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ABSTRACTS



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МАТЕРІАЛИ

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL MOVEMENTS IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD IN WESTERN EUROPE (GERMAN AND FLEMISH MYSTICAL TRADITION)

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Introduction

Various female spiritual movements in Western Europe XIII-XIV centuries arose in the issue of popularity of the ideal of ***vita apostolica*** (apostolic life) among the laity. The essence of this style of life is voluntary ***poverty*** and ***spiritual practices*** that lead the human soul to perfection (Grundmann, 1995). At first, in the early Medieval Ages, this ideal was implemented only in monasteries. But in the late Middle Ages, it began to be practiced by the laity who did not want to join the monastic orders. It was the birth of secular spirituality outside the traditional structures like monasteries. It was a new form of the Christian life that appeared in Flanders and Northern Germany whereupon spread throughout Europe.

The ***Cognitio Dei experimentalis*** or interior existential experience of the divine is the main characteristic of those spiritual movements. In such a way, Christian mysticism left the monastery and was transformed into new spiritual forms, among them there were ***mulieres religiosae or beguines*** and their men's variant - ***beghards***. At the end of the XIV century in their midst there was a popular conception of ***Devotio moderna*** – a movement for religious reform (Fraeters, 2014).

Methodology

This research briefly describes the main aspects of the beguinal spiritual movements and theology of the XIII century.

Conclusion

Exactly Beguines described their special spiritual experience through the marriage vocabulary of the Song of Songs (the Bridal mysticism), and for this they used folk languages instead of Latin. In such a way, they created a new spiritual phenomenon – ***female Christian vernacular mysticism***.

In the Medieval ages the notion "***mystic***" was applied to the type of theology. Mystical theology is the conception that formed Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (Unio Mystica). In short, there is a way to discover something hidden in God/Godhead. But women mystic expanded the meaning of this

concept and combined two aspects: mysticism of love (*Minnemystik*) and mysticism of being (*Wesenmystik*).

Well-known female mystics are Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch of Brabant, Hadewijch II, Marguerite Porete. Their texts are the type of folk or vernacular theology (McDonnell, 1969).

At the end of the XIII century Franciscans and Dominicans orders patronized some beguinages (begijnhoven) – the women’s communities in the cities. As the result of this common spiritual work such famous Dominicans as Meister Eckhart, then Henry Suso and Johannes Tauler formed Rhineland mysticism like a type of Christian Mystic. Thus, Meister Eckhart’s conceptions of “Gott” and “Gottheit” had a deep connection with the woman’s mysticism of Beatrice of Nazareth and Hadewijch. It is also formed under the influence of the works of Flemish mystic – Jan van Ruysbroeck and the community at Groenendael. Therefore, a speculative mysticism (theory) was combined with the female practical mysticism (personal experience) in a common goal – to know God through the process of self-knowledge.

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