



FRIAS

FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG



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University of Strasbourg
Institute for Advanced Study

Call for papers

Geographies of Knowledge and Imagination. Philological Research on Northern Europe 1800–1950

International conference

Dates: June 11th–13th 2015

Location: FRIAS, Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies

Comparative Philology was one of the fast developing branches of scientific and scholarly activities during the 19th and mid 20th centuries. Prosperous spin-offs from this field were Comparative Literature and Folklore as well as the different national philologies, including the studies of Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finno-Ugric cultures and languages, but even Germanic Antiquity and Lappology.

The study of the North and Nordic sources always held a prominent place in Comparative Philology. Scientific activities aimed at the generation of new historical knowledge, but, as we would propose, innovative geographical imaginations were produced as well. These imaginations were often intertwined with nationalist and/or colonial political projects.

The conference aims at analyzing imaginative geographies as the products of scholarly practices, anchored in specific institutional and political contexts and resulting from a certain geography of knowledge. In fact, in spite of its often objectivist claims, scientific knowledge is always localized and depends on venues such as libraries, classrooms, and office space, on regional needs and practices, on local milieus, and, of course, on circulation of people and media, as for example David Livingstone and Christian Jacob have shown in recent studies. Therefore, discussions of how to define supposedly Germanic peoples or the Vikings had different implications in London, Berlin, Paris, Rome, or Copenhagen.

At the same time, the growth and differentiation of the field made the knowledge about the North more and more complex and sometimes contradictory, as it participated in very different fields of knowledge. For example, the study of a Germanic past and the success of modern Scandinavian literature with authors such as Henrik Ibsen created tensions that philologists often only temporarily managed to bridge.

As a part of our Freiburg-Strasbourg Institute for Advanced Studies project *Building the North with Words. Geographies of Scientific Knowledge in European Philologies 1850–1950*, we invite researchers to contribute to this topic with papers on specific constellations, figures, institutions or scholarly projects, including reflections on the comparative methods of philological research during the 19th and 20th centuries. Case studies may come from all European contexts; we invite especially, but not exclusively, works on chronically under-researched contexts such as those of Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Russia, Central and Eastern Europe. The papers may concern work conducted by or within all scientific institutions such as universities, museums, scientific societies, research institutions, and libraries.

The conference is intended to stimulate discussion, so presentations should last 25 min with 20 min discussion. The publication of selected papers is planned. The conference language is English.

Deadline for abstracts: January 15th 2015

The length of abstracts should be 350–400 words, in addition to a short C.V. of the author.

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