



Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung  
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT  
HALLE-WITTENBERG



**Distinguished Lecture of the IMPRS ANARCHIE | 9 November 2016 | 18:00**

# **Prehistoric Religion – Bronze Age Religion – A Difficult Topic of Research?**

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Today, it seems straightforward to work with Bronze Age religion – and Prehistoric religion – even when considering a narrow definition of religion, including trans-empirical powers. However, not many years ago, research in Prehistoric religion had much lower prestige among researchers.

Going back through the history of research, some interesting fluctuations can be observed related to the willingness of working with and interpreting in the sphere of religion. A lack of interest in religious explanations is marked around 1875 and 1975, while the interest in religious explanations peaks around 1925 and is seemingly at its highest again after 2000.

Now, the acceptance level for incorporating interpretations related to religion seems extremely high, and many concurrent approaches are in play. Considering Bronze Age iconography, many themes can be linked to a cyclical sun mythology: Chaos powers of the underworld, fragments of a creation myth, anthropomorfisation of the sun god; even research into the prospects for a Bronze Age afterlife in the “Sonnenbarke” seems possible.

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