Chapter 10

The *Dialogus miraculorum* in the Light of Its Fifteenth-century German Translation by Johannes Hartlieb

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Johannes Hartlieb’s Biography and His Patrons

The biography of Johannes Hartlieb, the author of the German version of the *Dialogus miraculorum* (*HDM* henceforth),[1] is rather well-documented. Hartlieb was born between 1400 and 1410 and obtained a doctorate of medicine from Padua University in 1439; this title appears on his personal seal in the form of a ring which bears the inscription “harlipp doctor 1439.”[2] He was not a nobleman; however, in addition to a personal seal he also had his own coat of arms: a leaping donkey with a golden crown on a silver background.[3] Even if an exact chronology of the first period of his life is impossible to establish, much more information about the Munich period when he composed the majority of his works is available. In 1441, he entered the service of Duke Albert III of Bavaria († 1460) and his wife Anne of Brunswick († 1474). The extant receipts for the period from 1441 to 1457 demonstrate that the Duke paid him a salary for his medical services.[4] Hartlieb’s role at the Duke’s court was not limited to that of a doctor; we have his correspondence with Johannes of Indersdorf.[5]

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[1] Caesarius of Heisterbach’s *Dialogus miraculorum* will be referred to as the *DM* in this article.
[2] Fridolin Golleder, *München im Mittelalter* (Munich-Berlin: K. Oldenburg, 1938), 347, Fig. 37. See also Frank Fürbeth, *Johannes Hartlieb: Untersuchungen zu Leben und Werk* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1992), 17, n. 17 for the documents with this seal. As Fürbeth points out, men of modest birth did not, as a rule, have a personal seal.
[3] Golleder, *München im Mittelalter*, 349, Fig. 38. The donkey may be a symbol of humility or, possibly, of work and patience.
[5] Johannes of Indersdorf was first the dean and later the provost of the monastery of regular canons of St Augustine in Indersdorf. For his biography and his works, see Andrea Klein, *Der Literaturbetrieb am Münchner Hof im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1998), 138–56.
subject of the Church Reform from which we can surmise that he could also have served as a special envoy and even as the duke’s advisor.6

In 1442, Albert and his wife Anne of Brunswick gave Hartlieb a house in Munich; in the deed that confirms the transfer of the property, Hartlieb is named “hochgelert unser Artzt und lieber getrewer maister Johanns hartlieb lerär der Ertzneg” (our very learned doctor and dear faithful master Johannes Hartlieb, specialist in medicine).7 This description shows his patrons’ respect for and appreciation of Hartlieb. In a 1447 document he is designated as “gener Alberti ducis,” which lead the editor of Caesarius’s translation Karl Drescher to suppose that Hartlieb’s wife Sybille was Albert and Agnes Bernauer’s illegitimate daughter.8 Frank Fürbeth, however, proposes another interpretation of the word “gener,” for he believes that the duke was the godfather of one of Hartlieb’s children.9

In 1455, Hartlieb travelled on Albert’s business and conducted negotiations concerning possible marriage between Albert’s son Sigismund, who in time would himself become Hartlieb’s employer, and Margaret, the daughter of Frederick II, elector of Brandenbour.10 Even after Albert’s death in 1460, Hartlieb remained an important figure at the court of Munich. We know that, together with Anne of Brunswick, Wenher von Ketz, the tax collector (ungellter) and Hans Püterich (to whom the translation of the DM is dedicated) Hartlieb received revenues from a gold mine at Ammergau.11 According to the register of deaths of the Franciscan monastery in Munich (Franziskanerkloster St Anna 2° Cmm. 123), Hartlieb died on 18 May 1468.12

6 Fürbeth, Johannes Hartlieb, 17–8 and 217–18.
7 Fürbeth, Johannes Hartlieb, 18.
9 Fürbeth, Johannes Hartlieb, 20–1.
10 The marriage never took place.