



Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists
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Truth in Mechthild von Magdeburg (1207–1282)

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Mechthild of Magdeburg was a beguine, one who lived a cloistered life without having taken direct vows, in what is today Germany during the thirteenth century. Best known for her work *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, published after her death, she wrote in a vein that has attracted special attention in the new wave of scholarship on women thinkers. Mechthild claimed that God was moving through her in His authorial capacity, and thus she asserted that the work that was produced was indeed God's work. Thus her concept of truth cannot be divorced from her experience of the divine. Fiona Bowie notes that Mechthild had "a quite exceptional degree of poetic sensibility in conjunction with a profound and mature faith." Part of the concept of the true for Mechthild is that experience of it takes place, as Frank Tobin has noted, in the soul. Her work is often contrasted with that of Hildegard of Bingen, whose experiences might have been thought to be more overtly visionary.

Primary Source:

Mechthild von Magdeburg 1998. *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. Tobin, Frank (trans.). New York: Paulist Press.

Secondary Sources:

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Tobin, Frank 1995. *Mechthild von Magdeburg: a Medieval Mystic in Modern Eyes*. Columbia, SC: Camden House.

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