

Linus Ubl

Gertrude of Hackeborn

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Gertrude of Hackeborn (* ca. 1232 – † 1292)

1. Name variants: Gertrud of Hakeborn

2. Places: Helfta, *Rothardeshdorf*

3. Biography: G. was the daughter of the count Albert II. of Hackeborn and his wife Gertrude. Her elder biological sister was Mechthild of Hackeborn. G. entered *Rothardeshdorf* monastery and became its abbess at the age of 19 in 1251. Due to the lack of water resources, the monastery had to relocate to Helfta in 1258. By then, her sister Mechthild had also joined the abbey. The convent became comparatively large (ca. 60 nuns) and acquired considerable wealth. Several important mystical texts were written there, depicting a wide intellectual network. The most well-known are Mechthild of Hackeborn's *Liber specialis gratiae* and Gertrude of Helfta's *Legatus divinae pietatis*; both widely disseminated in the Late Middle Ages. The monastery and its nuns were potentially influenced by Mechthild of Magdeburg who presumably entered Helfta in the last years of her life, and finished her *Fließendes Licht der Gottheit* there. G. herself does not seem to be written. However, the sixth book of the *Liber specialis gratiae* is dedicated to her and depicts her life and death in a hagiographically stylized way. Her date of death is not completely certain.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: –

b. Liturgical commemoration: 15 Nov

c. Patronage: –

d. Attributes: Cistercian habit

5. Fontes: *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechthildianae 2: Sanctae Mechthildis Virginis Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Liber Specialis Gratiae accedit Sororis Mechthildis ejusdem ordinis Lux divinitatis. Opus ad codicum fidem nunc primum integre editum Solesmensium O.S.B. Monachorum cura et opera, Poitiers/Paris 1877.*

6. Literature: M. BANGERT, Die sozio-kulturelle Situation des Klosters St. Maria in Helfta, in: *Vor Dir steht die leere Schale meiner Sehnsucht. Die Mystik der Frauen von Helfta*, ed. M. BANGERT / H. KEUL, Leipzig 1998, 29–47; B. MCGINN, *The Flowering of Mysticism. Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200–1350)*, New York 1998, 267–282; C. OEFELIN, Gründung und mittelalterliche Geschichte des Klosters St. Marien zu Helfta. Ein Überblick unter Berücksichtigung neuer Funde, in: *Mechthild und das „Fließende Licht der Gottheit“ im Kontext. Eine Spurensuche in religiösen Netzwerken und literarischen Diskursen im mitteldeutschen Raum des 13.–15. Jahrhunderts*, ed. C. EMMELIUS / B. J. NEMES (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 17), Berlin 2019, 41–64.

7. Illustrations: –

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