

Seminar

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*New Ways of Dealing with
Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion:
Methodological and Theoretical Considerations*

Thursday, 7 November, 4:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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ABOUT JENS PETER SCHJØDT

Jens Peter Schjødt gained a D.Phil. from Aarhus University in 2004 with the thesis “Initiation, liminalitet og tilegnelse af numinous viden: En undersøgelse af struktur og symbolik i førkristen nordisk religion” (Initiation, liminality and acquisition of numinous knowledge: An investigation of structure and symbolism in pre-Christian Norse religion). He has taught at the universities in Durham, Rzeszow, and Reykjavik and given guest lectures at many universities in Europe and North America. He has been a Visiting Scholar for longer periods at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and at the Centre for Advanced Study, Oslo.

His main fields of research are pre-Christian Scandinavian religion and the phenomenology of religion (mythology, ritual studies, and methodological issues). Schjødt’s publications include *Suverænitet, kampen og frugtbarheden: Georges Dumézil og den indoeuropæiske ideologi* (Sovereignty, fight and fertility: Georges Dumézil and the Indo-European ideology, with Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen, 1994); *Det førkristne Norden: Religion og mytologi* (The pre-Christian North: Religion and mythology, 1999); and *Initiation between Two Worlds: Structure and Symbolism in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religion* (2008). He has edited *Myte og Ritual i det førkristne Norden* (Myth and ritual in the pre-Christian North, 1994) and co-edited *Reflections on Old Norse Myths* (2007) and *More than Mythology* (2012). Schjødt has also published numerous articles on Old Norse religion and the phenomenology of religion.

At SCAS, Schjødt will write and edit the three-volume work “Pre-Christian Religions of the North: Histories and Structures” together with professors Anders Andrén and John Lindow. The book is part of a larger project including works on research history, the reception of pre-Christian mythology, and the presentation of the textual as well as archaeological sources.

ABSTRACT

One of the reasons for undertaking a new handbook of the pre-Christian Religions of the North (PCRN) is that many of the ideas which were, more or less, implicit in the works of the 20th century, are not accepted nowadays. This is due to general tendencies within the humanities as well as new recognitions within comparative religious studies. The lecture will give a brief introduction to some of the main problems we face when we approach PCRN, such as for instance the source situation, and propose some new ways to deal with the subject field. Thus, it will critically discuss some of the old assumptions on which earlier handbooks were based, and at the same time introduce notions such as ‘model’ and ‘discourse’ and the use we can make of them, notions which were not part of scholarship at the time even the most recent handbooks were written.