

Lars Boje Mortensen

Born 1958, currently Professor of Ancient and Medieval Cultural History, Dept. of History, University of Southern Denmark (Odense); head of the Centre for Medieval Literature (Odense and York, sdu.dk/cml).

After my training in classical and medieval Latin philology (Copenhagen) I published both within editorial philology and literary aspects of medieval and renaissance Latin texts. My PhD dealt with early medieval historiography in Italy; chronicles from Antiquity to the Renaissance, in their highly different historical contexts, have been a major field of research since then. I had the opportunity to pursue manuscript studies in major European libraries which brought a book-historical dimension to my work; this has in turn shaped my view of pre-print texts.

After my appointment as professor of medieval Latin at the University of Bergen (1992), I gradually moved into the field of saints' lives and saints' cults, thus opening my studies more towards sociology of religion and sociology of learning. I also became interested in the rich Old Norse literature and the dynamics holding between the Latin and vernacular in Europe in general. At Bergen, I formed part of a Norwegian Centre of Excellence in 2003 and a similar Nordic Centre in 2005 in which I began to explore, with various international research groups and on my own, new ways of writing literary history.

I have spent time abroad as guest researcher/professor or on research leave in London (1989), Bologna (1998-99), Gothenburg (2000), Helsinki (2009), Naples (2018) and am engaged for a guest professorship at the university of Siena in spring 2020.

In 2007 I moved to my current post in Odense (SDU) for teaching medieval history and ancient literature in translation and in Latin. I continued to be occupied with the interdisciplinary field of large scale literary history and its problematic relations to the fields of history and comparative literature; together with Elizabeth Tyler (York) I established the international group Interfaces. Through this collaboration and with my SDU byzantinist colleague Christian Høgel, the Centre for Medieval Literature (CML, Odense/York) emerged in 2012 thanks to a long-term grant from the Danish National Research Foundation. The ambition of CML is to contribute to a theoretical framework for integrating the study of the European Medieval Literatures. My own contributions in this research programme concern both theoretical and practical aspects of literary history on the large scale (macro-literary history) and, more specifically, book- and intellectual history in papal Europe between c. 1050 and 1300.