Linus Ubl

Gertrude of Hackeborn

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

1. Name variants: Gertrud of Hakeborn

2. Places: Helfta, Rothardesdorf

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 Rothardesdorf 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


7. Illustrations: –

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