

ABSTRACTS SESSION 3

Catherine Squires (Moscow State University)

Early Hanseatic manuscripts in mid-18th-century discourse between Lubeck and Saint Petersburg

The mid-18th century was an early period of active archival research and academic evaluation of historical manuscript sources on medieval Germany. In the early 1760-s Carl Heinrich Dreyer, then Syndic of Lubeck in charge of the city archive, donated a copy of the earliest treaty between the Hanseatic cities and their Russian partner Novgorod the Great, written in Middle Low German (the Yaroslav Charter of 1269), to the Academy of Sciences in Saint-Petersburg. The historic circumstances of this act are exposed in a series of letters between Dreyer and the secretary of the Academy Gerhard Friedrich Müller, who was also a prominent historian, pioneer ethnologist and explorer of Siberia.

The remarkable gift had several consequences, both for Dreyer personally and for the academic life in both countries. The extensive research on Russian-Hanseatic relations, carried out in the West from the 19th century onwards, missed this important document, whereas Russian historians hardly noticed it until the 2000-s.

The correspondence took place in a time before Germanic Philology was established in its diverse areas and methodologies. In his pursuit of historical and legal questions Dreyer was inaccurate in his judgement of the types and genres of written texts he dealt with and underestimated linguistic (in the first place lexicological) evidence. Dreyer's misjudgements and inaccurate terminology, introduced to the academic discourse in Russia via the Dreyer-Müller correspondence, could have contributed to one of the bitterest and longest historical disputes, known as the Norman Theory of the Origin of the Russian State.

Yves van Damme (Leiden University)

The correspondence between Willem de Vreese and C.G.N. de Vooy and the forgotten Philological Turn

This paper will focus on the correspondence between two of the leading scholars in Medieval Dutch literature at the beginning of the twentieth century: Willem de Vreese (1869-1938) and C.G.N. de Vooy (1873-1955). Their vast correspondence, now preserved at the University libraries of Ghent and Leiden, was a product of an intensive professional relationship and affectionate friendship. Using this correspondence, I will address two topics.

First, I will show how De Vreese and De Vooy were trying to formulate a new, ground breaking research agenda, arguing for a full understanding of the codicological context of each particular medieval text. With these insights, they were challenging the