

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research guide grew out of a need to provide students of medieval history with an up-to-date and convenient tool for studying Germany and its empire in the Middle Ages that went beyond simple bibliographies or lists of source collections. I have endeavored to combine the best features of an advanced bibliographic research guide with the best tools of the Information Age, including links to Internet resources, databases, and institutional homepages, which are now essential tools of academic research. But I have also included directories and finding aids for manuscript and art historical material, with overviews of key research institutions, manuscript libraries, and archives. Hopefully, this guide will prove to be a flexible, enduring, and useful aid in a time when technology and the world of electronic information and research resources are changing dramatically.

Compiling a guide to institutions and scholarly resources for medieval historical studies in Germany presents a set of unique challenges. Europe, particularly where medieval studies are concerned, is ever more difficult to regard as simply an assemblage of individual nation-states, each with its own academies and historical institutions and traditions. As this field, along with others in the humanities and social sciences, embraces more kinds of multinational collaboration, as well as more interdisciplinary methods, proposing a research guide for something called “Medieval German History” raises questions right from the outset: what, exactly, are the parameters of “Germany” when it comes to medieval history, and how ought we delimit “history” as a discipline?

In conceptualizing the parameters and goals of this handbook, I felt it was appropriate to envision the boundaries of what we might consider “German” and “historical” as broadly as possible without attempting to compete directly with, or outdo, the much more comprehensive research guides on individual areas or subjects already available to students. My intended audience includes graduate students and scholars who may be approaching medieval German topics for the first time or are getting started on a dissertation or similar research project and need to gain a basic familiarity with the tools of German *Mediävistik*, starting with discussions of current historiographical and methodological questions in the German academy. I have listed works in English, German, Italian, and some French but assume that my reader is primarily an English speaker with a good reading knowledge of German and maybe some Italian. Therefore, this guide constitutes a broad, but hardly exhaustive, overview of research aids and bibliographies. It also provides directories of key

libraries, archives, and institutions in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy, the former lands of the Holy Roman Empire, which actively support study of the medieval period. It is a place, in other words, to get started, but also to accompany the successful completion of historical research projects.

Because the medieval “German” empire once encompassed lands that are today part of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy, there are libraries and institutions in all of these countries that preserve “German” medieval history in some way. I am aware, of course, that regions like Alsace, Bohemia, the Low Countries, as well as parts of Poland and Slovenia, were at various times part of the medieval German empire as well. But in the interests of keeping the length and scope of this guide reasonable, I have chosen to place the emphasis primarily on the German and trans-Alpine areas, though I have included material on the Baltics and the lands of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia. To be sure, this will not satisfy all readers or users, but at least a cognizance of these omissions and limitations might be of some value.

The medieval German empire—however one defines its political borders over time—was a dynamic and multicultural environment, with Germanic, Nordic, Slavic, and Romance-speaking peoples interacting along frontiers and in places like markets, universities, and courts. In the bibliographic sections in particular, I have tried to highlight sources which enable us to pursue especially questions and problems arising from this complexity. The research centers listed here include places like the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung and the Institut für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas im Mittelalter which emphasize the study of cross-cultural contacts and interactions. Jewish culture was an important part of the fabric of the medieval empire, and I have endeavored to include literature and research aids on Jewish history here as well.

History has always been an interdisciplinary subject. Its sources are not only textual narratives, but charters, seals, manuscripts, archaeological remains, and art images, to name a few. Moreover, the types of questions we raise about these sources and the past are increasingly informed by other social scientific, humanistic, and technical disciplines, particularly gender studies, anthropology, sociology, environmental studies, media, and literary studies. I have not provided resources for all these fields individually in a comprehensive way but have attempted to highlight interdisciplinary works and, especially, institutions, wherever possible.

As scholars in the field are also well aware, defining “medieval” is a sticky wicket. Again, in order to keep the parameters of this handbook within a reasonable frame, I elected to follow the conventional chronological range for “Mittelalter” as defined by the *Monumenta Germaniae*

Historica, namely ca. 500–1500 AD, or roughly from the rise of the Frankish Merovingian dynasty to the eve of the Reformation.

Finally, any manual of this type today must take into account the astounding amount of information that can be accessed through the Internet. My text provides links to library catalogs, institutional homepages, and online bibliographic and source material. I have been fairly selective in doing so, however, recognizing that web links, and the information superhighway in general, are ephemeral things. Links expire. Servers and hosting services change hands or go out of business. In an effort to keep this work as current as possible for as long as possible, I have listed web links to pages and resources that I think are likely to endure in their present location for some time, but this is never certain. *Caveat lector*.

A number of people contributed their time, patience, and knowledge to this project. First, I would like to thank the German Historical Institute, and especially its director Christof Mauch, for providing the impetus and opportunity to compile this guide, and editor Patricia Casey Sutcliffe for her expert review of every entry. I would like also to thank in particular my undergraduate research assistant at Pomona College, Kristen Rasmussen, who helped me begin the daunting task of compiling much of the information that you see here. Along the way, I benefited from the advice and encouragement of a number of scholars and friends. Prof. Michael Borgolte at the Humboldt University in Berlin, as well as his assistant, Michael Brauer, provided helpful advice on a number of issues, as did Prof. Patrick J. Geary at UCLA. I am also very grateful to the support, references, and advice I received throughout the process from Prof. Dr. Helmut Flackenecker (Würzburg), Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schmitz (Munich), Dr. Christoph Sonnlechner and Dr. Paul Herold (Vienna), Dr. Helmut Reimitz (Vienna), Dot. Emanuele Curzel (Trento), and Dr. Jochen Johrendt (Rome).

Pomona, California
December 2006

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