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## Imagining Nordic Paganism

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Scandinavian Pre-Christian religion has been an eminently productive part of identity constructions for numerous social groups from the 13th century until the present day. This conference brings together researchers from several countries and various disciplines in order to investigate why, by which means and to what ends diverse recipients at different times engaged in identitarian recourse to a religion that is accessible only from spatially or temporally external perspectives in the extant source material. In doing so, the conference encompasses a diachronic dimension, asking how subsequent processes of reception interrelate and how later acts of reception engage with notions of paganism established earlier in the history of reception. Furthermore, it aims at a synchronic layer, placing specific reception processes in the socio-political contexts and preconditions of their time.

The contributions address a wide array of topics connected to the reception of pre-Christian religion in the North and beyond, such as the relation between gender and paganism, its connectivity to certain media, the spatial dimension of its reception, and, not least, identitarian recourses to paganism in historiography and the history of the discipline. Thus, turning to some particularly salient aspects of the reception history of paganism from the Middle Ages until recent times, the contributions aim at facilitating a better understanding of its special viability for identity constructions attested to by countless examples from eight centuries of imagining Nordic paganism.

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## Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics'

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The Cluster of Excellence has been investigating the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures since 2007. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences are focusing in the current funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the 'dynamics of tradition and innovation'. In transepocheal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day, they are analyzing the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change, with their focus being above all on the paradox that religions often develop their innovative potential precisely by drawing on their traditions. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.

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### Organization

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#### Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics'

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Project A3-36 of the Cluster of Excellence: "Paganisations: Memorialised Paganism as an Element of Scandinavian and European Identities"

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[www.religion-und-politik.de/en](http://www.religion-und-politik.de/en)

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### Location and registration

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Cluster of Excellence lecture theatre

Room JO 101 (1st floor)

Johannisstraße 4, 48143 Münster

We kindly ask for your registration until 24 October 2025 (skandinavistik@uni-muenster.de).

Institut für  
Skandinavistik



International Conference of the  
Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics" and the  
Institute for Scandinavian Studies

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Cultural Memories and Scholarly Thought  
since the Middle Ages

6-7 November 2025



Image: Olaus Magnus – On the three Main Gods of the Geats. [https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Olaus\\_Magnus\\_-\\_On\\_the\\_three\\_Main\\_Gods\\_of\\_the\\_Geats.jpg](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Olaus_Magnus_-_On_the_three_Main_Gods_of_the_Geats.jpg)

Programme

Thursday, 6 November 2025

08:30  
Registration

09:00–09:30  
Welcome and Introduction  
Roland Scheel and Simon Hauke, Münster

09:30–10:15  
The Blind One in the Forest: Viability as a Guiding Principle in  
Constructions of the Pagan North  
Simon Hauke, Münster

Media and Pagan-Christian Dichotomies

10:15–11:00  
Who's Afraid of the *Fuporc*? The Challenge the Old English  
Runes Pose to Present-Day Conceptions of Nordic Paganism  
Kerstin Majewski, Bochum

11:00–11.30  
Coffee

11:30–12:15  
Runes and Paganism: An ad hoc Created Binomial  
Alessia Bauer, Paris

12:15–13:00  
The Eddas as Neopagan Bible? A Diachronic Approach to a  
Pagan-Christian Equation  
Lukas Rösli, Berlin

13:00–14:30  
Lunch

14:30–15:15  
Shifting Attitudes to Pre-Christian Myth: The Case of Þórr's  
Journey to Geirrþōr  
Tom Grant, Utrecht

15:15–16:00  
Gods in the *Heliand*: Paganization of a Carolingian Time  
Christian Text  
Heike Sahm, Göttingen

16:00–16:30  
Coffee

Space, Social Groups, and the Nation

16:30–17:15  
Paganitas, Urbanitas, and the People of Trøndelag in  
Saga Perception  
Benjamin Allport, Oslo

17:15–18:00  
Icelandic Constructions of Nordic Paganism  
Gylfi Gunnlaugsson, Reykjavík

18:00–18:15  
Coffee

18:15–19:00  
Cyrus the Great and the Diaspora: On Iranian  
Nationalism Today and its References to Ancient Iran  
Philip Bockholt, Münster

Friday, 7 November 2025

Gender and Emotion

09:00–09:45  
Female Conceptions of Paganism and Conceptions of  
the Female in Paganism  
Katja Schulz, Frankfurt am Main

09:45–10:30  
Paganism as Female Agency in Fredrika Bremer and  
Selma  
Lagerlöf  
Anna Bohlin, Bergen

10:30–11:00  
Coffee

11:00–11:45  
Eg likar ikkje snakket ditt (I don't like your talk): Old Norse  
Mythological Sources and Jon Fosse's Edda (2017)  
Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, Oslo

Historiography, Law, and Scholarship

11:45–12:30  
Outsider Perspectives on Old Scandinavian Beliefs in *Brot  
um fornan átrúnað*  
Jonas Wellendorf, Berkeley

12:30–13:30  
Lunch

13:30–14:15  
Harrowing Past: Old Norse Laws' Attitude to the  
Scandinavian Heathen Period  
Jiří Starý, Praha

14:15–15:00  
Pagan Law? Imagining Pre-Christian Origins and Contents  
of Legal Norms in Medieval Scandinavia  
Roland Scheel, Münster

15:00–15:30  
Coffee

15:30–16:15  
Conceptions of (Continental) Germanic Paganism from  
Jordanes to Felix Dahn (and beyond)  
Christian Scholl, Münster

16:15–17:00  
Jan de Vries, Otto Höfler, and their Networks for  
Distributing Conceptions of a Germanic Past in the 20th  
Century  
Bob van Strijen, Oslo

17:00–17:15  
Coffee

17:15–18:00  
Concluding Discussion