

**Call for Paper:**

**Killing and being killed.**

Perspectives on bodies in battle in the middle ages.

**Time:** April 16-18th 2015

**Place:** Mainz

The Research Unit Historical Cultural Sciences of the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz will host a conference on bodies in battle in the middle ages in spring 2015. The conference shall offer insights to conceptions, imaginations and practices of violent exertions of bodies of medieval combatants. On the one hand the body will be analyzed as a cultural artifact, on the other as a lived body and a place of self-experience.

While the human body has gained much prominence in recent research in the humanities and cultural studies – especially in the field of gender studies – its use for military purposes for instance in medieval studies is to a large extent unexplored. Setting the dichotomy of having a body and being a body as a starting point, the conference will ask, what kind of relation medieval combatants had to their body. It has to be asked, in which ways warriors attributed meaning to their bodily integrity and the ability to control their bodies, as well as for the value their bodies had for them. What bodily experiences did fighters make through their lifetime and especially in violent conflicts? How did they interpret, speak or write about these experiences? To what extent ideal fighting bodies were trained and shaped both systematically and in a targeted way? Which techniques did they actually use to achieve and maintain bodily fitness and how did they treat bodies which were no longer capable of violent actions?

The conference will be divided in four panels following an ideal fighter's biography. The panels themselves are defined through the following questions:

**a) Shaping bodies for battle**

Which practices were used to make bodies fit for battle?  
What bodily techniques were taught and trained?  
What was seen as a fighter's ideal bodily appearance?  
How did fighters physically experience the shaping of their bodies?

**b) Using bodies in battle**

What ways of using one's body in battle were existing and common?  
What were the conditions and objectives under which the own body was risked?  
How did fighters experience bodily dangers and how did they speak about them?

**c) Bodily injuries by means of battle**

What kind of injuries and violations appeared and how frequently did they appear?  
How did fighters experience bodily injuries and how did they communicate about?  
How did people treat injured bodies – individually and within the social context?  
How did fighters prepare themselves for bodily injuries and how did they treat their injured companions?

**d) Dead fighters. Dead bodies.**

How did fighters experience the killing of (hostile) and the dying of (befriended, allied, kindred) combatants? How did they speak and write about it?  
How did a fighter's approach to and the dealing with the own mortality differ from the concepts of non-fighters? How did they

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deal with their fear of death?  
How were dead fighters treated?  
Could a fighter survive his dead body?

Papers for the conference can be in English or German language. The presentations are limited to 30 minutes. A selection of the conference papers will be published in the series „Mainz Historical Cultural Sciences“. Speaker's costs for traveling and accommodation are reimbursed by the Research Unit Historical Cultural Sciences. Please submit electronic versions of abstracts (up to 2000 characters) not later than August 31, 2014.

**Please send abstracts and further enquiries to:**

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[Office of the Research Unit Historical Cultural Sciences]