

**Workshop, no. 8, Early Modernity**  
**23rd of May, 2024**  
**School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University**  
**Langelandsgade 139**  
**Building: 1586, Room 114**

**Program**

**11.15-11.30: Welcome and Intro**

**11.30-12.10: Anastasia**

**The Danish Cleopatra and the European Tradition of Historical Drama, or why one should always read the footnotes**

In this work-in-progress talk I want to present and discuss Hans Thomesen Stege's († 1628) historical tragedy *Cleopatra, eller en Historisk Tragædia(...)* printed in Copenhagen in 1609. A text I stumbled upon entirely by chance in the latter part of my PhD studies. The tragedy presents an original Danish dramatic rendering of the tragic downfall of Mark Antony and Cleopatra based on a careful reading of Plutarch's *Life of Antony*. This not only makes Stege's tragedy one of the very few existing Danish renaissance dramas (see for example the series "Tidlig dansk dramatik" from Munksgaard, published in the 1970s) but also one of the only—if not the only—Danish drama based on Greek and Roman historical accounts. Yet, Stege's tragedy has never seen modern critical edition nor serious scholarly scrutiny. This explorative talk will stipulate that this is due to the fact that Stege's tragedy fits poorly with the scholarly categorizations of this period's drama, in particular the often invoked "school comedy". Building on my recent completed PhD thesis "History Incarnate: Genus and Genre in French Historical Drama", my talk will discuss Stege's *Cleopatra* as part of a European tradition of historical drama and prove as a reminder why one should always remember to read the footnotes.

**12.10-12.45: Lunch**

**12.45-13. 25: Odile**

**Theological education and political ideas in early modern Reformed Protestantism**

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the establishment of myriad academies and universities across the parts of Europe where Reformed Protestantism had become the dominant confession, in response to an urgent need to properly train future ministers. The theological instruction provided in these educational institutions also addressed some of the key political questions of the time: what were the grounds and limits of civil authority? Could people be punished for their religious beliefs? Could Christians legitimately wage wars? This paper will examine the significance of early modern Reformed theological education as a vehicle for the dissemination of controversial political ideas and as a means for the consolidation of a specifically Reformed approach to politics.

**13.25-13.40: Break**

**13.40-14.20: Common discussion of Early modern concept**, taking our point of departure in Randolph Starn: "The Early Modern Muddle" (sent out via e-mail)

**14.20- 14.35: Break**

**14.35-15.15: Casper and Louise Kjærgaard Depner**

**The wetting trap chair at Rosenborg Castle**

In this presentation, we will introduce the peculiar case of the wetting trap chair presumably from the 17<sup>th</sup> century today kept at Rosenborg Castle focusing on its role at the royal Danish court and in the royal Danish collections. We will take you through what we know about the Danish chair and how we know it as well as presenting similar cases of devices for pranking at other early modern European courts and collections. Taking these examples as our point of departure, we will speculate how the Danish chair was used and how we can interpret it today as part of a greater European culture of courtly amusement. Further, we hope to have a discussion with you concerning the methodological considerations of interpreting early modern phenomena based on scarce source materials; how far can we take the interpretation of the chair's uses and history?

**15.15-16.00: Break**

**16.00-16.40: Josefine Baark**

**The Nature of Time: Plants, animals and horizons on the move in the Qianlong Emperor's clock collection**

Focusing on elaborate clocks imported to and made in China in the eighteenth century, this paper explores the significance of the automated landscapes that came to life when the clocks struck the hour. In Chinese made clocks, peaches signify long life, springtime and fertility, while narcissus indicates a desire for good fortune and the coming of spring. But, what did it mean to bring movement to these previously stationary depictions? Putting animated landscapes into conversation with traditional Chinese landscape scrolls and poetry might point to a nuanced understanding of how perceptions of time and nature changed in the period of increased cultural exchange that produced these spectacular clocks.

**16.40-17.00: the future**

**17.00-17.45: wine**

**18.00: Self-paid dinner in town**

Registration by email to Karen-Margrethe Simonsen ([litkms@cc.au.dk](mailto:litkms@cc.au.dk))