

Indigenous Ideas and Foreign Influences

Interactions among Oral and Literary, Latin and Vernacular Cultures in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe International Workshop
26th – 27th September, 2013
Helsinki, Finland

The Medieval and Early Modern periods in Northern Europe (ca. 600–1600), defined broadly to include both Scandinavia, the Baltic, the British Isles and the Hanseatic areas of the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, were characterized by the simultaneous existence of oral and literary as well as Latin and vernacular cultures. Worldviews, ideas, beliefs, customs and norms were neither purely Christian nor purely pagan. Instead, the surviving sources show traces of various cultural layers as a result of cultural blending; sometimes the different elements are easily discernible, but sometimes they are so intermingled that they cannot be distinguished. The syncretism applies to both religious and secular texts; the coexistence of Latin and vernacular sometimes appears literally in manuscripts that combined both Latin and vernacular content or used different vernacular languages in parallel. Moreover, some texts (defined in the broad sense of the word) were never written but remained oral, manifesting themselves in later folklore.

The workshop *Indigenous Ideas and Foreign Influences* will offer an arena for discussion of the interaction between oral and literary and the Latin and vernacular cultures in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe.

The seminar will take place on Thursday 26 September and Friday 27 September 2013, in Helsinki, Finland, at the House of Science and Letters (Tieteiden talo), Kirkkokatu 6.

The programme for the event will consist of workshops and keynote lectures.

Suggested preliminary themes for the workshops included, but are not limited to:

- Latin and Christian influences in vernacular sources
- The relationship between Latin and vernacular: multilingualism in sources
- Practical skills of vernacular culture vs. Latin *artes*
- Indigenous elements and foreign influences in beliefs, conceptions and practices (e.g. in beliefs regarding the supernatural, conceptions of the sacred, magical practices) in vernacular sources
- Interaction between oral and literary cultures
- The physical context of oral performance of the Latin or vernacular texts
- The role of language in the modes of textual transmission (prose, poetry, official documents, letters, songs, charms, incantations, runic inscriptions etc.) and performance (e.g. singing, reading silently or aloud, ritualistic performances)

The invited guest-lecturers are:

Marco Mostert (Utrecht University)

Mara Grudule (University of Latvia)

Terry Gunnell (University of Iceland)

Tuomas Heikkilä (University of Helsinki, Institutum Romanum Finlandiae)

Those who wish to participate in the seminar and propose a paper for the workshop are kindly requested to send an abstract (max 300 words) in .rtf, .doc or .docx form by **May 3rd** to the organisers at the address indigenousandforeign@gmail.com. Please also contact this address if you wish to receive further information regarding the event. Please include in the abstract your name, affiliation, contact information and field of specialization. Notices of acceptance will be sent by May 15th.

The workshop papers will be sent to all seminar participants before the event with the intention that everybody will be able to acquaint themselves with the texts in advance. The papers (max 5–15 pages) should be sent to the organisers by August 20, after which date the texts will be forwarded to other participants. More information regarding the seminar, social programme, travel and accommodation in Helsinki will be posted soon at <http://www.glossa.fi/iifi/>.

The seminar is free of charge (including coffee and lunch during the seminar days). Unfortunately, we cannot offer any travel grants; the costs of travel and accommodation must be covered by the participants themselves.

The seminar is funded by Thure Galléns stiftelse and organised by the Finnish Literature Society, Historiska Föreningen i Finland and Glossa – the Society for Medieval Studies in Finland.

The Jarl Gallén prize in North European Middle Age Studies will be awarded at the seminar and the recipient will present a ceremonial lecture.