

Ancient Germanic Heroic Legend

Autumn 2014 - NOFI 210, 211, 250, 300, 302, 303, 304

HF-bygget, seminarrom 400, Tuesdays, 10.15am - 12.00pm

UPDATED 22.10.84 TO REFLECT REVISED DEADLINE AND SCHEDULE

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Course Overview

This course focuses on the network of **Germanic heroic legends about ancient heroes** in the north of medieval Europe. Iceland, England and Germany's distinct vernacular heroic texts will be compared in order to come to an understanding of **the relation and relationship of these legends and their respective places in their native traditions**.

Through the length of the course, the students will be exposed to a variety of medieval primary texts. The course **challenges students** to analyse the primary sources of the **Völsung legend** and the sources detailing **the legends of Lejre**, through close reading, discussion and by intellectually engaging with texts and related archaeological objects. As a brief break between the Völsungs and the goings on at Lejre, we'll take a look at **Völundr**, a rather curious elf. Although the focus of the course will be primarily on the Old Norse material, sources in Old English, Latin and Middle High German will be studied (in translation), to give a rich and varied understanding of the legends and heroes we look at; **Beowulf** from Anglo-Saxon England will be studied in particular.

Classes will be primarily **discussion** based. Throughout the course, we will ask the following questions of the material:

1. What can be said of the provenance and date of the text/art work?
2. What is distinctive about the way a particular text/art work tells a particular story?
3. What form did the story have (or might have had) in the period earlier than that in which the relevant Icelandic material was written down?

Required Texts

All required material (pensum and any handouts and bibliographies) will be distributed via Mi Side. The pensum is listed at the end of this syllabus. The lectures will emphasise the primary material, and students are encouraged to read the assigned secondary literature as a helpful prerequisite to each class.

TIP: Bring printouts of material to class! You will need them.

Preparation Tip

For most classes, there will be a preparation sheet put up on Mi Side in advance. This will explain:

- ✓ What the next class will be about and what the goals of the class are.
- ✓ What texts you should read in advance (both primary and secondary).
- ✓ What questions you should be thinking about as you read the primary sources.

Please bring these sheets with you to class!

And... a **top tip** is, **make notes as you read primary texts**, especially on the answers to the questions I give you. These will be handy not only for class, but for your learning in general and in revising for the exams/writing the assignment and final essay.

Course Requirements

Presentation - Each student will be required to give a presentation of three to four archaeological sources. The presentations should be around 15 minutes long and will take place on 30.09.14. The topics will be discussed in the first class.

Each presentation should be accompanied by a handout, minimum 2 sides long, outlining and giving a comprehensive summary of the presentation. You do not need to include the pictures on this handout.

Written Assignment - Each student should please complete a written assignment of minimum 750 words (more words are welcome) on the lacuna of the Codex Regius manuscript. Further guidance will be given, and the date for submission will be agreed in the first class. This assignment will be evaluated but will not count towards your final mark.

The title of the assignment is: **What is ‘the great lacuna’ of the Codex Regius? Why is *Völsunga saga* important for our understanding of the lost lays of the Codex Regius?**

Reading to help you with the assignment is below. Looking up *Sigurðarkviða in meiri* in encyclopaedias will also be illuminating.

- Andersson, Theodore M. “The Lays in the Lacuna of *Codex Regius*.” *Speculum Norroenvm: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*. Ed. Ursula Dronke et al. Odense: Odense University Press, 1981. Pp. 6-26.
- Andersson, Theodore M. “Beyond Epic and Romance: *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*.” *Sagnaskemmtun: Studies in Honour of Hermann Pálsson*. Ed. Rudolf Simek et al. Wien: Böhlau, 1986. Pp. 1-11.

- Orchard, Andy. "Introduction." *The Elder Edda: A Book of Viking Lore*. London: Penguin, 2011. Ppp. xxiii-xxiv (2 pages)

Important Dates

30.09.2014: Student presentations of archaeological material (see above).

03.10.2014: Deadline for submission of the pensum list (this must be okeyed with me in advance!).

06.10.2014: Reading week, no class.

05.11.2014: Deadline for the submission of a draft of the final essay.

26.11.2014: Final exam.

26.11.2014: Final essay due.

CLASS SCHEDULE

19.08.14: Introduction to the Course and to Heroic Poetry and Prose

26.08.14: The Palaeography and Poems of the Heroic Section of the Codex Regius

The Volsung Cycle

02.09.14: Helgi Hundingsbani

09.09.14: The Volsung cycle, and Sigmundur

23.09.14: The Young Sigurðr

30.09.14: Sigurðr and the Archaeological Material (presentations and discussion)

07.10.14: READING WEEK, no class!

14.10.14: Sigurðr and the Archaeological Material (presentations and discussion)

17.10.14: The Death of Sigurðr

21.10.14: Völundr

The Legends of Lejre

28.10.14: *Beowulf*

04.11.14: *Beowulf* and its Scandinavian Analogues

11.11.14: The Legend of Lejre

18.11.14: *Hrólfs saga kraka* and summary.

Ancient Germanic Heroic Legend – Pensum (987 pages)

Primary Sources (430 pages)

Old English Material (to be read in modern English translation) (38 pages)

Beowulf [extract]. *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*. Ed. and trans. S. A. J. Bradley. London: Dent, 1982. Pp. 420-444. (24 pages.)

Deor. *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*. Ed. and trans. S. A. J. Bradley. London: Dent, 1982. Pp. 362-365. (4 pages, includes introduction)

The Battle of Finnsburh (The Finnsburh Fragment). *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*. Ed. and trans. S. A. J. Bradley. London: Dent, 1982. Pp. 507-509. (3 pages, includes introduction.)

Waldere. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*. Ed. and trans. Jonathan B. Himes. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. Pp. 79 & 81. (2 pages.)

Widsith. *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: An Anthology of Old English Poems in Prose Translation*. Ed. and trans. S. A. J. Bradley. London: Dent, 1982. Pp. 336-340. (5 pages, includes introduction.)

Old Norse Material (to be read in Old Norse)¹

Eddic Poems (83 pages)

Brot af Sigurðarkviðu. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 237-241. (5 pages)

Fáfnismál. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 219-226. (8 pages)

Frá dauða Sinfjötla. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 202-203. (2 pages)

Grípisspá. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 204-212. (9 pages)

Grottasöngur. Beowulf and Lejre. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 301-302, 304, 306, 308. (5 pages)

Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 171-178. (8 pages)

¹ You may of course read a translation or use a translation to help you read the Old Norse. In class, we will be using the original texts so it is printouts of the original text you will need to bring with you. In any assessment you will be expected to analyse and quote the Old Norse.

Helgakviða Hundingsbana hin fyrri. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 179-189. (11 pages)

Helgakviða Hundingsbana önnur. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 190-201. (12 pages)

Sigurðarkviða Fáfnisbana II [Reginismál]. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 212-218. (7 pages)

Sigurðarkviða hin skamma. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 247-259. (13 pages)

Völundarkviða. Norræn fornkvæði. Ed. S. Bugge. Universitetsforlaget, 1965 [1867]. Pp. 163-170. (8 pages)

Prose Sources (220 pages)

Grettis saga Ásmundrsonar [extract]. Ed. Guðni Jónsson. Íslenzk fornrit 7. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1936. Pp. 107-123, chs. 32-35. (17 pages)

Hrólfs saga kráka ok kappá hans. Fornaldar sögur norðurlanda. Vol. 1. Ed. C. C. Rafn. Kaupmannahöfn, 1829. Pp. 3-109. (106 pages)

Skáldskaparmál [extract]. *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*. Vol. 1. Ed. Anthony Faulkes. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998. Pp. 45-50 and pp. 58-59. (7 pages)

Piðreks saga af Bern. Ed. Henrik Bertelsen. Vol. 2. København: Møllers, 1905-11. Pp. 258-268. [Death of Sigurðr.] (11 pages)

Völsunga saga, The Saga of the Volsungs [extract]. Ed. R. G. Finch. London: Nelson, 1965. Pp. 1-61. [The saga up to the death of Sigurðr.] (60 pages)

Ynglinga saga [extract]. *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 363-364, 366, 368, 370, 372. (6 pages)

Archaeological Material - pictures of the following 14 objects will be provided (20 pages)

Rune or Picture Stones: U 1163; U 1175; Sö 40; Ramsund Carving, Sö 101; Sö 327; Gs 2; Gs 9; Gs 19; Bo NIYR 3; Hunninge Image Stone; Ardre Image Stone VIII (see Jesch on secondary reading).

Other: the Franks Casket (picture part of Souer's article); Hylestad stave church door portals.

German Source (to be read in modern English translation) (25 pages)

The Nibelungenlied: The Lay of the Nibelungs. Trans Cyril Edwards. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: OUP, 2010. Pp. 77-101. [The section in which the two queens argue, Sivrit is betrayed, killed and buried.] (25 pages)

Latin Sources (to be read in modern English translation) (28 pages)

Annales Ryenses [extract]. *Klaeber's Beowulf*. Ed. R. D. Fulk et al. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Pp. 303-304. [Note the English translation is in the footnote.] (2 pages)

Saxo Grammaticus. *Gesta Danorum. Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 341-342, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361. (11 pages)

Skjöldunga saga. Beowulf and Lejre. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 333-335, 337, 339. (4 pages)

Sven Aggesen. *A Short History of the Kings of Denmark (Brevis Historia Regum Dacii)* [extract]. *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 329, 331. (2 pages)

The Lejre Chronicle (Chronicon Lethrense) [extract]. *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 311-312, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327. (9 pages)

Thietmar of Merseburg. *Chronicon* [extract]. *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 297, 299. (2 pages)

Secondary Sources (557 pages)

- Andersson, Theodore M. "Beyond Epic and Romance: *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*." *Sagnaskemmtun: Studies in Honour of Hermann Pálsson*. Ed. Rudolf Simek et al. Wien: Böhlau, 1986. Pp. 1-11. (11 pages)
- Andersson, Theodore M. "The Lays in the Lacuna of *Codex Regius*." *Specvlvm Norroenvm: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*. Ed. Ursula Dronke et al. Odense: Odense University Press, 1981. Pp. 6-26. (21 pages)
- Ármann Jakobsson. "Le Roi Chevalier: The Royal Ideology and Genre of 'Hrólf's saga kraka'." *Scandinavian Studies* 71.2 (1999): 139-166. (27 pages)
- Chadwick, H. Munro. *The Heroic Age*. Cambridge: CUP, 1912. Pp. 1-63. (63 pages)
- Düwel, Klaus. "On the Sigurd Representations in Great Britain and Scandinavia." *Languages and Cultures: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé*. Ed. Mohammad Ali Jazayery and Werner Winter. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988. Pp. 133-156. (24 pages)
- Frank, Roberta. "Germanic Legend in Old English Literature." *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*. Ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge. Cambridge: CUP, 1991. Pp. 88-106. (19 pages)
- Haimperl, Edgar. "Sigurðr, a Medieval Hero: A Manuscript-Based Interpretation of the 'Young Sigurðr Poems.'" *Revisiting the Poetic Edda*. Pp. 28-52, including the introduction to the article. (34 pages)
- Harris, Joseph. "Older Germanic Poetry, With a Note on the Icelandic Sagas." *Medieval Oral Literature*. Ed. Karl Reichl. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012. Pp. 253-278. (25 pages)
- Heusler, Andreas. "Introduction." *Codex Regius of the Elder Edda: MS No. 2365 4to in the old Royal collection in the Royal Library of Copenhagen*. Ed. Einar Munksgaard. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1937. Pp. 15-30. (16 pages)
- Himes, Jonathan B., ed. and trans. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*. Jonathan B. Himes. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. Pp. 3-16, 37-53. (29 pages)
- Jack, George, ed. *Beowulf: A Student Edition*. Oxford: OUP, 1994. Pp. 1-21. [The introduction to the book, discusses the manuscript and dating of *Beowulf*.] (21 pages)
- Jesch, Judith. *Women in the Viking Age*. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991. Pp. 128 and 131 [a discussion of Ardre VIII and picture] (2 pages)
- Jónas Kristjánsson. "Heroic Poems." *Eddas and Sagas: Iceland's Medieval Literature*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2007. 4th ed. Pp. 47-82. [This is a good introductory chapter to many of the texts and questions we will be discussing.] (36 pages)

- Lindblad, Gustaf. *Studier i Codex regius av äldre eddan, I-III*. Lundastudier i nordisk språkvetenskap. Lund: Gleerup, 1954. Pp. 256-276. [Note that you do not need to read the section “Gudadikterna inbördes”, which is pp. 262-267.] (17 pages)
- Margeson, Sue. “The Völsung Legend in Medieval Art”. *Medieval Iconography and Narrative, a Symposium*. Ed. Flemming G. Andersen, Esther Nyholm, Marianne Powell and Flemming Talbo Stubkjær. Odense: Odense University Press, 1980. Pp. 183-211. (29 pages)
- McKinnell, John. “The Sigmundur/Sigurðr Story in an Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norse Context.” *Medieval Nordic Literature in its European Context*. Ed. Else Mundal. Oslo: Dreyer. Forthcoming. Circa 20 pages
- McKinnell, John. “The Context of Völundarkviða.” *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*. Ed. Paul Acker and Carolyne Larrington. New York: Routledge, 2002. Pp. 195-212. (17 pages)
- Mundal, Else. "Den norrøne episke tradisjonen." *Hellas og Norge: Kontakt, Komparasjon, Kontrast*. Eds. Øivind Andersen and Thomas Hägg. Skrifter (Det norske institutt i Athen) 2. Bergen: Det norske institutt i Athen, 1990. Pp. 65-80. (15 pages)
- Niles, John D. “Was There a ‘Legend of Leire’?” *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323*. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 255-265. (11 pages)
- North, Richard. “Is There More Like *Beowulf*? Old English Minor Heroic Poems.” *Beowulf and Other Stories: A New Introduction to Old English, Old Icelandic and Anglo-Norman Literatures*. Ed. Joe Allard and Richard North. 2nd ed. Florence, KY: Taylor and Francis, 2014. Pp. 95-129. [Available on ebrary.] (34 pages)
- Orchard, Andy. *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*. Woodbridge: Brewer, 2003. Pp. 173-187. (14 pages) [This is an analysis of the fragment ‘The Fight at Finnsburh’ and its connection to *Beowulf*.]
- Osborn, Marijane. “Legends of Lejre, Home of Kings.” *Beowulf and Lejre*. John D. Niles. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 323*. Temple: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007. Pp. 235-254. (20 pages)
- Shippey, Tom. “*Hrólfs saga kraka* and the Legend of Lejre.” *Making History: Essays on the fornaldarsögur*. Ed. Martin Arnold and Alison Finlay. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2010. Pp. 17-32. (16 pages)
- Souers, Philip Webster. “The Wayland Scene on the Franks Casket.” *Speculum* 18.1 (1943): 104-111. (8 pages)
- Swinford, Dean. “Form and Representation in *Beowulf* and *Grettis saga*.” *Neophilologus* 86 (2002): 613-620. (8 pages)

Vésteinn Ólason. "The Poetic Edda: Literature or Folklore?" *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*. Ed. Slavica Ranković, Leidulf Melve and Else Mundal. *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 20. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010. Pp. 227-252. (25 pages)