

Rethinking Pre-Modern Popular Revolt: Histories and Memories in a Long Transnational Context

A Two-Day Workshop, 3rd–4th March 2017

Venue: Tallinn University

Organizers: Centre for Medieval Studies, Tallinn University, and the Finnish Literature Society

The deadline for paper proposals 5th January 2017

The aim of this workshop is to re-contextualize the national representations of the medieval and early modern popular revolts by approaching them as components of an international web of schemata, narratives, and images. Interpretive traditions of these historical events – such as the Great Revolt in England, the German Peasants War, the St. George's Night Uprising in Estonia, Engelbrekt's Uprising in Sweden, or the Club War in Finland – began already when the events unfolded. In most cases, their event histories have been studied thoroughly. This workshop however focuses on the interpretive traditions of these uprisings and seeks to understand and de-particularize them in a framework of transnational historical imagination concerning popular resistance.

Over the course of centuries, these representations have been developed in various fictive and non-fictive genres stretching from scholarly writing to popular fiction, images, or performances. Nevertheless, uprisings and their historiographies are usually studied as distinct and separate events regardless of the fact that the events themselves, as well as their depictions were characteristically transnational (Baker & Edelstein 2015). The workshop seeks to demonstrate that each specific event can only be fully understood in a diachronically long-term and synchronically comparative perspective.

Ideally the papers of the workshop should take one uprising as the point of departure, but also consider the event and its afterlives in a comparative perspective. This enables comparing the representations of particular events either diachronically or synchronically with other narratives and imageries of resistance.

We are especially interested in questions related to story-worlds as spaces that enable to discuss social or colonial ambitions and anxieties, as well as in the possibilities to read such representations as 'narrative laboratories' where the limits of political participation allocated to different social groups could be debated in the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century.

We also encourage contributions that discuss:

- the transnational or transcultural traffic of stereotypes concerning peasants and other socio-ethnic groups associated with the revolts;
- the amplifications of modern and pre-modern historiographical interpretations by means of historical fiction, visual culture etc.;
- the conflicts and compromises between the overlapping cultural memories of

- same or similar historical events;
- the impact of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' revolutions on the representations of the medieval and early modern popular uprisings;
 - the uses of the early modern and medieval past and texts by the modern grand ideologies such as nationalism, or Marxism.

We also seek to contribute to the discussions concerning the transnational nature of nationalism, showing that the schemata used in national histories might be more similar than particularistic national interpretations have been willing to acknowledge. We also seek to test the idea that revolt narratives, motifs, and topoi have been particularly significant for multi-ethnic, socially stratified societies typical to the frontiers of Europe.

As a comparative workshop we also welcome theoretically focused contributions that discuss 'long contexts' (Armitage 2012), or the relationship between close readings and distant readings (Moretti 2005; Best&Marcus 2009; Levine 2014).

The long-distance aim of the workshop is to form a multidisciplinary network of researchers, which would also enable the creation of ambitious research projects in the future.

The deadline for paper proposals is 5th January 2017.

Please send an abstract (around 500 characters) to
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