

Nordic mythology—with its remarkable stories of gods, giants and the catastrophic end of the world—has captured the imaginations of scholars and the public alike for centuries, keeping the Medieval North front and center in the popular imagination. Recent films, such as the Hollywood blockbuster, *Thor*, contribute to the popularity of the Nordic mythological world while, at the same time, contributing to the proliferation of misunderstandings about that same world.

In this conference, we interrogate the complexities of the Nordic mythological realms interdisciplinarily from the scholarly perspectives of folkloristics, anthropology, religious studies, cultural history, linguistics, archaeology, philology, film criticism, textual criticism and the history of ideas. We explore how religious and secular institutions have imposed differing narratives of interpretation on this mythological world, and we explore the interaction of the Scandinavian realm with other belief groups, such as the Sámi and more recent ones such as the neo-pagan Ásatrú.

Generous support for this conference has been provided by

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Advance registration for the Friday and Saturday conference sessions is not required. Please see inside for the Master Class registration information. For abstracts of the conference papers, visit the website at http://tango.bol.ucla.edu/nord_myth

For more information,
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Self-pay parking is in UCLA lots 2, 3, and 4.
Parking information and maps are available at
<http://map.ais.ucla.edu/go/portal/1002187>

Cover photos of the burial mound at Mysselhøj:
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Nordic Mythologies: Interpretations, Intersections, and Institutions



UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
CMRS Ahmanson Conference Series

APRIL 27-28, 2012

Nordic Mythologies: Interpretations, Intersections and Institutions

Friday, April 27, 2012 | Royce Hall 314

8:30-9:00 – Registration, coffee

9:00 - 9:05 – Welcoming Remarks – Massimo Ciavolella, Interim Director, UCLA Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies

SESSION 1: MYTH, GODS AND GIANTS

9:05-9:35 – **Margaret Clunies Ross** (University of Sydney)
“Gods, Heroes and Horses”

9:40-10:10 – **John Lindow** (UC Berkeley)
“Stability and Variation in the Myth(s) of Þórr’s Battle with Geirröðr (and his Daughters)”

10:10-10:30 – Coffee

10:30-11:10 – **Jens Peter Schjødt** (Aarhus University)
“The Vanir in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion—To be or not to be?”

11:10-11:50 – **John McKinnell** (Durham University)
“Useless Wisdom? The Paradox of *Alvíssmál*”

11:50-12:00 – Discussion – **Joseph F. Nagy** (UCLA)

SESSION 2: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

1:00-1:40 – **Rudolf Simek** (University of Bonn)
“The Sanctuaries in Uppsala and Lejre and Their Literary Antecedents”

1:40-2:20 – **Stefan Brink** (Aberdeen University)
“Reading Mythology in the Landscape. The Toponymic Evidence”

2:20-3:00 – **Anders Andrén** (Stockholm University)
“From Iceland to Gotland and Back Again: The Historical Context of a *Fornaldarsaga*”

3:00-3:10 – Discussion – **Úlfar Bragason** (University of Iceland)

3:10-3:30 – Coffee

SESSION 3: MYTH, MAGIC AND FOLKLORE

3:30-4:10 – **Stephen A. Mitchell** (Harvard University)
“Charming Sex: *Skirmismál*, the Orkneys, and the Faroes”

4:10-4:50 – **Terry Gunnell** (University of Iceland)
“Magical Mooning and the Goat Skin Twirl: Memories of Old Nordic Magical Practices in the Sagas”

4:50-5:30 – **Catherina Raudvere** (University of Copenhagen)
“To Meet Hardship, Illness and Malice: Valter W. Forsblom and his Documentation of Healing Practices in Swedish Speaking Finland”

5:30-5:40 – Discussion – **Timothy R. Tangherlini** (UCLA)

Saturday, April 28, 2012 | Royce Hall 314

8:30 -9:00 – Coffee

SESSION 4: NORDIC MYTHOLOGY IN COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL FOCUS

9:00-9:40 – **Lars Lönnroth** (Gothenburg University)
“From History to Myth: Yngvars saga viðförla”

9:40-10:20 – **Judy Quinn** (Cambridge University)
“Shifting Mythological Focus: Rán, her Daughters, her Husband and Snorri”

10:20-10:30 – Coffee

10:30-11:10 – **Jonas Wellendorf** (UC Berkeley)
“Odin of Many Devices: The Old Norse Gods Seen Through the Trojan Lens”

11:10-11:50 – **Thomas A. Dubois** (University of Wisconsin)
“Underneath the Self-Same Sky: Comparative Perspectives on Sámi, Finnish, and Medieval Scandinavian Astral Lore”

11:50-12:00 – Discussion – **Úlfar Bragason** (University of Iceland)

1:15-2:00 – Graduate Student Roundtable
Joseph F. Nagy (UCLA), Moderator

SESSION 5: NORDIC MYTHOLOGY AND EDDA

2:00-2:40 – **Gisli Sigurðsson** (University of Iceland)
“Snorri’s *Edda*: The Sky Described in Mythological Terms”

2:40-3:20 – **Merrill Kaplan** (The Ohio State University)
“Vaxinn völlum hæri: The Mistilteinn in *Völuspá*”

3:20-4:00 – **Joseph Harris** (Harvard University)
“Edda and Ballad: *Svipdagsmál* and the Uses of Poetic Afterlife”

4:00-4:15 – Coffee

SESSION 6: NORDIC MYTHOLOGY AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

4:15-4:55 – **Jackson Crawford** (UCLA)
“The Language of the Norse Gods (and Their Worshipers) in Popular Culture”

4:55-5:35 – **Ulf Palménfelt** (Gotland University College)
“How Eternal is Eternal Evil? Mythical Traits in a Contemporary Computer Game”

5:35-6:05 – **Kendra Willson** (University of Turku)
“Views of Myth in Two California Rings”

6:05-6:25 – Discussion – **Timothy R. Tangherlini** (UCLA)

6:25-6:30 – Concluding Remark

MASTER CLASSES

Registration is required to attend the Master Classes.
Write Professor Tangherlini at tango@humnet.ucla.edu.

Wednesday, April 25, 3:00-5:00 pm – Giants and Gods
John Lindow and Margaret Clunies Ross

Thursday, April 26, 9:00-11:00 am – Myth Across Cultures
Thomas A. Dubois and Gisli Sigurðsson

Thursday, April 26, 2:00-4:00 pm – Archaeology and Myth
Anders Andrén and Stefan Brink