The coming of Christianity to Northern Europe resulted in profound cultural changes. In the course of a few generations, new answers were given to fundamental existential questions and older notions were invalidated. Jonas Wellendorf’s study, the first monograph in English on this subject, explores the medieval Scandinavian reception and re-interpretation of pre-Christian Scandinavian religion. This original work draws on a range of primary sources ranging from *Prose Edda* and Saxo Grammaticus’ *History of the Danes* to less well-known literary works including the *Saga of Barlaam* and the *Hauksbók* manuscript (c. 1300). By providing an in-depth analysis of often overlooked mythological materials, along with translations of all textual passages, Wellendorf delivers an accessible work that sheds new light on the ways in which the old gods were integrated into the Christian worldview of medieval Scandinavia.

**Jonas Wellendorf** is an assistant professor in the Department of Scandinavian at University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of multiple articles in journals and peer-reviewed anthologies and has also co-edited anthologies and an edition of an Old Norse rhetorical treatise.
This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c.1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

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GODS AND HUMANS IN MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA

Retying the Bonds

JONAS WELLENDORF

University of California, Berkeley
Allir menn þeir sem sannfróðir eru at um tíðendi, vita at Tyrkir ok Ásiamenn byggðu Norðrlænd. Hófsk þá tunga sú er síðan dreifðisk um öll lönd. Formaðr þess folks hét Óðinn, er menn rekja ætt til.

All men who possess true knowledge about events know that Turks and Asians populated the North. The tongue which later spread across all lands originated then. The chieftain of this people was called Óðinn, and people trace their ancestry to him.

*Sturlaug saga starfsama, FAS* vol. iii, p. 107
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As a starting point for this book, I will identify an interest in medieval versions of the story of the Babylonian Confusion which led me to the *Codex Wormianus* version of the Edda prologue that I discuss in Chapter 5. I began working on this text while I was a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Bergen. The work on the other chapters, which can be seen as ways of contextualizing the Edda prologue, began after I had taken up my current position at the University of California, Berkeley. There I have not only benefited from the inspiring atmosphere of the Department of Scandinavian, the Program in Medieval Studies, and the university at large, I have also had the immense pleasure of teaching classes on Scandinavian myth and religion at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This has helped me shape my ideas on the topic. I have also benefited greatly from invitations to present my work on mythology at annual conferences on Old Norse mythology. These meetings have been a great inspiration for me and have helped me sustain my interest in the material.

Early versions of most of the chapters or parts of them have been presented at conferences and workshops over the years from 2012 and onwards. An early version of parts of Chapter 3 was published in 2013 as ‘Zoroaster, Saturn, and Óðinn: The Loss of Language and the Rise of Idolatry’ in an anthology entitled *The Performance of Christian and Pagan Storyworlds: Uncanonical Chapters of the History of Nordic Medieval Literature*, edited by Tuomas Lehtonen and Lars Boje Mortensen (Turnhout: Brepols). The material on Jonas Ramus in the Epilogue was published in 2014 as ‘Odin of Many Devices: Jonas Ramus (d. 1718) on the Identity of Odin and Odysseus’ in the anthology *Nordic*
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