



Ludwig Boltzmann Institut  
Neulateinische Studien

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cordially invites you to a talk by

**Dr. Sari Kivistö (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies)**

## **Dangerous Shoemakers and the Revaluation of Knowledge in the Early Eighteenth Century**

**Wednesday, 15.04.2015, 18:00**

Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“, Langer Weg 11, SR 5)

Although intellectual life remained closely tied to the universities in eighteenth-century Europe, the world of learning was broadening to include social classes other than the university-based professions. These new groups (including merchants, peasants, artisans, soldiers, gardeners) possessed skills and knowledge that could also meet the criteria of erudition. Especially in the commercial city of Lübeck several dissertations and pamphlets were produced on scholars who also distinguished themselves in commercial or other practical activities. My paper will focus on learned shoemakers, who were sometimes counted among religious fanatics, owing to their connections with radical Pietists, mystics and other dissident thinkers. These dangerous shoemakers included the Christian mystic Jacob Böhme, the English dissenter George Fox and their followers, all of whom denigrated the importance of traditional curricula and linguistic study and denied having benefited from previous literature, attributing all of their inventions to divine illumination. Polemical writings often expressed a conservative theological reaction against their allegedly heretical or atheistic teachings which had the power to modify men's practices of devotion and education. Most of the information on these dissident thinkers comes from hostile sources, but part of my reversal of the usual historical roles here is to look at the issue of dangerous shoemakers from their perspective and consider how they reflected on their goals. I will explore the more active roles that these dissident shoemakers played in the history of knowledge-production.