Bampi / Larrington / Rikhardsdottir

A Critical Companion to Old Norse Literary Genre

A comprehensive guide to a crucial aspect of Old Norse literature. We cannot read literary works without making use of the concept of genre. In Old Norse studies, genre has been central to the categorisation, evaluation and understanding of medieval prose and poetry alike; yet its definition has been elusive and its implications often left unexplored. This volume opens up fundamental questions about Old Norse genre in theory and in practice. It offers an extensive range of theoretical approaches, investigating and critiquing current terms and situating its arguments within early Scandinavian and Icelandic oral-literary and manuscript contexts. It maps the ways in which genre and form engage with key thematic areas within the literary corpus,noting the different kinds of impact upon the genre system brought about by conversion to Christianity, the gradual adoption of European literary models, and social and cultural changes occurring in Scandinavian society. A case-study section probes both prototypical and hard-to-define cases, demonstrating the challenges that actual texts pose to genre theory in terms of hybridity, evolution and innovation. With an annotated taxonomy of Old Norse genres and an extensive bibliography, it is an indispensable resource for contemporary Old Norse-Icelandic literary studies.

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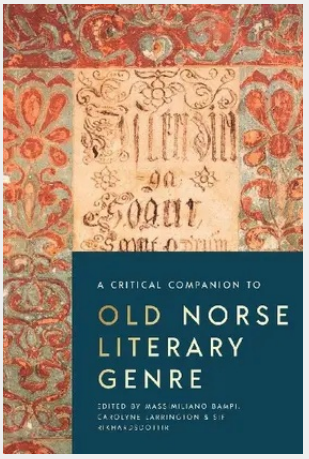

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