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ONLINE LECTURE SERIES 'MANUSCRIPT CULTURES'

EDITING OLD YIDDISH TEXTS: THE EXAMPLE OF 'VIDUVILT'

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Editing Old Yiddish Texts: The Example of 'Viduvilt'

A young knight who sets out in search of his father and aids a beleaguered princess, fighting against giants, a dragon, and an overwhelmingly strong woman—this story enjoyed great popularity among German-speaking courtly audiences in the High Middle Ages, as can be inferred, for example, from the numerous manuscripts transmitting Wirnt von Grafenberg's Arthurian romance Wigalois from the early 13th century.

Several centuries later, a Jewish audience, too, appreciated the narrative. Viduvilt, an Old Yiddish adaptation of the Middle High German source from the 16th century, tells the plot in a different way, thereby creating distinctive versions of the chivalric protagonist as well as his helpers and adversaries.

Preserved in three fragmentary manuscripts and several printed editions, the Yiddish Viduvilt was, moreover, from the late 17th century onward, received with interest not only by a Jewish but also by a Christian audience. The lecture will trace the particular challenges involved in producing a synoptic edition of the Yiddish text and how the editors addressed them.

See: [Der altjiddische "Widuwilt"](#)