

## [The Cult of St. Olaf. Christian Identity in Pre-Reformation Scandinavia and the Baltic Region](#)

Announcement published by Mihai Dragnea on Wednesday, March 24, 2021

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Call for Papers

Date:

October 1, 2021

Location:

Poland

Subject Fields:

Urban History / Studies, Historic Preservation, Local History, Medieval and Byzantine History / Studies, Religious Studies and Theology

In the second and third decades of the eleventh century Olaf Haraldsson was establishing his power in Norway after a successful Viking career he had pursued in the West. As the medieval historiographical tradition holds, the main feature of his turbulent rules was religious conversion he undertook sparing no efforts to bring his subjects to the new faith. Although Olaf's drive to promote Christianity was not a new tendency in his country - regarding unsuccessful attempts of previous rulers - it was he who got down in history as the king that began irreversible formation of Christian statehood in Norway. This process lasted throughout next generations and there are ample grounds to assume that its irreversibility was facilitated by the new role Olaf Haraldsson was given soon after his death in 1030, i.e. the role of a saint. The cult of St. Olaf seems to be one of the gateways through which Christianity poured not only into Norway, but also other regions of the North, meeting the needs of developing Church and its believers. The Norwegian saint was venerated in numerous churches of his name scattered across Scandinavia, the islands of the North Sea and the Baltic. His cult reached territories marked by Scandinavian presence in the British Isles, Rus and the Holy Land, whereas the resting place of his relics in Nidaros Cathedral grew into one of the most frequently visited pilgrimage sites in Europe. The cult of St. Olaf became a determinant of Northern Christianity recognizable enough to be adopted by Hanseatic merchants involved in trade in Scandinavia who transmitted it to various towns round the Baltic Sea.

A millennium has passed since Olaf Haraldsson was implanting the new religion in Norway. This provokes a question about our current knowledge of the role his cult played in development and formation of Christian identity in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region before the cult of saints declined in the age of Reformation. We would

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like to invite both highly experienced scholars and representatives of the younger generation – whose research interests cover the issues of Christian identity in the medieval North and various aspects of the cult of St. Olaf – to contribute to the edited volume: “The Cult of St. Olaf. Christian Identity in Pre-Reformation Scandinavia and the Baltic Region”. We propose several topics that can be situated in a wider context of Northern Christianity:

- sources and strategies of religious conversion under the reign of Olaf Haraldsson
- cultural and political origins of St. Olaf’s cult
- hagiography of St. Olaf – sources, examples, interpretation and transmission
- liturgical aspects of St. Olaf’s cult
- St. Olaf’s relics and places of veneration
- religious art devoted to St. Olaf
- St. Olaf’s cult and the medieval pilgrimage movement
- St. Olaf’s cult and development of the Norwegian Church administration
- St. Olaf’s cult in political contexts of the High and Late Middle Ages
- Hanseatic reception and transmission of St. Olaf’s cult

The contributors are free to formulate the subject matter of their texts (written in English), however, it should be related to their research interests and to the topics listed above. In the course of the editorial process the volume can be divided into thematic parts into which the submitted texts can be grouped according to the subjects they cover.

The volume is going to be published as a part of a series: “[Christianity and Conversion in Scandinavia and the Baltic Region, c. 800-1600](#)” (Peter Lang).

## Deadlines

October 1, 2021: Submit proposals to editors

October 11, 2022: Notification of accepted studies’ proposals

May 9, 2022: Receipt of full studies for review

October 10, 2022: Revised studies re-submitted to editors

November 25, 2022: Approved studies delivered to publisher

Contact Info:

Editors

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