What happens when scholars cross the disciplinary borders? What problems are there when a scholar uses the material from one discipline to interpret the material from an entirely different one, and how should the problems be solved? Interdisciplinarity is a prestige word in the academic world. In practice, it has turned out to be more problematic. Material, methods and research issues are often of very different kinds in different disciplines. The 7th Austmarr symposium is devoted to the problems of interdisciplinarity and the combination of different kinds of material from Northern Europe in pre-Hanseatic time. A main aim of the symposium is to promote a better understanding and more fruitful communication between disciplines which share common interests and concerns.

There will be 30 papers presented at the symposium as well as two special sessions, one devoted to the Salme finds, the other to the issue of female Viking warriors.

Keynote lectures:

Lydia Carstens, ZBSA, Schloss Gottorf: Reading the Viking Age. Old Norse literature and Archaeology.
Henrik Janson, University of Gothenburg: Old Norse Religion and the Troublesome Quest for an Interdisciplinary Approach.
Jens Peter Schjødt, University of Aarhus: Óðinn – the pervert?

Please register for the symposium on the symposium website by November 1st at the latest: https://www.maailmakeeled.ut.ee/en/about-us/7th-meeting-1 Further information (on programme, venue, accommodation etc.) is also found on the website.

If you have any questions, please contact the organizer (daniel.savborg@ut.ee).

Welcome to Tartu in December!

Daniel Sävborg, Professor of Scandinavian Studies
University of Tartu
The Austmarr Network is an international, interdisciplinary network of scholars investigating historical and prehistoric contacts among peoples in the circum-Baltic region. We aim to reconstruct the development of the Baltic Sea region, viewed as a trans-ethnic cultural area that played a central role in the emergence of modern Germanic, Slavic, Finnic and Sámi ethnicities. We focus on the pre-Hanseatic period, up to the High Middle Ages.

The network arose from recognition of the need to strengthen communication and collaboration across disciplinary and national boundaries. History, archaeology, folklore, philology, comparative religion, historical linguistics, onomastics and population genetics all share an interest in reconstructing the human past, but the methods employed in these different disciplines lead to divergent pictures of the history of the region. We emphasize interaction, networks, fluctuating identities and trans-ethnic communities, as opposed to the predecessors of the modern ethnicities and language groups. In this way, we transcend the limitations of traditional disciplines based on modern languages and nation-states, using models more suited to pre-state societies. The circum-Baltic region, with its rich (pre)history involving several well-studied groups with comparatively deep historical records, provides a robust case study for developing methods that can be applied to other cases of interdisciplinary cultural reconstruction.

The network has held six interdisciplinary conferences, in Tartu in April 2011, Helsinki in June 2012, Härnösand in April 2013, Sundsvall in December 2014, Visby in October 2015, and Helsinki in December 2016.