



**Nordic Spirit Symposium**  
Scandinavian American Cultural  
and Historical Foundation  
California Lutheran University  
60 West Olsen Road #2600  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-2710

FIRST CLASS  
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Nordic Iron Age boat model  
Hjortspring ca 350 BCE



# NORDIC SPIRIT PRESENTS THE NORDIC IRON AGE: LIFE BEFORE THE VIKINGS

FEBRUARY 6 AND 7, 2026

SCANDINAVIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATION



A unique lecture/performance program presented by the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation and California Lutheran University, made possible by generous grants from the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation and the Norway House Foundation.

California  
Lutheran  
University



NORDIC SPIRIT PRESENTS

# The Nordic Iron Age: Life Before the Vikings

The Nordic Iron Age, nestled between the Bronze Age and the Viking Age, saw great changes and developments in society, technology, agriculture, settlement, and more. Seacraft revolutionized travel, trade and cultural exchange. Iron technology revolutionized both tools (e.g., the plow) and weapons. Very practical boats and ships, essential to the Viking Age, were developed in the later part of the Iron Age.

Do you wonder how such graceful, beautiful, and practical craft were developed? Do you wonder what life was like before the Viking Age? This symposium, designed for a public audience, will treat these topics among others. The program will begin Friday Feb. 6 with a live performance of a drama from the Iron Age, Beowulf. Saturday the program will continue with illustrated lectures and music. Discussion of farm life, Iron Age art, and an exceptionally well-preserved and extraordinary 2,000 year-old bog body will fill out the program. We will follow the time-honored tradition of a symposium with music, drama, and ample time for discussion, learning, and enjoyment.

## FRIDAY EVENING, FEB. 6, 2026

**Overton Hall (off Memorial Parkway)**  
**California Lutheran University**  
5:30 – 6:30 p.m.    Gala Reception - Meet the Presenters  
Reservations requested – Admission is \$15

**Preus-Brandt Forum - California Lutheran University**  
6:15 – 7:00 p.m.    Registration  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.    Program

**Beowulf**  
**John Heimbuch, Actor, *Minneapolis, Minnesota***

A live drama from Iron Age Sweden and Denmark will be performed by John Heimbuch. In this play, the hero of the Geats, Beowulf, takes on Grendel, a monster that has been creating great problems for the king. With his famous grip, as strong as that of 30 men, Beowulf tears off the monster's shoulder and arm. When Grendel dies, Grendel's mother emerges from a lake to avenge her son's death.

## SATURDAY, FEB. 7, 2026

**Preus-Brandt Forum**  
**California Lutheran University**  
8:15 a.m.                Registration  
9:00 – 5:15 p.m.    Program, Coffee Breaks and Lunch

**The Iron Age Farm in Stavanger: Research, Reconstruction and Living History**  
**Håkon Reiersen, Ph.D., Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, *Stavanger, Norway***

In 1972, an Iron Age farm was reconstructed outside Stavanger, Norway, built directly on top of excavated house remains from the 3rd-6th century AD. For over fifty years this has been a center for disseminating Iron Age research and living history. In combination with recent settlement research, the reconstructed farm reveals what life was like in Norway 1500 years ago.

**Iron Age Figurative and Animal-Style Art in Scandinavia: From Roman Influence to the Vikings**  
**Nancy Wicker, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Art History, The University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi**

The art of the Iron Age in Scandinavia drew upon previous indigenous Bronze Age sources and diverse outside influences. Although Romans never invaded Scandinavia, the region was marked by Roman culture, resulting in imagery that was transformed and culminated in the Nordic animal styles. Yet interest in human subject matter continued to reveal both external and internal sources.

12:00 p.m.                Lunch Break  
1:30 p.m.                Afternoon Program

**Ships and Seafaring in Prehistoric Denmark**  
**Morton Ravn, Ph.D., Senior Researcher, Viking Ship Museum, *Roskilde, Denmark***

Some inventions in human history have changed the world so profoundly that life was never the same again. The boat is one of these inventions. We will follow both the boatbuilder and the seafarer through Denmark's ancient past, beginning in the earliest Stone Age, more than 7,000 years ago when people hollowed out tree trunks to make log boats, and continuing through stages to the late Iron Age when Scandinavian shipbuilders had mastered their craft to an astonishing degree.

**The Finnish Kantele—The Ancient Wisdom of its Strings and Forever Friend of the Singer**  
**Diane Jarvi, Singer, Songwriter, Guitarist, Kantele Player and Poet, *Minneapolis, Minnesota***

Said to be 1000-3000 years old, the kantele – Finnish folk harp and Finland's national instrument – has a unique history of accompanying singers of epic poems and inspiring innovative players of instruments ranging from 5- 36 strings over hundreds of years. In this lecture/performance, Jarvi shares how this instrument continues to sing.

**Grauballe Man – a 2,000 Year-Old Iron Age Man**  
**Pauline Asingh, M.A., Curator, Moesgaard Museum, *Moesgaard, Denmark***

The Grauballe Man is one of the most extraordinary discoveries from Denmark's ancient past and the world's best-preserved bog body from the Iron Age. X-rays, CT scans, and analyses of his teeth, hair, bones, and even his last meal have provided valuable insight into his life and death – his health, his age, and the world he lived in. These studies have made it possible to paint a vivid picture of the man and situate him within the society and culture of his time.

**SATURDAY EVENING**  
**Lundring Events Center, California Lutheran University**  
5:30 – 6:00 p.m.    Social  
6:00 pm.                Dinner; Entertainment – Diane Jarvi  
Reservations required. Dinner admission is \$50.

Early registration deadline: January 17, 2026  
Meal registration deadline: January 25, 2026

For information, please contact nordicspiritclassics@gmail.com or contact Howard at (805) 497-3717.  
The organizers reserve the right to make any changes that may be necessary.

**Cover photos:**  
*Upper: Sea Stallion photo, Werner Karrasch, Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark*  
*Lower left and right: Reconstructed Iron Age farm in Stavanger, Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger, Norway (License: CC BY-MC-ND 3.0).*  
*Center: Migration Period figurine, Kymbo parish, Västergötland, Sweden, copper-alloyed silver with gold neck ring, Stockholm, Swedish History Museum, inv. no. 20877, photo Ulf Bruxe (CC BY).*  
*Hjortspring boat model, photo, Wikimedia Commons, National Museum of Denmark.*

www.scandinaviancenter.org

Reservation deadline for Saturday Lunch and Dinner: January 25, 2026.

	General Admission	Quantity	SACHF Members	Quantity	Students CLU Faculty/Staff	Quantity	Total
The Works: Programs, Meals & Reception	\$145 (\$140 by Jan. 17)		\$130 (\$125 by Jan. 17)		\$85 (Meals & Reception)		\$
Friday Gala Reception	\$15		\$15		\$15		\$
Friday & Saturday Program	\$65 (\$60 by Jan. 17)		\$50 (\$45 by Jan. 17)		Free registration		\$
Friday Program Only	\$20		\$20		Free registration		\$
Saturday Program Only	\$50 (\$45 by Jan. 17)		\$40 (\$35 by Jan. 17)		Free registration		\$
Saturday Luncheon <i>(limited seating; tax &amp; service included)</i>	\$20		\$20		\$20		\$
Saturday Dinner <i>(limited seating; tax &amp; service included)</i> Dinner Choice:   ___ Beef   ___ Salmon   ___ Vegetarian	\$50		\$50		\$50		\$
Please enroll me (us) as SACHF members, \$40 per individual, \$60 household							\$
Enclosed is my check payable to Scandinavian American Cultural & Historical Foundation or SACHF							\$

Please print  
Name (each person): \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_