

Conference Report

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CONFERENCE TITLE: INDIGENOUS IDEAS AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES – INTERACTIONS AMONG ORAL AND LITERARY, LATIN AND VERNACULAR CULTURES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN NORTHERN EUROPE

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ORGANIZED BY: *GLOSSA* – THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES IN FINLAND, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE OF NORDIC STUDIES (CENS) AND HISTORISKA FÖRENINGEN I FINLAND

This two-day symposium and international workshop was held at the charming House of Science and Letters (Tieteiden Talo) of the University of Helsinki on 26th and 27th of September 2013. Although focusing on a very specific geographic area, the symposium gathered a wide array of researchers from very different fields of expertise: folklorists, medievalists, law historians, military and commercial historians, codicologists, runologists, theatre and performance researchers, theologians. Throughout this heterogeneous assembly, ideas were exchanged, cross-fertilized, or even born. Ideally, this is the purpose of all such academic congregations, yet the Helsinki one was particularly successful in achieving this. The interdisciplinary nature of the symposium engendered congenial discussions and forged fruitful relationships between scholars from very different research cultures – something that should be happening more often and more widely.

The symposium focused on medieval and early modern (ca. 600–1600) Northern Europe (defined broadly to include both Scandinavia, the Baltic, the British Isles and Ireland, and the Hanseatic areas of the southern coast of the Baltic Sea) and especially on the way they were characterized by the simultaneous presence 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. Hence, while in some contexts the different elements are easily discernible, in others they are so deeply interwoven that they are virtually indistinguishable. 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 broadest sense of the word) were never written but remained oral, surviving in later folklore. The Helsinki workshop showed plenty of instantiations of these dynamics, from Danish runic amulets to early Lutheran Finnish hymns, from late medieval English alchemical manuscripts to pretextual legal Old Norse codes. The symposium also provided an academic arena for discussing the complex interactions between oral and literary, on the one hand, and Latin and vernacular cultures, on the other, in medieval and early modern Northern Europe.

There were eight groups of papers which were actually workshops in their own right, since there was plenty of time for discussion allocated after each presentation (the politics of circulating the other participants' papers in advance made this possible). The sessions were interspersed with breaks during which generous reserves of coffee and nibbles were available for everyone. There were also three keynote lectures punctuating the two days, while the fourth lecture, the culminating point of the symposium, was the special Jarl Gallén lecture given on the second day.

Jarl Gallén (1908–1990) was a Finnish historian and Swedish-speaking professor in history at the Helsinki University. The prize carrying his name is awarded every third year to a researcher distinguished in North European Middle Age Studies. The prize was awarded in 2004 for the first time, and it has previously been received by Sverre Bagge (University of Bergen), Monica Hedlund (University of Uppsala) and Anders Andrén (University of Stockholm). This year, the Jarl Gallén prize was awarded to Prof. Lars Boje Mortensen from University of Southern Denmark. He presented a ceremonial lecture titled *The Rise of Prose - a Comparative View (Greek, Latin, Old French, and Old Norse)*. Lars Boje Mortensen is currently a Professor of Ancient and Medieval Cultural History at the University of Southern Denmark (Odense) and the head of the Centre for Medieval Literature (Odense and York). Prof. Mortensen's research over the years concentrated on medieval Nordic and Italian book history and historiography, as well as on the dynamics between Latin and the vernaculars.

A summary of the four keynote lectures will be provided first, followed by the individual papers in the chronological order of the sessions.

KEYNOTE LECTURES

Professor Mara Grudule (*University of Latvia*): ‘The Emergence of Hymns in the Crossroads of Folk and Christian Culture: Latvian Case’

Prof. Grudule’s lecture took us on a journey to the early days of Latvian literature. Since the first (sixteenth- and seventeenth-century) authors were German clergymen who had mastered the Latvian language in order to perform their pastoral tasks, their texts had little influence on the local culture. Not only did books still presuppose a literate and quite wealthy public, but most Latvians still adhered to their old religious customs until the end of the eighteenth century. Their aesthetic and moral values were contained and passed on through folksongs, folktales, charms and other oral traditions. In the first religious hymns composed in Latvia, however, Prof. Grudule identifies the convergence of the two cultures: the texts were Christian and inspired by Lutheran hymns, but they were adapted to Latvian sensibilities. Musicologically, these hymns preserved Latvian folksongs structures and many leitmotifs, as Prof. Grudule demonstrated through her own performance of one such hymn. But the old beliefs persisted also in the wording of the Christian hymns. All in all, the first lecture of the symposium was a very illuminating start for unraveling the nexus of oral vernacular traditions and Latin literate culture.

Professor Marco Mostert (*Utrecht University*): ‘Diglossia, Authority and Tradition – The Influence of Writing on Learned and Vernacular Languages’

Prof. Mostert delivered an inspired lecture which opened a very lively and informative debate on the assumptions scholars usually make when discussing medieval literacy. One of the implicit models underlying much research is that there is a binary opposition between Latin and the vernacular, and that each language had its spheres of manifestation quite closed off from the other. This is not the case, as Prof. Mostert demonstrated using several case studies. In Anglo-Saxon England, for example, there were not only Latin and Old English, but also Old Welsh, Old Irish, Old French, Old Norse spoken, interacting with one another and appearing in writings, not only confined to isolated groups of population. The other example was drawn from a forthcoming paper by Andrzej Janeczek in *Using the Written Word in Medieval Towns: Medieval Urban Literacy II*, a volume edited by Marco Mostert and Anna Adamska (forthcoming at Brepols in 2014). The second case study was even more eloquent, since the existence next to each other in communities of several hundred people of up to seven languages is well documented. In late medieval Ruthenian towns (communities typically comprising several hundreds of inhabitants), Old Ukrainian, Polish, Romanian, Hebrew and Armenian were spoken by the respective cultural groups within the town population, with Latin and German acting as official languages and conceivably as *linguae francae*. The coexistence of all

these languages was helped by the fact that the more official languages were native to only a few speakers. This point was elaborated upon, Prof. Mostert emphasizing the importance of a *lingua franca* for diglossic communities. Instead of the binary Latin/vernacular, elite/folk culture, there was a multiplicity of dialects and even high and low variants of the same language, depending on the context.

Director of the institute **Tuomas Heikkilä** (*Institutum Romanum Finlandiae*): ‘Interplay and Influence – The Arrival of Written Culture to Medieval Finland’

Dr. Heikkilä treated us to an impressive lecture on the beginnings of manuscript-writing in medieval Finland. From the first manuscripts dated to the twelfth century up to the rich output of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Swedish-dominated Finland, his wide-ranging presentation made us aware of the complex interplays between local vernacular culture and foreign influences, from the early and very strong connections to medieval England to the later Swedish influence due to political domination, going through the late medieval surge in French manuscripts and stories. Indeed, the first manuscripts of medieval Finland are interestingly either in English or displaying features associated with English texts of the period. In this context, the legendary Bishop Henry, an Englishman who presumably came to Scandinavia and baptized the Finns in the mid-twelfth century, might have historical underpinnings in strong ties with England in the early days of written culture in medieval Finland. The Second Swedish Crusade in the mid-thirteenth century decisively brought the territory of modern-day Finland under Swedish control, an event that was reflected in the manuscript output of the period starting then. Finland became integrated in the global medieval European circuit but only gained real representation of the vernacular with the Reformation and Mikael Agricola’s biblical translations into Finnish.

Professor Terry Gunnell (*University of Iceland*): ‘The Belief Contexts and Performance of *Völuspá* – Considerations Regarding the Nordic Judgement Day’

Although not the only impressive keynote lecture, Terry Gunnell’s was unique, as can be expected from the renowned scholar of Old Norse literature, folkloristics and theatre studies. In a fitting *mise en abyme* (which also perfectly illustrates his main point), his presentation is hard to impart and almost impossible to convey to those who were not attending. Indeed, in a nutshell, this is what Prof. Gunnell argues about the Old Norse *Völuspá*: this was a poem not meant to be read – it was to be performed, in a special setting, using (quite literally) special effects and creating an experience whose pale shadow is the written text that has been handed down to us.

After helpfully summarizing – in his characteristically performative style – the long and complicated history of the scholarly reception of the *Völuspá*, Prof. Gunnell went beyond the debates about whether the poem is Christian or pagan, whether a late reworking or a rare survival of an

extremely early text and argued that we are missing the pragmatics of the immediate reception of what the text originally was – an oral poem. And it is the context of the performance what defines the oral poem. One does not simply hear, or see or read such a poem (as we tend to think, separating the elements that make up a holistic performance): one experiences it.

Prof. Gunnell convincingly argued that the performance of Old Norse poems like the *Völuspá* were similar to a musical performance and proved this unraveling the musical quality of the sounds used in different parts of the poem. The varied phonetic patterns (from the grumbling staccato of the Ragnarök section to the peaceful legato of the description of the world made again) came to life again in Prof. Gunnell's performance. He further explained that the Viking hall setting (where the traditional names of the elements of the building refer to the mythical setting of many of the poems which would have been performed there), with the performer in the high seat near the cauldron, in the obscurity of the hall, with perhaps a helmet on (which would have functioned as an amplifier and distorter of the voice), must have made a strong impression on an audience of euphoric warriors. Using the unique approach of performance archaeology (but also his dramatic experience and skill), Prof. Gunnell succeeded in making the *Völuspá* alive again for the scholarly audience – its text being the last 'recording' of the last stage of an oral performance, literally an early multimedia work.

Jarl Gallén Lecture: **Lars Boje Mortensen** (*University of Southern Denmark*): 'The Rise of Prose – a Comparative View (Greek, Latin, Old French, and Old Norse)'

As expected from a recipient of the Jarl Gallén Prize, Prof. Mortensen's lecture demolished many uncritical assumptions, opened new paths for research, and left everyone wondering what we really know about anything. First, he argued that the development of written vernaculars in the Middle Ages all over Europe was something very haphazard, and that there was nothing necessary or natural about the rise of prose, as we might tend to think. Before the rise of prose, vernaculars were invisible, because they were not objectified through schools, books, institutions, and thus for an early medieval writer it was inconceivable to write in anything else than Latin, which was objectified and institutionalized. The modern ideals of perfectly inter-translatable languages (ie., that any word in any language can be translated more or less faithfully in another language) and of languages as providers of full representability (ie., languages have words for all phenomena of human life) would have been shocking for the medieval mindset. Latin and vernaculars were simply used for very different things. Then Prof. Mortensen took us on a journey through the history of prose writing, from around 450 BC, when we have for the first time a cluster of prose-writers. However, until Plato, the norm of encoding was verse, for philosophers, dramatists, and historians. In Rome, verse was also the norm until c. 160 BC, when the first prose writings appeared. However, the first prose writers, whether Greek or Roman, did not see themselves as producing canonical literature, or writing for posterity. Rather they saw themselves as recording oral texts which were destined to be

performed, which is why the actual writing was oftentimes quite indifferent to its future reception (note the lack of word division in early prose writing).

In medieval literature, the beginnings of vernacular prose can be dated to around 1200 (*Chronique de Normandie, Geste de France* etc.), after a long spell of verse writings, even those of a historiographic character. In stark contrast, Old Norse literature is all prose from its beginnings, while verse (skaldic and eddic) comes later, after 1220. Prof. Mortensen forcefully argued that this is due to a de-professionalization of history, which led to the opening of an entirely new space of opportunity in Scandinavia. In conclusion, the rise of prose in medieval Europe took place in three phases: first, a long poetic phase of traditional poetry and Biblical paraphrase, followed by a short burst of prose writing (suggestively described as a ‘love-affair between aristocracy and their vernacular’), and finally the diffusion and canonization of vernacular prose. Throughout the multiple beginnings of prose writing (in Ancient Greece and Rome, in medieval Scandinavia), a common pattern arises: it is always preceded by a critical mass of readers and by the availability of books. Thus, the prose of writing is connected to technologies of writing but is also a matter of contingency. In any case, it is always accompanied by a de-professionalization of and greater opportunity for writing.

SESSIONS

WORKSHOP 1A, CHAIRED BY DR ANU LAHTINEN (UNIVERSITY OF TURKU), FOCUSED ON *LANGUAGE AND WRITING CONVENTIONS IN MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN LAWS*

Ditlev Tamm (*University of Copenhagen*) & **Merike Ristikivi** (*University of Tartu*):
‘Archbishop Anders Sunesen and the Law of Scania – A Universal Scholar Looks at Local Law’

Prof. Tamm and Merike presented their work on the treatise on the old law of Scania, found in the text known as the *Liber legis Scaniae*, attributed to Anders Sunesen, the archbishop of Lund between 1201 and 1223. He renders the *Law of Scania* as it was written down more or less at the same time in Old Danish, but he deviates from the order of the Danish law and follows his own system adding explanations and sometimes even rules which are not found in that text. He seems to be fond of differences of opinion regarding the law and explains such dilemmas in detail. The two scholars explored the possibilities that the collection of law contained in the Danish text was actually established by the archbishop to be used as material for his Latin treatise, the Danish version being a spin-off, or alternatively, that the Latin version might be a later learned work, when a full Danish text was extant, and without any direct connection between the two. Or, as a third possibility, the two texts may have been redacted more or less simultaneously with different aims, the Latin version influencing the Danish text. For Anders Sunesen, the law was a human artifact and hence only a

contingent phenomenon with the function of helping people to settle their conflicts peacefully. All in all, this joint presentation threw light on the complex interrelations between law, language and learning in the early thirteenth-century text.

Maria Kallio (*University of Turku*): ‘Letters to Eternity – Writing Conventions in Late Medieval Swedish Wills’

Maria talked about how the practice of will writing in Sweden provides important insights into the workings of Latin and vernacular and the different rhetorics associated with the two languages. She discussed the writing conventions of medieval wills through the example of the diocese of Turku (part of the Eastern Swedish church province of Uppsala). In some sense the Nordic region was at the periphery of Catholic Europe, making it an interesting place to look at what testament writing tells about local practices. For the structure of the will, its religious rhetoric, and the sometimes very detailed requests reflect not only the teaching of the Church but also the wishes of the testator. The rhetoric used in wills reflects the authors’ attitudes towards death and the afterlife. Interestingly, even if so far vernacular charters have been considered to be more modest and informal than the Latin ones, the closer study of the Swedish testament material leaves the opposite impression. Maria convincingly argued that the vernacular examples were dictated and written using complicated rhetoric and different than in Latin examples.

Lina Breisch (*Uppsala University*): ‘Oral and Literary Rhetoric in Swedish Medieval Territorial Law’

Lina cogently argued against earlier research dismissing the Swedish territorial laws as primitive and naive, far from Roman law and continental rhetoric, by expounding the rhetorical function of medieval law, and showing that there existed a rhetorical awareness amongst the lawmen and other contributors to the law. Because during the early Middle Ages Sweden was not yet a centralized kingdom, different territories were ruled by local chiefs and were governed by regional laws. Under the influence of other European countries, Swedish territories began to write down rules and traditions that had previously been passed on orally transmitted at public meetings (*ting*). A lawsayer (*lagman*) was chosen to present and preserve the law in his mind, to give legal advice and solve juridical problems among the people. Lina’s presentation showed that these territorial laws were both a documented memory of the people and a governmental system of authority and legitimacy, which functioned rhetorically as a combined oral and literary statement and a witness of new and old beliefs.

WORKSHOP 1B, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR SVERRE BAGGE (UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN),
FOCUSED ON *ORAL TRADITION AND HISTORY*

Galina Glazyrina (*Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow*): ‘References to Oral Traditions in *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar* by Oddr Snorrason’

Galina's presentation focused on the different ways in which references to oral traditions as a source of information are reported in medieval Icelandic sagas. Typically, such references were intended to verify and confirm some of the details of the narrative. The authors of the early Icelandic sagas had few written sources concerning Iceland and Norway at their disposal, and thus oral traditions were naturally a priority source of information. By the time the saga genre fully developed, references to the traditions were often used as literary or stylistic devices, losing their initial pragmatic function. Galina used as a case study *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar*, composed by Oddr Snorrason, a monk at the Þingeyrar monastery c. 1190, thus belonging to the initial period of saga writing in Iceland. The saga abounds in authorial references to oral sources and thus it is a representative example showing how a medieval author combines in his narrative facts that had been reflected in the sources of different provenance, as well as his attitudes to facts and tales that had survived in oral transmission. Oddr had the fortunate chance to get information about many events from the early history of Iceland from the people who lived at the time when the events related had happened or from their descendants. Sometimes Oddr's preference for the long-running family oral traditions could mean that in deciding between the oral and the written the choice was given to the oral account. Oddr paid particular attention to the cases of eyewitness evidence which, since it had been announced in public, circulated with a reference to a particular informant. The rhetoric of oral references sometimes suggests the fact that it was the origins of the information rather than the informant himself that was more important. However, references to individual traditions are scanty compared to a great number of instances where Oddr Snorrason alludes to collective knowledge. Galina names these 'impersonified traditions', drawing attention to the standard repeated phrases introducing tales identified as oral tales. All in all, her paper was thoroughly enlightening for the attitudes saga writers had towards their oral sources.

Tatjana Jackson (*Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow*): 'Oral Tradition and the *útfærðar saga*'

Tatjana's paper concentrated on one the so-called *útfærðar saga* which tell of the exploits of Scandinavian warriors in distant lands, often in Old Rus' or even Byzantine territories. These sagas are traditionally considered to have passed along the way 'from the Varangians to the Greeks', which was not only of commercial and military significance, but was also a way of achieving cultural contacts and to pass on stories about Scandinavians in the Eastern part of the world back to their homeland. One of these texts, the Icelandic saga of the Norwegian King Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson, recounts Haraldr's life and travels first to *Garðaríki* to the court of King Jarizleifr (the Rus' Prince Yaroslav the Wise), then to *Miklagarðr* (Constantinople) and his adventures in Africa and Sicily, in Bulgaria, as well as in Palestine. According to the sagas, Haraldr had amassed wealth greater than anyone in Scandinavia. In 1046 Magnús the Good shared Norway with Haraldr Sigurðarson, having received for it half of his immense treasure.

According to Snorri Sturlusson and other references, the privileged informant for all the subsequent sagas written about Haraldr was one of his companions, Halldórr. He is unanimously called a witness, even a participant of many events during this campaign, and also the first narrator of the saga, the one who put it together. However, Tatjana argues that Halldórr and Haraldr did not get along with one another after Haraldr had become king in Norway and that this situation is reflected in the saga which thinks little of the former but unconditionally sings the praises of the latter. This would be strange if Halldórr had been the privileged oral informant for the saga – he would have at least tried to put forward his own merits. The answer to this conundrum, convincingly proposed by Tatjana, was that it was King Haraldr himself who was the original informant and the author of the saga. Haraldr himself is known as a skillful composer of verse. It is hard to believe that Haraldr, with his vanity, energy and outstanding poetic gift, would not tell about his exploits overseas. Thus, as Tatjana impressively demonstrated, he not only brought immense wealth ‘from the Varangians and the Greeks’ when he returned to his homeland, but also his own *útfærðar saga*.

Catalin Taranu (*University of Leeds*): ‘Germanic Heroic Poetry Between Two Worlds – Was Sigurðr the Original Dragon-slayer of the Nibelung Cycle?’

Catalin’s paper explored the possibility that, even though Siegfried/ Sigurðr is the archetypal dragon-slayer of Western literature and certainly the protagonist of the many embodiments of the Nibelung cycle known throughout medieval Northern Europe, the earliest forms of the narrative of the dragon-slayer tell a radically different story – Sigurðr may not have been part of its original form at all. The guiding question in the title opens onto the bigger problems of studying what is conveniently – albeit sometimes unhelpfully – known as ‘Germanic heroic poetry’. Catalin’s enquiry started from a simple narrative element (the hero of the dragon-slaying narrative) and continued by looking into its evolution throughout the different temporal and regional layers of the Nibelung cycle, using this element as a marker for tracing the evolution of the entire narrative through time and space. His argument was that there are three separate and very different narrative cores which collided into the grand narrative present in *Völsunga saga* and the *Nibelungenlied*. This paper interestingly explored what this narrative stratification of an apparently monolithic story tells us about how and why these narratives evolved the way they did. Ultimately, Catalin argued that this evolution is inextricably linked to the complex relationships between the binaries which determined the shape of these narrative cores – oral and literate, Latinate and vernacular (Old English, Old Norse, Middle High German), lower-class and elite. Eventually, focusing on two opposite worlds between which these stories were always moving prove to be not entirely helpful, and thus, the need for a new integrative model for Germanic heroic poetry emerges, which Catalin’s proposed solution was to consider Germanic heroic traditions in the manner of a rhizome – a botanical term used to describe a dynamic, open, decentralized network that branches out to all sides unpredictably and horizontally.

WORKSHOP 2A, CHAIRED BY DR FROG (UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI), FOCUSED ON
INDIGENOUS IDEAS AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES IN SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURE

Päivi Salmesvuori (*University of Helsinki*): ‘Shadow of a Monk – Birgitta of Sweden encounters her Critic’

Päivi’s paper focused on Birgitta of Sweden, canonized in 1381, and enjoying a huge fame in her native lands even during her life, especially on how she acceded to authority and power and how she dealt with dissenting voices. Although she became during her lifetime a so-called ‘living saint’, this was not a stable status, for Birgitta had to convince her audiences time after time about her special status. One of her critics was monk Gerekinus, whose claims Birgitta met head on in some of her visions. There, as Päivi argued, she makes Gerekinus a character of the text she authored and could thus counteract his criticism very effectively. One of the images she used was especially striking. She claimed that the monk’s shadow will remain on earth after his death. Päivi offered a convincing explanation for the shadow (its origins are more likely Biblical rather than folkloric) in that it split Gerekinus’s persona through her accusation of duplicity and hidden sins making the accused feel existentially uneasy. Had Gerekinus denied any forgotten or hidden sins, he would have been guilty of pride. It was thus in practice impossible to argue against such a claim. This metaphor, along with other rhetorical devices, shows Birgitta’s creativity in using figurative imagery and also a well-developed sense of human psychology, making her an effective constructor of the text of her own life.

Ásdís Egilsdóttir (*University of Iceland*): ‘The translated saint – The emergence of Icelandic hagiography’

Ásdís examined the evolution of the hagiographic genre from the classical Latin model to the rise of native Icelandic saints’ lives and cults. Thanks to translations from Latin into the vernacular, the *passiones* and *vitae* of all major saints were known to Icelandic audiences and thus paved the way for vernacular texts on Icelandic saints. The most venerated saints were universal and local at the same time. When their relics were brought to a church, and their legends translated into the vernacular, they were localized and became part of their host culture. However, she argues that an Icelandic born saint held a special place in the hearts of the Icelandic people. Ásdís uses the example of the vita of St Þorlákr, whose Latin original texts are now lost. The lives of the Icelandic-born saints were first written in Latin and then translated into Icelandic. Hence, we do not know how closely the preserved Icelandic texts resemble their Latin originals. Ásdís cautions that, although scholars usually define texts like *Þorláks saga*, *Jóns saga*, and the *Guðmundar sögur* as Icelandic, they are basically translations.

In the lives of the Icelandic saints, we see historical persons, (indeed pious) translated into the traditional language of hagiography and a universal model translated into the Icelandic language and scenery. Hence, Icelandic hagiographers did more than write on their own saints. They translated lives of foreign saints, adding characters and scenarios that are Icelandic, but the miracles are universal. Since most miracles were probably oral stories told by their beneficiaries transformed into the written language of the Church by the priests or bishops who listened to them, this transformation is also a translation from one type of discourse into another. Ásdís provided a very useful account of the complex dynamics of literacy and orality in Icelandic hagiography.

Kirsi Kanerva (*University of Turku*): ‘Eye pain in medieval Icelandic secular and hagiographical literature’

Kirsi’s wonderful presentation concentrated on eye pain episodes in both the *Íslendingasögur* (Icelandic family sagas) and sagas of a hagiographical nature, and discussed the differences between these genres in terms of how they depict this affliction, its causes and consequences, also delving into the possible indigenous and foreign elements in these accounts. In hagiographic writings, the aim of the stories of people catching eye pain appears to be the glorification of the saints. In the *Íslendingasögur*, on the other hand, both the cause and the consequences differ in that eye pain is usually caused by another person who appears to have magical skills. The victims are important either because they are protagonists in the sagas, or are otherwise presented as respectable and famous men with a genealogy. The events that precede the eye pain are thoroughly explained, as if to imply the motivation behind the behavior of the characters who are struck with eye pain. Thus, eye pain in *Íslendingasögur* often appears as indicator of guilt and a heavy conscience, and in both types of texts, the reason for eye pain appears to be the same: a punishment for misdeeds. However, what causes the punishment in these two source types is totally different since in the sagas of the St Þorlákr and St Óláfr the cause is divine whereas in *Íslendingasögur* the inflictor is heathen – though both causes can be categorized as ‘supernatural’.

Relative to the latter category, an interesting parallel is offered by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, in which, according to folk beliefs, elves would shoot arrows and spears at their victims, ‘elf-shots’, which could cause illness and other forms of harm. This power was also ascribed to people skilled in witchcraft. There are equivalents in later Scandinavian tradition in the form of *alvskot*, ‘elfshot’, and *trollskot*, ‘trollshot’, sometimes also known as *finnskot* (Finnshtot), both involved the idea that supernatural beings and people skilled in magic, such as elves and the Sami people (ON *Finnar*), could cause illnesses by sending a magical shot. Kirsi’s paper continued her exploration of the folk beliefs which underpinned these references, reconstructing the magical-religious context in which these afflictions were understood. Kirsi successfully argued that the motif of the eye pain caused by an external agent or force as a punishment, especially in *Íslendingasögur*, was based on indigenous ideas of the human body as porous and susceptible to external influences.

WORKSHOP 2B, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR MARCO MOSTERT (UTRECHT UNIVERSITY),
FOCUSED ON *LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION*

Inka Moilanen (*University of Stockholm*): ‘Latin and Vernacular Homilies of Anglo-Saxon England – Preaching and Perceptions of Society’

Inka’s presentation focused on homiletic literature in Anglo-Saxon England – a good case study for both oral and literary as well as Latin and vernacular communication, since it was a genre whose main function was not only to spread and explain the word of God, but also to create a sense of community and to establish rules for social behaviour. She began by showing that Ælfric did not believe it possible to convey the word of God without proper vernacular commentary – not only because of issues of different idioms, but also and mainly because of differences in customs and the lack of explanatory context to uncover the allegorical and moral implications of the Scripture – which thus lead him to preach extensively in Old English. Inka then compared this set of attitudes to those of Wulfstan. She convincingly argued that, since Ælfric’s and Wulfstan’s works are among the rare cases that we can study in two languages, both written by the same author, we can discern the ways in which they conceptualized the two languages and their respective cultural spheres. This is an advantage not often manifest in the study of anonymous homilies and sermons. Inka’s conclusion was that whereas Ælfric was more worried about the boundaries between the two languages (especially the knowledge these two languages conveyed) and the ability of the laity to understand the deeper meanings of Christian doctrine, Wulfstan’s attitude was more pragmatic. He, too, simplified and omitted complex theological issues when rewriting and translating his Latin sources, but he also concentrated more on practical teaching than on the theoretical aspects of education. Anonymous homilies, meanwhile, evinced no such concern for using the vernacular.

Ilkka Leskelä (*University of Helsinki*): ‘Cultural Economics: Late Medieval Praxis of Interregional Trade and Culture Flows between the German Hanse and the Swedish Realm’

Ilkka’s presentation demonstrated the deep-going German dominance in Hanseatic-Swedish trade and located it in a broader, regional and multi-polar Hanseatic-Swedish trading system. The late medieval Baltic Sea had become the *mare nostrum* of Hanseatic merchants. Middle Low German emerged as the *lingua franca* of all major trade hubs. German organization patterns, architecture, customs, taste and popular culture could be found all over the Baltic Sea coasts. Ilkka’s case study was the cathedral finances of the Turku chapter, which he located in the larger picture of contact networks and practices between Finland and Nyland on one hand and the Hanseatic cities of Lubeck, Gdansk and Tallinn on the other hand. Ilkka adeptly argued that these practical, economic contacts should be seen as blurring the lines between indigenous and foreign by creating a fruitful forum for cultural contacts and influences. Even small local communities, like Finnish peripheral rural towns, parishes and villages, participated in the interregional exchange. Hence, Ilkka

suggested that the Northern regional elites that were connected to written culture and ultimately Latin Christendom (who produced most of the sources we have left) had to coexist and negotiate with local populations who knew of and were acting in the wider world on their own terms. His presentation proved that when we talk of ideas, influences and interactions, of their direction and intensity, we should look for actual people, actual travel and actual communication (since it is not countries and cities that trade, but people; not culture that travels, but individuals). Although this is a challenging task when we operate with medieval and early modern sources, Ilkka argued that a much better view than is often presented is possible. Thus, he used the rarely preserved merchant correspondence, the sporadically available harbour registers, and individual merchants' account books can yield new and comprehensive insights into the cultural contacts of such peripheral and remote areas as the north Baltic, Turku, and the Finnish countryside.

Gleb Kazakov (*Universität Bielefeld*): 'The Terms for the King's men in Medieval Denmark – A Glimpse Through the Latin Sources and Vernacular Language'

Gleb's paper was a thought-provoking display of linguistic and semantic archeology. Focusing on how the semantic spheres of the words for the socio-political category of the 'king's men' overlap very imperfectly between the Latin and the Old Norse sources. This incongruence is due to the fact that although skaldic poetry, the sagas of Icelanders or Norwegian kings, law codes etc. were all composed and written down in Old Norse or other old Scandinavian languages, the very first stage of the Scandinavian medieval literature (from late twelfth-century to the beginning of the thirteenth) was written in Latin with classical Latinate historiography in mind. Hence, terms like *konungr*, *bóndi*, *lendrmaðr*, *þræll* – well-attested and understandable in the context of Scandinavian medieval society, do not have exact translations in the Latin texts, which describe the social realities they deal with by using primarily classical Latin terms (such as employing *rex* for *konungr*, or *dux* for *jarl*). There are exceptions, however, and for instance the Latin *Lex castrensis* (composed in the 1180s by Sven Aggesen, a Danish medieval historian and king's serviceman) uses the ON *huskarlastefna*. This suggests that the king's bodyguards and retainers were known at the time as *huskarlar* (unattested in any other Old Danish historical sources), though the word used most often to describe a single member of king's retinue is *militaris/miles*. Sven Aggesen refers to the retainers of a Danish medieval king by using the classical Latin terms with the meaning 'soldiers serving together' (*castrenses*, *contubernales*) and 'servicemen' (*curiales*). Gleb deftly compares the uses of these words in other Latin sources (Saxo Gramaticus and others), but also in Old Norse texts (the *Heimskringla*, Icelandic sagas etc.), tracing the evolution of their semantic content in time. All in all, he demonstrated how the different uses of these words provide unexpected glimpses into the mind of the Danish medieval historians writing in Latin as they struggle to find suitable Latin words to translate the social reality they dealt with, but not shying away from leaving words like *huskarlastefna* untranslated, thus showing their intimacy with the connotations of vernacular terminology.

WORKSHOP 3A: INTERACTION OF ORAL AND LITERARY CULTURES

Linda Kaljundi (*Finnish Literature Society*): ‘Indigenous and Foreign Archives – Oral vs. written in Estonian cultural memory’

Linda’s paper showed how the dynamics of the oral and written cultural spheres shaped Estonian cultural memory. As in other emerging modern states from previously non-dominant ethnic groups (e. g., Finland), the collection and study of oral folklore was one of the major projects of Estonian nation building in late nineteenth century. Oral heritage also played a major role in young Estonian nationalism, and even today it holds a privileged role in the nation’s cultural memory as well as identity politics, much more so than any historical monument, or heritage site. Linda traced the rise of oral culture into the centre of the Estonian nation-building from the perspective of cultural memory studies. She proved that the concept of ‘cultural memory’ offers fruitful avenues of inquiry for this multi-sided phenomenon and also that Estonian uses of oral culture also resonates well with a number of debates that have been prominent in memory studies during the past decades. The Estonian case study shows the oral mode of historical memory as an alternative to the recently critiqued status of written archives as neutral depositories (since it is closely bound to the emergence of history as an independent academic discipline in the nineteenth century, which positioned itself as science that studies sources). Hence, Linda’s paper examined the relations between the making of archives and histories in a situation where different communities – Estonian and Baltic German – strove to establish competing versions of the region’s past. She explains the rise in prestige of oral heritage as accompanying the rapidly rising social status of the Estonians and the colonial legacy that loomed large in the Baltic provinces of the Russian empire. Folklore, when projected back to the ancient past, was used to prove that the young nations were themselves ancient *Kulturnationen* and thus to subvert colonial humiliation. Furthermore, the use of oral heritage – especially when opposed to written media – also strongly capitalizes on the rhetoric of authenticity and indigenous as opposed to artificial and foreign (projected on Baltic Germans). The Estonian constructions of the ancient past, she argued, relate and run parallel to the Baltic German media of memory. Linda did a wonderful job of showcasing the Eastern Baltic project of oral heritage as a point of entry into understanding the complex relationship between cultural memories created by dominant and non-dominant groups, documenting the ways in which the emergence of competing and conflicting historical identities and their archives both divided and joined local communities.

Marek Tamm (*Tallinn University, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*): ‘How to Do Things with Words – Medieval Sermon Stories and the Estonian Folk Tales’

Marek’s presentation looked at medieval preaching as performance and speech act which aims both to inform and to form the audience. Medieval sermons as an intermediary between learned clerical

culture and popular lay culture by translating ecclesiastic culture into the categories of thought and linguistic forms of the laity, particularly in recently Christianized areas, like Estonia or Finland, where the preaching was one of the main cultural contacts between the clerics and the native inhabitants. However, Marek wisely abandons the oppositions between lay and clerical, oral and vernacular, focusing instead on the interactions and contacts between these presumably opposite spheres. His main argument was that Estonian folktales are heavily dependent on the medieval (but most probably also on the early modern) preaching. He proved that it is impossible to understand the content and form of the Estonian folktales without taking into consideration the influence of medieval *exempla* (the small illustrative stories – intended for both lay and illiterate audiences – which combined religious didactics with entertaining tales about human behaviour and miraculous events). Medieval sermons had a significant influence on the Estonian oral traditions. Marek convincingly argues that we can find the influences of the medieval preaching on the Estonian folktales on three separate levels (the level of narrative motifs, of narrative structure, and of social values), and also that the influence of medieval mendicant preaching (based on a very acute social ethos) can be found also on the level of social values that characterize the universe of Estonian folktales. Since the audience of the mendicant sermons were the people who consisted mostly of the poor and illiterate, the joy over the punishments of rich sinners was a message directed to these people, as to keep them happy in this life waiting for retribution, and, what is more, for their vengeance in the future. The belief in the glory of poverty and the wickedness of wealth that is very typical to Estonian folk stories is most probably rooted in the teaching of the mendicant preachers.

Irma-Riitta Järvinen (*Finnish Literature Society*): ‘Vernacular Transformations of Saints’ Cults in Finland – St. Katherine of Alexandria and St. Anne’

The aim of Irma-Riitta’s presentation was to show how Christian saints were made a functional part of vernacular religion in Finland, which she successfully did. From the viewpoint of lay piety, the aim of vernacular prayers and rituals was to venerate the saints and to call their help, no matter how much the forms used for this differed from the practices taught by the Church. In this context, she showed that the distinction between ‘pagan’ and ‘heathen’ practices is not very helpful; saints were understood and transformed by vernacular imagination in various ways. In vernacular piety the saints were made part of a mythological continuum of beings, who were asked to fulfill human needs. Irma-Riitta focused on two case studies, the cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria and that of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, in Finnish-Karelian traditions. St. Katherine was seen as the guardian spirit of the cattle. Irma-Riitta reflected whether this proves that when the traditions of St. Katherine arrived in Finland there was already a set of beliefs about guardian spirits in the household who help to protect the cattle, and thus that the saint took over the tasks of the guardian spirits. In the case of St. Anne, in Eastern Finnish and Karelian hunting charms and prayers she is usually presented as a dweller in the forest. Since in the worldview of Karelian folklore the forest belongs to the sphere of the supernormal ‘other’, an ‘antiworld’ in contrast to the village and its

reality, the popular narratives on St. Anne can be said to go back to pre-Christian symbols and myths. The examples presented by Irma-Riitta cogently showed how vernacular imagination functioned in making the Catholic saints useful in popular piety. Although there is no documentation of folk piety or vernacular cults of St. Anne and St. Katherine in medieval Finland, the fact that both saints were still appealed to in the nineteenth century proves that they were fulfilling an important need in people's lives. Both St. Katherine and St. Anne were familiarized and entered the spaces which had already been mythologized by ethnic spirits.

WORKSHOP 3B, CHAIRED BY JESSE KESKIAHO (UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI), FOCUSED ON
MULTILINGUALISM IN SOURCES

Helen F. Leslie (*University of Bergen*): 'The *mise-en-page* of Latin and Old Norse Poetry in Old Norse Manuscripts'

Helen's paper discussed the distinction between prose and verse in the layout of Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts. She helpfully showed how the details of the *mise-en-page* provide us with plenty of information about the scribes who wrote the text and the literary culture in which they worked. She used *Ketils saga hængs* as a very useful case study. This text is an Old Norse legendary saga written in prose interspersed with verse with a demonstrably long life since, although probably starting out as oral and the first extant manuscripts are fifteenth-century, its popularity and copying by hand endured well into the nineteenth century in Iceland. Helen first discussed several Latin verses in Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts and then saga manuscripts written in the vernacular, discussing the layout of verse on the manuscript page. She argued that writers of manuscripts sought to mediate their readers' response to the text through the layout of the text on the manuscript page. Helen ingeniously used (in relation to Old Norse culture) Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe's argument that readers in Anglo-Saxon England applied a large amount of oral knowledge in decoding the English manuscript page, since Old English verse was alive in oral tradition, whereas for Latin texts, more visual cues were needed in a manuscript since the readers were alienated from an oral, vital tradition. Hence, Helen prudently argued that although the *mise-en-page* of the Old Norse manuscripts she analyzed might be indicators of residual orality (or alternatively, simply visual aids for finding verses at a glance in performance contexts), this need not characterize an entire culture. All in all, her impressive presentation shed new light on the way orality and performance shape manuscripts and are in their turn shaped by them.

Leena Enqvist (*University of Helsinki*): 'Birgittine Reading Culture – Questions of Literacy, Uses of Latin & Vernaculars, and Reading Aids and Guidelines'

Leena's paper attempted to reevaluate the complex ways in which diglossia and literacy interacted and were embodied in English and Swedish Birgittine communities. Although books and reading

were an integral part of medieval monastic life and Birgittine monasteries had a learned and pious reputation, not every nun was literate and even when they were, this was not necessarily a sign of knowledge of Latin. As Leena argues, evaluating an individual nun's level of literacy is in most cases an impossible task, partly because of problematic definitions of literacy which do not reflect the social realities in late medieval monastic communities. For instance, if a person was completely illiterate, this does not mean that he or she would not participate in the literary culture of his or her monastery – illiterate nuns had access to texts through public reading. On the other hand, owning books does not necessarily mean that they were actually read. The monasteries discussed in Leena's study housed both those who were *litterati* in a traditional sense of the word (competent in Latin) and those who were either literate in the vernacular or completely illiterate.

In regard to Birgittines, diglossia and literacy are especially problematic since exploiting the possibilities offered by vernaculars was widespread within the Order. If the liturgical material is excluded, Latin books were mainly aimed at private study and devotion, Leena argued, whereas public reading was supposed to be conducted in vernacular so that everybody could understand it. Thus even those who did not necessarily need to read Latin texts had to manage with ritualistic Latin usage. Naturally, this does not mean that those nuns needed to be fully competent in Latin. Yet Birgittine nuns apparently preferred vernacular devotional writings. Leena concluded her valuable paper by remarking how bilingual books reflect the diglossic situation in Birgittine monasteries where two languages are used partly for different purposes – Latin as a ritualistic, religious prestige language and English/Swedish as an everyday language and also as a language of devotional texts.

Alpo Honkapohja (*University of Zurich*): 'Multilingualism in The Sloane Group of 15th-Century Medical and Alchemical Manuscripts'

Alpo condensed an impressive amount of his postgraduate work in his presentation. This felt all the more fitting since he was just concluding his PhD at Zurich. His presentation focused on the way English, French, and Latin were used in a cluster of related fifteenth-century medical and alchemical manuscripts dating from the second half of the fifteenth century known as the Sloane Group. Alpo drew on pragmatic approaches to the study of bilingualism in present-day societies as well as codicological description of the manuscripts to shed light on the different communicative functions in which each language is used in the manuscripts, but also on the production and audiences of these manuscripts. Interestingly, the Sloane manuscripts may be evidence of systematic commercial production of medical texts, in London or its surrounding areas, slightly before Caxton and the first printing press. More to the point, they are peculiar because Latin and English seem to be on the same level in them. The English texts do not directly gloss the Latin ones, and the contents in both languages are of equal sophistication. Alpo's paper focused on the latter point. He employed an impressive array of linguistic cognitive and semantic methodologies to prove that despite the

occurrence of texts both in Latin and Middle English in these manuscripts, code-switching is fairly rare and also that the Latin texts do not contain any switches to English or French. Moreover, although the Sloane Group was previously regarded as an example of a manuscript in which Latin and Middle English are of equal sophistication, this view has to be slightly revised. Interestingly, the reader of the manuscripts was expected to have enough functional Latin to be able to understand recipes in Latin or to make astrological calculations based on them. All in all, Alpo's presentation proved very illuminating for the interactions between medical and alchemical manuscripts, their authors and their public in late medieval Western Europe.

WORKSHOP 4A, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR MARA GRUDULE (UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA),
FOCUSED ON *INTERACTION OF INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN TRADITIONS*

Kati Kallio (*Finnish Literature Society*): 'What is a Good Poem? Shifts in Poetics, Music and Ideologies'

Kati's paper analyzed the complex interactions between folk and elite or oral and literate poetic languages, contextualizing them in the attitudes of the elite towards the oral Kalevala-metric poetry and also in the implementation of rhymed meters in folk poetry. Her central argument was that most of the earliest poems were in fact songs, and hence should be understood in relation to musical as well as poetic registers. Kati introduced us to the two main Finnish poetic systems: the Kalevala meter (the traditional language of epic, ritual, and lyrical poems, lullabies, charms and incantations, proverbs, nursery rhymes etc.) and rhymed meters (the newer genre of stanzaic songs of various types emerging from Western influences).

The first poems written in Finnish from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are usually regarded as rather weak and clumsy. Kati tackled the venerable question of why these first poets chose German and Western European meters instead of developing the old oral Kalevala meter. She answers by looking into the cultural and practical preconditions necessary for the use of a poetic meter. The poetic register must not carry unacceptable undertones or associations, and, at the same time, it must be compatible with the musical register in question. Since the first Finnish verse-makers were reformers who drew inspiration for the German Lutheran singing, the attitude to the traditional oral poetic idiom (Kalevala-meter) was one of avoidance. Thus, Kati argued that the choices of the early reformers should not be seen in relation to the oral vernacular idioms only, but also relative to the song registers they had as their models or aims. She concluded that the early rhymed hymns in Finnish may seem clumsy or even difficult to sing for a modern reader, but since they were in use for several hundreds of years without being changed or refined by the compilers of new hymnals, they must have been perceived as good in at least some ways, being probably deeply rooted in local practices.

Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen (*Finnish Literature Society*): ‘Vicious Pagans, Pious Men, and Pleasures of Singing – King David, St. Augustine, Luther and Väinämöinen’

Tuomas’s presentation focused on how the pleasure of music has been conceptualized and moralized in a series of cultural contexts ranging from St. Augustine to the early Finnish reformers. He started by looking at the prefaces penned by Mikael Agricola and Jacobus Finno for the Finnish translation of David’s psalter and the first Lutheran hymnal in Finnish, where they proposed what could be defined as the first theory of music and singing in Finnish. They both introduced new congregational singing and a new type of rhymed hymns while also creating literary Finnish. Tuomas argued that, since in the Middle Ages Finnish was used only as the local vernacular language for oral communication while the written languages were Latin, Swedish and Low-German, the introduction of congregational singing led to a complex process of changes in cult and doctrine, written and oral as well as in linguistic constellation. Tuomas went on to trace attitudes towards the pleasure derived from music in early Christian thought, where suspicion felt towards sensuous gratification in music was intertwined with awe towards music as a mathematical discipline, an instantiation of beauty as an attribute of God. For Luther and other reformers, music was a gift of God which included reciprocity – receiving the gift of God evokes man to praise him and also a road leading to faith as part of ‘the affective trust of the heart’. Tuomas argued that Luther turned Augustine’s objection towards musical pleasure on its head, since aesthetic pleasure was an innate human ability which makes him to turn toward God’s creation and hence toward God himself. This affective theory legitimized the Luther’s personal love of music as well as his program to renew the liturgical practice among other things with congregational singing of religious hymns, which was accomplished also on the shores of Baltic Sea.

Rikke S. Olesen (*University of Copenhagen*): ‘Runic Latin – Foreign Influence on the Vernacular Epigraphic Tradition in Denmark’

Rikke’s paper focused on runic inscriptions in Latin – well-known to runologists but perhaps not familiar to scholars in other fields. She showcased her work on Danish runic amulets by discussing the inscriptions from a philological and epigraphic point of view. Rikke expertly argued that the medieval use of runic amulets can be regarded as a continuation and/or a renewal of a very old tradition. Among the innovations brought to this tradition from abroad, the most important seem to have been the use of Latin, the literary and Christian textual formulas, the physical material (lead), and the characteristic way of folding lead amulets. Interestingly, the presentation showed that the folding could reflect the imitation of a foreign ritualistic performance of folding pieces of lead or even parchment. Thus, runic Latin reflects the interactions between the foreign language and the autochthonous characters traditionally used for epigraphic writing in the vernacular. Certain features in the runic spelling of Latin have attracted scholarly attention because they seem to reflect an oral realization and therefore the pronunciation of Medieval Latin in Scandinavia. Rikke also

countered the opinion that runes were seen as being more effective in a magical context by proposing the more practical explanation that the amulet rituals were connected with oral performance. It must have been possible for people with runic skills to read runic Latin aloud even though they might not have been familiar with either Latin or Roman letters. Inscriptions in Roman lettering also show spellings that seem to reflect memorized and not copied pieces of text. Rikke's presentation successfully unraveled the complex interactions between Latin and Germanic vernaculars and between orality and literacy underlying the runic inscriptions on Danish amulets. She also expressed the ambition to throw more light on this material in the future in a joint project involving museums and universities in and outside Denmark.

WORKSHOP 4B, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR TERRY GUNNELL (UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND),
FOCUSED ON *ECHOES OF THE PAST IN ICELANDIC SAGA LITERATURE*

Kendra Willson (*Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*): 'Parody and Genre in Sagas of Icelanders'

Kendra's presentation tackled the thorny issue of identifying irony and parody in Icelandic sagas. This is problematic because, since sagas prefigure the novel in many ways, there is a tendency to read them as novels, especially by a modern audience raised on modernist texts, which may see similar preoccupations in older texts (even though they may be more present in modern minds rather in the authorial intention which studies of medieval texts often aim to reconstruct). Still, Kendra did an excellent job of navigating these difficulties and presented a picture of Old Norse and Icelandic literature which included parody and satyr. She nuances these modern notions by viewing parody in several medieval texts as use of traditional motifs in a comic vein.

For instance, *Fóstbroeðra saga* is at once a parody of the genre and a satire of the heroic ethos. It parodies Norwegian sagas inspired by Arthurian romance by drawing the ultimate and often ludicrous consequences of the behaviours propounded in courtly romance. These behavioral codes are intrinsic to the genre, so the distinction between textual parody and social satire is undermined. Kendra prefers to read *Króka-Refs saga* (a fourteenth-century saga which has previously been seen as a parodic pastiche of the saga genre) as making comic use of traditional motifs. In many cases, the more familiar tragic sagas which *Króka-Refs saga* is said to parody may represent a more innovative use of the tradition. In it, motifs are not inherently comic but depend on incongruity in context and genre sensibility for its humor. Hence, she argued that *Króka-Refs saga* does show parody of traditional elements and scenes and generic consciousness. However, in most instances the target of the spoof is a motif or generic element rather than a specific other saga.

Anne Irene Riisøy (*Buskerud University College*): 'Eddic Law – Viking Law – Germanic Law?'

Anne Irene's paper dealt with legal terms and legal episodes in Old Norse verse and skillfully argued for a Viking Age setting of the Eddic poems, and in some cases possibly also an even earlier

origin. Eddic poetry is replete with ancient legal terminology and often depicts scenes of a legal nature (murder, revenge, compensation, hanging of criminals, how to contract a lawful marriage or become a legitimate heir). While no Eddic poem is itself a legal text, they are dramatic enactments of imagined events in the lives of the gods which demonstrate legal notions and which thus may reflect legal practices in the society in which they originate. Anne Irene's presentation impressively unraveled the law embedded in these texts (which, she argues, can be firmly tied to a Viking Age reality) by employing semantic archaeology. She focused on legal terms such as *þing* (in Scandinavia the most common term for assembly), *eið* ('oath', normally connoting solemn promise, with cognates in all Germanic languages), *vargr* (the word for 'outlaw', but also 'wolf'). All in all, Anne Irene convincingly argued that Eddic poetry, read together with the earliest skaldic verse, provides the closest possible view of the paths of legal thought among the Germanic people.

Frog (*University of Helsinki*): 'Calling Christ *bealdor* – From Mythology to Meaningfulness in an Oral-Poetic Formula'

Frog offered us an impressive sample of linguistic and semantic archeology from his broad-ranging work. His conclusions had much more far-reaching implications, however, as his rich research output of the past few years has demonstrated. His paper was not concerned (as those of previous researchers) with whether Christ and/or an Anglo-Saxon equivalent of Baldr underlie the Old English poetic word *bealdor*, but rather with the use of the term in oral poetry, and how it was informed by vernacular mythology. He first explored this line of enquiry by showing that the use of *bealdor* in Anglo-Saxon poetry is highly formulaic – it was not used generatively in the poetic vocabulary. Frog's analysis proved that the attested pattern of use of this term is so narrow, even down to its grammatical aspects, that it appears to have been preserved in documentation and maintained in oral use more or less exclusively in oral-poetic constructions. Frog went on to examine *bealdor* cognates in other Germanic languages. In Old Norse, *baldr* was not seen as a common noun and all its poetic uses are instantiations of the theonym *Baldr*. A cognate with Anglo-Saxon *bealdor* and Old Norse *baldr* is preserved in a single example from Old High German, found in the intriguing Second Merseburg Charm, the subject of heated debate owing to the possibility that it represents a tradition of the god Baldr among Germanic cultures on the continent.

Frog then reconstructed not so much the form or the exact meaning of the pretextual embodiments of *bealdor*, but rather the connotations they carried through time and across different Germanic cultures. Thus, he showed that the antecedent of *bealdor* was used flexibly and even generatively in poetry and presumably in other registers in an earlier period, hence it did not start off in poetry exclusively in a particular formula, but rather dropped out of other daily uses, being preserved in meter. Frog's survey of the use of cognates in Germanic languages convincingly demonstrated that the term appears strongly connected with the mythological sphere in evidence from all other linguistic-cultural arenas, and was a term applicable to gods that appears by extension to have

become a poetic synonym for lord or leader especially in kenning constructions. Conceivably, the antecedent of OE *bealdor* was identified with a particular god who suffered death as a victim. In time, the mythological narrative and even the god may have become obscure or been wholly forgotten, but the formula's conventionalized patterns of use, once established as a resource in the register, allowed the formula to be maintained as part of a poetic idiom. Hence, as Frog argued, its connotative significance could remain accessible and interesting as a resource without the need for the mythological referent to be recognizable. All in all, Frog's presentation was a tour de force across Germanic cultures, poetic traditions and mythologies which provided exciting vistas of research for the pretextual evolutions of words and texts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

All the presentations and lectures given at the Helsinki symposium concluded along similar lines in regard to the complex dynamics of oral vs. literate, Latin vs. vernacular, elite vs. folk, Christian vs. pagan etc. First of all, we all agreed these embodiments of the 'Great Divide' should be abandoned and replaced with other models. The paradigm of a spectre of attitudes seems to be much more helpful than that of opposing binaries. Prof. Mostert's refutation of simplistic 'literate vs. illiterate/oral' approaches and his proposition of intermediate categories (quasi-literate, semi-illiterate etc.) should be adopted and extended to the other binaries and this is what many of the participants to this workshop did in fact achieve. The sixteen presentations and four lectures showed plenty of instantiations of the dynamic interaction between the above-mentioned binaries, from Danish runic amulets to early Lutheran Finnish hymns, from late medieval English alchemical manuscripts to pretextual legal Old Norse codes, but more than that, they proved that these interactions surpass cultural, temporal, spatial, genre boundaries and that they effectively make these texts (in the broadest definition of the word) into much more than they would have been confined to one of the two binaries. Thus, the very presence of one of the terms of the opposing pairs presupposes the (muted) presence of the other. The Helsinki workshop(s) succeeded in making the second term (whether it be residual orality, muted pagan mythology, despised folklore) speak for itself, all the while making us aware that any boundaries between the two terms is a scholarly ideal never discernible in the sources we use.

Finally, I would like to thank the organizers (especially Kirsi Kanerva) for hosting the conference and for providing excellent support and facilities.