about the wonderful and uninterrupted light of the shining stained glass windows" is also exemplary for a series of medieval texts that use light as a starting point for allegorical reflections, but hardly reveal anything about the concrete perception of stained glass and its pictorial content. Nor do they say much about their interaction with the room, its furnishings and its liturgical structure.

One of the aims of this session is to trace the use of light as a creative element across the ages. The changes and continuities of coloured glazing from early church architecture to the increasingly bright late Gothic window designs will be a topic, and an outlook will be given on the Renaissance and Baroque eras, which finally led to a break with the traditional aesthetic ideas. In addition, with a focus on the origins of this art form, coloured light openings in sacred spaces of the Arabic-Islamic cultural area will be thematized.

Analyses of specific sacred spaces and their glazing with regard to concepts of "light direction" are also welcome. How is lighting adapted to the various liturgical functions and how is it used to constitute spatial hierarchies?

What is the relationship between coloured and natural light, illumination and metaphysical interpretation? Is there a correlation between lighting, spatial-hierarchical structuring and the content of stained glass?

Session 3.2: Glass in Light – Light in Glass

Session organizers: Lisa Horstmann (Darmstadt) and Markus Mock (Potsdam)

Numerous medieval sources deal with the preciousness and fragility of stained glass windows. They speak of their beauty, luminosity and colourfulness, but also deal with symbolic meaning and even use glass and light as allegory. For example, Bernard of Clairvaux describes the incarnation of Christ as follows: “Just as the splendour of the sun fills and penetrates the glass [window] without injuring it [...], so the divine Word, the splendour of the Father, entered the virgin chamber.” These and other written sources attest to the high status of glass as a cultural material with specific perceptual-psychological qualities.

In this session, the materiality of the medieval stained glass window will be considered as a central concept for its understanding. It will be asked how the materiality of glass in interaction with light was understood, used and reflected in the Middle Ages. In this context, case studies can be used to examine pictorial programmes and their implementation in stained glass windows in relation to light or to present concrete iconographic aspects. Moreover, it seems promising not only to compare contemporary texts on stained glass with the material evidence, but also to examine quasi self-referential inscriptions and images in the windows themselves that deal with light and glass.

In which way, for example, are pictorial schemes adapted to the medium of stained glass windows? And to what extent does the design refer to the materiality of stained glass in contrast to, for instance, panel painting or manuscript illumination? In what way do the images thematize glass and light? Are stained-glass windows integrated into liturgical practice or other forms of action in the church space because of their metaphysical interpretation? In what correlation is scripture in stained glass windows to its material nature? It may also be instructive to take a comparative look at other translucent materials, such as crystal or precious stones, which were often equated with glass in the Middle Ages.

Session 4: Light and Lampstands in Medieval Churches

Session organizer: Andrea Worm (Tübingen)

The session is dedicated to medieval lighting devices in church interiors. Questions of materiality, design and pictorial programmes will be examined as well as heterological aspects: Who were the actors involved in the creation (donors and artists), what functions did the candlesticks fulfil in liturgy and in personal and institutional memory? Monumental lampstands in particular are often characterised by sophisticated pictorial programmes and materiality. For example, the Romanesque chandelier that stood in the presbytery of Durham Cathedral (the largest known candelabrum of the Middle Ages with a height of over ten metres) was still praised as the most magnificent artefact of the church shortly before its destruction in the 17th century.

Papers can focus on individual artefacts in the sense of case studies; questions of materiality, pictorial programmes and allegory can be addressed (for example, in the case of the seven-armed candlesticks, whose seven lights were associated early on with the Holy Spirit and Pentecost) as well as the position and function of the candlesticks could (at tombs, as Easter candlesticks, in front of the altar of the cross or on the altar). In many cases, the history of medieval lighting devices after the Middle Ages is instructive; therefore contributions on the post-medieval use of such artefacts (often: their destruction) their "rediscovery" and repositioning are also invited.

Session 5: Manufacturing and Manipulating Light in Byzantium: Objects, Diagrams, Architecture

Session organizer: Divna Manolova (Paris)

Sponsored Session Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture

This session is organised around the themes of vision, seeing, and light as central to questions of aesthetics, science, and technology, as well as optics and philosophy in Byzantium. It addresses the treatment and employment of light (natural and artificial, present or absent, manipulated or not) within the medieval disciplinary contexts of metallurgy and alchemy, astronomy, and architecture. By analyzing the practical and symbolic use of light in all four contexts, the session enquires into the ways, in which theories of vision, light, and colour effectively informed the craft of practitioners producing precious metals and stones, drafting diagrammatic renderings of the universe, and designing both the exterior and the interior of ecclesiastical architecture.

To interrogate the disciplinary contexts of metallurgy and alchemy, the session seeks to address the intersection of the study of the natural sciences and artistic production by examining how Byzantine cloisonné enameling techniques reproduce wondrous phenomena found in nature. Byzantine alchemical texts describe enamel's capacity to mimic autonomous light, including the glow of minerals like fluorite and the bioluminescence of fish, explicitly through its process of production. In relation to cosmology and astronomy, the session aims at exploring astronomical diagrams in Byzantine manuscripts, especially those depicting the presence and/or absence of light (eclipse diagrams, diagrams of lunar phases) and at studying the possible impact of Byzantine theories of vision, light, and colour onto the diagrams design, but also onto literary texts on related topics whose employment of light metaphors equally betrays the influence of optical and physical theories. Finally, in order to study material within the remit of architecture and technology, the session seeks to examine the interrelations of Cappadocian landscape, architecture, and light, both artificial and natural. Artificial light seems to have been the privileged light form in the interiors of many churches and other rock-cut edifices, while at the same time natural light impacts the perception of their façades (sometimes decorated) depending on the time of day, vantage point, and placement within the landscape.

Session 6: Light on Sculpture

Session organizer: Jacqueline E. Jung (Yale)

As an artfully shaped three-dimensional object, a work of sculpture assumes different appearances depending on where it stands within a given spatial environment and the angle(s) from which beholders apprehend it. Contours morph, volumes project or recede, and, in figural arts, the focal points of gestures and gazes seem to shift as a viewer moves through a sculpture's space – and even more so when a sculpture is transplanted from its original site into a museum. No less powerful in shaping the appearance of a sculpture than its spatial positioning is its illumination – the play of light and shadows along its borders, its projections, its hollows. Although medieval sculptors who fashioned images in stone and wood for placement inside and on the exteriors of churches surely reckoned with the uneven and variable lighting conditions under which their works would be encountered, scholarship has been slow to address this crucial component of their creations.

This session invites considerations of how lighting affects the appearances, and thus meanings, of large-scale sculptural images in stone or wood from any period of the European

Middle Ages. These may include free-standing works such as wayside crosses or other commemorative monuments; stone sculptures on portals or other exterior areas of churches, which catch the sunlight in particular ways; architectural sculptures inside buildings, which would be subject to fleeting forms of natural or artificial illumination; moveable cult statues, whose levels of visibility would change dramatically when brought out of a church for public processions; and carved altarpieces, whose illumination by lamps, candles, and windows would enhance not only the figures' material configurations but also their surface polychromy, gilding, and other decorations.

Along with thinking about the spatial and temporal aspects of sculptures' responsiveness to light in their medieval context, presenters might also consider the transformative role of lighting in modern forums, for example in museum galleries or photographic reproductions.

Session 7: Goldsmithing and lighting effects. Manipulating shadows, the diaphanous and transparency

Session organizer: Pierre Alain Mariaux (Neufchâtel)

To what extent is the perception of the medieval reliquary subject to an economy of light metaphorically understood as a sacred presence? The contributions in this session will look at how goldsmith's objects, especially *vasa sacra et non sacra* react to light, whether artificial or natural, when displayed on the altar, placed in fixed or temporary display devices, or moved during processions. We will also analyze how this external illumination relates to the figuration and materialization of interior light, as manifested on the object itself by the implementation of luminous materials (Gold, Silver, etc.), rock crystal windows, or the presence of precious stones. The proposed analysis cannot be separated from the biography of the objects under investigation.

The staging of light in and around the reliquary reveals presence without fixing it. The manipulation of light produces vibrating, scintillating or shimmering effects that create diaphanous impressions; this is an express condition for constructing the visual rhetoric of sanctity (C. Hahn). Set on a reliquary, for example, the colored gemstones—mainly emeralds, amethysts, and sapphires, but also sard with their liquid effects—express its purely luminous dimension, while the rock crystal forms a membrane between the celestial and the terrestrial (Rev 4, 6). The object unveils the double dimension of a screen: it both conceals and reveals, making full use of its diaphanous quality.

Contributions, which may be submitted in German, English, French or Italian, on the relationship between materiality and light are welcome, with a particular focus on goldsmith's objects. Contributions may focus for example on the study of artificial and/or natural light in the place of worship and its consequences on the perception of reliquaries, particularly during their display and ostension. The question of textual sources dealing specifically with the perception of reliquaries in situ should also be considered.

Session 8: “Shining with Truth”: Silver as Material and Medium

Session organizers: Joseph Salvatore Ackley (Middletown, Connecticut) und Joshua O'Driscoll (New York)

Sponsored Session ICMA – International Center of Medieval Art

Recent discussions of medieval materiality have enthusiastically explored such touchstones as gold and precious gems, sumptuous *media par excellence* whose dazzling brilliance triggered

an endlessly rich array of meanings for medieval viewers. The preciousness and aesthetic impact of these materials rested in large part on their ability to manipulate and reflect light. The resulting radiance enabled a variety of perceptual modes, from the sensual to the mystical, the mechanics of which medieval thinkers repeatedly investigated with gusto. While gold and gemstones have been at the center of key art-historical inquiries (one thinks of recent work on gold-ground painting, jeweled reliquaries, and treasure bindings), silver has received significantly less attention as a focused object of study. Although a close peer to gold, silver exhibits different working properties, produces different visual effects, and carries different allegorical valences. The dominant traditions of natural philosophy often defined the two precious metals in contrast to each other: whereas gold was believed to be of a warm nature, for example, silver's elemental composition caused it to be cool. Gold and some gemstones could strengthen the sense of sight, whereas silver had different bodily impacts. Much of the commentary on silver fixated on its variable levels of purity as, for example, in Psalm 11: "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried by the fire ... refined seven times." Pursuing the analogy, Cassiodorus describes the luster of the Divine Word as if it were a metal "fired in a furnace, shining with the ruddy glow of truth." Despite this rhetoric of purity, however, silver is quite famously susceptible to tarnish and oxidation, rendering it a more finicky material for book and panel painting. In sum, the questions of visibility and materiality that have been so productive for gold and gemstones are equally rich for silver, and yet this material has been somewhat sidelined by scholarship, despite crucial contributions by Herbert Kessler, Thomas Raff, and Nancy Turner, among others. Mindful thereof, this panel invites submissions that explore the nature and significance of silver, particularly when used as a medium in manuscript illumination, panel painting, and metalwork. Questions of the visual characteristics of silver, including its interaction with light, can expand in a variety of directions. Topics might include, and are very much not limited to, traditions of silver-ground painting; the oxidation of silver; the rhetoric of tarnish and darkness; the natural philosophy of silver, especially with regards to optics, sight and the body; the allegorical interpretations of silver, for example, its relationship to sweetness, purity, and eloquence; *Zwischgold*, *electrum*, and other interactions with gold; the various treatments of silver pigment and silver leaf on both parchment and panel; and more.

Session 9: In Its True Light: Problems and Perspectives of Research on Medieval Enamels (9th–15th c.)

Session organizer: Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie (Gießen)

Medieval enamel works are among the most sophisticated artefacts of the Middle Ages. They can be associated with the highest-ranking patrons and were occasionally even – and very early – signed. However, the state of research does not reflect their significance, not least due to insufficient photographic documentation. Enamels cannot shine without light, which is particularly evident for translucent enamel, but also applies to opaque enamel. Photographs are often misleading, e.g., when supposedly more important parts of artworks are optimally illuminated, while their enamels literally remain in the dark (e.g., icon frames with enamel medallions vs. painting). Thorough research requires, therefore, the examination of the artworks, even though different colours of artificial light and reflections from the enamels' metal backgrounds, some of which are in relief, present further challenges. The difficult access to medieval enamels in numerous international collections is a research problem that is becoming even more acute in view of the recent crisis-related travel restrictions. As a result, misconceptions circulate in the research literature, such as the confusion of enamel and niello. Furthermore, colour designations are often vague, although precise

information on enamel colours and shades can yield clues for localisation and processes of exchange. One example is the "lavender tone" of Gothic translucent enamels of the 14th century, which according to new photographs is also found on Byzantine enamels of that century. This provides additional evidence for the distribution of "fashionable trends" in Byzantium and the West. In general, greater consideration must be given to the analysis of techniques, materials and craftsmanship in order to avoid the often occurring confusion of technical prerequisites and stylistic characteristics. Interdisciplinary, networked research in the sense of "technical art history" must, therefore, be significantly expanded for medieval enamel.

Systematic approaches to recording and documentation have already been made (D. Kemper, L. Lambacher) and will be explored again in this section, especially with regard to the role of light and light-dependent analysis and documentation procedures in the study of medieval enamel art. Presentations representing different disciplines and approaches are welcome, e.g. art history, material analysis/archaeometry and history of science, as well as photographic documentation methods. The aim is to put previous research to the test and to develop new perspectives and standards for research.

Session 10: Light Phenomena and Light Effects in German Painting of the Late Middle Ages

Session organizer: Svea Janzen (Jena)

The spirit of discovery and inventiveness with which painters in the German-speaking lands from 1420 onward put light phenomena into the picture are still outshone today by the light-mimetic achievements of their Netherlandish colleagues. The session is dedicated to this less explored, original approach to light. It will be explored how representations of light and light-like effects in German painting of the 15th and early 16th centuries are carriers of emotional expression, idiosyncratic aesthetics, as well as narrative and theological content, and in the process provide stimulus for the development of new types of artistic design.

As early as around 1420, tiny manuscript illuminations in southern Germany depict shimmering sunrises and, from 1430, light-reflecting water surfaces. Earlier than elsewhere in Europe, the reproduction of cast shadows from Dutch painting is taken up in book, glass, and panel paintings in German-speaking countries. But for the following decades, the discovery of light did not merely provide inspiration for mimetic surface depiction, but for an imaginative approach to metallic overlays, color application, and coloration. The interest in light phenomena encompasses much more than just the consistent reproduction of a light source and its effect, but applies to reflections on water, weather phenomena, diurnal and seasonal representations, as well as metaphysical phenomena. Light-like effects through the use of leaf metals, hallmarks, varnishes, or even pressed brocade, as well as through special color application and luminous colorfulness create idiosyncratic styles and engage the viewer emotionally. Finally, in the visionary light appearances of the painters of the early 16th century, light is staged as a metaphysical force in spectacular color and chiaroscuro designs. We are looking for contributions that deal with unusual concepts and representations of light phenomena as well as with the creation of light effects in painting and the design of image carriers. Possible questions are: How do representations of light phenomena situate themselves between sacred splendor and psychological content, pictorial narrative, representation, and aesthetic design? How do representations of light and the creation of light-like effects enhance the "art" character of a work? How do representations of light, weather, and temporality (time of day, time of year, time spans) intertwine? How are lightness and

darkness calculated? Which possibly new means of color application or for the design of e.g. gold grounds are used for light-like effects?

Session 11: (In)visible – Monochrome Textiles in the Middle Ages

Session organizers: Dominique Wyss, Lea Hunkeler (Riggisberg)

Sponsored Session Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg

Exhibited in scarcely lit rooms, textile objects today are protected from light as much as possible. Prolonged exposure to intensive light causes irreversible damage to their fibres and colours. Nevertheless, medieval fabrics fascinate us with their magnificent appearance. However, their full effect only unfolds in the right light. Depending on the production technique of the textiles, numerous visual effects are created when the incident beams of light are differently reflected or absorbed by the surface texture of the material. With impressive skill, various textile crafts throughout the ages have made use of a nearly endless repertory of effect-enhancing features. Costly materials such as silk, metal threads and glass beads or pearls were skillfully combined with technical know-how. Various matte and shiny effects were created and colour nuances decisively expanded.

Considering these perception-enhancing possibilities, monochrome textiles are particularly impressive. At first glance, they stand apart by their apparently unspectacular surfaces. Their magic is revealed only through movement and the changing incidence of light, whereupon their initially invisible patterns appear. The textile realization of monochrome designs could be achieved through various materials and techniques. Made into liturgical vestments, clothing or interior furnishings, monochrome silk fabrics, linen damasks, or whitework embroideries document the wide range of possible uses in both sacred and profane contexts. This panel intends to discuss the specific characteristics of this group of textiles within the scope of their manufacturing possibilities but also with respect to their significance. We invite proposals for papers that focus on the properties and impact of monochrome textiles and situate these in the art historical discourse.

Session 12: Splendor Librorum – the Radiance of Books. Books, Light, and Movement

Session organizers: Thomas Rainer, Sabrina Schmid, Katharina Theil (Zürich)

Sponsored Session: SNF-Research Project: “Textures of Sacred Scripture”, Zürich

All three Abrahamic book religions closely associate the written word of God with light and luminosity and their scriptures were often seen as luminous or light-emitting media. To give just one example: in the Christian liturgy of the early Middle Ages, the entry of the Gospel book into the sanctuary and its procession to the altar and ambo were always accompanied by candle bearers. A wide variety of materials and surface-enhancing techniques were used to make the splendor of the books visible and sensually tangible.

In this process, light, writing support, and script interacted in various ways, and the luminous quality of books in codex format was decisively shaped by the movement, not only of the closed book itself, but also of its pages as they were turned. The interplay of different light sources, movement, and the materiality of reflective and transparent surfaces determined the visual experience and affordance of sacred book objects.

Gold and silver covers, silk bindings and veils, and the color play of translucent or opaque precious stones on the outer skin of the books created variegated iridescent and luminescent effects. These guided the perception of the books as media for the embodied experience of

light in liturgical performances. Texts written and polished in gold and silver ink, which became visible when the codices were opened and pages were turned, manifested themselves in a fluctuating tension between script and writing surface, in the floating of the shiny letters over the often purple background. On a practical level, there was a tension between the legibility of the text and the brightness of its material support which was addressed early on in medieval sources. For example, Isidore (Etym. 6, 11, 2) reports that bright white parchment should be avoided because its shining effect, like gilded library ceilings, tires the eyes and hinders a refreshing reading experience.

Topics of particular interest are:

- Luminous effects through different techniques of precious metal work such as polishing, engraving, burnishing, and tooling both on bindings and parchment pages.
- the combination of various materials with different luminosity as an ornamental strategy
- “Varietas” in light and color of precious stones on bindings and their painted evocation inside the book.
- Iridescence and brilliance caused by movement (either of the books and pages themselves or light sources)
- Combinations of color, brilliance, and transparency effects across the various surfaces of books.
- Splendor of books in liturgical use – the staging of light sources and books in liturgical performances
- Lighting and legibility
- Representation of light sources in book arts.

We also welcome approaches that combine material analysis through spectroscopic methods with investigations of the different luminous effects of book ornament in a multidisciplinary way.

Session 13: Luminous writing: On Materiality and Reception of Light in Inscriptions

Session organizer: Franziska Wenig (Heidelberg)

In the inscriptions of the late antique and early medieval apse mosaics in Rome, light and the manifold forms of its expression (sparkling, shining, shimmering) play a decisive role in both the material and the figurative sense: self-referentially, they bear witness to the (restored) church building together with its magnificent design (mosaic) and provide information about their donors, who mostly hoped for intercession for their salvation. The mosaics of Ss. Cosma e Damiano, S. Stefano Rotondo, S. Agnese flm. or S. Maria in Domnica may be considered significant examples.

In order for the inscriptions to develop their full effect, their reflection of light was not only influenced by setting the tesserae at different angles, thus creating a vivid image, but also in the process of producing the small stones themselves: From the 1st century AD, the glass could be supplemented with wafer-thin gold foils. A coloured background additionally controlled the effect of the gold: yellow glass intensified the hue, red achieved a warm effect and green enhanced the shimmer – the effect of the material was thus decisive and was actively influenced.

With the help of its material presence, the inscription designed in this way takes on a function that it describes itself. The sparkle, shine and gleam become visible in the sacred space in written and pictorial form. But the horizon of meaning goes even further: through the combination of technique and material, the donors succeed in demonstrating their power (Caroline J. Goodson), which is supposed to take second place to their veneration of the saints. Another field opens up when the light conveyed in material, writing and image is seen

in relation to divine light or as a connecting moment to transcendent spheres (Barbara Schellewald).

Starting with the example of inscriptions in apse mosaics, this session will broaden the scope of observation. Can the phenomena described also be observed far away from the sanctuary and the Christian cult? Can similar phenomena be found, for example, in the material culture of Islam or Judaism, and what significance is attributed to them? Does the linking of material presence and written reference to light also take place in other media and groups of objects such as inscription bands inside and outside of the sacred space, as inscriptions in stained glass, on liturgical objects, on shrines, reliquaries, candelabras and much more? And to what extent is the theme of light also treated epigraphically on artefacts in the High and Late Middle Ages?

Session 14: Mirror and reflection

Session organizer: Gia Toussaint (Wolfenbüttel)

The mirror as a medium of light and as an optical instrument literally illuminates things. Of particular interest is the distance between “reality” and what the mirror reflects. The Roman de la Rose is familiar with its various properties and associated irritations: a mirror can magnify, diminish, turn things upside down, or reproduce true proportions; it can reflect sunlight, burn things, or multiply them (vv. 18153–18285). In addition to its optical qualities, the novel also knows of dangers: the fateful gaze of Narcissus into the mirror “whereby he then fell down dead” (v. 1574) or the mirror held by Oiseuse, Idleness.

The mirror has an inherent ambivalence, especially when it serves as a reflector. If believers used it as a pilgrimage mirror to capture salvation during relic presentations, Paul knows of its mysteriousness: *videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate tunc autem facie ad faciem* (1 Cor 13:12). This much-interpreted apostle word points out that looking into the mirror does not only show what is visible, but is opposed to it. But what does the mirror show? More than reflection and mirror image, for example, if the mirrored person recognizes himself as a fool in the mirror image? What about the visualization of the hidden or the transcendent? Is it a magical instrument, one that even knows about past and future? And what does a mirror do? In this case, too, the answer is manifold: it holds knowledge, but also deception or transformation.

Further, it is to be asked, who looks into the mirror, who should look into the mirror and who holds the mirror up to whom. Mirrors belonged to the luxury goods, not available to everyone. However, its function was well known, so that a number of metaphorical and moral ideas were attached to it, depending on whose hands the mirror was in. Allegorically embodied by Venus, Luxuria, Superbia, Frau Welt, or Fortuna, the question arises as to why hardly any men served as bearers of mirror and reflection.

The session will focus on the different functions, effects, and metaphorical-allegorical attributions of meaning of this optical instrument (which is as simple as it is effective), its artistic implementation, and the relevant technological knowledge.

Session 15: Tenebrae / Darkness

Session organizer: Wolfgang Augustyn (München)

Light and its opposite, the absence of light as darkness or gloom, are part of the reality of human life. In the Middle Ages, this was hardly perceived as a phenomenon of nature; rather,

this condition was often recognized as having a special meaning. Darkness, the alternation of day and night, was associated with the absence of good, with horror, disaster, death and the realm of the dead. The absence of light was equated with the absence of God, the onset of darkness or the stay in darkness was interpreted as punishment and damnation.

For the artists of the Middle Ages, the depiction of this condition presented a unique creative challenge: How should the absence of light be represented? The pictorial arts attest to a wealth of different local, temporal or technical possibilities that were tried out, for example, to express the absence of light, the darkness, in narrative scenes or within pictorial sequences, using painterly or graphic means.

The relevant pictorial themes include Cosmic phenomena (due to divine direction) and events connoted with light/darkness: the creation of light, the separation of light and darkness, in representations of the biblical creation account, the Christmas night of Christ's birth, the darkening of the sky during the hour of Christ's death, or events related to the end of the world described in the Apocalypse (the eclipsed sun, the darkened stars), but also the Old Testament "plague of darkness". Above all, hell and limbo are places of darkness that were impressively depicted in representations of the Last Judgment as a chilling reminder.

Especially at Easter, the theme in the liturgy became the light coming from God, to which darkness and gloom must give way. In addition, the inability to perceive light in blindness also became a theme in which the absence of sight and miraculous healings could play a role....

Welcome are contributions that take into account the theme of "darkness" as the opposite of light in all aspects.

Session 16: Illuminating Shadows

Session organizer: Saskia C. Quené (Tübingen)

As Cennino Cennini noted in his *Libro dell'Arte*, even gold leaf has a dark side. Both appearance forms can be observed in panel paintings and illuminated manuscripts. However, scholarship has traditionally highlighted gold leaf's translucent, reflective, and refractive qualities and emphasized its metaphorical and metaphysical luminosity. Meanwhile, shadows played significant roles in medieval culture: Virgin Mary got "overshadowed" by the Holy Spirit in the presence of the angel Gabriel (Lk 1,35), optical treatises from the 12th century onwards discussed shadows as natural phenomena, and the moon cast its shadow on the sphere of the earth. The worldly realm becomes the "umbra futurorum."

The section "Illuminating Shadows" invites contributions exploring shadows in relation to specific artistic materials and techniques (precious metals, relief, sculpture, architecture), iconographies (representations of the Holy Spirit, clouds, eclipses), or as discussed in written sources (on astronomy, cosmology, geometry, optics). In doing so, papers might address the following questions: Where, how, and when were shadows (in)visible? How do and did shadow effects guide the production and perception of artifacts? How can we understand shadows iconographically (and theologically) beyond their opposition to light? How do Latin and Arabic treatises concerned with catoptrical and dioptrical phenomena refer to penumbrae, shades, and shadows? Which consequences follow from these investigations for the (photographic) (re)presentation of medieval artifacts in publications or exhibition spaces?

Session 17: Controlled strategies in the production and reception aesthetic treatment of daylight and artificial light (Double Session)

Session organizers: Vera Henkelmann (Erfurt), Heike Schlie (Krems), Stefan Bürger (Würzburg).

This double session will focus on the use of daylight and artificial light, both medieval strategies of light use and our scholarly handling of artifacts and sources in order to understand and qualify these strategies: A discussion encompassing both parts of the session will compare the strategies exemplified in individual presentations as well as the working methods.

On a methodological level, it should be asked how structures or traces of intentional light staging can be recognized, described, and evaluated. To what extent can qualities of dealing with different light be described, for example, as illuminating (making something more visible through light, presenting it), exposing (filling it with light or making it appear through light, visualizing it), illuminating (making something appear meaningful through light or producing and embodying something significant, representing it, immortalizing it), and/or illuminating (making something appear meaningful through light)? (to make something appear meaningful through light, or to produce and embody something significant, to represent, to perpetuate) and/or to illuminate (to effect something in the observer through "divine" light, to activate, to transform, to heal, to sanctify, to deify)? Can criteria and categories be named in order to make a medieval light culture - various actions in dealing with light - more comprehensible in architectural, pictorial and written sources?

In a first step, the double session aims to assemble contributions that elaborate specific, intentional strategies of how daylight and artificial light were used in the production and reception of artifacts and architecture as a factor in creating effects and meaning, what alliances light, space, and material things formed, what properties and attributions to light were focused on in each case-and especially how this elaboration was carried out in terms of work technique and method.

Light made the world and reality visible and with its immanent qualities recognizable as God's creation, but beyond that it also made it possible to let transcendent ideas of God's spheres of power and actions appear beyond the things visible in the light, but in the end remained incomprehensible like God himself. Did the light effects serve only the attention control for the quality increase of the material or a constituting of the immaterial - and which findings serve us to recognize and distinguish such handling?

Although light cannot be processed like a material, specific effects of daylight and artificial light can be constituted medially in the processing of material as well as with forms of light direction. The basic assumption is that the effect of light (as a liminal phenomenon) was used in the Middle Ages to constitute interfaces between immanence and transcendence on the material and the artifacts. The most radical case would be, as it were, that an artifact is not primarily created to come to appearance itself, but to give shape to light at its thingness and/or materiality.

The productive use of light as a medium is largely dependent on the quality, availability, and semantic valence of the light source, which is why this double session would be devoted to phenomena of daylight in the first session (17.1) and phenomena of artificial light in the second session (17.2). Daylight and artificial light differ mainly according to their change and availability.

The question here would be: Can specific characteristics be identified in order to activate daylight or artificial light in different ways in terms of production and reception aesthetics through controlled strategies in each case? "Controlled" here means the simultaneously intentional and successful handling of the materiality of the location/object with regard to the specific artistry of the lighting direction as well as with the associated meaning-giving and meaning-increasing immaterial performance characteristics.

Session 17.1 on Daylight

Session organizers: Heike Schlie (Krems), Stefan Bürger (Würzburg)

In this session, special interest will be given to the light emanating directly from God, embodying the divine/action as a transmitting, transforming or transcending component of controlled artistic strategies. Special importance will be given to the consideration of light as an actant overcoming borders and thresholds and to the liminal phases that occur in this process and to those effects concerning liminality that affect the quality of light itself but also the illuminated/transilluminated materials, the real and virtually visualized image/spaces and actions.

Session 17.2 on artificial light

Session organizers: Vera Henkelmann (Erfurt), Stefan Bürger (Würzburg)

In this session, the particularly efficient strategies of the use of artificial light, which go beyond purely practical concerns, will be presented and examined. Here we are interested in how, with the help of artificial light sources and staging in the relationship triangle of light-space-human, urban, architectural and visual art settings create and model urban/image/action spaces, how thresholds and atmospheres and thus specific visual spaces of experience can be created, in which attention and actions can be controlled, values presented and represented. The question to be asked here is whether and how, if applicable, transformative or transcending effects differ from those of daylight or not.

Session 18: 'Light'- and 'Soundscapes'. Conceptualizing Medieval Liturgies Through Light and Sound

Session organizers: Joanna Olchawa (Princeton / Frankfurt am Main) and Irene Holzer (Munich)

Meaningful, ephemeral events and practices such as masses and nocturnal offices, processions, and (liturgical) drama in the Middle Ages are geared towards an aural reception that emphasizes seeing and hearing simultaneously. The effectiveness of the ritual action is often only realized through the production of light and sound (such as singing and carrying candles) as well as participation in the sacred event that is staged through them. With the use of arranged or rather enacted sound—as a generic term for music, chant, and speech acts—as well as light, a purposeful accentuation is achieved; together or separately, they contribute to the creation of dramatic contrasts (e.g., light/dark, loud/quiet), the allocation of meaning, or even the formation of a sense of community (among those present, but also with the imagined transcendence). Within the resulting 'lightsapes' (Bille/Sørensen 2007) and 'soundscapes' (Murray Schafer 1977), the material dimension plays a crucial role. The objects involved serve a variety of functions, ranging from practical furnishings and devices (lamps, sound generators), intentionally deployed props, to dramaturgical centers and markers of numinosity (such as the crosses carried, praised, and illuminated during processions). Space, however, is not only a place of action and structuring element, but also an artistically designed backdrop and stage. This is evident, for instance, during the Easter Vigil with the lighting of the Easter candle and the singing of the Exultet, or during the reading of the Gospels at the so-called

Ambon of Henry II in Aachen, where the light shimmering through its rock crystal elements staged 'the divine word' in all of its metaphorical luminosity. Moreover, in addition to the obligatory praise of God, both music as decorative soundscape and the discursive interpretation of the experienced light rituals resounded in the chants.

This session is interested in questions of aurality or the specific interplay of illuminative and auditory elements as they pertain to objects and spaces from around 500–1500: on which levels of the dramatic, performative, and sensual are light and sound (whether complementary or contrasting) embedded? How do they change perception and participation, influence what is seen and what is heard? We also welcome contributions that address ceremonies beyond Christian traditions or reflect on theories of practice/performance that account for material dimensions.

Session 19: Synchrotron radiation based techniques for the investigation of medieval objects

Session organizers: Josef Hormes (Bonn)

Whenever we talk about “light”, most of the time we think of the tiny range of the electromagnetic spectrum for which our eyes are sensitive! However, we know that there is “light” that is undetectable for our eyes. That is, for example, the infrared, that we feel as heat on our skin, the ultraviolet, mainly responsible for sunburns and finally X-rays, that are used mainly for diagnostic purposes in medical science. Synchrotron radiation, the “light” that is emitted from electrons moving with nearly the speed of light on macroscopic circular orbits in electron accelerators (betatrons, synchrotrons, storage rings) covers all these ranges - from infrared till the hard X-ray range- without any gaps. Specifically, in the X-ray range, synchrotron radiation is by far the most powerful “light source”.

This property together with a collimation similar to a laser pointer and the tunability of the energy make synchrotron radiation an outstanding light source not only for the improvement of well-established X-ray techniques but also for the development of “new” techniques. Well – established techniques (e.g. X-ray fluorescence) are significantly improved regarding spatial resolution (micrometer and nanometer range) and detection limits for elements (parts-per-billion). “New techniques” are, for example, X-ray absorption spectroscopy and element specific X-ray tomography. For recording X-ray absorption spectra, the photo absorption cross section is measured as a function of energy in a range close to the absorption energy of an inner shell electron of a specific element. These spectra provide detailed element specific chemical and structural information about the chosen atomic species, for example, about the formal valency of the chosen atomic species but also about type, number and distances of the neighboring atoms.

All techniques that are mentioned here can be applied for the investigation of all sorts of samples (metals, ceramic, building materials, paintings, textiles...). In general, these techniques don't require a specific preparation of samples, they are “nondestructive” and can be applied with just a few hundred milligrams of the sample if the sample itself cannot be brought to a synchrotron radiation laboratory. In general, the elemental composition of samples as determined by X-ray fluorescence provides information about the provenance of the samples and the starting materials respectively. Very often, the chemical/mineralogical/structural information derived from X-ray absorption spectra indicate details of the techniques applied for fabricating a sample and quite often information is also obtained for a sensible and suitable cleaning, restauration, and conservation of the samples. Over the last years, these techniques have been applied for the investigation of objects from various cultural areas from the stone age and the medieval times till modern art objects.

For this session, specifically appreciated are contributions that report on the application of a synchrotron radiation-based or comparable specific light-based techniques for the investigation of medieval objects.

Proposals for presentations of max. 200 words (plus contact details) can be submitted until November 15, 2023 at kontakt@dvfk-berlin.de.

The selection of the sessions will take place in January 2024.

A maximum of three speakers (presentation of approx. 20 minutes each) are scheduled per session.

Papers received after 15.11.2023 will not be considered.

For more information, visit kontakt@dvfk-berlin.de.