

# ACMRS NEWS

AUGUST 2014

## ACMRS LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

ACMRS is initiating an exciting new program in local public and private schools: teacher training in the history, literature, and methodology of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The program will enable teachers to use a wealth of folklore from Europe, North and South America, Southeast Asia and West Africa, contextualize it in its chronological framework, and most importantly, bring out the value and the fascination of these stories for elementary and intermediate school students. ACMRS views this as an integral component of its university mission, which sees higher education as an advanced (but by no means final) stage in life-long learning. Training teachers of public schools how to teach the Middle Ages and the Renaissance from the standpoint of all the worlds' peoples, and from the standpoint of their interaction and its repercussions in contemporary life, is an important extension of higher education at work in the community.

The workshops will be led by Sharonah Fredrick, Assistant Director of ACMRS. Many thanks also to Kendra TerBeek, Outreach & Media Coordinator, without whose help this program would not have been initiated. If you are interested in participating in these teacher training workshops or know a teacher who might be, please contact us at [acmrs@acmrs.org](mailto:acmrs@acmrs.org).

## ACMRS ANNUAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

ACMRS invites session and paper proposals for its annual interdisciplinary conference to be held February 5-7, 2015 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Scottsdale. We welcome papers that explore any topic related to the study and teaching of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and especially those that focus on: *"Trades, Talents, Guilds, and Specialists: Getting Things Done in the Middle Ages and Renaissance"*. **The deadline for proposals is midnight Mountain Standard Time on December 5, 2014. Please submit an abstract of 250 words and a brief CV via email to: [ACMRSconference@asu.edu](mailto:ACMRSconference@asu.edu).**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Henry S. Turner, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Program in Early Modern Studies at Rutgers University. Intellectually imaginative and energetic, Professor Turner is one of the few - and the finest - scholars now writing on the historical intersection of literature and science. His first book, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580- 1630*, was awarded honorable mention from the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, in competition for being the best book in interdisciplinary science studies in 2007.

[WWW.ACMRS.ORG](http://WWW.ACMRS.ORG)

# LATIN AMERICAN AND GERMANIC SAGAS: AN UNUSUAL UNION

## THE STORY BEHIND ACMRS' PUBLICATION AND TRANSLATION OF JORGE LUIS BORGES' ANCIENT GERMANIC LITERATURES

By Sharonah Fredrick, Assistant Director, ACMRS

Many scholars would not link the terms "Germanic" with "Latin American," but as students of Latin American literature know, one of the greatest writers of all time, Argentina's Jorge Luis Borges was profoundly influenced by the sagas of medieval Norway, Iceland, and the later poetic epics of Germany. Borges' active role, beginning in 1938, with the Anti-Fascist Writers' League in Buenos Aires gave him access to some of Germany's finest intellectuals, forced to flee their homeland due to Nazi persecution. Far from Germany, but profoundly connected to it emotionally and intellectually, many of these German anti-fascist writers provided Borges with an understanding of the world of the sagas. And as we know, it was a world that encompassed more than Germany.

Borges' definition of "Germanic" should be taken in its widest sense, to include the Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic spheres (Finland remained a fascination for Borges but one that he associated more with the Finns' linguistic cousins, the Hungarians and the Japanese; or with the Sami/Laplander people, whom Borges associated with Asia). The Argentine author, whose nickname in Buenos Aires was "El ingles" (literally, the Englishman), viewed Germanic/Scandinavian literature as the basis for English literature. And that, for Borges, meant that the sagas had to be understood and studied. Borges was a polyglot, but he was an Anglofile polyglot, who insisted on using the English term "moon" instead of the Spanish word "luna" when he spoke or wrote Spanish, claiming, as he did, that the inter-stellar body simply looked more like a "moon." And this from the writer who is widely acknowledged, together with Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as having a sublime command of the Spanish language.

Indeed, it was in 1951, in Argentina's capital, that Borges, with the aid of researcher Delia Ingenieros, completed his book on ancient Germanic literatures, hoping to introduce this great body of literature to his fellow Latin American writers. All through his life, Borges was frustrated by the mutual lack of familiarity that plagued both Spanish and English speaking worlds, believing that each side was woefully ignorant of the others' contributions to culture and art. Why then, Germanic, rather than British, literature for Borges' Argentine readers? Because quite simply, to Borges, there would have been no English Renaissance, no Shakespeare or John Donne, without medieval Germanic epics. Understanding English literature was, for Borges, understanding the Germanic forbears of the English.

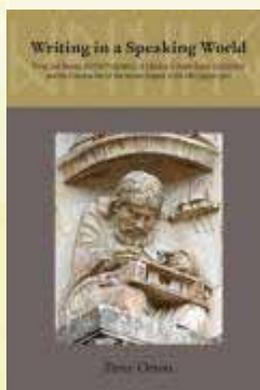
For Borges, this concern extended into Spanish. Due to the presence of the Goths in the pre-Islamic Iberian peninsula (prior to 711 AD) Borges believed that the Germanic influence on the subsequent development of the Spanish language in the Middle Ages was crucial to understanding the many medieval Spanish kingdoms, in particular Castille, and the literature that it produced. Iceland, for Borges, was an unjustifiably forgotten outpost of medieval literature where Germanic culture and thought had reached its height, and so it must be studied to understand Spain's own gothic past. Since Spain had conquered the indigenous civilizations of the Americas during the Early Modern period, there would be no understanding of Latin American cultural processes without returning to the Germanic roots. His book *Ancient German Literatures*, translated by M.J.Toswell and recently (2014) published by ACMRS, is a testament to the complexity of literature, and its long and often neglected, or unexpected, roots.

## THE BOOK NOOK:

FEATURING ACMRS PUBLICATIONS AND BAGWYN BOOKS

### **Writing in a Speaking World: The Pragmatics of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions and Old English Poetry**

By Peter Orton



Writing in a Speaking World is a critical investigation of some manifestations of literate ways of thinking and expression in Anglo-Saxon writings. Two of its main themes are the relationship between runic and roman writing in both epigraphical inscriptions and manuscript poetry, and certain distinctive deictic usages, in particular the use of the first-person pronoun, 'I' or 'me', in reference to non-human subjects (inscribed media or artifacts, particular copies of texts, or the texts themselves). The Old English Riddles, comparable with inscriptions in

their use of the first-person pronoun for non-human 'speakers', also sometimes combine runic and roman writing, and shed interesting light on contemporary ideas about literacy and orality. Finally, the Old English 'lyrics' of the Exeter Book illustrate certain difficulties involved in 'reclaiming' the first-person pronoun for human reference, and foreshadow later developments in human subjectivity in writing.

**PETER ORTON** was born in Leicester, graduated from Manchester University and received his Ph.D. from Exeter University. He has lectured in the English departments of the University of Leeds, University College Dublin, King's College London and Queen Mary, University of London, from which he retired in 2010. His main research area is Old English literature, though he has also published on Middle English and Old Norse. The theoretical orientation of much of his work reflects his interest in philology, textual transmission, prosody, literacy, and cognitive science.

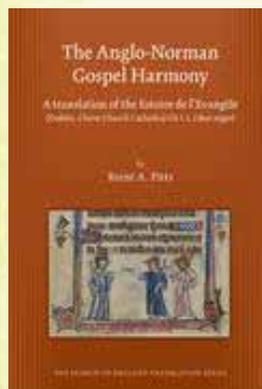
---

### **French of England Translation Series (FRETS), Vol. 7**

#### **The Anglo-Norman Gospel Harmony:**

#### **A translation of the Estoire de l'Evangile (Dublin, Christ Church Cathedral C6.1.1, Liber niger)**

By Brent A. Pitts



This work is the first modern English translation of the unique Anglo-Norman gospel harmony, the Estoire de l'Evangile, dating plausibly from the mid-thirteenth century and surviving in a single manuscript, Dublin Christ Church Cathedral's Liber niger. As the likely source of the well-known Pepysian gospel harmony, the Anglo-Norman gospel harmony encourages daily meditation on the

life of Christ through a seven-part arrangement. The anonymous harmonist's blending of the New Testament gospels targets an audience of women and men for whom it manifests the Holy Land of Christ's ministry, but in the twilight of the Crusades. Certain readings echo early diatessaronic texts. This is an intrinsically interesting work both for general readers and for specialists in the New Testament and medieval piety and religious practice.

WWW.ACMRS.ORG



# UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS:



## AUGUST

FEARLESS FEMALES SERIES:

**"African Warrior Princess of Brazil: Aqualtune, New World Freedom Fighter"**

Sharonah Fredrick, Assistant Director, ACMRS

Tuesday, August, 26, 2014 at 7:00pm - Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, AZ

Click here to reserve a seat: <https://africanprincess.eventbrite.com>

## SEPTEMBER

ACMRS SCHOLAR SERIES:

**"Apocalypse in the Andes: Saint Francis, the Incas, and Militant Angels"**

Jaime Lara, Research Professor, ACMRS

Thursday, September 4, 2014 at 7:00pm - Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, AZ

Click here to reserve a seat: <https://angelsapocalypse.eventbrite.com>

FEARLESS FEMALES SERIES:

**"Abandoned Daughter: A Venetian Nun Wages War"**

Marsha Fazio, Lecturer, Division of Humanities, Arts, and Cultures

Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at 7:00pm - Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, AZ

Click here to reserve a seat: <https://abandoneddaughter.eventbrite.com>

STAY CONNECTED WITH ACMRS!



Questions? Please feel free to contact ACMRS with any questions or suggestions you might have. Send all correspondence by email to [acmrs@acmrs.org](mailto:acmrs@acmrs.org) or by mail to this address. We'd love to hear from you!

ACMRS  
P.O BOX 874402  
TEMPE, AZ 85287-4402  
(480) 965-5900  
[WWW.ACMRS.ORG](http://WWW.ACMRS.ORG)

WWW.ACMRS.ORG