

## Storytelling as *Pharmakon* in Premodernity and Beyond: Training the New Generation of Researchers in Health Humanities (StoryPharm)

### Advertisement of Positions

### Call for Individual Applications



**ZeMas**  
Zentrum für Mittelalterstudien

**The University of Bamberg (UNI BA) is pleased to announce four three-year PhD positions with a generous research allowance in an international, multi-partner EU project, employment beginning between June and August 2025.**

The StoryPharm project, which is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action – Doctoral Networks, is announcing a total of 19 PhD fellowships within the training programme “Storytelling as *Pharmakon* in Premodernity and Beyond: Training the New Generation of Researchers in Health Humanities” (<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/storypharm/>). The focus of the project will be on premodern narratives and images involving medicine, health, and healing. These will be studied from a transdisciplinary and comparative perspective, across linguistic and cultural borders. The five PhD candidates at UCY will form together a study group working on different research aspects of the StoryPharm project.

### **Project 1: “Women as Healers in Medieval German Literature” (StoryPharm Fellow 4)**

This subproject will use a wide literary corpus, including medieval German courtly romances, hagiography, chronicles, and small epics, to examine (recurring) stories of healing featuring female characters. It will explore rituals of female healing and their narrativisation. Female healers' portrayal and staging in relation to genre will also be examined. Additionally, this subproject will delve into the transmission history of recurring stories, exploring how characterology differs from one story's retelling to another and how episodes with female healers are incorporated into manuscript collections, such as the Leipzig Small Epic Manuscript Ms. 1279 (15<sup>th</sup> c.).

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the Centre for Medieval Studies. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at Cardiff University and a one-month non-academic secondment at the National German Museum in Nuremberg. At UNI BA the PhD candidate will work under the supervision of Gesine Mierke while Shaun Tougher will act as a supervisor at Cardiff University.

## Objectives

**Fellow 4** will aim at achieving the following results: (1) offer the first comprehensive examination of women healers in medieval German literature; (2) illuminate gendered generic conventions; (3) work towards establishing the textual transmission and reception history of popular healing stories.

## Specific Requirements

A Master's Degree in Medieval German Literature, Medieval Studies, German or Cultural Studies, Comparative literature and an in-depth knowledge of the historical language levels (Old, Middle, and Early Modern High German) are required. Candidates holding a Master's degree in another field should prove that their competence in medieval culture and medieval German literature is equivalent.

## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- What is the relationship between literature and medicine? What about the function of literature *as* medicine and the use of medicine *in* literature?
- What are the uses of storytelling in (medieval) literature?
- To what extent are healing processes aestheticized?
- What concepts of female healers can be detected in medieval literature and in different genres?

## Short Bibliography

Bulang, Tobias and Regina Toepfer. 2020. *Heil und Heilung: Die Kultur der Selbstsorge in der Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*. Heidelberg.

Feistner, Edith. 2014. “Krankheit als Heil? Genderperspektiven auf das Opfer der Gesundheit in der Literatur des Mittelalters,” in Anne-Julia Zwierlein and Iris M. Heid (eds), *Gender and Disease in Literary and Medical Cultures*. Heidelberg, 27–48.

Fischer, Pascal and Mariacarla Gadebusch Bondio (eds) 2016. *Literatur und Medizin: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zu den ‘Medical Humanities’*. Heidelberg.

Keen, Suzanne. 2007. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford.

For more information about this fellowship, contact Prof. Gesine Mierke ([gesine.mierke@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:gesine.mierke@uni-bamberg.de)).

## Project 2: “Sin as Disease, Verbalisation as Cure: Coping with Illicit Sexuality in Medieval Narratives” (StoryPharm Fellow 10)

This subproject will examine forms of illicit and immoderate sexual desire in a variety of sources (historiographical, hagiographical, theological, and medical texts) to see how far and in what manner the verbalisation of such sexual desires and acts were seen and understood as part of healing processes. This approach will provide some answers to a series of questions, such as why Constantine the African stated in his treatise “On sexual intercourse” that nobody could remain healthy without frequent intercourse, while theological treatises praised the virtues of chastity and abstinence; why homosexual behaviour was frequently implied in chronicles and saints’ lives even though it was considered to be the “unmentionable vice”; why chroniclers in favour of King Richard the Lionheart would describe in detail that he confessed his life’s depravity and took seriously a hermit’s warning concerning the fate of Sodom; and why the leading theologian of confession Jean Gerson (15<sup>th</sup> c. CE) chose masturbation as the topic of his treatise on confessional interrogation of adolescents.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the Centre for Medieval Studies. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Cyprus (UCY) and a one-month non-academic secondment at the Diocesan Museum in Bamberg. At UNI BA, the PhD

candidate will work under the supervision of Klaus van Eickels while Dionysios Stathakopoulos will act as a supervisor at UCY.

## Objectives

**Fellow 10** will aim at achieving the following results: (1) trace the medieval forms of illicit desire through an investigation of different sources being co-examined for the first time; (2) offer answers to questions concerning the ways in which medieval authors chose to refer to or hide transgressive desire; (3) explore in how far the evolution of penance and confession had an impact on norm-transgressive sexual behaviour.

## Specific Requirements

A Master's Degree in History (with a focus on the Western Middle Ages) or in Medieval Studies. Candidates holding a Master's degree in another field should prove that their competence in medieval cultural history is equivalent.

## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that the best effort is made toward making the document reflective of candidates' true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- the essentialist-constructivist debate about the perception of same-sex desire;
- the evolution of the theology and practice of confession and penance;
- the evolution of the concept of sodomy in medieval Western theology.

## Short Bibliography

Jordan, Mark D. 1997. *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology*. Chicago.

Harvey, Katherine. 2021. *The Fires of Lust: Sex in the Middle Ages*. London.

Karras, Ruth Mazo. 2012. *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others*. London.

For more information about this fellowship, contact Prof. Klaus van Eickels ([klaus.van-eickels@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:klaus.van-eickels@uni-bamberg.de)).

### **Project 3: “Ecologies of Healing: Visual Storytelling in Medieval Medical Manuscripts and Herbals” (StoryPharm Fellow 14)**

This subproject will explore visual storytelling strategies in medieval medical manuscripts and herbals. The starting point of the investigation will be the Lorsch Medical Manual (late 8<sup>th</sup> c. CE), a unique composite manuscript (BSL, Msc. Med. 1). Complex text layouts (like the Lorsch Medical Manual) and illuminated manuscripts (like the Pseudo-Apuleius manuscripts in Kassel, Montecassino and London, 9<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> c. CE) will be juxtaposed to explore the distinctiveness of both models. The subproject will mainly focus on the role of plants as non-human actors sharing a common ecosystem with humans and objects. Materiality (parchment, ink, pigments) and object histories (actors, places, changing performative and functional contexts) will be an integral part of the analysis. Descriptions and depictions of plants in medieval encyclopaedias and world maps will be part of the comparative framework, as will medical manuscripts from the Islamic world.

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the Centre for Medieval Studies. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Salerno (UNI SALERNO) and a one-month non-academic secondment at the Bamberg State Library. At UNI BA, the PhD candidate will work under the supervision Katharina Schüppel while Maddalena Vaccaro will act as a supervisor at UNI SALERNO.

#### **Objectives**

Fellow 14 will aim at achieving the following results: (1) open up new research avenues by analysing medical and herbal manuscripts as “storytelling objects” within the medieval discourse on healing; (2) foster research on plants as non-human actors in interdisciplinary medievalist contexts.

#### **Specific Requirements**

A Master’s Degree in Art History, Cultural Studies, or Medieval Studies is required. Candidates holding a Master’s degree in another field should prove that their competence in medieval cultural history is equivalent.

## The Application

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- current research on the medieval book as object (material, performative, also transcultural contexts);
- materiality and object histories as art-historical research perspectives;
- the relevance of current cultural-historical discourses on plants and plant agency for medieval studies.

## Short Bibliography

Chavannes-Mazel, Claudine A. and Linda IJpelaar (eds) 2023. *The Green Middle Ages: The Depiction and Use of Plants in the Western World 600-1600*. Amsterdam.

Hériché-Pradeau, Sandrine and Maud Pérez-Simon. 2013. “Du texte à l’image et de l’image au texte. En pratique et en théorie,” in Sandrine Hériché-Pradeau and Maud Pérez-Simon (eds), *Quand l’image relit le texte: Regards croisés sur les manuscrits*. Paris, 11–38.

Treharne, Elaine. 2021. *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts: The Phenomenal Book*. Oxford.

For more information about this fellowship, contact PD Dr Katharina Schüppel ([katharina.schueppel@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:katharina.schueppel@uni-bamberg.de)).

## Project 4: “Reframing the Myth of Female Healing in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Hildegard von Bingen and Wise-Woman Traditions” (StoryPharm Fellow 18)

Hildegard von Bingen’s (12<sup>th</sup> c.) work related to well-being and healing has exercised a great influence on feminist movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. It has become part of a new

female empowerment in issues related to birth-giving, breastfeeding, contraception, and abortion. This subproject will investigate the ways in which Hildegard's medicinal power and work have informed feminist theory and art thematising women's embodiment and healing traditions in a contemporary male-centred medical world. The work of feminist thinkers (e.g. Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Barbara Newman), will be examined along with the work of feminist artists and authors (e.g. Judy Chicago, Mary Sharrat).

The successful candidate will be enrolled in the Centre for Medieval Studies. The training includes a three-month academic secondment at the University of Cyprus (UCY) and a one-month non-academic secondment at David Collection (Copenhagen). At UNI BA, the PhD candidate will work under the supervision of Ingrid Bennewitz while Stavroula Constantinou will act as a supervisor at UCY.

### **Objectives**

**Fellow 18** will aim at achieving the following results: (1) reveal the importance of a medieval female healer to contemporary culture; (2) show how Hildegard's personality and work has informed contemporary feminism, art, and literature; (3) significantly contribute to the writing of the cultural history of female healing.

### **Specific Requirements**

A Master's Degree in German Literature, Medieval Studies, German or Cultural Studies, or Comparative Literature is required. Candidates holding a Master's degree in another field should prove that their competence in medieval culture and literature is equivalent.

### **The Application**

The application package should contain a short document (max 2 pages) describing how candidates would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that candidates make their best effort toward making the document reflective of their true abilities.

When composing the text regarding the project, candidates may wish to consider:

- The importance of feminists' rediscovery and re-evaluation of the women's contribution to European history and culture from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. onwards.
- The potential identification that a female scholar and healer, such as Hildegard von Bingen, offers to contemporary women in a world where the art of healing is still male-dominated.
- The importance of medievalism in reframing European cultural heritage, especially through popular novels and films (e.g. Marion Zimmer-Bradley's, *Mists of Avalon* versus Noah Gordon's *The Medicus*; J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series).
- The reframing of premodern female healers and female medicine in the context of current medical discussions ("gender-sensitive medicine").

### Short Bibliography

Bulang, Tobias and Regina Toepfer (eds) 2020. *Heil und Heilung: Die Kultur der Selbstsorge in der Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*. Heidelberg.

Dieterich, Susanne. 2016. *Weise Frau: Hebamme, Hexe und Doktorin: Zur Kulturgeschichte der weiblichen Heilkunst*. Karlsruhe.

Reddig, Wolfgang. 2000. *Bader, Medicus und weise Frau: Wege und Erfolge der mittelalterlichen Heilkunst*. Munich.

Embach, Michael. 2023. *Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179): Leben, Werk und Wirkung*. Trier.

Hopson, Kathryn. 1993. *Re-visioning Morgan Le Fay: A Unifying Metaphor for the Image of Woman in Twentieth Century Literature*. PhD thesis, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Hill-Zenk, Anja. 2008. "Der Medicus & Co.: Ärzte, Bader, Heiler und eine Apothekerin in zeitgenössischen historischen Romanen," in *Gesund und krank im Mittelalter: Marburger Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Medizin*. Leipzig, 357–373.

Gössmann, Elisabeth. 1995. *Hildegard von Bingen: Versuche einer Annäherung*. Munich.

Matthews, David. 2015. *Medievalism: A Critical History*. Cambridge.



For more information about this fellowship, contact Prof. em. Ingrid Bennewitz ([ingrid.bennewitz@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:ingrid.bennewitz@uni-bamberg.de)).

UNI BA wishes our staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.

UNI BA promotes professional equality between women and men. We endeavour to increase the proportion of women in research and teaching and therefore strongly encourage suitably qualified women to apply. Severely disabled applicants will be given preferential consideration if they are otherwise equally qualified.

UNI BA has been certified by the Hertie Foundation as a family-friendly university. It is particularly committed to the compatibility of family and working life.

### **Main Training Activities Specific to the Project**

- Induction Week (University of Cyprus; UCY)
- Training in Critical Discourse Analysis (Lund University)
- Training in Narrative and in Literary Criticism (UCY)
- Training in Intersectionality, Sexuality, and Gender (UCY)
- Summer School (University of Bamberg)
- Training in Obtaining Funding in Project Management (online)
- Training in Entrepreneurship (online)
- Training in Publishing Industry (Bamberg State Library)

### **Expectations**

The candidates will fulfil the requirements of the PhD programmes in History (BaGraHist; <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/bagrams/>) and Medieval Studies (BaGraMS; <https://www.uni-bamberg.de/bagrams/>), lead their research under the guidance of the supervisors and present their work at international conferences, in accordance with the consortium's communication and dissemination plan. Furthermore, they will cooperate with other fellow PhD students to fulfill the StoryPharm's training and other objectives. Participation in StoryPharm's training and other activities is compulsory. The PhD theses can be written in German or English.

## Salary

The successful candidates will be employed full-time. The gross salary before taxes will be €3,342.20/month plus mobility allowance (€600) and, only if applicable, family allowance (€495).

All recruited doctoral fellows will become highly skilled cultural historians specialising in premodern intellectual and healthcare worlds. At the same time, they will acquire transferable skills allowing them to use, develop, and deploy cutting-edge approaches to storytelling and its ethical ramifications for scientific, professional, business, healthcare, and social purposes. After the offered doctoral training, the fellows will be ideally positioned to (1) achieve ground-breaking research results; (2) meet current trends and needs in the job market; (3) work towards establishing a human-centred medical system; and (4) create better and more resilient societies.

StoryPharm welcomes highly-motivated applicants. The call is open to applicants of any age and nationality who meet the following requirements at the recruitment date:

- Prior to the starting date of the PhD programme they must hold or be due to hold a Master's Degree in relevant fields mentioned above.
- Must not already hold a doctoral title.
- Must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting organisation for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date (mobility Rule). Any time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention (1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol), compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays do not count towards the total.

Additional requirements can apply for specific positions. For further information, please consult the detailed information for each position.

If any of the above prerequisites is not satisfied, the StoryPharm consortium reserves the right to exclude applicants from the selection procedure at any time, even after the selection procedure has taken place.

## Application Procedures

Applications for the first round will be accepted from **15/10/2024** until **15/12/2024** at **14:00** (Central European Time).

Applications must be submitted electronically to the email address: **cemar@ucy.ac.cy**

Applicants may apply for one or more positions, up to three positions in total. In case of multiple applications, applicants should submit one application with a separate research statement for each position **and specify the priority order** in their personal statement.

The following documents must be provided:

- Personal statement (max 2 pages) detailing the applicant's motivations and goals within the StoryPharm programme
- CV (max 2 pages) with emphasis on prior academic achievements
- Research statement (max 2 pages, 1,000 words) detailing how the applicant will approach the research project and how the StoryPharm training goals fit into the applicant's career plans. Please consider the research questions included in each position's description.
- Copy of Bachelor's and Master's Degree certificates and transcript of records
- Copy of Master's Thesis
- A reference letter by the MA supervisor and one other academic reference.
- Copy of an ID document valid at the time of the interview.

All application documents **must be drafted** in English. For **certificates and other official documents** official translations in English are preferable. We, however, accept documents in the following languages: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish.

Applications must be submitted by the call deadline.

The applications must be complete in all their parts and must include all required material in PDF format without any protection that prevents printing.

## Evaluation

A specific Evaluation Committee will be established to assess each topic's applicants. Each Committee will be composed of the main supervisors, an external member from the Supervisory Board, and possibly other faculty members of the recruiting university.

The evaluation process will include two stages.

### 1st Stage: Application Assessment

Application materials will be assessed based on the criteria specified in Table 2.

The score will be calculated on a scale of 0 to 100 points. Candidates with a score of at least 60 over 100 will pass to the second step and will be invited to an interview. We expect to notify shortlisted candidates in December 2024.

**Table 2:** Evaluation Criteria for the Preliminary Selection

Criteria	Percentage
<b>Criterion 1:</b> Excellence of the applicant's CV, skills and track record (see Application Procedures), fulfilment of the relevant requirements related to the position applied for	80%
<b>Criterion 2:</b> Potential impact on the applicant's career and motivations to participate in the StoryPharm training programme	20%
<b>Global score</b>	100% (threshold 60%)

### 2nd Stage: Interview

Individual interviews will have the purpose of gaining a better sense of the applicants' academic background and their approach to the proposed PhD research project as well as the vision of their role within the network and of their future career. If a candidate has applied for more than one fellowship, the interview will test the fulfilment of the requirements for all of them.

The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. Candidates will be interviewed on-line via Zoom or Teams.

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the interviewees based on the criteria specified in the table below. It will produce an evaluation summary report for each applicant, with scores and detailed motivations.

All interviews will be conducted in English.

**Table 3:** Evaluation criteria for the interview

Criteria	Percentage
<b>Criterion 1:</b> Excellence of the applicant’s presentation: Argumentation, communication, and evidence of knowledge of the ancient/medieval/modern languages when relevant	35%
<b>Criterion 2:</b> Excellence of the research statement, originality, understanding of the different facets of research demonstrated during discussion	65%
<b>Global score</b>	100%

The Evaluation Committee will produce a ranking list for each position.

### Ranking List

All applicants invited to the interview will be informed of the outcome of the selection process with an Evaluation Summary Report.

### Applicants with Disabilities or Specific Learning Difficulties

StoryPharm will take specific measures for applicants with disabilities (e.g. blind or deaf applicants or those suffering from any other relevant disability) or with specific learning difficulties (e.g. applicants diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia or dysorthography) to guarantee equal treatment.

### Admission to the PhD Programmes

Successful applicants are admitted to their selected PhD programme following the order of the ranking list. The selected applicants must confirm by email their acceptance of the position within 15 days.

Applicants who fail to meet this deadline will be replaced by the next applicant on the ranking list, who will be informed by email and must enroll within 15 days following the same procedure.

If no other applicant is available in the ranking list for the position, StoryPharm may decide to assign the position to a qualified applicant for a different PhD position or launch an extra call for applications for the vacant position.

### **PhD Fellows' Rights, Obligations and Incompatibilities**

It is not possible to be simultaneously enrolled in more than one study programme leading to the awarding of a degree (e.g. Bachelor, Masters, Postgraduate Specialisation, short/executive Masters or PhD).

In the case of enrolment in the StoryPharm PhD programme successful applicants will be required to suspend or, if not possible, discontinue any enrolment in their other degree programme before the commencement of the PhD programme in order not to be excluded.

### **Confidentiality**

Personal data will be collected, used and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

StoryPharm commits to using personal information for the purposes of the selection process alone.

The participation in the selection process implies the applicant's consent to the collection, use and process of their personal data by the StoryPharm consortium.

For more information about the StoryPharm project, visit our website

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/storypharm/>. For any questions contact Dr Andria Andreou, contact the StoryPharm Scientific Project Manager, Dr Andria Androu [andreou.andria@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:andreou.andria@ucy.ac.cy).