

Miracle Healing, Miracle Vision, and Miracle Narrative in the Pre-Modern World



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Virtually no religion can exist without some kind of miracles. Those transform the material dimension and offer a transcendental perspective which justifies and legitimizes the institution of religion in the first place. This phenomenon finds its most vivid expression in medieval mystical visions and religious artwork, including musical compositions and performance. In fact, the vast majority of literary texts from that time period, as well as the relevant visual documents, were predicated in one way or the other on miracles. While this topic has already been discussed at length by religious scholars, here I will turn to medieval mysticism as one of the most startling phenomena where a miraculous experience of a personal encounter with a Godhead finds its startling expression. The works by Hildegard of Bingen and Mechthild of Magdeburg, among others, will serve well to illustrate the impact of miracles on the creation of literature and art. But we find numerous references to miracles also within a secular context and can thus identify one of the most central forces behind creativity at large, at least in the Middle Ages, if not also today.

Biography:

Dr. Albrecht Classen is University Distinguished Professor of German Studies at the University of Arizona, Tucson. He has published currently 127 scholarly books on German and European medieval and early modern literature, most recently *The Secret in Medieval Literature* (2022), *Globalism in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Ages* (2023), and *A Translation of Johannes Pauli's Didactic Tales* (2024). He has won numerous awards for his teaching (Carnegie Professor of the Year, 2012), service (Honorary member of the American Association of Teachers of German, 2022), and research (Henry Koffler Prize for Research, 2009). The German government bestowed the Bundesverdienstkreuz am Band upon him in 2004, and he was knighted in 2017 (The Most Noble Order of the Three Lions). In Fall of 2022, he received a Fulbright grant for Egypt. He is the editor of three journals, *Mediaevistik*, *Humanities*, and *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, and he has published almost 780 scholarly articles and more than 2900 book reviews.