Abstract:
A main concern of the humanities is to understand the ways selves create, and relate to, their world and history. These questions have been a focus of vigorous discussion in the field of medieval studies, where the accepted contention promotes the complexities of the self and its perpetual dynamic interplay with and within a variety of social spaces. This project to be presented here, aims to contribute to the discussion by studying Old Norse literature, which has not been exploited sufficiently to elucidate the topic, despite its great potential. The project will investigate three main questions: (1) How does the creative self (author, translator, scribe, artist, patron, or a reader, perceiver) condition, define, relate to the created self (a text, a manuscript, a literary character, a sculpture, or a letter), within a specific socio-political space?; (2) What happens to this link during translations from one linguistic context to another?; (3) How is this link conditioned by the mediality of the created self? The main focus will fall on two texts, Njáls saga and Barlaams saga, but in order to address the third main question, the project will incorporate investigations of Norwegian and Icelandic charters and law material.

The investigation will utilize theories of ‘distributed cognition’ and ‘artefactual medievalism’, both of which foreground human agency and the cognitive processes that underlie the production of textual and material culture. Each of the sub-projects will consistently incorporate study of four different...
selves: (1) the self of the ‘creator’ (i.e. author, scribe), (2) the self of the manuscript or cultural expression, (3) the self of the narrator, and (4) the self of the narrative characters. I will further discuss the relationship between these four different selves, and the change in this relationship, seen against the general ‘movement’ of Iceland away from the political center during the years between its submission to Norway and the Kalmar Union in 1397.

The presentations will be structured around and include short presentations of (1) the main questions of the project seen against the background of studies of the self in general; (2) the theoretical premises of the project; and (3) the method as suggested above. My aim is to inspire theoretical and methodological discussions which may be relevant for the study of the self based on various material.

Forelesningen vil foregå på norsk.

Om foreleseren:


Forelesningen vil finne sted i SVHUM E-0103 kl. 15.15 fredag 5.2.2016. Alle er hjertelig velkomne!