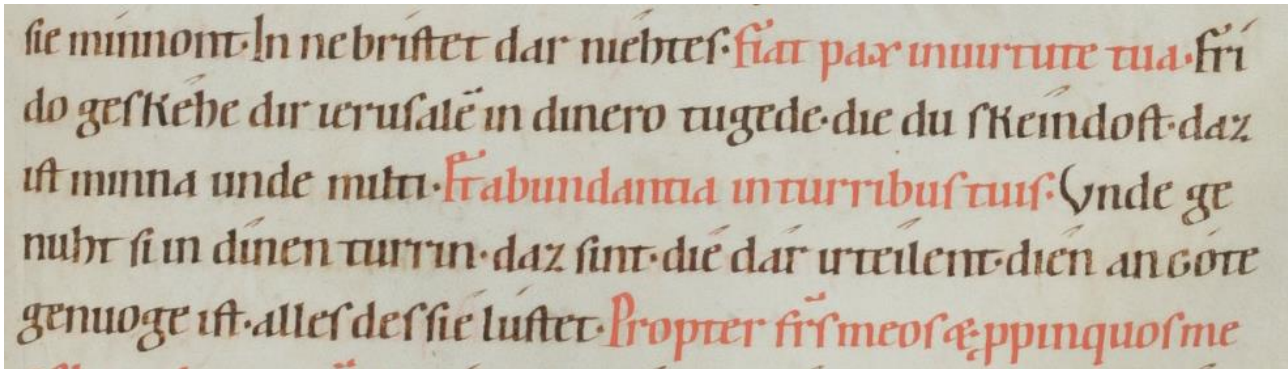


CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:

Fiat pax – Desiring Peace in Medieval Literatures



Translation of *Psalm* 121,7 by Notker († 1022)
Saint Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 21, p. 487 (1125/1150)

Title: *Fiat pax* – Desiring Peace in Medieval Literatures

Place: MISHA, Campus of the University of Strasbourg

Date: 17 and 18 June 2022

Languages: English, French, German

Organization and scientific committee: Peter Andersen, Fanny Moghaddassi, Muriel Ott (Strasbourg)

External members of the scientific committee: Philippe Haugeard (Orléans), Klaus Ridder (Tübingen), Martine Yvernault (Limoges)

Funding: LETHICA, UR 1337, UR 2325, UR 3400

Coverage: travel expenses and accommodation

Keynote speakers

Brigitte Burrichter, professor (University of Würzburg): “Friedensaspekte in der *Historia Regum Britanniae* und im *Roman de Brut*”

Patrick del Duca, professor (University of Clermont-Auvergne): “Paix et ruptures de paix dans le *Willehalm* de Wolfram von Eschenbach”

Ármann Jakobsson, professor (University of Reykjavik): “Suing for Peace: The historiographer Sturla Þórðarson and his contemporary sagas as ideological documents”

Submission of proposals

Form: title along with short abstract and short CV (max. 1 page)

Deadline: 15.01.2022

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This call for papers is available online: <https://lethica.unistra.fr/>.

Outline and Guidelines

As part of the “ITI 2021-2028” program, the University of Strasbourg hosts an international conference entitled “*Fiat pax – Desiring Peace in Medieval Literatures*” (17th-18th June 2022). The conference is organized by three members of LETHICA: an ‘Institut Thématique Interdisciplinaire’ (ITI) labeled by the University of Strasbourg, the ‘Centre national de la recherche scientifique’ (CNRS), and the ‘Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale’ (Inserm). LETHICA, involved in education and research aims to create new bridges and synergies between the academic fields of arts, literature, social science and research in the domains of health and biology. This conference is part of the “moral revolutions” issue and takes place within the “historical approach” research perspective. The participants will pay particular attention to the ethical anchoring of the theme of peace in these two LETHICA problematics.

Medieval narrative texts, marked by a culture of honor and the sublimation of heroism, indeed provide fertile ground for reflection on the ethical issues of peace. Can we identify cases where primacy was given to peace over war? More generally, if both war and peace are presented as effective solutions for conflict management, how do poets articulate, in specific cases, the deliberation and negotiation between these two poles and how do they stage the processes by which peace may take precedence over war?

The conference proceedings will be published, and the participants will be invited to write entries for the “Lethictionnaire”, a dictionary on ethics currently managed by LETHICA. The issue of the conference will also be addressed during a cycle of six conferences held at the University of Strasbourg during the second half of the academic year 2021-2022 and primarily intended for master students within LETHICA. Website: <https://lethica.unistra.fr/>

The European Middle Ages were marked by important crises, sometimes leading to war, but also by the emergence of voices that questioned war and highlighted the preeminent value of peace, especially within the Christian conceptual framework. The conference aims to highlight these voices without neglecting the heroic and bellicose dimension of the chivalrous ideal. The approach to these issues will therefore involve studying the tensions, negotiations and reflections that these voices generate between the desire for peace and the desire for war in medieval literature.

The Middle Ages are commonly defined and pictured as a long and dark period, permanently disturbed by war, violence, and uncontrolled brutality. This fantasized representation of the Middle Ages has largely been demystified by medieval scholars, who stressed between political powers and violence, studied the struggles between ecclesiastical injunctions and the objectives of the lay aristocracy, uncovered the mechanisms and rituals of peace settlement, and documented the slow evolution toward a society in which the states and their institutions control violence.

It is nonetheless true that, in medieval literature, a great number of narratives, especially in the epic genre, are concerned with war, celebrating war heroes and victorious struggles against the enemy of the Christian faith, or the hostilities between rival clans. To sing the deeds of the heroes then implies a glorification of war, or even of the joy of war, according to proven dialectics.

The present conference, on the contrary, offers to study peace and the ways of peace within literary works about war. What could be called ‘pacifism’ is indeed relatively seldom discussed as the studies which take into consideration the voices of peace, or are dedicated to the resolution of conflicts in literary texts remain relatively rare. The literary texts concerned with peace tend to represent it less as a state (which is besides often disrupted at the beginning of the story), than as a goal to be reached through a series of actions (embassies, negotiations, possibly betrayals), speeches, gestures, rituals, but also as a goal that can be contested, turned down, or powerfully resisted. Peace thus offers an important narrative potential, which, in some texts, competes with the glorification of war. It is this narrative potential and the strategies – including argumentative ones – of the supporters of peace that

this conference proposes to focus on. In literature as in reality, in fact, military confrontations are always preceded by deliberations where the different options are debated.

The conference intends to study this concern for peace through the study of specific cases relating to all linguistic and cultural areas of medieval Europe, with particular emphasis on the most productive periods of vernacular literature (12th-15th centuries, depending on the region) and on German, English, French and Northern literatures. The aim is not to theorize about medieval “pacifism” conceived as an ideology. By exploring different linguistic areas (mainly the English-speaking, French-speaking, German-speaking and Norse areas, without excluding, if necessary, the reference to Latin), the conference will emphasize the multifaceted conceptions of peace in the Middle Ages and their variations through time and space within literary productions.

- Papers may address the question of peace in genres traditionally studied more for their relation to war such as epic literature, but also in texts less directly concerned with violence, such as the narrative lay.
- They may also analyze symbols such as the dove, the olive and the palm, often associated with both victory and peace (*Roman d'Eneas*, v. 5919, Heinrich von Veldeke, *Eneas*, v. 6092; *Song of Roland*, v. 72; Konrad von Fußesbrunnen, *Die Kindheit Jesu*, v. 1496).
- Speakers may also concentrate on the patrons of the poems, often belonging to the Church, such as the Bishop of Passau Wolfger von Erla, the probable instigator of the *Song of the Nibelungs*, who, acting as mediator between the opposing camps during the German civil war, was praised for his action by Innocent III as a “bearer of words of peace and harmony” and whose desire for peace can be detected in the song itself.
- Many other characters may be deemed relevant to the theme of the conference: Etzel (*Song of the Nibelungs*, stanza 1958), Hagano (*Waltharius*, v. 634), the gymnosophists, the Brahmins and the pacifist Scythian in the *Roman of Alexander*, their avatars in Mandeville’s *Travels*, Frotho III (Saxo, *Gesta Danorum*, V), Havelok (*Havelok the Dane*) or female characters who build peace according to terms to be defined, such as Constance (Chaucer, *The Man of Law’s Tale*).
- The speakers are also invited to reflect on the contribution of Christianity to medieval pacifism. Church policy is often summed up with the formula “*ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*”. It seems relevant to establish the influence of such a doctrine in the medieval vernacular literary context, at a time when the injunction for peace was far from being the only voice that mattered.
- Contributors may finally adopt a historical approach and address medieval pacifism through the study of historical documents such as peace treaties or speeches on peace, for example in the context of the War of the Roses. The participants will however place this historical approach in the general perspective of the conference, the desire for peace in literature.

The organizers invite researchers to submit papers

drawing on lexical, rhetorical, symbolic, historical or literary approaches including the study of gestures, for instance, and/or comprising discussions of the relations between text and image, literary discourse and theological or legal discourse or different versions of the same story in different linguistic areas.

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