

## Abstract:

This work attempts to outline concepts associated with body in the Old Norse literature. As the word for the body (*líkamr*) as well as the term for an incorporeal soul (*sál*) do not occur in the Old Norse literature until the translated Christian works and cannot therefore be used as markers, two areas closely connected with the concept of body have been chosen for the research: shifting of shape (*hamr*) and somatic expressions of emotions.

In the first area, i.e. phenomena associated with shape-shifting, contexts of all (113) occurrences of radix *ham-* in the Old Norse literature are analysed in order to describe the semantical field of this root. Within the themes that have appeared in the material (i.e. shape-shifting related to flying, battle frenzy and magic), occurrences are ordered on an axis from those where the form (*hamr*) is considered to be holistic to those where just the form of body or soul is described. In this context, it is important to mention the proximity of man and animal in the Germanic environment, as shape-shifting is often related to an animal and thus points to the limits of human identity. In the second area, i.e. somatic expressions of emotions, we can also find cases where the mental and the physical area intersect and the boundaries between diseases and emotions are not clear, as well as cases where they are more or less separated.

The Old Norse sources show their highly heterogeneous nature as we can find a wide range of ideas about the interconnection of body and soul. From this point of view, 12th-14th centuries can therefore be seen as a transition period. There we can find pre-Christian concepts in which man is not seen within the polarity of body and soul: both the animal and the human shape belong to the powers of the particular protagonist, and emotions have at the same time a psychic and a physical component, where none of them is the result of the other one. In the same period, Christian dialogs of body and soul are translated into Old Norse, other texts present situations illustrating medieval humoral theories or are working with the concept of external appearance different from the nature of the protagonist. This transition can also be illustrated by tools of cognitive linguistics, by the process of the so called metaphorisation - the transition from idioms based on physical experience to literary metaphors, where the stories about corporeality of emotions or shape-shifting into an animal were not any longer perceived literally.