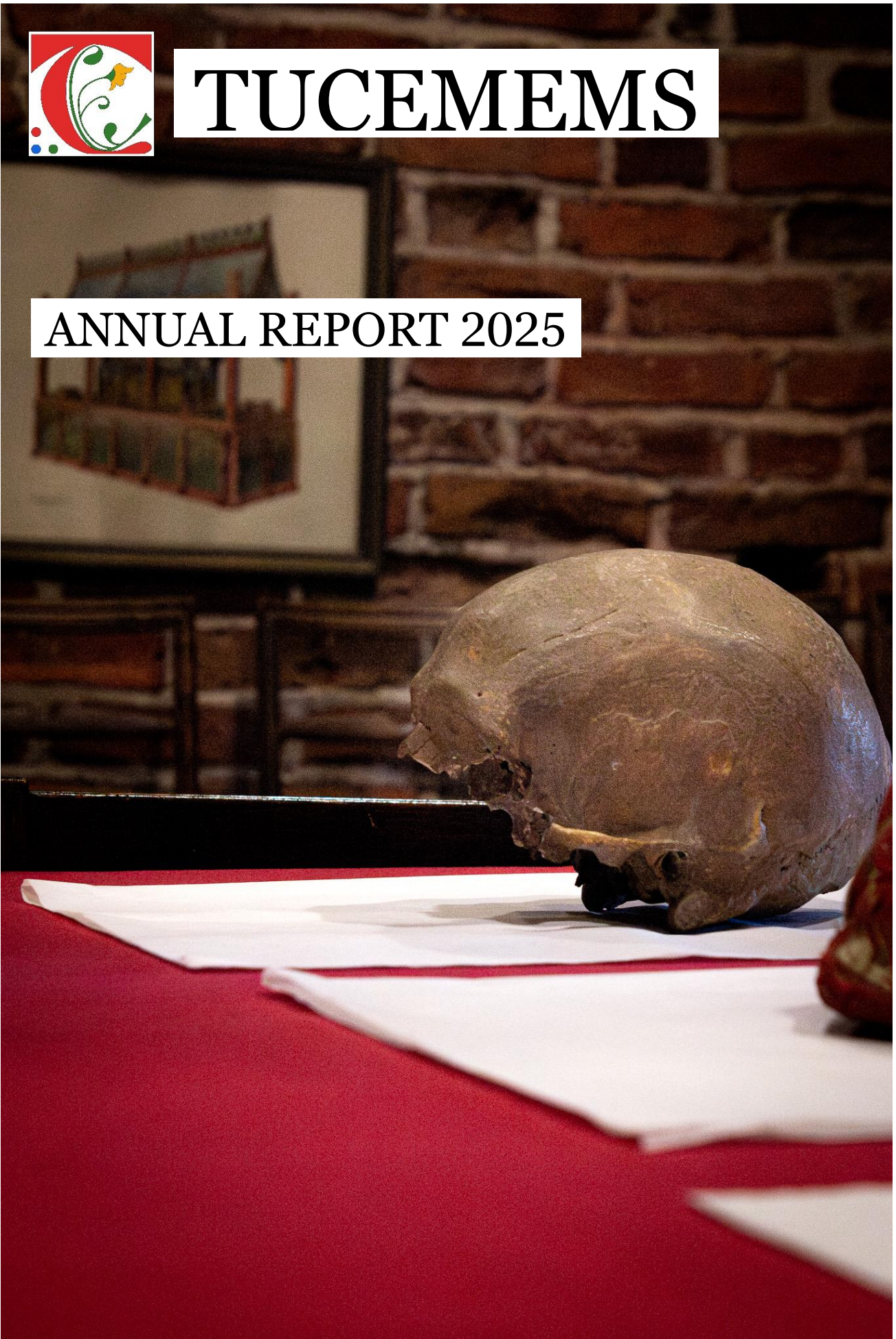




TUCEMEMS

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**



TURKU CENTRE FOR MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES

The Turku Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (TUCEMEMS) is a multidisciplinary research centre funded by the University of Turku. The Centre provides support for and advances research activities examining different historical time periods, ranging from late antiquity to the latter part of the 18th century.

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@tucemems

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EDITORIAL

We have just stepped into a new year, leaving behind the vibrant and productive year of 2025. As always, TUCEMEMS has been active across a wide spectrum of talks, meetings, and teaching, reaching audiences both within academia and beyond.

Our spring lecture series featured several presentations by members of the Centre and its collaborators, organized in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Christian Culture and in collaboration with the Turku Medieval Market. Additionally, we contributed to the Studia Generalia series hosted by Turku City Library. These partnerships beautifully illustrate the continuing public and civic interest in pre-modern history, and we are deeply grateful for these opportunities!

One of TUCEMEMS's most visible educational responsibilities is overseeing the Prehistorical, Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies programme. It is rewarding to see that the courses offered by our members consistently attract students. Likewise, the Thesis Seminar—now in its third year—remains popular. These seminars foster a remarkably friendly and collaborative atmosphere, showcasing the rich interdisciplinary expertise among both students and staff.

The past year also strengthened new forms of national and international collaboration. Domestically, TUCEMEMS and TRIVIUM – Tampere Centre for Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies – launched official cooperation by organizing joint sessions at Finnish Conference of History Research. Internationally, the University of Turku signed a collaboration agreement with the University of Rochester, New York, paving the way for scholarly exchanges and joint initiatives in premodern studies.

From a research perspective, 2025 was equally productive and innovative. Several projects affiliated with TUCEMEMS oversaw a wide range of activities. A highlight was the successful international workshop “Rethinking Holy Materiality: Bones and Other ‘Stuff’. With and Without Reliquaries (The Middle Ages and Beyond)”, organized by Docent Marika Räsänen and Professor Päivi Salmesvuori, both members of our board. Furthermore, a new research project, “Cultures of Control? Lived Religion and Lay Challenges to Normativity in Later Medieval Europe”, led by Professor Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, secured funding from the Research Council of Finland, further strengthening the Centre's research profile. TUCEMEMS continues to attract scholars nationally and internationally, and I am excited to see what new initiatives and opportunities 2026 will bring!



There have also been changes at the administrative level. Janne Tunturi has joined the board, bringing valuable expertise to our work. For my part, stepping into the role of Director of the Centre is both a challenge and an exciting opportunity. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the board for their continued support as I have taken on this new responsibility.

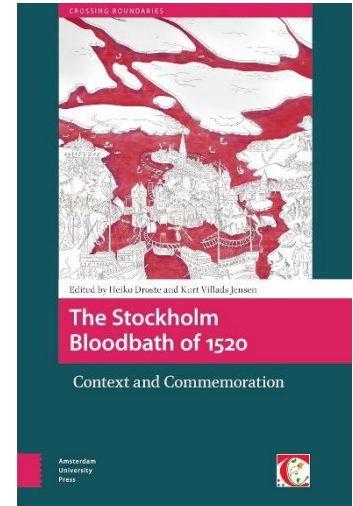
Jenni Kuuliala

Director of the Board

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: Turku Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Series editors: Mari-Liisa Varila, Janne Harjula, Johanna Ilmakunnas, Kati Kallio, Karolina Kouvola, Hemmo Laiho, Aino Mäkikalli, Kirsi-Maria Nummila, Matti Peikola, Kirsi Salonen

This peer-reviewed book series of TUCEMEMS was published by Amsterdam University Press until 2025, when the series moved to Routledge as part of the Taylor & Francis Group's acquisition of the AUP English-language series. Crossing Boundaries publishes monographs and collected volumes placed at the intersection of disciplinary boundaries to introduce fresh connections between established fields of study. By the end of 2025, altogether fifteen volumes have come out.



In 2025, one new title came out in the series: *The Stockholm Bloodbath of 1520: Context and Commemoration*, edited by Heiko Droste and Kurt Villads Jensen. The volume contains contributions from fifteen researchers. The essays shed new light not only on the event itself but also its background and aftermath.



The Editorial Board is looking for high-quality manuscripts of monographs or collected volumes. For further information, please visit <https://www.routledge.com/Crossing-Boundaries-Turku-Medieval-and-Early-Modern-Studies/book-series/CBTMEMS> or contact the Series Editor.

Mari-Liisa Varila

Series Editor 2024–

TEACHING

In 2025, TUCEMEMS continued to oversee the Prehistorical, Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies programme (25–60 ECTS). It consists of one compulsory introductory course titled ‘Introduction to the Study of Old Times’ (5 ECTS) and three modules, each of which includes various optional courses: ‘Periods’ (10–15 ECTS), ‘Languages’ (5–20 ECTS), and ‘Methods’ (5–20 ECTS).

‘Periods’ gives students basic knowledge of at least two older time periods and an understanding of their chronology. ‘Languages’ gives students basic skills in at least one foreign language required for the study of old times. ‘Methods’ aims to strengthen students' methodological skills. In this module, students familiarise themselves more comprehensively with at least one research method (for example, palaeography, diplomatics, codicology, epigraphy, numismatics, heraldry, chronology, text editing, or archaeological excavation). The programme was promoted to students of the Faculty of Humanities via email, Facebook, and the newly founded Instagram account, as well as in person at the Opening Carnival.

DISTINCT COURSES HELD BY TUCEMEMS

III PERIOD 2024-2025

KLAS0018 Everyday Life in Antiquity, 3 ECTS

Minna Seppänen

Course description:

In this course, students were familiarized with Greco-Roman antiquity's everyday phenomena (e.g. schooling, bathing culture, game culture, travel, private religion) with the lead of changing lecturers. The course was conceptually successful, and the course received good feedback. It was quite unique in the sense that the Classics department has not had many courses with changing lecturers.

Lecturers: Tommi Alho, Maria Jokela, Antti Lampinen, Minna Seppänen, Reko Tikka, Jaana Vaahtera, Jyri Vaahtera and Joonas Vanhala

IV PERIOD 2024-2025

HIST0240 Saints, witches, heretics: the borders of religious orthodoxy in medieval and early modern Europe, 5 ECTS

Jenni Kuuliala

Course description

During this course, lectures and source exercises addressed the ways in which the institutions of the Catholic Church investigated and resolved various forms of religious practice and heresy. The material examined included witness testimonies concerning saints and so-called false saints, medieval heresy trials, as well as the magic and witchcraft trials of the Roman Inquisition. At the same time, the course introduced contemporary literature that seeks to define the boundaries of orthodox religious practice, as well as the latest scholarly research on the topic.

Lecturers: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, Jenni Kuuliala, and Reima Välimäki

KLAS0017 The Romes of Late Antiquity and Medieval times, 5 ECTS

Maria Jokela

Course description

The course was an introduction to the two important cities of late antiquity, Rome and Constantinople, as well as the relationship between the two. The goal of the course was to get to know these cities in the late antiquity and understanding their relationship. The course handled this topic through themes of languages, gender and the role of Christianity. How and why did the relationship between the old Rome and new Rome develop by the Middle Ages?

Lecturers: Maria Jokela and Antti Lampinen

I PERIOD 2025-2026

Roman days of celebration, 2 ECTS

Minna Seppänen, Jaana Vaahtera



Prof. Jyri Vaahtera giving a lecture on augur inaugurations. Picture: Reetta Meriläinen

Course description

The goal of the course was to familiarise students with Roman festival days and to understand their social meanings and roles. In the seminar, for which students kept a lecture diary, the lectures examined various days of celebration in Roman culture. The second part of the course was a literature assignment designed to teach students to retrieve information independently. The seminar was successful, and the audience appeared engaged. A strongly thematic structure was considered appropriate, and a similar course could be offered in the future.

Lecturers: Veli-Matti Rissanen, Minna Seppänen, Jaana Vaahtera and Jyri Vaahtera

Student seminar, 3 ECTS

PREHISTORICAL, ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN THESIS SEMINAR

3rd of November at 13:00, Arcanum ARC335/357, University of Turku

The student seminar organized by TUCEMEMS took place at the University of Turku, where seven students gave 15-minute presentations on their theses. This year, students came from both the School of History, Culture and Arts Studies and the School of Languages and Translation Studies at the University of Turku. The topics ranged from ancient Ostia to the 18th-century Caribbean. As in the past two years, the aim of the seminar was to give students the chance to introduce their thesis topics to a wider audience, to meet other students with similar research interests, and to provide opportunities for networking and peer support.

The presentations were varied and ranged from antiquity to the modern era. From antiquity we learned about the urban borderscape of Roman Ostia, silent reading in ancient Rome, and the miracle stories of the Vestal Virgins. Moving into the medieval period, we heard about experiencing gardens in Marguerite d'Orléans's late-medieval prayer book, the historical experience of visitors to medieval fairs, and the depiction of medieval times in the novel *Rottien pyhimys* (2021). In the modern era, we heard about depictions of masculinity among pirates in the 1734 book *A General History of the Pyrates* by Charles Johnson.

As per last year, it was also possible to attend the seminar as a course in the Prehistorical, Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Studies. The seminar was attended numerously by students and staff alike and the atmosphere was active and conversational.

PROGRAMME

13:15 Session I

Annikka Ahola: Hartauden puutarha: Puutarhakokemus Marguerite d'Orleansin myöhäiskeskiaikaisessa rukouskirjassa

Karoliina Koivumäki: Merirosvot miehuutta vastaan: Merirosvojen rakennettu maskuliinisuus Charles Johnsonin teoksessa "A General History of the Pyrates" (1734)

14:00 Session 2

Jasmin Vanha-Majamaa - Kuvitellut keskiajat: Vieraitten kokema historiallisuus keskiaikatapahtumissa

Aada Lehtinen: Luodut ja löydetyt kuvat: keskiajan kuvaus romaanissa Rottien pyhimys (2021)

14:45 Break

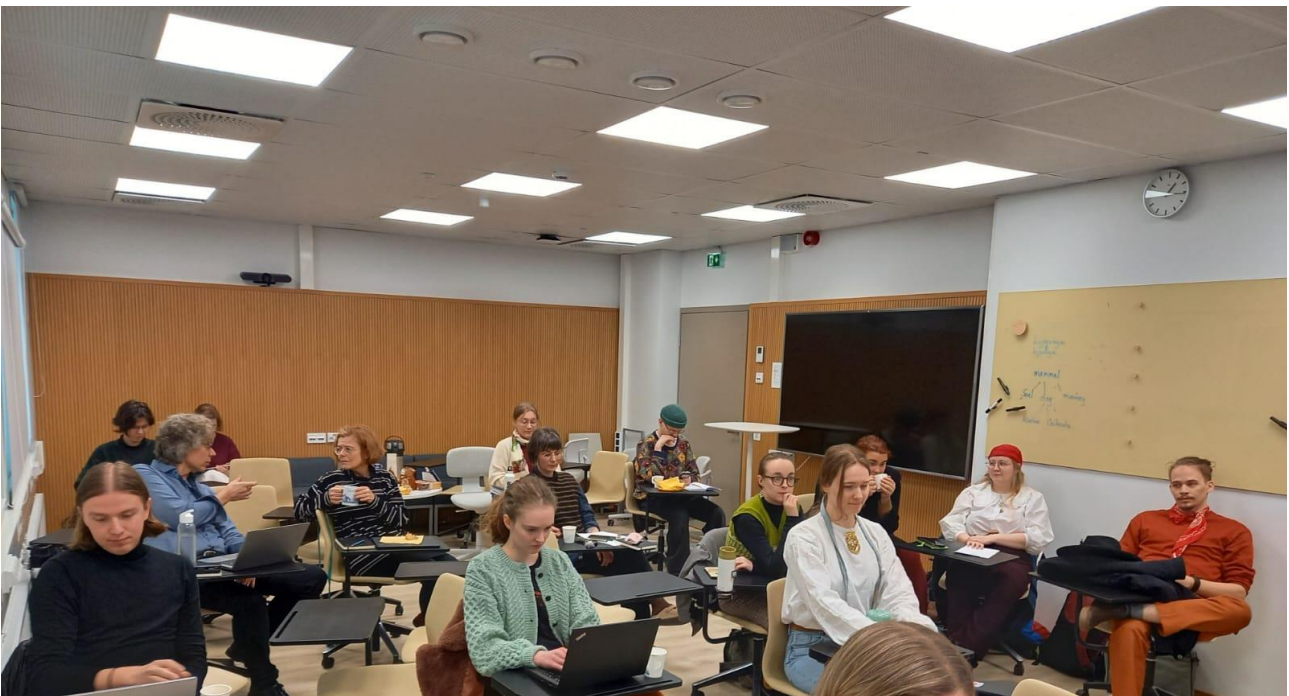
15:00 Session 3

Ida Manninen: Teloituksia ja ihmetekoja – kehollisten rajojen ylittäminen Vestan neitsyistä kertovissa roomalaistarinoissa.

Niko Järvinen: Muros et portas Cicero fecit. Boundaries and movement in the urban borderscape of ancient Roman Ostia

Reetta Meriläinen: Sine murmure legi - ääneti lukeminen antiikin ja myöhäisantiikin Roomassa

CLOSING REMARKS



Waiting for the seminar to begin. Picture: Reetta Meriläinen

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND EVENTS

MONTHLY LECTURES: SPRING 2025

The monthly lectures for spring 2025 were held on Thursdays from 16:15 to 17:30 in the Arcanum seminar room A 355/357.

6th FEBRUARY

Kirsi Salonen: "Tavastian uprising 1236/7 revisited"

According to Finnish historiography, the Tavastian uprising was an anti-Church revolt by the people of Tavastia in 1236–1237, which led Pope Gregory IX in December 1237 to call on the Swedes to launch a crusade against the Tavastian rebels. Finnish historians have linked the uprising to the harsh conversion methods of Thomas, the bishop of Finland at the time, and to opposition to church taxation. Similarly, Finnish historiography connects the so-called "Second Swedish Crusade" to the papal letter and the need to pacify the Tavastian people, but historians have not reached a consensus on when the Tavastian crusade took place. Scholars also disagree on the purpose, if any, of the 1240 military campaign against the Novgorodians at the Neva and on its possible connection to the Tavastian uprising or the papal crusade bull.

This presentation examines that series of events and attempts to identify possible links between them. It begins with a brief overview of the key events related to the rebellion, followed by a review of the historical literature on the Tavastian uprising. The presentation concludes by assessing the accuracy of existing interpretations, arguing that there probably was never a large-scale rebellion in Tavastia and that interpretations of the Tavastian Crusade should be reevaluated.

6th MARCH

Minna Sandelin: "Mellum ræt ok o ræt. Medieval provincial laws in the history of the Swedish language." The monthly lecture is organized in collaboration with Glossa ry.

Swedish legal texts date back to the early 13th century, when Swedish began to be written using the Latin alphabet. The oldest of these include provincial laws, which were drafted over a period of more than a hundred years in the 13th and 14th centuries, i.e. during the Old Swedish period. Other medieval laws include common laws and municipal laws. Old laws have often been regarded as the crown jewels of the history of the Swedish language and are considered to represent the language of their time in its purest form. This is because they contain linguistic features that do not appear in other types of texts from the same period.

From the end of the 14th century onwards, the Swedish language underwent a number of changes that fundamentally altered and transformed it. What was the language of provincial laws like before these changes? In this presentation, I will discuss provincial laws from the perspective of their language and as part of the Swedish-language literary production of their era.

3rd APRIL

Antti Lampinen: "The Reception of Ancient Greece in the 'Cosmographia Aethici Istriotae' (c. 720 CE)"

Cosmographia Aethici Istriotae, a text difficult to define in terms of genre, was probably written in the early 700s CE. Its author claims to be the Church Father Jerome, who adapts the *Cosmographia* text by the Roman philosopher Aethicus Ister into a form suitable for Christian readers. The language of the work is full of pseudo-Greek neologisms, wordplay based on Isidore of Seville, scenarios of apocalypse and based on the Alexander material, and many other similar 'nova ex veteribus' creations.

The way this interesting text recycles ethnographic material plays an important role in my TIAS research project (2025-2027), which examines the descent of ancient ethnographic elements from late antiquity writers to early medieval literature and paratexts. In my presentation, I will focus more specifically on the use of the Greek past and present in *Cosmographia*, as well as its way of playing with the concept of 'Grecity'.

15th MAY

Sari Katajala-Peltomaa: "Living faith and sacred experiences in the Vadstena sermons."

According to the rules of the Birgittine Order, preaching—even to laypeople—was a central part of the Birgittine brothers' duties, and there were more than a hundred important preaching days in Vadstena each year. A considerable corpus of Vadstena sermons (approximately 5,000) has survived. Traditionally, sermons have been regarded as didactic material, but a close reading reveals elements of lived faith.

The intended audience is always present in the text, and the sermons evoke emotion, awaken the senses, and build devotion. Through these rhetorical devices, the preacher connected with both the listeners and Saint Birgitta, the saint being commemorated. This lecture focuses on the experiential side of the sermon and analyses the means by which the preacher created a sense of special time and place for the listeners—specifically, how the sermons built a devotional community.

PUBLIC LECTURES ON THE VISITORS AND BUILDERS OF THE MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL

26th JUNE, Turku Cathedral, Finland

As part of the Medieval Turku event program, the University of Turku's research centers Centre for the Study of Christian Cultures and TUCEMEMS, together with the Turku Cathedral Congregation, organized a series of four lectures given by Anna-Stina Hägglund, PhD, Marika Räsänen, PhD, Panu Savolainen, Professor, and Reima Välimäki, PhD.

The lectures dealt with the medieval users, builders, and ecclesiastical life of Turku Cathedral. The lectures were held in Turku Cathedral.

Speakers and topics:

PhD Anna-Stina Hägglund: Wishes for the salvation of souls in the Middle Ages: Donations to the altar funds of saints in Turku Cathedral

Doctor of Philosophy Anna-Stina Hägglund's lecture sheds light on donations made to secure pastoral care after death. Such gifts, which ranged from landholdings to textiles and precious gold and silver objects, were directed to saints and their earthly places of worship. These gifts were common in medieval Europe and reflected both a culture of piety and prevailing social norms. The lecture focuses on gifts to the altar funds of various saints at Turku Cathedral in the 14th and 15th centuries, and on what they reveal about people's lives and aspirations.

PhD Reima Välimäki: What were indulgences, and why could you obtain them by visiting Turku Cathedral?

When Finns think of indulgences, they mainly think of Reformation slogans about coin coffers ringing and souls springing from purgatory. In the Middle Ages, indulgences were a much more complex phenomenon, linked to the doctrine of purgatory, the cult of saints, church holidays, and support for church construction projects. This lecture presents the significance of indulgences in medieval culture and religion through the letters of indulgence granted to Turku Cathedral.

PhD Marika Räsänen: Saints and relics in medieval Turku

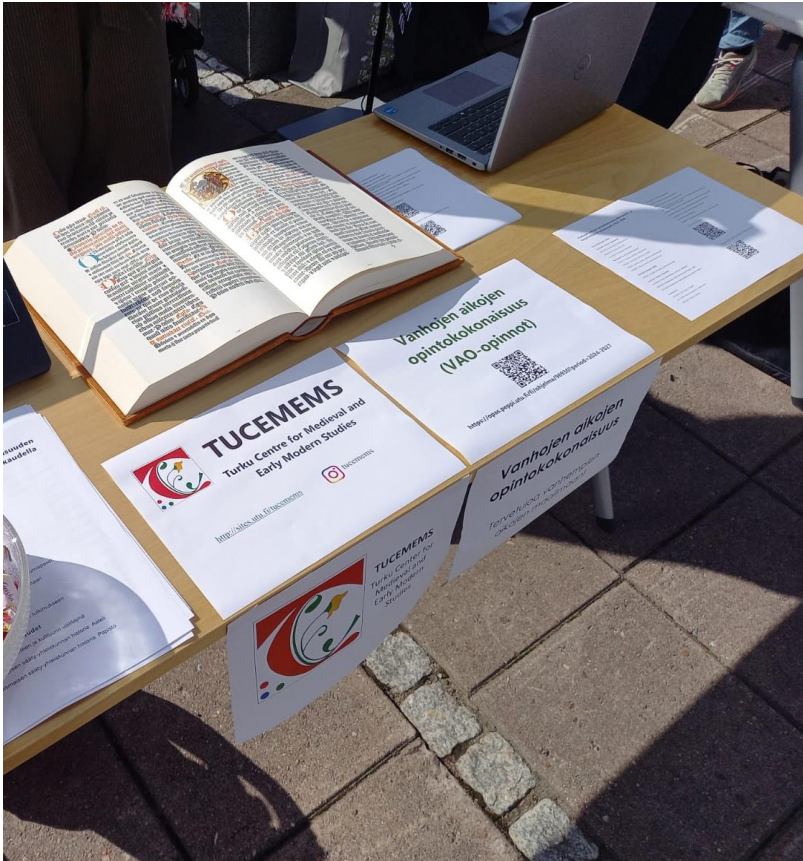
PhD Marika Räsänen examines the veneration of saints and relics as part of medieval culture. She highlights examples of saints and relics in the collections of Turku Cathedral and the Dominican Convent and reflects on their significance in people's everyday lives and celebrations, as well as in the broader European experience.

Prof. Panu Savolainen: New information about the medieval construction history of Turku Cathedral

The medieval construction history and artefacts of Turku Cathedral have not been comprehensively studied since the 1920s. In a project led by Associate Professor Panu Savolainen "The Sunken Cathedral" (2024-2028) will use scientific and humanistic methods to create a new comprehensive picture of the Cathedral's construction history, its pan-European connections, and its artifacts as part of the architectural history of medieval Northern Europe. Savolainen will talk about the project, its background, and the research currently underway.

STUDENT EVENT: OPENING CARNIVAL

2nd SEPTEMBER



At the opening carnival. Picture: Reetta Meriläinen

TUCEMEMS continued the student outreach campaign by participating in the annual Opening Carnival of the University of Turku. TUCEMEMS promoted its Prehistorical, Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Studies Programme to newer and older students, distributing flyers listing the school year's courses, and promoted its website and new Instagram account. The flyers were popular, as were the candies offered at the table.

WORKSHOP: RETHINKING HOLY MATERIALITY: BONES AND OTHER 'STUFF', WITH AND WITHOUT RELIQUARIES (THE MIDDLE AGES AND BEYOND)

10-11th SEPTEMBER, Åbo Akademi and University of Turku, Finland

On 10th and 11th of September we gathered in Turku for a workshop "Rethinking Holy Materiality: Bones and Other 'Stuff', With and Without Reliquaries (The Middle Ages and Beyond)". We had two days of brilliant presentations from various talented researchers, and the workshop was a rewarding event of shared knowledge and learning new things about relics and reliquaries. The workshop was organized by Docent Marika Räsänen and Professor Päivi Salmesvuori in collaboration between TUCEMEMS, Åbo Akademi, University of Turku and The Polin Institute.

On the first day, Marika Räsänen and Päivi Salmesvuori welcomed the workshop participants. In attendance was a happy mix of speakers of the workshop as well as students.

The first session of presentations was held in the Arcanum building at the University of Turku. The keynote, “See-through. Relics, Materiality, and the Dynamics of Deception”, by Professor Vincent Debiais was held in the afternoon in Arken, Åbo Akademi. In the evening the speakers gathered in the Turku Cathedral to learn about local relics.

The second day went by with two sets of presentations in Arcanum, with a coffee break and a lunch in restaurant Grädda in between. The final group of presentations was held after lunch at the Theologicum building in Åbo Akademi’s premises. After a final discussion, the speakers and students gathered at the beautiful Round Room for some bubbles.

Workshop was also related to Åbo Akademi’s course Introduction to relics and pilgrimage. Attending the course were also six students from the University of Turku from the fields of history, law, art history and theology. The students described attending the workshop as exciting and super interesting. They got a glimpse to the world of research.

PROGRAMME:

Venues: University of Turku & Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland

Wednesday 10.9.2025

Venue: Arcanum, ARC A 112, University of Turku

13:15 Welcome

Marika Räsänen and Päivi Salmesvuori

13:30–15:00 I group of presentations (Chair: Päivi Salmesvuori)

Sacred earth, sacred objects: The production of loca Sancta Agnus Dei in the seventeenth-Century Franciscan custody of the Holy Land.

Mattia Corso, University of Roma Tre

Relics in Place and Relics as Place in Later Medieval Pilgrimage Accounts.

Pelia Werth, Johns Hopkins University

Carthusian corpses: Later Medieval literary presences and actual tombs.

Stephen J. Molvarec, SJ, Boston College

Venue: Arken Helikon, Åbo Akademi

15:00–15:30 Coffee break

15:45–16:45 Keynote (Chair: Marika Räsänen)

See-through. Relics, Materiality, and the Dynamics of Deception

Professor Vincent Debiais, EHESS, Paris

Abstract: In the devotion to relics, seeing or not seeing defines the whole faithful’s attitude. Entering the sanctuary, standing in front of the reliquary, the sight and expectation are whether fulfilled or deceived. The devices – object or building – used for the presentation of relics dating from the end of the Middle Ages seem to have built on this tension between

the need to look and touch the saints' bodily remains and the impossibility to fully grasp on the subject of devotional actions, using transparency, concealment, or distraction as enhancers for the spiritual possession of relics. This lecture presents an overview of the material, sensorial, and theological questions raised by these objects, focusing primarily on reliquaries that used glass and writing to showcase the virtue of the saints.



Prof. Vincent Debiais. Picture: Sara Karuneva

Thursday 11.9.2025

Venue: Arcanum, ARC A 112, University of Turku

9:00–10:30 II group of presentations (Chair: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa)

Relics and the emotional labor of colonization
Claire Becker, University of Rochester

Early modern Habsburgs and the holy supernatural ca 1500 – 1550
Tupu Ylä-Anttila, independent researcher.

A Mediator and His Medal: The Case of Giovanni Antonio Gabuti (1551–1621) and the Canonization of St Carlo Borromeo

Jenni Kuuliala, University of Turku.

10:30–11:00 Coffee break

11:00–12:30 III group of presentations (Chair: Vincent Debiais)

You Touched my Heart: Emotion and touch in the making of relics
Sarah Wood-Gagnon, University of Rochester

“We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body”: The translation of saint Edmund’s body in Carlyle’s *Past and Present* (1843)
Deborah Prang, University of Turku

Images as relics. Manifestations of saintly presence in the monastery of Montecassino, 11th–12th centuries
Teemu Immonen, University of Turku

12:30–14:00 Lunch break

Venue: Annexet, Theologicum, Åbo Akademi

14:00–16:00 IV group of presentations (Chair: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa)

Secondary reliquaries: Sculptures with niches for relics in the late medieval Finland
Sofia Lahti, Åbo Akademi University & Elina Räsänen, University of Helsinki

Complex materialities and identities. Rethinking relics, reliquaries and devotional diptychs from communities of women religious
Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Autonomous University of Madrid

The drinking bowl of Saint Francis of Assisi: A medieval artefact still in use
Jeroen Reyniers, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA), Brussels

Contactless and self-reproducing relics in late Middle Ages.
Marika Räsänen, University of Turku

16:00–16:30 Closing discussion (Chair: Päivi Salmesvuori)

STUDIA GENERALIA-LECTURES: AUTUMN 2025

In autumn 2025, TUCEMEMS, in collaboration with Turku City Library, organized a series of public lectures open to all, *The relationship between humans and nature from antiquity to the early modern period*.

The lectures were held on Mondays at 18.00.

22nd SEPTEMBER

Lic.Soc.Sc., MA Visa Helenius: Concepts of nature at the dawn of the modern era and their connection to antiquity and the Middle Ages

The worldview at the beginning of the new era was influenced, among other things, by the scientific revolution and its new discoveries. The philosophy of the era is called early modern philosophy. Its central trends are rationalism, which emphasizes the role of reason, and empiricism, which relies on experience. In my presentation, I will discuss the rationalists' and empiricists' views of nature and clarify their connection to the views of antiquity and the Middle Ages.

27th OCTOBER**PhD Anni Hella and MA Jutta Laitila: Holy, evil, or firewood? The many meanings of the forest in classical and Christian antiquity**

For people in ancient and late antiquity, the forest was both a practical resource and a symbolic space. This lecture examines how forests were used in ancient times and what meanings classical and Christian writers attributed to trees and forests. Was the forest a place where the sacred was present, or something to be feared or controlled?

17th NOVEMBER**PhD Mia Lempiäinen-Avci: The use of wood in medieval Finland: from wood carvings to coffins**

The presentation discusses the use of wood in medieval Finland from the perspective of archaeology and natural science research: what was wood used for and what kind of wood was used? How can the use of wood be studied and what kind of results have been obtained? In addition, the presentation will review a few examples of how research has provided new information on the use of wood in the Middle Ages, for example in sculptures and coffins.

8th DECEMBER**PhD Teemu Immonen: On the edge of the forest: Humans, nature, and change during the Medieval Warm Period**

The Medieval Warm Period (approximately 950–1250) brought not only milder winters and longer growing seasons to Europe, but also significant social changes. This presentation examines how forests were perceived not only as physical boundaries but also as mental landscapes at a time when deforestation, agricultural expansion, and changes in spirituality were reshaping humanity's relationship with nature. The presentation examines the interaction between nature and culture in the pre-industrial world, particularly in the light of texts written in monasteries in southern Italy.

**PANELS ORGANIZED WITH TRIVIUM – TAMPERE CENTRE
FOR CLASSICAL, MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES
FOR THE FINNISH CONFERENCE OF HISTORY RESEARCH**

16-18th OCTOBER, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Tucemems, Turku Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, and Trivium, Tampere Centre for Classical, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies, organized together a series of

three sessions on the theme of knowledge, the history of knowledge, knowledge production, and knowledge use from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era. This first session approaches the theme through the relationships between knowledge, learning, and memory, as well as the material dimensions of knowledge.

The nature, use, and significance of knowledge from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era – Panel 1: Knowledge and memory

Chair: Jenni Kuuliala (University of Turku)

Marika Räsänen (University of Turku): Information about bones – processes of identifying and recognizing relics in the late Middle Ages

The presentation discusses the processes of identifying and recognizing bones as relics in late medieval culture. The late Middle Ages were characterized by control over the definition of holiness, which can also be seen to include control over bodies and bones. Information about bodies and different body parts, such as bones, was collected, for example, in canonization processes, but it could also be reported and thus given different definitions in other normative or narrative texts. Information about the status of the bone can also be considered to have been conveyed through its display. My interest lies, on the one hand, in how the bone was identified and thus recognized as a relic on a practical level and, on the other hand, in the nature of the information that was obtained.

Saara Penttinen (University of Turku): The circulation of knowledge and the encounter of experiences in English 17th-century cabinets of curiosities open to the public

Between 1450 and 1750, cabinets of curiosities were private collections of objects gathered from around Europe, which were regarded as microcosms. For decades, research into these cabinets has advanced the debate on historical science and knowledge by revolutionizing our understanding of the material nature of knowledge, the parallelism of different knowledge systems, and the interfaces between science and art. My own perspective adds to the understanding of the movement of information and its interconnection with experience, not only in cabinets, but also more generally at the beginning of the modern era. Cabinet rooms should be understood not only as virtual repositories full of information based on the personal experiences of numerous individuals, but also as meeting places where information circulated between collectors, visitors, and numerous other actors.

The nature, use, and significance of knowledge from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era – Panel 2: Types of knowledge and its transmission

Chair: Ville Vuolanto (Tampere University)

Jaakkojuhani Peltonen (Tampere University): A manly experience of pain? The story of Mucius Scaevola from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era

My presentation deals with the use of the story of the Roman Mucius Scaevola from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era. Scaevola, who attempted to assassinate the Etruscan king Porsenna, deliberately burned his hands after being caught in order to prove the steadfastness of the Romans. I'll look at how this story has been passed down and used to build masculinity and describe the experience of pain. How is historical information reused in different cultural contexts? In my presentation, I'll cover not only ancient literature but also visual art.

Kaisa Kyläkoski (University of Helsinki): Offerings and intercessions as creators of communities in 17th-century Finland

The announcements read to parishioners, or subjects, have been the subject of research, but other parts of 17th-century Swedish worship services may also have been significant for political culture. When communications for war, tax collection, and legislation are added to prayers for pregnant queens and collections for unknown individuals and parishes, parishioners no longer appear solely as a people punished or rewarded by God and the ruler, but as actors with the chance to actively influence something outside the parish. Even if these opportunities remained unexploited, the collections in particular raised the question of which community one belonged to: the Christendom, the kingdom, or only the people of one's own parish or village.

Hemmo Laiho (University of Turku): Kant, Enlightenment, and Knowledge

According to Kant, the central goal of enlightenment is to enable people to grow into independent-minded citizens. This goal is closely linked to the promotion of freedom of thought and the idea that those in power should no longer control the pursuit of truth. A public space is needed where enlightened citizens can present their views on an equal footing for everyone to evaluate, without any view being considered true or false in advance. Such an endeavour can be seen as providing a genuine opportunity to achieve universally valid, unbiased information. On the other hand, the ethos of independent thinking can be seen as leading to the subjectivization of knowledge and untruthfulness. In my presentation, I will examine these two conceptions of knowledge and the tension between them in the project of enlightenment.

The nature, use, and significance of knowledge from antiquity to the beginning of the modern era – panel 3: Production of knowledge

Chair: Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (University of Turku)

Teemu Immonen (University of Turku): Christus medicus vs. Asclepius? The problem of medical knowledge during the golden age of Montecassino Abbey at the end of the 11th century

The presentation examines the status of medical knowledge in Montecassino during its golden age at the end of the 11th century. Montecassino offers a unique opportunity to examine the tension between religious and scientific views that prevailed within the medieval monastic community. The texts produced and collected at the monastery invite us to consider how the monks understood the nature of knowledge. How should we understand the different and often contradictory messages conveyed by the monks? Can different views be reconciled into a unified understanding of the nature of knowledge and learning, and if so, what kind of understanding is this? How does Montecassino's approach to medical knowledge reflect broader medieval ways of thinking about knowledge and the value of learning?

Jussi Eerola (Tampere University): Giants and Ancient Kings – Antiquarianism in Sweden during the Swedish Empire

The Collegium of Antiquities, founded in Sweden in 1666, was an agency and expert body. Its task was to produce information about real and mythical antiquity and to refine it into a narrative that could be used to construct an early modern Swedish identity. What kind of image of the antiquity of the present-day Finnish territory was sought to be constructed at a time when the kingdom was actively focused on Swedishizing the provinces conquered from Denmark and creating a great power identity? The presentation reveals the contents of the search reports produced by the clergy between 1667 and 1674 and how they responded to the Collegium of Antiquities' request for information to find evidence of the ancient greatness of the fatherland.

Visa Helenius (University of Turku): Freedom and limits of science at the Royal Academy of Turku

In my presentation, I will discuss the nature of the activities of the Royal Academy of Turku (1640–1827) and how it was linked to the power structures and goals of the Kingdom of Sweden and to European science. In the 17th century, the activities of the Royal Academy of Turku were still dominated by theological tradition and the associated supervision. After the Great Wrath (1700–1721), a change took place: as the power of theology weakened, a (slightly) freer and more independent era of science began. Due to the above factors, the academy's activities were somewhat divided in nature: it diligently practiced philosophy, among other things, and published a significant number of works (i.e., dissertations) that met the scientific standards of the time, but without any critical thinking or originality.

BOOK LAUNCH EVENT

10th OCTOBER, Calonia, University of Turku, Finland

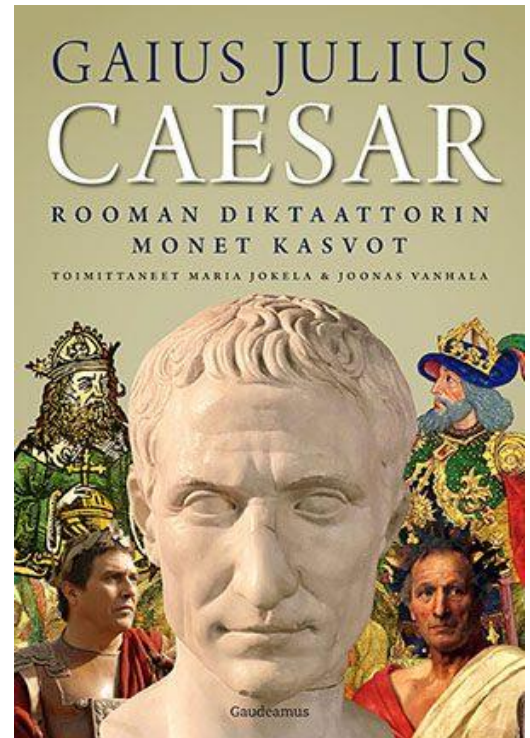
The launch event of *Gaius Julius Caesar: Rooman diktaattorin monet kasvot* (Gaudeamus 2025), edited by Maria Jokela and Joonas Vanhala, was held in Calonia, University of Turku.

Abstract:

Gaius Julius Caesar explores the man, a favourite of the gods, a cruel dictator, an intelligent strategist, a writer, and a lover. At the same time the book examines Roman society, culture and everyday life, as well as Caesar's significance in later centuries.

At the end of the Republic, a transition took place when the power structures and values began to change in Rome. By depicting the rise of Roman populist politicians, escalating political divide, and bellicose propaganda through Caesar, it creates striking parallels with the present day.

Gaius Julius Caesar is published by Gaudeamus.



TUPIIRI - TUCEMEMS MONTHLY RESEARCH SEMINAR

The TUPIIRI research circle supports scholarship on Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern period at the University of Turku. Throughout 2025, the group met regularly to provide feedback on research plans, grant applications, article manuscripts, and draft dissertation chapters, as well as to engage in a variety of collaborative activities.

Programme 2025:

17th JANUARY, 10:00–12:00, Arcanum A259 & Zoom

Eva Johanna Holmberg: Presentation and discussion on research into embodiment and pain.

31st JANUARY, 10:00–12:00, Arcanum A260 & Zoom

Hanna-Mari Kupari: Draft article

Ida Meerto: Practice presentation

28th FEBRUARY, 10:00–12:00, Arcanum A260

Nea Pälä: Research plan

Saara Kaltiomaa: Research plan for doctoral application

28th MARCH, 10:00–12:00, Arcanum A260 & Zoom

Reima Välimäki: Draft article

25th APRIL, 10:00–12:00, Arcanum A260

Maria Jokela: Practice presentation

Lauri Kokkonen: Dissertation project overview

12th SEPTEMBER, 10:00–12:00, ARC A113 & Zoom

Discussion of research topics by Jutta Laitila and Joonas Vanhala.

Guests and commentators: Prof. Vincent Debiais (EHESS, Paris): Medieval art history, materiality of writing

Claire Becker (University of Rochester): Early modern female spirituality and Spanish-speaking cultural sphere

10th OCTOBER, 10:00–12:00, ARC A113 & Zoom

Tiago Queimada e Silva: Monograph chapter

20th NOVEMBER, 16:00–18:00, ARC A113 & Zoom

Evening seminar: Emmarae Stein (University of Rochester) presents her doctoral project: “Networks of Faith and Knowledge: The Making of an Intellectual Movement in Alcalá de Henares.”

Presentation via remote connection; hybrid meeting. Informal gathering after the seminar.

5th DECEMBER, 10:00–12:00, ARC A113 & Zoom

Teemu Immonen: Article manuscript

Saara Penttinen: Dissertation chapter

COMPLIMENTS FROM THE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

At the start of my role as the research assistant at TUCEMEMS, the divide between the world of research and an ordinary student felt vast and even slightly out of reach. These three months working for TUCEMEMS have been eye-opening and introduced me to a whole new world within the university I have spent all these years at. I was also pleased to find out how actively TUCEMEMS reaches out to students and constantly aims to close that gap I had experienced.

The position of a research assistant has been interesting, with varying tasks from writing texts for social media publications to assisting in workshops and seminars. Making publications for the newly founded Instagram account was an interesting challenge I had not faced before. Graphic design was definitely new to me and having to think about what kind of visual image TUCEMEMS wants to project to the world wide web, its community and the students, was challenging and, in the end, incredibly fun. It was also fascinating to get a glimpse behind the curtain to how workshops and seminars are organized and how much work goes into them running smoothly. These events, the workshops, seminars and lectures, are a sign of an active community that is constantly willing to reach out and share their passion with the world.

The work TUCEMEMS does is important; not only bridging the gap between history and today, but also the gap between the world of academia and students. Carrying on the new tradition of attending the Opening Carnival and arranging the Student seminar shows that TUCEMEMS is interested in staying in touch with students, who will hopefully continue to contribute to the study of old times in the future.

Reetta Meriläinen, Student research assistant, autumn period 2025

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