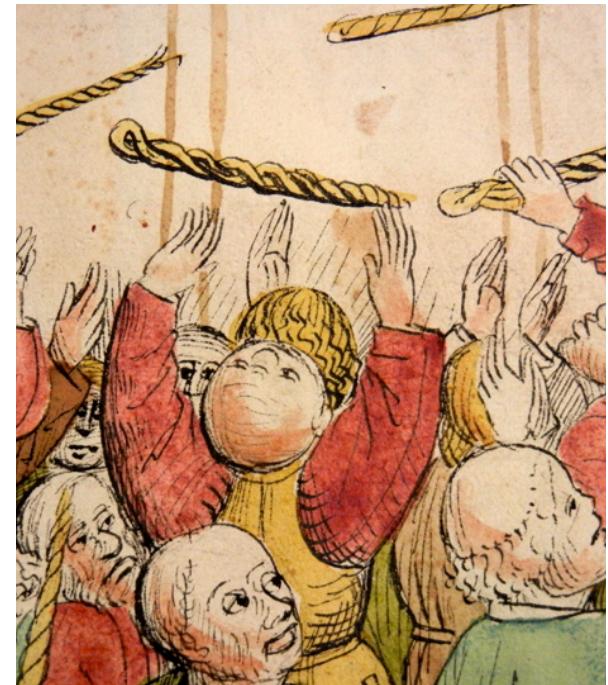


# Henri Pirenne-lezing 2014

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## November 1414: Literary Cultures, Nationalism, and the Future of Europe

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## November 1414: Literary Cultures, Nationalism, and the Future of Europe

In 1378 western Christendom split between popes of Avignon and Rome. Efforts to resolve matters in 1409 made things worse: there were now three rival popes. In November 1414 European nations were summoned to Konstanz; thousands of clerics, literary men, thus gathered at this lakeside town, between the Danube and the Rhine. First they addressed nationhood: what is a nation, and who might speak for it? Their chief working asset was literary language, as crafted in sermons, orations, treatises, chronicles, and diaries. Latin was lingua franca; Latin manuscripts were discovered in regional libraries, and there was a new vogue for Greek. Italian humanists taught eager northerners and inspired Jean Gerson, chancellor of Paris, to emulation. Oswald von Wolkenstein wrote songs in macaronic German; Italian and English bishops studied Dante; Poggio Bracciolini made brilliant discoveries and admired Jerome of Prague. Realignment of western nations at Konstanz had long-term effects, extending to the Reformation. Gregory Tsamblak, metropolitan of Kiev, arrived in 1418, hoping that the end of the western schism might inspire rapprochement with the Orthodox East.