

**SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT**

Regnr Östersjöregionens: dnr. 2012-0027

Project manager: Proferssor Erland Sellberg

Project title: Östersjöregionens akademiska kultur under tidigmodern tid
(The Early Modern Academical Culture in the Baltic Sea Region)

1. Purpose of the project

In the letter of the application the focus of the project was designed as a rather comprehensive concentration on some essential (basic) issues, all relating to the early modern academical culture, which is considered to be a transferring link between the medieval and the modern academical culture. The concept of culture was outlined under influence of Peter Burk's reasoning but in contrast to his examples the conditions of the early modern universities were extremely different and constricted to a small, and very secluded institute.

Even though the early modern universities offered a rather wide frame of teaching, ceremonies, a range of student activities and so on, the project has been mainly focused on the communicative aspects of academic life including contacts with worldly and ecclesiastical authorities outside the academy. It means mostly research on orations, disputations, dissertations and letters. Relating to such kind of sources, the scholars were supposed to find out what sometimes seemed to remain but yet essentially is changed or vice versa. The intention was to give a broad survey of the academic culture around the Baltic Sea and to relate the result of all the separate research contributions to the international scholarship of academical culture.

2. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them

Several articles have shown how difficult but nonetheless important it is to establish the relation between dissertations and disputations, where just the opposite to the present, the latter was the imperative one. Consequently, it remains in particular to explain, why the former develops from a few printed theses to comprehensive treatises without any obvious reason at all.



Professor Erland Sellberg discusses the frequently ventilated issue of authorship of the dissertations and takes up the question, if the frequent prefaces of the dissertations would be useful to find the answer. Mostly they were not, but Sellberg refers to an example where the respondent in the preface excuses himself for his imperfect analysis and blamed the professor, who had impeded him from writing much more.

Professor Bo Lindberg writes extensively about lectures and their role under the period. He is currently preparing a book on dissertations as representing an academical genre from the 17th century and up to modern times.

Some scholars have focused on the interesting genre of paratexts in the dissertations; ass. professor Peter Sjökvist has studied different poems, all written to his students by professor Petrus Lagerlöf in the end of the 17th century. Sjökvist has published two articles in which he discusses how these poems should be analyzed considering the fact that the normal or at least more traditional procedure was the other way around, that the students wrote poems of gratitude to their praeses.

Lindberg has also written a booklet about a genre that actually do not belong to the dissertation text but neither to the *paratexts*, the *corollaries*, which also is found in German dissertations, but the purpose of which is so far never analyzed. Lindberg has tried to systematically scrutinize the genre, and he observes that *corollaries* seem to be more frequent during some periods but seemingly without any clear reason. However, he suggests that they were added to dissertations as issues for the oral disputation. If the hypothesis is correct, it would be an indication of the lacking link between dissertations and disputations.

Ph. Dr. Benny Jacobson has dedicated his efforts to studying a vast material of student orations and exercises in order to register the importance of informal or formal social contacts behind the production of dissertations; his research is not yet published.

A second result is a better understanding of the oral aspect of the academical culture. Latin was the official language and used in lectures, examinations and disputations with few exceptions, even though in the consistory, Swedish language (in Tartu, German) was normally used, but still mixed up with extensive Latin quotations and concepts.

PhD student Kaidi Kriisa presented at Tartu University her doctoral thesis on Latin as the academical language. Her aim was to investigate more in detail to what extent Latin actually was chosen and also, if vernacular sometimes was found in the written texts, to



what degree. Her result shows that it was not unusual for the authors of the dissertations to mix in different languages, but it did not in any way reduce the total dominance of Latin.

Professor Annika Ström has been engrossed in studies in the history of rhetoric and edited, translated and made notes on two important 18th century dissertations on the History of Rhetoric where she made interesting observation of how the history of rhetoric was presented at the time, and she adds some interesting observations of the way the dissertations were presented.

She has also written about the importance of letters for the academical culture, manifested in many ways during the early modern time. Therefore, she edited, translated and made notes on a collection of letters written by the first professor of History in Turku, Michael Wexionius Gyldenstolpe. As his other correspondence these letters testify to his endless efforts at helping his sons wherever they were, and at maintaining his relations with the benefactors and patrons, at answering his clients many requests. Sometimes the letters reveal discussions with colleagues but such academical matters were normally dealt with at the academy.

A third result of the project is that we now have a better understanding of the degree of the influences from outside on the academical culture.

PhD student Fredrik Bertilsson studied in his doctoral thesis at Södertörn University the Educational commission in the middle of the 18th century which radically tried to transform the teaching at the university and in schools and make all kind of education designed for the future working life of the students and pupils. Eventually it all failed. The opposition from the Clerical Estate was decisive. According to the Clergy, including a lot of professors, education was a matter that belonged to the Estate's privilege.

In this case it was a question about how much of influence from political interests could be tolerated by the University and the Clergy. The project has also touched upon other kind of influences. Sellberg has a larger, as yet unpublished manuscript on the influence of Ramist dialectic and rhetoric on the content in Swedish dissertations, but he also touches upon the University Chancellor's and the Royal Council's intervention in the issue and their undisguised attempts to direct the teaching.

Other examples of influence are prof. Otfried Czaika's articles, which display how dissertations defended by Swedish students at Wittenberg University and at Helmstedt University revealed different opinions on dogmatic issues according to the theologian view



at the two seats of learning. At Helmstedt University the authors argued for a more irenical theology quite contrary to the more orthodox Lutheran attitude in Wittenberg.

Ph Dr Andreas Hellerstedt has studied the dissertations of a professor who for a time was the tutor of the young prince, who later became Charles XII. Hellerstedt argues that his examples show that the contextual influences on the contents of the dissertations were significant. The result is similar to Czaika's older case. However, in the end of the 17th century we can observe a significant change of the structure of the dissertations, and a few of them turned more to continuous treatises than the original, short theses-dissertations.

3. The project's contribution to the international research frontline

The scholars have in several cases attended international conferences and published several articles and papers in English. In the first place, the results of the Swedish project correspond well to ongoing international research projects. It needs to point out that with hindsight, the study of early modern academical culture mostly so far has been marked by modern perspectives. Today, however, there is a better understanding that the prime task to face is to explain why the rather homogenous medieval academical culture developed so differently. From such perspective the development of the academical culture in the Baltic Sea Regions is rather homogeneous, and it harmonizes obviously more with that at the German universities.

4. New research questions that the project has led to

The problem to get a better picture of the disputation culture has been more evident. We have in our region as in most other countries only rules that said how it should be done; we have only to assume that they were observed to begin with. There are a few manuscripts with speeches of the *preases*, and there are also dissertations in which notes have been taken down but to draw any general conclusions for thousands of disputations at different universities and during different times, we would need a lot more of luck and research in archives.

It is easier but yet problematic to say more about the dissertations because they were printed so today, they can be scrutinized in detail. There are still problems to understand what role the dissertations had for the disputations or for anything at all. They don't seem to have any assessment of qualification for the future careers of the students, and if elaborated to treatises they seem to have no part in the disputations at all.

The conclusions of international research are similar. We have yet much more questions than answers.



5. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

During the early modern time the Baltic Sea Region was not only economically and commercially connected but even political and confessional. Although the vernacular varied from the separated states or local regions it did not matter on the full scale. The authorities spoke German or Latin. The academical culture was by tradition mostly related to the Church but after the Reformation there was an apparent increase of the influence of society and politics. From that perspective the results of the project should significantly contribute to a better understanding of the situation in the Baltic Sea Region.

6. The contribution of research to multidisciplinary knowledge formation

The starting point of the project was multidisciplinary with participating scholars of different disciplines, as Latin, Rhetoric, History of Ideas and History of Church and the separate articles and books testify to that.

7. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community

In spring 2013, Sellberg launched the project with a meeting at Stockholm University, and in 2016 he and Lindberg organized an international conference on Academical culture in the Royal Academy in Stockholm in which several of those taking part in the project read papers.

At several occasions, Sellberg and Ström have attended international conferences with papers related to the project. The first one was an international conference in Renaissance studies in San Diego where Ström read a paper on *The Function of Funeral Orations to King Gustav II Adolf, 1632*, and Sellberg a paper on *Why the first Swedish Chancellor of the University so strongly rejected the traditional scholastic curriculum*.

They also attended a conference in Rhetoric in 2013 in Chicago where Sellberg read a paper on *Ramism, Rhetoric and Performance*, and Ström talked about *Feminae Doctae. Learned Women in Scandinavia*.

Sellberg read a paper on a conference in New York in 2014 on *Academic culture in early modern Europe*, and at a conference in Berlin in 2015 he read a paper *On Cosmopolitanism*.

In 2017 Sellberg organized and led a session at a conference in Chicago on *Educational Practice in Early Modern Swedish Academic Culture*, where he also read a paper on *Ramism*



in rhetoric and politics, and in the same session Ström read a paper on *Two dissertations on the history of Rhetoric* And in 2018 they attended another international conference, this time in New Orleans, where Sellberg read a paper on *The early modern political training in Sweden and the epideictic oratory?*

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