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Welcome to the 18th Viking Congress

In 2017, Denmark is host to the 18th Viking Congress. The history of the Viking Congresses goes back to 1946. Since this early beginning, the objective has been to create a common forum for the most current research and theories within Viking-age studies and to enhance communication and collaboration within the field, crossing disciplinary and geographical borders. Thus, it has become a multinational, interdisciplinary meeting for leading scholars of Viking studies in the fields of Archaeology, History, Philology, Place-name studies, Numismatics, Runology and other disciplines, including the natural sciences, relevant to the study of the Viking Age.

The 18th Viking Congress opens with a two-day session at the National Museum in Copenhagen and continues, after a cross-country excursion to Roskilde, Trelleborg and Jelling, in the town of Ribe in Jylland. A half-day excursion will take the delegates to Hedeby and the Danevirke.

The themes of the 18th Viking Congress are:

1. Catalysts and change in the Viking Age

As a historical period, the Viking Age is marked out as a watershed for profound cultural and social changes in northern societies: from the spread of Christianity to urbanisation and political centralisation. Exploring the causes for these changes is a core theme of Viking Studies. For this theme, papers are sought which debate grand cultural transformation as well as localised and/or individual changes, and which look beyond the specific cases and materials to debate the general causes and catalysts, which brought them about.

2. The power of social networks – interactive dynamics in the Viking Age

Interaction across boundaries or within communities constitutes the substance of the dynamic events of the Viking Age, and is prominently reflected in the legacy of the period. The investigation of social networks has formed an active focus of Viking Studies in recent years, from the mapping of geographical interaction attested by the archaeological and scientific evidence to the analysis of social relations in written records and literature. This theme invites studies which develop a relational perspective on Viking-age developments and discuss the cultural and historical implications in an interdisciplinary outlook.
3. Viking impact – pride and prejudice

The memory and heritage of the Viking Age has been a matter of profound fascination for later generations, from medieval historians and saga writers to contemporary novelists, artists and popular media. The legacy of the Viking Age maintains a strong impact in the present as a matter of pride, but also prejudice. This theme calls for papers which approach the presentation of the Viking Age as a cultural heritage from either historic or contemporary contexts.

4. Denmark and the Viking Age

Denmark was at the threshold between worlds from the eighth to the eleventh century when cultural developments clashed or connected at the confluence of the northern seas of Europe. Recent research has challenged many accepted beliefs about Denmark's place in the Viking world, and particularly the archaeological knowledge base has been greatly expanded by new finds. This theme invites contributions which present or take stock of significant new findings and discuss them in comparative perspective.
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Glass tesserae used as raw material for glass bead-making, Ribe, Denmark, 8th–9th centuries CE. (Photo: John Lee, copyright: The Museum of Southwest Jutland)
Scandinavian Christianity overseas in the ninth century

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I propose to look at the dynamics of conversion to Christianity away from the Scandinavian homelands. My paper will focus specifically on the early period of encounter between Scandinavian pagans and Christians in the ninth century when religious conversion belonged to the interactive dynamics of the political sphere. In Francia and England, written sources record how churchmen were enlisted by secular regimes to help subject the dangerous Scandinavians to their authority. The sources are silent, however, about how Scandinavians in Ireland and northern Britain accepted Christianity. Is this because religious identity played a different role there in the initial stages of interaction? If so, did that influence the way in which the different Scandinavian settlements were subsequently formed? If not, what can explain the striking difference in historical memory? This paper will examine the connection between changes of religious identity and the acquisition of land and political power through selected case-studies chosen from across the Scandinavian diaspora.

The riddles of a chamber grave – Bj 750 at Birka

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In 2013, the Swedish History Museum initiated the project The Riddles of the Chamber Grave in which we re-investigate the Birka grave, Bj 750, and a smaller grave, Bj 749, which is physically connected to the chamber grave. Both graves were initially excavated by Hjalmar Stolpe in 1879 with the archaeological standards of that era.

Through archaeological excavations carried out in 2013 and 2014, it became evident that both graves have undergone significant changes, a fact that Stolpe failed to notice. It involved certain rearrangements, ritual depositions of weapons and selected handling and depositions of un-cremated human remains. The era for these changes can be estimated to have taken place approximately in the mid-10th century AD, an era characterised by major changes in burial practices due to increasing influence of Christianisation as well as in ideology and mentality, with the potential of resulting in cultural stress phenomena – perhaps especially at a place such as Birka that within a couple of decades was about to be abandoned.

Traces of these large-scale transformations – and strategies for handling them – can be seen and read into Bj 750 and Bj 749. Being a large mound, Bj 750 is clearly referring to older Old Norse mentalities whereas the chamber-grave burial custom is of western European provenience. Furthermore, the finds discovered in 1879 from within the chamber grave reveal the mixture of Christian and non-Christian symbolism visible in certain objects but also in/on the exclusive dresses of the buried couple within the chamber of Bj 750.
War and peace in the Viking Age: Collective violence and preventive strategies in a comparative perspective

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War and violence are the most characteristic features of our image of the Vikings, deeply rooted in both scholarship and popular culture. A number of works are devoted to the history of Viking warfare, arms and technology. Contrary to this, the preventive strategies of conflicts in the Viking period have been considerably less studied by scholars. This makes our understanding of the epoch one-sided and subjective. As a result, the success of military achievements may have been heavily overestimated and the impact of diplomacy, religious, social and cultural norms undervalued.

The aim of my project is to investigate the phenomenon of collective violence as well as strategies for its prevention in a particular period of the past – the Viking Age. How was violence perceived during this period? What were the consequences of violence for both the people and the regions involved? Was violence ethnic- and gender-related? The primary hypothesis of this study is a statement that the Viking raids as a form of collective violence were not a cultural but rather a social phenomenon that had both regional and chronological peculiarities in Scandinavia. The regional and chronological variation of violence was a result of differences in the social and economic development. The regulation of violence in particular areas of Scandinavia was undertaken by means of periodical ‘exports’ of conflicts abroad. In this way Viking raids were a necessary measure for controlling violence on the local level.

Geographically, the project deals with the territories of modern Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The level of violence in the local societies will be measured by an examination of local concentrations of weaponry, evidence of physical injuries, places of assaults, executions, hillforts, fortifications, hoards and single objects that can be considered as war booties. These are very summary indicators that have chronological, regional and cultural varieties. In order to trace the spread of violence during the whole time span of the Viking period, we need to arrange the evidence chronologically. In a similar way, places for settling peace treaties will be examined (holy places, residences of power and places for public meetings). The spatial and chronological examination will make it possible to identify the most violent and the most peaceful periods in various Scandinavian regions. The data obtained from these areas will be compared with the record for the British Isles and the Continent. Special attention will be paid to examining the above-mentioned indicators of violence in indigenous collectives before and after encounters with the Scandinavians. Finally, we will get answers as to where weaponry was most spread – in early urban centres or rural areas – and what role the emergence of states played in controlling the distribution of weaponry and in the appearance of collective violence.

Into the melting pot: Culinary identities in Viking-age England

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This paper will provide interim results from an ongoing project that uses bioarchaeological and artefactual analyses to investigate the role of food and cooking in forging social relationships in Viking-age England. Though often seen in purely nutritional terms, food is central to the production of identity, particularly in contexts of migration and culture contact, of which the Viking Age is an excellent example. However, while faunal and botanical remains from Viking-age towns are well studied, the relationship between food and material culture is less well investigated. The explosion of
ceramic technology that characterises 10th-century England offers an opportunity to explore this relationship. Through nested analyses of ceramics from urban and rural sites across Viking-age England (e.g. sites in York, Lincoln, and London as well as less well-studied settlements in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire), we are investigating whether particular vessel forms may be related to particular functions, foodstuffs or styles of cooking. Vessel function will be characterised via use-alteration analysis, microscopic analyses of carbonised food crusts, and chemical analysis of absorbed lipid residues, in order to determine if particular forms of pottery were being used selectively in order to store, transport, process, present or consume particular foodstuffs.

Ultimately, we aim to establish the degree to which culinary practice was subject to innovation and regional variation, and how such patterning might relate to the impact of migration, politics, urbanisation and commercial expansion. This paper will introduce the project and discuss some initial results.

The allure of the foreign: Social and cultural aspects of the use of imported objects in Viking-age Scandinavia

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In recent years, several scholars have questioned the focus on political, economic and demographic factors that led to the Viking Age, with a call for a higher accentuation of the social and cultural factors behind the changes. One major factor in the social and cultural changes that Scandinavia undergoes is the increase in the foreign contacts. Foreign cultural impulses reached Scandinavia both in the form of knowledge and material culture. The various ways in which the foreign objects were incorporated into social practices in Scandinavia reveal aspects of the changing relationship between Scandinavia and the surrounding areas. Social and cultural identities are formed and transformed through material practices. The transformation and use of imported objects in Scandinavia show that the objects were used to accentuate distinctions between different social groups. However, a comprehensive study of the use of foreign objects used as dress accessories shows that both the type of objects and the way in which objects were used changed during the Viking Age. These changes reflect both a demographic and social shift in the group that had access to imported goods, and it reflects the character and intention of the contacts between Scandinavia and the neighbouring areas.

The extraordinary chamber grave from Fregerslev, Denmark: The find, excavation and future

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An equestrian burial from the late Viking Age was excavated this spring near Skanderborg in Jutland, Denmark. The size of the chamber grave was about 4 x 3m, which is rather large compared to other rich chamber graves. The chamber was divided in two rooms, which may indicate the burial of two people. The find was in a very poor state due to the low depth of the grave and the sandy soil. These two factors have influenced the metals, organic materials and the hope for any good results in DNA and protein-analysis. Nonetheless, the finds from the grave are impressive.
Gilded bronze fittings for a bridle and a lot of different strap mounts for a fully decorated horse harness were found in the north-eastern corner of the chamber, while 22 arrowheads were recovered from the western end of the grave. The lack of weapons may indicate that the burial, already in the Viking Age, was disturbed.

The year 1000 and Northern European boom-time economics

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This paper considers the prelude to the commercial revolution of the Middle Ages, exploring the hypothesis that there were multiple episodes of rapid pan-European economic and demographic expansion. It asks to what degree one such ‘event’ was centred on the turn of the first and second millennia AD. Contributing to previous arguments based on evidence such as ship capacities, it explores new data regarding the chronology of rural production and urban consumption. Its geographical coverage spans the northern world, from Greenland to Novgorod, but with a focus on examples from Britain, Norway and Ireland.

Monumental myths: The ship-grave ritual as a mean in political centralisation processes in Viking-age Scandinavia

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The paper will basically be a further development of the hypothesis presented (in Danish) in the article “Vikingetidens monumentale skibsgrave” published in “Et fælles hav - Skagerrak og Kattegat i vikingetiden” (ed. Pedersen og Sindbæk), published in 2015 by Nationalmuseet. The idea that I am exploring is that the monumental ship graves are materialisations of a few of the origin myths and invented lineages so characteristic of early-medieval Germanic kingdoms, and that the active use of these myths can be investigated through the examples of the ship graves from Anglo-Saxon England through the Scandinavian monumental ship graves to the stone ship in Jelling. Since the 2015 publication, I have been developing my discussion of the written sources to the use of such myths in Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England, a work that also includes a discussion of the representativity of the written record in this respect. In the presentation for the Viking Congress, I would like to focus more on the archaeological evidence, discussing how the ship burials may express the origin myths. This will include results from the coring campaign carried out in the Gokstad mound in 2011.
The end of Viking-age Iceland: Settlement history and the institutionalisation of Christianity

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The 11th century is generally considered to mark the end of the Viking Age, but exactly what the Viking Age was or when it happened has been debated. Iceland experienced rapid farm creation through the 9th and 10th centuries. This dynamic landscape can be linked to the Viking-age expansion into the North Atlantic, the initial colonisation of the island and subsequent division of land claims into new farm properties by subsequent generations. The 11th century, however, saw a cessation of new farm creation and an overall stabilisation of the farming landscape, one that eventually became dominated by elite landlords, as previously independent householders were replaced with tenant farmers. The widespread adoption of Christianity in AD 1000 came at the transition between the dynamic settlement of the Viking Age, and subsequent growth of manors and has been linked to the institutionalisation of both secular and ecclesiastical power. Based on survey work over the past 15 years in Skagafjörður, northern Iceland, this paper will discuss the history of settlement and early Christianity in Iceland and how the growth of medieval manors can be traced to the growth of prominent church farms in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Shared values: Links and hybridity in the Anglo-Scandinavian coin web

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In present-day Scandinavia, a coinage was initiated about AD 995, which imitated contemporary Anglo-Saxon coins. For more than thirty years, the English and Scandinavian coinages were closely connected through a network of humans and objects that moved, physically and conceptually, between mints and kingdoms. Coinage is often seen as articulating sovereign rights in a certain area, but the Anglo-Scandinavian coinage network instead cut across kingdoms from west to east. Despite ongoing state-formation processes, key valuables like artisans and dies were shared in the network, causing change in power relations and conceptions of value.

Different iconographical models were used in a strategic/rhetorical way by commissioners and artisans to create relations between cognitive nodes through association, referencing, paraphrasing and appropriation. When circulating, the coins linked users to an official and shared discourse and maintained the created relations through the impact of their materiality. While many recontextualising practices in the Viking Age seem to deal with reconnection with the past, the coin-imitation practice apparently worked mainly within a contemporary conceptual framework, although there are components of ‘anciency’ as well. Die-link studies here provide a source of theoretical inspiration for how to study linear as well as non-linear connections and networks in the past. Through the repetitive practices of coin-making, artefact types experience gradual changes, and thus new categories and articulations are created. Object agency and the hybrid character of these coins provide starting points for a deeper understanding of the coins’ wider connotations and meanings as well as of the imitative practice itself.
Humans of Ribe: The cemetery of an early urban community

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In this paper, I will present the final results of the research project “The City of the Dead” conducted in collaboration between Aarhus University and the Museums of Southwest Jutland. In the frame of the project, all the material from Ribe’s first cemetery (c. 700–850) was analysed with the aim of shedding light on the first urban community in Scandinavia. A closer look at the demography of its population and the chronology of the cemetery enables a better understanding of the emergence and the development of the town and contributes to a discussion of its character in the first century of its existence. Also, the diversity and complexity of the burial practices attest to various ways of dealing with death, hinting at a composite population. This raises the question of the interconnectedness of the early-medieval urban network, not just in terms of routes and systems of economic exchanges but as frames for mobility, social opportunities and cultural challenges.

Interaction and identity in South-West Wales in the Viking Age

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Recent research and excavation relating to Viking-age interaction and identity in Wales has largely focused on the Northwest, particularly the island of Anglesey. This is because of the growing amount of archaeological evidence, which suggests some Hiberno-Scandinavian settlement and likely intermittent control of the island as well as its pivotal Irish Sea location in relation to Dublin, the Isle of Man and North-West England. In contrast, there has been little recent consideration of the Hiberno-Scandinavian impact on South-West Wales. Although Viking raids are recorded in this region, particularly on the important monastery of St Davids, the archaeological evidence for contact and interaction, though growing, is less easy to interpret. This paper will examine the significance of the long-standing links between Ireland and this part of Wales and the impact of a range of Viking contacts on this region. I will focus on the significance of the archaeological evidence. Taking key examples, including the results of recent excavations at South Hook and St Patrick’s Chapel, St Davids as well as metalwork discoveries and sculpture, I will analyse the evidence in relation to our understanding of the dynamics of Viking-age interaction and identity in South-West Wales.

Viking shieling names and Scandinavian settlement in Scotland

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The movement of livestock was primarily to protect the arable and meadow land at the primary farming settlement from grazing before harvest time. Scandinavian settlers in the British Isles not only imported their own term for a shieling, sætr, but also, unusually, used an adopted Gaelic loanword, ærgi. The use of these two shieling names allow us to speculate that: 1) the Scandinavian settlement in Britain most likely involved the import of a farming system from the Scandinavian homeland; 2) the import of a farming system also suggests the formation of social networks similar to
those found in Scandinavia at the time; 3) the adoption of the term ærgi into the Norse farming system may also be a sign of adaption to local conditions and/or change through cultural contacts.

In this paper, I will use Carl Saur's theory of a ‘cultural landscape’ and Stjernquist's interdisciplinary method to investigate how shielings fitted into Scandinavian society. I will assess to what extent Scandinavian shieling in Scotland mirror those in the Viking Homeland and what this can tell us about the society at the time of settlements. I will also try to explain how the Gaelic loanword ærgi fits into the overall settlement pattern, and how this shows how Scandinavian society was changed by cultural contacts.

Henne: A special settlement on the west coast of Denmark

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The first excavation on the location was made in 2003, and investigations have continued over the next 10 – mostly smaller excavations but also magnetic mapping, air photo and metal-detector searching, the purpose of which was to uncover what kind of a settlement we are dealing with. The settlement covers 7 hectares and was from the beginning organised along an old road, probably from the Bronze Age. Situated along the sides of the road are 300–400 pit houses and an unknown number of longhouses. The road leads to Filsø, a huge lake which in the Viking Age was connected to the North Sea. These finds indicate connections to the Continent and to other Scandinavian countries.

Viking archaeology in Poland: Past, present and future

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Polish studies on the presence of Viking-age Scandinavians in Central Europe have a long history, but until recently, they remained disregarded or unknown in international academia. The general invisibility of the area of Poland in Scandinavian and Anglophone publications on the Viking world is not only due to linguistic barriers but also a result of complicated historical and political circumstances. This aim of this paper is to fill this gap and to provide an overview of the development of Viking studies in Poland from the 19th century to the present day. Particular attention will be given to the origins of academic and popular interest in the Northern world among the Poles and on how first discoveries of Scandinavian-style objects were interpreted and (mis)used in creating narratives about Poland's early-medieval past. The paper will present and evaluate the ideas of the pioneers of Viking studies in Poland such as Józef Kostrzewski or Jan Żak and those of their students and continuators. Based on selected materials from a range of archaeological sites (e.g. Wolin, Truso, Świełubie and others), critical remarks will also be offered on the current understanding of the roles which Viking-age Scandinavians may have played in the Polish lands in the period between the late 9th and 11th centuries. Some new perspectives and suggestions for future research initiatives will also be outlined.
Hofstaðir in Mývatnsveit: The bioarchaeology of an early Christian cemetery

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The summer of 2015 saw the conclusion of the excavation of the early Christian cemetery of Hofstaðir in Mývatnsveit, northern Iceland. The cemetery, which dates to between the mid-10th century and the 12th century, was found to have 170 preserved skeletal remains, half of which were children, mostly neonates, reflecting the high infant mortality at that time. These early cemeteries are believed to have only served the farm they stood on, and perhaps the neighbouring farms, and recent analysis of inherited osteoarthritis within the population indicates that the people buried there were, to a large extent, related to each other. Therefore, the focus of the bio-archaeological analysis of the site has been on the question of how to approach the question of the family within bio-archaeological research. This paper will present the early results of that analysis.

The cross and the sword: Signs of dual religious belonging in a late Viking-age warrior grave in Langeid, South Norway

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In 2011, a large Viking-age burial site was discovered in the isolated Setesdal valley in southern Norway, leading to one of the largest excavations of Viking burials undertaken in recent years in Norway. The burials showed substantial variety in external and internal layout, grave goods and treatment of the body. One of the youngest at the site, a male burial from mid-11th century, contained among other things a remarkable sword decorated with Latin letters and Christian iconography. The paper will give a short overview of the site, with special focus on the late male burial and its finds, and point to the site’s functions within the local community, links outside the local area and changing traditions at the brink of Christianity.

Viking/Anglo-Saxon interaction in South-West Scotland: The Galloway Hoard

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The Galloway (2014) Viking hoard consists of over 100 objects of gold and silver, part contained in a lidded Carolingian vessel. It was buried in the late 9th/early 10th century, within a single pit, but as two deposits separated by a level of gravel. The lower consists of three parcels: the Carolingian cup (and contents), wrapped in textiles; a bundle of five silver arm-rings, with a putative wooden box containing Anglo-Saxon gold (a bird pin, finger-ring and ingot); and a bag of silver ingots and Hiberno-Scandinavian arm-rings, four with short runic inscriptions using the Anglo-Saxon futhorc. The upper deposit consists of some 30 ingots and arm-rings (also mostly Hiberno-Scandinavian), with an Anglo-Saxon pendant cross, decorated with the evangelists’ symbols. The cup contained two gold-mounted objects (a flask and pendant), in separate wrappings, including imported silk; a gold ingot and nine Anglo-Saxon silver ornaments, with
Trehiddle-style decoration (seven brooches and a pair of hinged mounts); and a small group of beads and pendants, including a crystal ball and a re-used coin of Coenwulf (796–821), resting on an Irish bossed brooch.

Excavation around the hoard pit revealed that it was located inside a (possibly contemporary) timber building, situated within a large (ecclesiastical?) enclosure on the border between Dumfries and Galloway. Both the hoard's find site and its remarkable contents indicate a degree of Viking/Anglo-Saxon interaction, the possible nature of which will be explored in the conclusion to the paper.

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**How Scandinavian was the Viking Age in the northern isles?**

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This paper will make a case for the revision of traditional interpretive narratives covering the early Viking Age in Orkney, Shetland and related areas of northern Britain. The problem of the early Viking Age is a well-known one, but rather than continuing the as yet fruitless search for a dated ‘colonial’ early Scandinavian settlement presence, I argue we should recast the question away from this expectation. Based on retrospectively biased documentary sources, the northern isles have traditionally been seen as a ‘first base’ in the pattern of Viking expansion into the West. Assumptions are that Orkney and Shetland were settled and taken over by Scandinavians before other insular areas and used as a depot for onward expansion. Yet, the archaeological record provides scant support for this scenario. The early Viking Age is instead to be seen in a highly provisional light, where fleeting Scandinavian influences are manifested principally through their presence in existing/indigenous contexts. The principal driver in forming new identities at this earliest stage is arguably not a nativist reiteration of homeland cultural traits but an infiltration of acquired part-christianised Irish Sea-derived influences, which brought in some hybrid Viking elements. Dialogues with existing inhabitants were evidently knowing, subtle and complex, far more so than can easily be boiled down to the familiar binary annihilation vs assimilation dichotomy. The paper will use supporting evidence from a recently completed major field project in West Mainland, Orkney.

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**The gold hoard from Fæsted: The find and its context**

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During the summer of 2016, three detectorists found the largest known gold hoard from Denmark’s Viking Age. The site is situated in South-West Denmark in an area that has so far mainly been noted for its rich Bronze-age barrows. The Viking hoard consists of one golden necklace and seven arm-rings – six in gold and one in silver, and a total of 900g of gold has been found. The necklace and one of the arm-rings are clearly made in the Jelling Style, and they are both unique pieces.

The style and the amount of gold relate the deposit to the elite of the Danish society during the middle of the 10th century. But why is this hoard found in this region, which today constitutes a rural landscape? In this paper, we want to
present the deposit itself and its landscape settings. The local place names suggest the presence of a ritual centre in the area, while both LIDAR maps and the historical maps open up for further interpretations of the functions of the area.

### Changing places: Tracing the Viking Great Army in Lincolnshire

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This paper examines the Scandinavian impact in the English rural landscape, focusing on case studies from Lincolnshire. Recent work at Torksey on the River Trent has identified the archaeological signal of the Viking 'Great Army', through the recovery of some 1500 metal-detected artefacts. This assemblage, quite unlike those from contemporary Anglo-Saxon settlements, includes continental jewellery and coins, Irish and Scandinavian jewellery, dirhams, gold and silver ingots, weights and hackmetal. Similar, albeit much smaller, artefact assemblages are now beginning to be identified more widely across the region and offer the potential to trace the influence of members of the Great Army beyond the winter camps. This paper will focus on this evidence from Lincolnshire and will both characterise the metal-detected assemblages and place them in their local and regional contexts, particularly with respect to the relationship of such activity to local estate centres. Scandinavian settlement had a significant impact on this region, identifiable in, for example, changes to material culture, economic activities, food consumption, settlement organisation, estate structure and place-names. The chronology of this impact is, however, in need of refinement, and this paper will examine the evidence for the earliest stages of Scandinavian activity in the region, placing it in its longer-term context by considering its relationship to later Scandinavian settlement and cultural influences on the region.

### Settlement change in Scandinavian Scotland: Special deposits in domestic contexts

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This paper considers the frequent alterations made in the physical layout of domestic buildings in Scandinavian Scotland. It sets these micro changes in the broader context of changes in settlement, from the arrival of the Scandinavian settlers who introduced new building styles to the major shift in settlement patterns which occurred in the Late Norse period. From the 9th to the 12th century, repeated changes in the length and configuration of longhouses, their annexes and ancillary buildings are well evidenced in the Northern and Western Isles and in northern mainland Scotland. My paper will present new and reanalysed excavation data and use it to examine the factors driving these changes, in particular the significance of the use of 'special deposits' within the buildings to mark moments of change in their architecture and layout. These particular special deposits were made within building complexes and comprised regularly used domestic items such as combs, whetstones and pottery and/or the remains of domestic animals such as cats and dogs. Furthermore, particular midden material, especially rich in fragments of domestic artefacts, was selected to infill the centres of the stone walls of remodelled buildings.

The deposits were thus very different from hoards of metal items and coins deposited beyond buildings and were particularly associated with change in a domestic environment. Despite their relatively modest composition, my paper
argues the placed assemblages were as symbolically charged as hoards and played an important role in mediating that change. Their analysis reveals that special deposits and the architectural mutability linked with them played a crucial part in supporting Viking-late Norse communities through times of social change.

‘Beyond the foaming maelstrom’: Sea routes, seascapes and insular boat burial

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Traditionally, studies of Viking ‘furnished’ graves have focused on grave goods rather than the landscape context of these burials. This is now changing, but most new studies have approached the subject from a terrestrial perspective, examining themes such as site reuse. This paper focuses on the comparatively limited corpus of boat burials in Britain and Ireland and argues that they occupy key locations on sailing routes, overlooking approaches to and from major islands in Orkney, the Western Isles and on the Isle of Man. Like many other graves in this area, they are best seen as part of seascapes rather than a landscape, reflecting the importance of maritime connections in this part of the Viking diaspora.

Moving east: An interdisciplinary approach to the question of the beginning of the eastern expansion

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The 8th century saw an evolving phenomenon in Northern Europe that we have come to know as the Viking Age. Many different events and actions gave rise to this development, but its main characteristics comprised the emergence of early urban centres and an escalating expansion out of Scandinavia. The starting date of the Viking Age has generally been set to the late 8th century with the attack on Lindisfarne as a pivotal event. But by this time, things had been going on in the Baltic for almost 50 years. Approximately 750 AD, Birka was founded, while on the opposite shore of the Baltic, Staraja Ladoga emerged, showing Scandinavian presence already in the initial phase. The spectacular burial of two ships and their crew on the Estonian island of Saaremaa bears witness of an early raid in this region. The crew most likely originated from the Lake Mälaren Valley, and it was from this region that much of the movement eastward emanated.

But what do we know about the people that took part in this development and change? Where did they come from? How did they move? By combining archaeological evidence with DNA and isotopic data, a more complex image is starting to emerge.

This presentation aims at presenting and discussing some of the individuals that took an active part in the process of the 8th century that could be described as the Viking phenomenon.
Farin vestr – eða sunnan: On the significance of the insular and continental ‘imports’ in Viking-period Hedeby

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Over the past years, several new attempts had been made for a better understanding of the significance and impact of the insular and continental ‘imports’ in Viking-period Denmark due to a massive increase of archaeological and numismatic material mainly from metal-detecting. A disadvantage for these studies has often been the non-consideration of the important southern Danish emporium of Hedeby. Finally, new research has been undertaken on old and new materials from Hedeby’s long-lasting archaeological exploration to fill this gap. By bringing together the relevant small finds and objects, groups from recent investigations (systematic metal-detecting and new small-scale excavations based on geophysician surveys) and the appropriate materials from the former large-scale excavations, the corpus of relevant findings has increased significantly toward the understanding of the developments from the early 9th to the middle of the 11th centuries in a much more elaborate way. As a result, Hedeby’s role as a catalyst for cultural and economic transformations in Viking-period Denmark is discussed and presented to the audience.

The political landscape of Viking-age Bornholm (Denmark)

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Wulfsan’s travel accounts from the late 9th century describe Bornholm as an independent kingdom. According to the Saga of the Jomsvikings, Earl Veset complained to his king Swyn Forkbeard (986–1014) that his farm on Bornholm had been plundered. In the municipal law of the Danish city of Schleswig, dating back to the reign of King Sweyn Estridsson (1047–74), Bornholm’s merchants are granted special privileges in line with foreigners from Sachsen, Friesland and Iceland. The Knytlingasaga describes a conflict between the Danish king Canute the Holy (1080–86) and Blood Egil, his appointed earl of Bornholm.

If we are to believe the historical sources, the political scene of Bornholm was extremely changeable, as the island went from an independent kingdom in the late 9th century to a Danish earldom at the turn of the millennium, then possibly became a non-Danish island in the middle of the 11th century, only to return to the Danish kingdom towards the end of the 11th century. But is this a likely scenario? Turning to the archaeological records, Bornholm displays a number of characteristic elements suggesting a different development compared to central mainland Sweden and Denmark, indicating some form of independence. Bornholm is characterised by a lack of urbanisation, autonomous monetary development, continued bullion economy, late rune stones, decentralised trade and intense silver hoarding. This paper investigates if and how these elements reflect the political landscape of Viking-age Bornholm, the focal point being settlements, monuments and silver hoards.
King Haraldr of Norway (d. 1066) is sometimes seen as the ‘last Viking king’ of the North. Although he is known from contemporary sources, much of our information about him comes from West Norse (Icelandic-Norwegian) texts composed between 1180 and 1230. Haraldr seems to have figured strongly in the learned imagination of this period, and the focus of this study is how his image was fashioned in that period, and what Haraldr’s potential usefulness was for 13th-century Icelanders and Norwegians. Why was Haraldr so popular with early 13th-century historiographers, what was his function in the history of Norway created in the 13th century, and how have these texts influenced Haraldr’s portrayal right until the present day?

Repton resolved? New evidence for the nature and impact of the Great Army winter camp

Since the initial excavations in the 1970s and 1980s, the Great Army winter camp in Repton, Derbyshire, has often been considered the foremost example of Scandinavian military impact on Anglo-Saxon England. Yet, several unanswered questions have remained. The identification of the commingled remains of nearly 300 individuals under a mound in the Vicarage garden as those of members of the Great Army has never been confirmed, not least due to seemingly incompatible radiocarbon dates. More recently, questions have also been raised over the nature and extent of the winter-settlement at Repton, in light of new discoveries at nearby sites such as Torksey. This talk will summarise the results of an extensive programme of scientific investigations of human remains from Repton. A new set of radiocarbon determinations demonstrates how marine reservoir effects skewed the formerly published dates from the charnel, whilst isotope data shed light on the geographical origins and demography of the Repton burial populations. Additionally, results from new geophysical surveys and excavations in the Vicarage garden will be presented. Taken together, this new evidence allows for a reassessment of the nature of the winter camp, backing up the results of the initial excavations whilst suggesting an ongoing Scandinavian legacy marking the surrounding landscape to a greater extent than previously assumed.

The Kame of Isbister revisited: Monastery or stronghold?

In 2015, as a short sabbatical project, Dr Andrew Jennings visited a number of extraordinary, inaccessible sites in Shetland, including promontories and islands. He flew a drone over a number of them taking aerial photographs. These sites were described by R.G. Lamb in 1980 as potential eremitical monasteries, a description which has been adopted by other scholars such as David Dumville.
Their similarity to the Pictish stronghold at Dunnicaer, currently being excavated, and the existence of a single C14 date from the mid-9th century from the Kames of Isbister, indicates they were being frequented in the early-medieval period. However, the lack of any extant religious sculpture suggests a secular explanation may be more appropriate. Were they Viking-age strongholds? The Shetland equivalent of the Norwegian bygdeborg?

Healing runes

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Both Sigdrífumál and a well-known anecdote in Egils saga ch. 72 suggest that the early Scandinavians associated runes and runic inscriptions with both healing and harm. Of the 110 Viking-age and medieval inscriptions identified as amulets by Samnordisk runtextdatabas, the majority have inscriptions that are either uninterpretable or that reproduce simple religious formulae. However, a small number of these ‘amulets’ have inscriptions which explicitly mention illness, injury, disease and/or some kind of medical practice. These inscriptions can also be compared with other wooden and metal objects (and even one manuscript) which are not obviously amulets, but which bear very similar texts. The paper is a case study which will outline the characteristics and investigate the significance of this corpus using the methods of cultural and medical history as well as runology and philology. We will also investigate whether there is evidence that some of the amulets with religious formulae but without obvious reference to disease were in fact used in some form of healing. The corpus ranges from the 9th century to c. 1400, but we will concentrate on the material before c. 1200.

Revisiting Birka’s Black Earth Harbour

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Any Viking-age trading town little is understood without a closer knowledge of the layout of its harbours. Together with corresponding ships, the harbours formed the prerequisite for the engagement in long-distance trade and thus even for the emergence of urbanism itself. On the layout of Birka’s harbours, our knowledge is generally best documented for Svarta jordens hamnområde. Alas, despite earlier efforts up to today, not a single harbour facility is known in its total extent. In 1969 and 1970/71, a stone packing, once filling the inside of wooden frame construction (stenkista), which in turn formed the landward foundation to an otherwise wooden jettiy, was encountered and excavated. This stone box of merely 2.8 x 10m was preliminarily dated to the early 10th century. In comparison to the contemporary harbour layout in Hedeby with jetties of 10 x 32m at the end of the 9th century, the structure in Birka seems peculiarly small – particularly since we have to assume that one and the same heavy trading ships called both at the harbours of Hedeby and Birka.
Due to the re-excavations conducted in 2015/16, a revised dating is suggested which allows a far better synchronisation with the general developments in Hedeby but also calls for a revision of the course of the regression of the water-level in Lake Mälaren and of the local harbour development in a long-term perspective.

The sources of Viking wealth: Lead isotope analysis of silver from the Bedale, Yorkshire, hoard

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What were the sources of Viking wealth? Contemporary written sources describe the Vikings acquiring loot through raids in Western Europe as well as Islamic silver via eastern (Russian) trade routes. Yet, the relative quantity in which western and eastern silver was acquired is one of the enduring questions of medieval archaeology. Since much of the silver acquired by the Vikings was melted down and refashioned into Scandinavian artefact forms, the only means of addressing this question is through archaeometric methods. In this paper, I present the results of recent lead-isotope and trace element ICP-MS analysis of all 37 silver rings, brooches and ingots contained in the 2015 Bedale hoard from Yorkshire, England. This coinless hoard contains an unusually wide cultural mix of artefact types and is thus ideal for analysis. From where did the Vikings active in England in the early 10th century obtain their evident wealth, and what does this reveal about Viking raiding activity and trade networks during a pivotal episode of cultural expansion?

Hidden patterns: Contextualisation of isotope and aDNA data in Sigtuna

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Profound technical advancements have been made in archaeogenetics during the last decade. The introduction of next-generation sequencing of autosomal DNA, the removal of contamination problems and the bio-statistical handling of “Big Data”, have made it possible to reach new levels of knowledge within Viking-age research when dealing with ancient genetics. Additionally, analyses of isotopes offer novel understanding of mobility. The fast-moving development of technologies has left the archaeological contextualisation behind.

This presentation aims at demonstrating the advantages and challenges of a holistic approach when trying to interpret the combined results from some individuals buried in Sigtuna. Although these men and women lived during the first phase of development in the town, they represent different life histories. The homogenous character of most of the graves is contrasted to the complexity demonstrated through the results from aDNA and isotope analyses. While the dietary patterns, in large, suggest cultural similarities among groups, there are also indications of long-distance mobility and disparate ancestry. Additionally, gender-related activities expressed in the bio-archaeological data together with the new results further demonstrate the social networks and influx of ideas in the forming of the Sigtuna society.
Danish influence on the earliest rune stones in Uppland

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The rune stone custom in Uppland started instantly and rather late compared to other regions in Sweden. The two earliest groups of rune stones in this province – the so-called un-ornamented stones and the rune stones by the rune carver Ulv in Borresta – are often seen as the result of direct influence from Denmark due to the numerous Viking expeditions to England from the beginning of the 990s to the campaign of Cnut the Great in 1015–16. Those who returned from these campaigns did not only bring Christianity to the Mälar region but also “the Danish rune stone custom, Danish Ornamentation – Sven Forkbeard’s and Cnut the Great’s Mammen style – and Danish runes”, to quote the Swedish scholar Otto von Friesen in 1933. Also the orthography on the earliest Upplandic rune stones (e.g. the representation of the diphthong /æi/ with the single rune i) is believed to be dependent on Danish patterns or even Danish pronunciation.

But what do the earliest rune stones in Uppland really tell us? Is there evidence of direct Danish influence in ornamentation, rune forms and language in the beginning of the 11th century, or was it a longer process where these features were first filtered through the runic traditions in the southern provinces of Sweden? And what about the language? Did the Swedes who returned from England speak some kind of ‘Danish’ that has left traces on rune stones in Uppland?

The Vikings in Newfoundland and Labrador: What do we know? Where should we go?

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Recent investigations in 2015–16 on the west coast of Newfoundland and a greatly publicised journey of a longship in 2016 to the Great Lakes have resulted in a renewed and remarked interest in the “Vikings/Norse/Scandinavians” in North America. There have been several “Viking sites” or “Viking burials” discovered by the general population in Newfoundland alone. What should be a source of pride for the communities, who could come to rely on the lure of the Vikings to draw in tourist dollars, is also one of prejudice, as the majority of these sites have been summarily dismissed as fantasy by professional archaeologists.

An impartial survey of the reported sites, artefacts and evidence is deemed necessary at this time. The paper will consider the evidence and also consider the burden of proof needed to take pride in a distant, yet profitable, past. What is the role, or indeed the duty, of the interpreter in negotiating expectations of an enthusiastic population about a past? Is an imagined saga landscape sufficient, or must we find more spindle whorls for spin-offs?
Jelling: A part of the surrounding communicative landscape

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The royal site in Jelling is seen as the centre for the early royal dynasty and as the centre in the process of Christianisation in Denmark. Attention has focused on the monumental area with the huge palisade, the buildings, the huge ship setting, the grave mounds, rune stones and the early buildings beneath the present church. With the exception of the huge wooden bridge over Ravning Enge, there has not been much focus on the surrounding landscapes.

The (architectural) elements in Jelling represent strong, significant and quite sudden markers in the second half of the 10th century. This has been confirmed by the recent archaeological investigations in Jelling. The investigations also show a rather thin depth of time, and thus, Jelling differs from other prominent sites such as Tisso and Lejre.

Archaeological excavations in the close vicinity of Jelling over the past decades have, together with the results from the excavations conducted within the Jelling project, provided an overview of the local and regional surroundings and have made it possible to set the monumental area in a broader context. The archaeological material represented by a broad group of locations and find categories, such as settlements, graves, single finds, hoards, rune stones, bridges, hollow roads etc., and certain groups of place names, provides insight into the culture-historical landscape which Jelling was a part of and, hereby, also provide a better starting point in understanding the background for the Jelling complex, its geographical location and, not least, its link (or lack thereof) with the immediate surroundings, all of which are essential factors in light of the classical thesis concerning Jelling’s function and central importance in Viking-age Denmark.

The aim of this paper is to focus on Jelling’s relation and possible interaction with other locations in the surrounding area, by using the above-mentioned material and searching for indications of a special reason for the geographical location of Jelling, in light of the communicative landscape. The paper will also consider the distribution of other significant find categories, such as rune stones and graves (burial customs), in order to get insight into the social stratification in a broader region around the royal site in Jelling in the Viking Age. All of this will help us to shed new light on the secretive Jelling.

Early Christian grave monuments, social networks and ecclesiastical organisation in 11th-century Sweden

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This paper explores the early Christian grave monuments (often called Eskilstunakistor) as a source for the social dynamics of 11th-century Sweden. These monuments formed an integral part of the Scandinavian rune-stone tradition, at the same time as they constitute the first church-yard memorials in the Götaland and southern Svealand area. Based on an analysis of the stylistic design of the early Christian grave monuments, it is possible to identify regional groups which have varying degrees of affinity with each other. I will argue that the ornamental design of the monuments can be regarded as a way of visual communication where networks of associations are created by means of citation, linking places, burials and magnate families together. Thus, similarities and diversities in the design of funerary monuments convey information about the social networks of people erecting, or being buried beneath, these kinds of memorials as well as the scope of their power.
Moreover, the designs of rune-carved monuments are related to substantial differences in the Christianisation process, in the way Christian burial and commemoration were practiced during the 11th century in Sweden. Different types of rune-inscribed grave monuments not only signify differences in elite networks but also provide insight into how the Christianisation process was related to social and political structures.

Not necessarily a lack of imagination? Names and nodality in Scotia Scandinavica: Parts 1 & 2

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The late Prof. WFH Nicolaisen made numerous wide-ranging assertions on the nature of Scotland’s originally Old Norse place names. Perhaps most famously, he argued that the typological sterility of this material could be attributed to ‘colonists in a hurry’, ‘a lack of imagination’ or both. This observation stands in stark contrast to those offered on the namescapes of the colonists’ Scandinavian homelands. In Sweden, Denmark and Norway, the comparative density and diagnostic variety of name material has played a key role in the identification and analysis of ‘nodality’ in the prehistoric part of the Nordic Middle Ages. Little wonder then that it is the limitations rather than the possibilities of the Scottish corpus that have come to be stressed.

While Nicolaisen’s assertions were initially used to bolster the traditional view of Scotland’s Viking Age as one of piecemeal settlement and early integration, perspectives are now changing. A number of recent studies in the fields of archaeology and onomastics have raised the prospect of widespread and culturally aggressive settlement during this period by whole communities of incomers with the full range of societal aspirations and facilities. Although these phenomena appear to have left few direct traces in the landscape or the historical record, there is a possibility that they might yet be rediscovered through the contextualised review of local place names. Important new work on the diagnostic features of Scotland’s þing sites, for example, has stressed the utility of place-name elements in the identification of social structures in the Scandinavian settlement zone. As yet, however, comparatively little attention has been given to the maritime infrastructure which is likely to have scaffolded the consolidation of that settlement.

In these two connected papers, we will build on concepts of centrality and nodality to review the cognitive landscape of naval warfare and defence in Viking-age Scotland. In Part 1, Dr Kruse will renegotiate the question of why the Scandinavian and Scottish material appears to be so different, and what, if any, extra-linguistic markers from the Norwegian experience might help to model the behaviour of Viking pioneers in the North Atlantic. In part 2, Dr Macniven will demonstrate how this model might then be applied to different parts of Scotia Scandinavica. It is hoped that the conclusions reached will help to stimulate a more coordinated programme of onomastic and archaeological study targeted at uncovering specific evidence for the Norse takeover and domination of large parts of medieval Scotland.
Viking heroes and aspiring emperors: Learned political discourse in the context of the Viking Age

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This paper will investigate the imperial ambitions of 10th- and 11th-century Irish and English kings in the context of the Viking Age. In particular, it will discuss how literary responses to Viking events constitute a nuanced discourse concerning contemporary politics on both sides of the Irish Sea. The deliberate depiction of rulers as Viking heroes went hand in hand with expression of imperial ambition, as labels such as 'Augustus of the Western World' make clear. The extent to which Vikings were merely useful rather than essential in this development will be explored. Its pan-Northwestern-European dimension will also be examined as evidence for interaction in a cultural – and hence political – sphere. The textual records presented will illuminate the nature of intellectual contacts in this period revealing an extended learned network stretching from Ireland through England to Ottonian Germany and beyond. In this way, the contribution will address Theme II: 'The Power of Social Networks – Interactive Dynamics in the Viking Age'.

Vikings beyond the Motherland: The case of Gnezdovo

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From the Viking world’s point of view, the territory of the future Old Rus’ State is a far, far periphery – Austrvegr, a way to the Arabic silver and Greek wine. While establishing fluvial trade routes in Eastern Europe, Vikings (or varangians) inevitably interfered in the course of local communities’ lives and played a major role in the rise of early urban centres. The talk is based on newly uncovered archaeological evidence and deals with the Gnezdovo settlement’s layout which shows an adaptation of the incomers’ urban tradition to local circumstances.

Politics, art and identity: Changing attitudes to Viking art in Ireland

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Viking art appears to have had almost no impact on native Irish art for the first two and a half centuries of Viking influence in Ireland. During that time, Viking art styles seem to have been largely confined to the Hiberno-Scandinavians themselves. This is somewhat surprising considering the fact that Irish/Insular and Viking art are both zoomorphic, with a common root in Germanic art. Given the similarity, one would expect that Viking art could have easily been assimilated into the Irish tradition. However, from the 9th to the early 11th century, this did not happen.

In stark contrast, from the mid-11th to the late-12th century, later Viking art had a major influence across Ireland and prominently featured in Christian contexts, such as metalwork, stone sculpture, and manuscript illumination. But what caused this fundamental change in attitude towards Scandinavian art in Ireland?
Surprisingly, although the influence of the Ringerike and Urnes styles in Ireland has long been recognised, nobody has considered this important question.

It is argued in this paper that the reason for differing attitudes towards Viking art in Ireland over time may have related to changing ethnic and cultural identities. Furthermore, it is contended that the catalyst for this was the changing political landscape. It is demonstrated that the manufacture of significant pieces of religious art under royal patronage, featuring the Hiberno-Ringerike or the Hiberno-Urnes style, coincides with the time that the same Irish kings first began directly ruling what had been, up to then, the independent Hiberno-Scandinavian towns.

**Personal belief in Hiberno-Norse Dublin**

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Historical and archaeological evidence for the conversion of Hiberno-Norse Dublin is scarce. No church buildings earlier than the 12th century survive, and only a handful of graveslabs are known. This paper will review the evidence focusing on the small but important corpus of amuletic and devotional objects which have been recovered from the Dublin excavations. These consist of pendants of amber, jet, bone and wood, human and animal images, fragments of imported porphyry and other objects, and this paper will explore what it tells us of personal devotion and belief systems among the town's inhabitants among the Christianised population of Dublin in the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries.

**Communication through creativity: The ’Vestfold school’ revisited**

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The excavation of the ship burial at Oseberg in 1904 demonstrated the creativity of craftspeople supplying products to the elite in the Viking-age society. Haakon Shetelig envisaged a royal farm attracting highly skilled artisans, identified several individual masters sharing techniques and knowledge, thereby coining the term “The Vestfold School”. A century later, investigations at Kaupang provided a picture of urban craftspeople communicating with a much broader audience, offering a range of objects from inexpensive items to high-status artefacts. And even more recently, extensive workshop activity has been identified at Heimdaljordet, in the immediate vicinity of the ship burial at Gokstad. This paper will discuss the character of the new site and explore the relationship between urban craftspeople and the artisans behind the masterpieces in the ship burials. To what extent did craftspeople in Vestfold communicate and inspire each other? Did they all belong to “The Vestfold school”, and could some of them have operated both in the town and at a royal estate? Results from a detailed investigation of the new material from Heimdaljordet and results from new scientific investigations of the material from the ship burials will be central in the discussion.
The Viking phenomenon: A progress report

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In December 2015, the Swedish Research Council made an unprecedented investment in Viking scholarship, funding a ten-year programme of pure research with a budget of fifty million kronor (approx. $6 million USD). The award is intended to establish a new centre of excellence for the study of the Viking Age, based at the University of Uppsala under the direction of the author but with connections to other Swedish institutions and also further afield within Scandinavia and beyond. The research programme focuses on the period 750–850 CE and on the crucial decades either side of this period, spanning (and perhaps beginning to erase) the Vendel-Viking transition. Central questions will concern the social, political, economic and cultural origins of what we call the Viking Age - how it should be defined, how it should be understood. Formed of two sub-projects, each with multiple components, the main areas of investigation will be 'boat grave culture' (focusing on the burial grounds of Valsgärde in Swedish Uppland and Salme on the Estonian island of Saaremaa) and 'Viking economics' (referring specifically to mobile Viking groups rather than to the more general economic systems of the time). The project employs a mixture of permanent staff, fixed-term postdocs and other researchers and also includes a major element of public outreach with a concern for the Vikings' contemporary reception. This paper will set out the background, objectives and organisation of The Viking Phenomenon programme, and review the research undertaken during the first twenty months of operations.

Pride and prejudice: The Ostmen in medieval Ireland

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In Anglo-Norman Ireland, men of Viking heritage were known as Ostmen. Unlike the Irish, Ostmen were not theoretically excluded from English law. Very little has been published on this fascinating subject since the studies of Alexander Bugge and Edmund Curtis at the turn of the last century. Curtis argued that the Ostmen were awarded semi-status; however, in reality, their treatment was influenced by a variety of social and economic factors. Evidence from medieval Irish sources suggests that, at times, it was difficult to distinguish an Ostman from an Irishman. Disputes, recorded in the Justiciary Rolls, demonstrate that cases came about precisely because the Anglo-Normans attempted to dispossess certain Ostmen of their lands on the grounds that they were Irish. In order to substantiate their rightful claim, these Ostmen often proudly cite written charters granted to their ancestors. In one such case, William le Tenyture claims through matrilinear descent to be of the Mac Macus family of Limerick and therefore an Ostman. Analysing these cases and other evidence, this paper will explore the status of the Ostmen, and thus the legacy of the Vikings, in later-medieval Ireland.
Vikings and Cymru: New evidence for social dynamics

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The geographical position of Wales, forming the southern shore of the Irish Sea, made it a natural target for social and political interaction with the Viking world. This paper presents new archaeological and numismatic evidence for social interaction and compares the physical evidence (archaeological and scientific) with the documented picture. Recent mapping and classification of the growing corpus of ringed pins and other metalwork from Wales is presented and contextualised, and the interplay between Scandinavian and Welsh material culture and socio-political interests are reviewed, including the activities of Sigtryggr Olafsson, ‘Silkiskeggi’ (989–1036) and the significance of the Llandwrog hoard, discovered in 2015.

“And they proceeded to plough and to support themselves”: The Viking Great Army and the settlement of Northumbria

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Viking armies are widely regarded as catalysts of major political, social and economic change in late 9th-century England. Recent research has focused on their winter camps as well as the quantity of Scandinavian dress accessories recovered by metal-detecting from across Eastern England, re-opening debates about the scale of armies and their impact.

However, this paper will focus on the evidence from ordinary rural settlements. Having identified a Viking Great Army signature at the winter camps, it is now possible, for the first time, to identify the presence of elements of the Army at rural farmsteads and estate centres. New analysis and detailed plotting of metal finds at Cottam, East Yorkshire, allows us to see not just an Anglo-Saxon settlement replaced by an Anglo-Scandinavian one, but also an initial short-lived phase of raiding activity. Indeed, investigation of the finds profile of multiple sites across Northumbria shows widespread settlement abandonment and displacement of the local population, following Halfdan’s infamous seizure of the land of the Northumbrians. My paper will review the evidence and discuss how it changes our view of the impact of the Army and subsequent settlement.

Viking-age Danish legal procedure: Part of a common Scandinavian law

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Compared to the rest of Scandinavia, the interest in the law and legal practice of Viking-age Denmark has been rather modest. In this paper, I will focus on one legal aspect and argue that Danish legal procedures are in line with those used all over the Viking world. Legal procedures are the methods by which legal rights were enforced; they were the forms, manners and orders of steps that were applied in order to solve disputes and settle legal cases. During the Viking Age, the
single-combat fighting, swearing of oaths and making pledges were examples of such procedures. Christian chroniclers occasionally recorded such episodes, and The Annals of St. Bertin (year 863) described Danish Vikings who fought single combat. In the same year, the same group of Vikings came to the emperor Charles where they “swore solemn oaths in their own way”. This Viking way of swearing oaths is not further elaborated here; however, it may have been similar to the practice described in the Annals of Fulda (year 873). When a peace between the Danes and the Saxons was ratified, it was reported that the Danes “swore on their weapons, according to the custom of that people”. Moving across the channel, in the year AD 876, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle noted that King Alfred managed to force a Viking army under the command of the Danish King Guthrum into a short-lived truce, and “they swore him oaths on the sacred ring”. When fighting single combat, swearing oaths on weapons, rings and invoking the heathen gods, the Danes were part of a common Viking-age Scandinavian law. I will use various sources to underpin this statement.

**Convivium, cohabitation and lost encounters: Changing socio-economic relations between Baltic Finns and groups in Eastern Middle Sweden in the Late Viking Age and High Middle Ages**

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Convivium can be interpreted both as a banquet among good friends and more directly, to "live with each other". Cohabitation has, according to English dictionaries, several meanings. It can be to live together as or like a married couple, to live in company or to exist together. All meanings are connected to the first part of my presentation.

I will give an account of how the Baltic Finnic artefacts in the Lake Mälaren district from the Viking Age define an interface with, as well as presence of, Baltic Finns. The second part of the paper is named "lost encounters". I will try to argue for a hypothetic historical sequence of changing socio-economic relations between Baltic Finns in the region that is today Finland and North-West Rus' and groups living in Eastern Middle Sweden in the Viking Age. A disruption of social interaction in the mid-11th century is set against the growing transactions of the Svear with the Novgorodian area as well as Baltic Finnic expansion to northern Fennoscandia. The artefact pattern is set in a context of historical consensus and socio-economic possibilities of the period c. 800 to 1200.

**Losing one’s tongue: Place names and language changes in medieval Wirral**

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The Wirral peninsula in the north-west of the English midlands is an area that has long been identified as a site of Viking-age Scandinavian settlement. Alongside artefactual, textual and genetic evidence, Scandinavian settlement names have played a key part in the identification of the Wirral as an area of Scandinavian settlement. These names bear witness to just one of the changes brought about by Scandinavian settlement, change in the languages used on the peninsula. The focus of this paper, however, will be on changing language use in Wirral in the centuries following Scandinavian settlement.
The paper will focus on the period between the 12th and 15th centuries when several hundred minor place names, the names of places smaller than settlements, are recorded. Late-medieval minor names provide some hints of widespread Scandinavian language use in earlier centuries, but they also show that the use of Scandinavian vocabulary in the area’s dialect declined in later centuries. This, apparently thorough Anglicisation of vocabulary by the later-Middle Ages, distinguishes the Wirral’s dialect from that of certain other areas of Scandinavian settlement in northern and eastern England investigated by the author and others. This paper will explore the catalysts that might have led to the forgetting of Scandinavian vocabulary in the Wirral and will conclude by considering the implications of the Wirral minor name evidence for interpreting similar evidence in other areas of the Viking world.

Time and cult: Viking-age seasonal rituals

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This paper examines the concept of time in Norse society as a regulator of everyday life as well as of cultic rituals and gatherings. Through the Norse written sources, a basic calendar of ritual events can be reconstructed. This shows that calendric rituals were carried out throughout the year, in accordance with the seasons, although the nature of these naturally varied between regions and over time. A regular pattern of calendric rituals is fully in line with earlier archaeological evidence, as calendars and monuments aligned to solstices and equinoxes, and thus, ritual gatherings at set times of the year are known from as early as the Mesolithic and above all the Neolithic period. Viking-age cultic gatherings thus fit into traditions that seem to have been in place for thousands of years.

The Norse written sources, such as the Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, also show that certain particularly significant rituals involving high levels of spectacle and performance such as human sacrifice took place, not annually but on an 8-year cycle. All these written sources have been explored in detail, but the aspect of time has so far been little explored in archaeological evidence from the Viking Age. In this paper, therefore, the archaeological evidence of cultic rituals from Denmark and southern Scandinavia will be examined in order to determine if they were carried out at specific times of the year and for specific purposes.

Mythology of the Prose Edda interacting with the sky

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It is well established in memory studies that buildings and landscape can serve as a storehouse for memory. By thinking through these “storehouses”, people can retrieve what they want/need from the different “locations”. When travelling in the physical world, the landscape serves as a cue for certain stories, explaining place names or narrating events that are said to have taken place there. This line of thinking has been applied to the secular part of Old Norse literature. In my paper, I will look at the sky above, which can serve as a similar aid to the memory as structures on the ground. This applies in particular to texts with cosmic dimensions such as the mythological material in the Gylfaginning of Snorri Sturluson’s Edda. Seen from a phenomenological perspective, the sky is a gigantic dome above us, explained as Ýmir’s head in the Norse mythology, where a mighty tree can be observed, or narrated, in and above the sky, and where also many named mythological locations and characters are literally to be found. I shall discuss direct references to locations
Scandinavia in the Viking Age: A peaceful network society

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Scandinavia, in the Viking Age, was bound together by friendship and kinship. The numerous overlaps of these ties made Scandinavia a peaceful society. Friendship which was the most important social tie in the Viking Age could mainly be established by householders, chieftains, kings and other high-ranking members of society. By all accounts, this group constituted 15–20% of the population. The friendships which were established can be characterised as “political friendships”. The purpose of these was to secure support and/or protection. These friendships also extended to the members of the households. Thus, nearly everyone was influenced by these friendships. Friendship was established between two individuals, but the obligation to support and/or protect also included the friends of the friend, as stated so clearly in Hávamál stanza 43.

The kinship system in Scandinavia was bilateral; that is, a person could trace his or her kin through both the male and female line. This meant that only siblings of the same parents had an identical kin group. Their parents and children each had their own distinct kin group. These groups overlapped and formed a continuous network of family relations. Kings and chieftains generally had great power over their families and controlled the marriages of their kinsmen and kinswomen. Thus, a large kin group provided the basis for establishing alliances with many of the other chieftains and more influential householders in Scandinavia. If these marriages resulted in an offspring, a “new” family tie had been added to the friendship. As a consequence of these networks created by friendship and kinship, Scandinavian peace was obtained and export of violence was possible.

Avaldsnes: A sea king’s seat at the Island of Kormt

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The 2011–12 excavations at Avaldsnes, western Norway, are the first to explore one of the five royal manors that according to Snorri were the seats of the first King of Norway, Haraldr hárfagri. The five are all situated along the sailing route along the western Scandinavian coast, the Norðvegr, indicating that the dominion of the sea route was a primary condition for attaining control of the realm. The evidence from Avaldsnes and the near vicinity indicate that control of the sea route was sought by the powerful for 2–3 millennia. The recent excavations supply the basis for writing the history of this sea king’s seat from the Roman Iron Age until the High Middle Ages. In the paper, some main themes in this history will be outlined, among them some interesting parallels and contrast between a sea king’s manor and the seats of land kings detected elsewhere in Scandinavia.
From plunder to early state building and taxation in Viking-age England

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A peculiar trait of the Scandinavian Vikings was their ability to switch between two overall strategies: Plundering and state building, including taxation. Plundering basically corresponds to the common-pool problem of fishing or hunting. During roving banditry, confiscating goods from farmers, traders etc. is a free-access resource. Therefore, we simply suggest that eventually the roving bandits become too many; they over-plunder and lose profits. Vikings engaging in roving banditry eventually experienced profits from plundering, approaching zero due to an increasing number of competitors. Moreover, defenders became better organised so to resist the raids. We will focus on Viking Age in England and the historical transition from plunder to Danelaw.

State building and taxation through Danelaw could be a more profitable option. The strongest Viking rulers with a relative advantage in the use of coercion thus had an economic incentive to move to stationary banditry where they would increase profits by settling down, providing public goods and taxing local people rather than roving and looting, a pattern consistent with empirical observations detailing the developments over time in the number of raids and the amount of wealth extorted. This shift from plunder to state building can be explained in the line of the stationary bandit model suggested by Olson (1993); Kurrild-Klitgaard and Svendsen (2003). It will pay individual roving bandits to change behaviour when over-plundering eradicates profits. By becoming stationary, they will be able to monopolise violence and exclude others from plundering that area and start taxing.

Shetland’s lost landnám

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Small’s definition of the requirements for the first Viking settlers (a suitable shoreline, extensive flat land and good grazings), have been cited frequently and in recent times. Bond has demonstrated that at least part of the answer lies in Viking interest in the already-established Pictish estates, which might account for up to 120 Viking settlements throughout the islands. Turner (2016) has suggested that political reasons might underlie the later proliferation of flourishing upland Viking farms found in Unst; however, that would imply that the lower-lying land was already taken. If so, where were those lower-lying buildings? We have hitherto glibly suggested that they have disappeared, either due to coastal erosion or reuse. But what did the 8th-century Shetland coastline look like, and what does that mean for our understanding of landnám?
Íslands kvennalof: Cultural memories of Viking-age women in 18th-century praise poetry

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Hvarfsbók (ÍB 815–816 8vo) is a two-volume collection of poems and poetic fragments by various authors that was compiled by Þorstein Þorkelsson (1831–1907) in 1890. This compilation contains two 18th-century praise poems of specific interest here, Sprundahrós and Kvennaríma.

Sprundahrós ('Women's praise'), a long poem attributed to both Jón Jónsson að Kvíabekk (1739–1785) and Ingjaldur Jónsson of Múli (1739–1832), is claimed to be the first Icelandic poem in praise of famous women. It is a catalogue of women, including six feature din sagas, who were notable by virtue of their good qualities. A similar and much less-known poem on the same theme, yet one without a satisfactory edition, is Kvennaríma ('Women's rhyme/ballad') by the reverend Þorsteinn Hallgrímsson (1752–1791). Like Sprundahrós, it lists and glorifies several biblical women as well as saga heroines. These poems exhibit features reminiscent of the “gynaecea,” a literary historical genre from the Renaissance, which was well represented in Denmark and Sweden during the 17th and 18th centuries but non-existent in Iceland. However, these praise poems might offer an Icelandic alternative to the Danish and Swedish gynaecea. The above-named poems may have created a precedent by mentioning some saga women, but Íslands kvenna lof ('Icelandic women's praise'), written by the poet Árni Böðvarsson (1713–1776), is the first Icelandic poem dedicated entirely to the praise of Icelandic women.

This paper examines the presentation of Viking-age women in 18th-century Icelandic praise poetry. It will argue that these poems make for a new picture of female saga characters representing the strong Icelandic woman, a symbol of pride in the Icelandic community.

Burial and religious change in Viking-age Iceland

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Traditionally, Viking-age archaeology has viewed the pagan and Christian burial paradigms as quite distinct: pagan burial is furnished and the cemeteries typically in liminal locations, while Christian burial is unfurnished and associated with churches. In the Norse world, classification of burials into pagan or Christian has largely been based on these characteristics. Within the project Death and Burial in Iceland for 1150 Years, an examination of graves which fit neither of these categories has revealed that in 10th-century Iceland, people were buried both in furnished graves outside the home fields and in unfurnished graves inside the home fields.

These findings suggest that taphonomy and classification schemes have resulted in significant biases, and the paper discusses what implications this has for our understanding of the relationship between burial practice and religious change in the Viking Age.
The changing corpus of Danish Viking art: Animal-style no longer the only game in town

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The study of Viking-age art has been dominated by the formalistic investigation of abstracted animals and biased toward images on metal objects and raised stones, in particular Upplandic runestones, with only occasional examples in wood, as from Oseberg. However, the corpus is being transformed with a flood of new finds as a result of metal-detecting in Denmark. Although metal-detectorists have discovered pieces with zoomorphic ornamentation, many of the latest discoveries display figurative subjects. In this paper, I examine humanoid representations that are difficult to fit into existing classifications and chronologies of Viking art based on animal-style decoration.

Some figurines may be identified as Old Norse mythological beings; yet, the individuals depicted in these works of art contribute to our overall views of Viking men and women – both sacred and secular. As more examples of three-dimensional art come to light, we glimpse another side of Viking art. Ernst Gombrich observed that the expression of “mimesis” – imitation of the natural world – is more direct in the actual three-dimensionality of sculpture than in the creation of the illusion on flat or nearly flat surfaces. Thus, surface or relief designs seen in zoomorphic Viking art are abstracted, whereas sculptural works, including small figures of so-called Valkyrie women, are relatively representational. In 1966, David Wilson declared that “animal art was the only art which really satisfied the Viking mind;” nevertheless, due to the recent finds, we can no longer insist that three-dimensional figurative art was merely a minor afterthought among the Vikings.

Economy and authority in Viking-age Ireland

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This paper will consider the relationship between economic agency and royal authority through a study of the coinage struck in Viking-age Ireland. The period is often interpreted as one of dramatic economic and political upheaval; enormous growth in commerce, the emergence of an urban network and increasingly centralised polities are all indicative of this process. Ireland has rarely been considered in discussion of this sort but analysis of Ireland’s political economy has much to contribute to the debate. This will be tackled through a consideration of the coinage struck in Ireland between c. 995 and 1170.

Specifically, this paper will consider the controlling aspects of royal authority over the economy with the belief that it can contribute to an understanding of early-medieval economic agency. This paper will argue that the importance of royal authority in directing the economy was minimal, with agency behind economic change seen to rest more with an urban, mercantile community.
Viking-age heritage or Viking-age continuity? Orkneyinga saga’s account of Sveinn Ásleifarson’s 12th-century Viking activity

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In chapter 105 of Orkneyinga saga, the author gives the following account of Sveinn Ásleifarson’s lifestyle and his seasonal Viking expeditions: In the spring, he had more than enough to occupy him, with a great deal of seed to sow which he saw to carefully himself. Then when that job was done, he would go off plundering in the Hebrides and in Ireland on what he called his “spring trip”, then back home just after mid-summer where he stayed till the cornfields had been reaped and the grain was safely in. After that, he would go off raiding again and never came back till the first month of winter was ended. This he used to call his “autumn trip”. Sveinn is popularly referred to as the ‘ultimate’ or ‘quintessential’ Viking, although his expeditions took place a hundred years after what we commonly refer to as the end of the Viking Age and in the midst of the Orkney 12th-century renaissance. In this paper, I will discuss whether the saga’s account of Sveinn’s activities is an expression of the saga writer’s and his milieu’s fascination with and understanding of traditional Viking activity, or whether Sveinn’s raiding could be seen as an expression of a genuine Viking-age continuity in the wider Irish Sea region.

Intersection Sigtuna: The first town dwellers in Sweden’s oldest town

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Sigtuna at the heart of the Lake Mälar Valley was founded in the late Viking Age, c. AD 970/980. Although the material culture as such show that Sigtuna was a cosmopolitan town, research has formed two opposing views where Sigtuna is regarded either as a local phenomenon dependent on and rooted in the surrounding countryside or as a strange bird with a material culture and cultural background that differed from the neighbouring region. By focusing on the backgrounds of the first generations of town dwellers, it is possible to discuss the cultural transformation of the early town. From AD 970 until 1100, altogether 325 buried individuals are known. Of these, 185 belong to 25 different cemeteries where people were buried in accordance with Christian practice but without a church building. The remaining 140 burials derive from 4 different churchyards contemporary with the cemeteries. The cemeteries (Sw. gravgårdar) are unique. It is unclear what kind of communities the cemeteries and churchyards represent: different households, more affluent or dispossessed groups, religious minorities and other cultural groups? The main objective of this paper is to understand urbanisation, social relations between groups of people and the early church organisation as well as networks and transnational relations.
Of warriors and beasts

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The Viking Age of the British Isles initiated a rich period of political, economic, social and cultural change, through which multiple new identities arose. Often engaging, both culturally and physically, these interactions led to continual change during this period of flux. This may be evidenced, for example, in the rapidly changing kingship at York, the sacking of Dumbarton Rock or in the emergence of new forms of carved stones. There is a marked increase in the production of carved stones during the Viking Age, particularly in the 10th century, and this is indicative evidence of fruitful contact and exchange within the different Viking-age kingdoms of the British Isles. This may be demonstrated through stone sculptural connections, such as the distribution of hogbacks. The observed increase in carved stones is a manifestation of wealth, power and control, burgeoning in a culturally diverse environment.

This doctoral research therefore aims to address these issues of contact and exchange between the Kingdoms of Strathclyde and Northumbria, principally through a re-examination and archaeological contextualisation of hogbacks and hammerhead crosses. This study ultimately aims to highlight the significance of these carved stones within a contemporary landscape dominated by a complex historical and archaeological narrative.

Technological development in Viking-age locks and keys: Changing attitudes to security, possession and ownership?

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In Iron-age Scandinavia, locks and keys were tools of security and privacy as well as symbols of ownership, possession, and access; of rights and responsibility; of social position and influence. By studying their variation in form and function in my ongoing PhD project, two central aspects have become apparent. Firstly, that locks and keys changed significantly during the Iron Age, and secondly, that operating locks and keys required specific, and potentially secret or restricted, knowledge. The more unique the lock, the more secure it was, as more specific knowledge was required for opening it. As for the smiths who produced the locking devices, the archaeological record shows that their craft was impressively and increasingly complex. The technological developments of Iron-age locks and keys seem inseparably related to their use and social relevance, thus mirroring social change.

Through diachronic, spatial and functional analyses, my project’s aim is to study specific developments within Scandinavian locking mechanisms in order to understand the short- and long-term technological changes and the social processes governing them. Initial observations indicate that both production and use of locks and keys underwent significant development during the Iron Age, the most dramatic of which occurred in the Viking Age. In this paper, I take a closer look at the changes happening in the Viking Age, which mark a highly significant shift, exploring which aspects of the Viking Age acted as catalysts for this particular technology.
Sacrifice in Viking-age Britain and Ireland

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This research looks at specific acts of ritualised religious violence enacted on objects, animals and people by the Vikings in the British Isles and aims to develop a new interpretative framework with which to consider them. This research brings together for the first time the evidence for Viking sacrifices from Britain, Ireland, The Isle of Man, and the Scottish Islands, using comparanda from Scandinavia and Iceland, and argues for an approach which considers categories of objects, animals and things to be fluid. Numerous archaeological, documentary and textual sources relate evidence of sacrificial violence from the Viking world. These practices have deep roots, stretching back into the Iron Age. Archaeological evidence for sacrifice and sacrificial violence comes from graves, from single finds and from settlement sites and may include animal and human sacrifices, food offerings, deliberate destruction of weapons or other artefacts, and the deliberate placing-beyond-reach of artefacts as part of votive rituals. The situation in the British Isles is complex with a relatively small number of pagan Vikings settling and competing in a Christianised society and within a relatively short time converting to Christianity. By analysing the use of sacrificial violence, it is hoped to gain perspectives on conversion, identity and the effects of migration on Viking communities.

Animal spaces and human memory: Transforming the place of Viking-age Iceland

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While the perception of space in the Viking period has been analysed previously (Hastrup 2008, 1990, 1985; Kupiec and Milek 2015; Skrede 2005; Steinsland 2005), these studies neglect to consider the role of animals and animal places within perceptions of space in this period. Nonetheless, outside of Viking studies, scholars have suggested that animals can play key roles in the understanding and remembering of place (Jones 1998; Mills 2005; Sykes 2014). This paper will focus on the spatial dimension of animal-human relations, with an emphasis on how the embodied, sensory experience of dwelling with animals may have influenced the arrangement of space at Viking-age farms.

This paper will first consider the vital role of domestic animals in both the physical and cultural establishment of Iceland, before looking at the evolution of space and place at Sveigakot, an early settlement-era farm in the north of Iceland. The arrangement and claiming of space through building is a meaningful act, and rebuilding, adapting or repairing a built structure involves the transformation, alteration or active continuing of place (Mullin 2011, 7; Thomas 1996, 89). This paper will ask what the building strategy at Sveigakot may mean, drawing on archaeological remains from the settlement period and later textual narratives about this settlement, to examine the transformation of space and materialisation of memory through spatial analysis, sensory archaeology and cultural memory theory. Sverrir Jakobsson has suggested that the establishment of a political domain in Iceland may have been a matter of relationships rather than physical boundaries (2009, 159); this paper will consider the farm as likewise constituted by networks of relations, in which buildings, humans and animals each played their vital role.
Across the North Sea: New Insular finds from Viking-age Norway

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I started a PhD in autumn 2016 concerning the incorporation, meaning and use of imported objects in Mid-Norway during the Viking-age period. My presentation seeks to discuss some of the social ramifications within Norse communities in Norway of the extensive contact with the Insular world, especially highlighting how this contact created new social opportunities for certain members at different levels of society. The presentation will be based around the following research topic:

How did the contact with the Insular world affect the development of social roles and identities in the Norse homelands, and what part did imported objects play in such processes?

By analysing the functions of certain types of Insular items and the meanings they could have been given within their new setting, the presentation will discuss how some of these objects may be considered as active expressions of their Norse owners’ role within communities and networks with relations to the British Isles. The extensive contact with the Insular world created new social opportunities for individuals and families, who in various ways became involved in communication with areas outside their local groups, and my aim is to review how this can be seen through the archaeological material in early Viking-age Norway.

Burials and landscape in the Faroe Islands during the Viking Age

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This PhD research project aims to examine Viking-age burials in the Faroe Islands. Since only two Viking burial sites are recorded and excavated in the Faroe Islands so far, the religious beliefs and mortuary practices of the Viking settlers in these islands remain poorly understood. However, there is more archaeological material in the Faroe Islands regarding the settlements from the Viking Age and information regarding their daily lives. This lack of knowledge about the Viking-age burial heritage on the Faroe Islands leaves a huge gap in our understanding about Viking-age burial practices. Therefore, the main goal of this research project is to fill in this gap of missing knowledge by testing various models for locating Viking-age burials, which have lately been developed in Iceland by archaeologist Dr Adolf Friðriksson. Secondly, by comparing similarities and differences with other Viking-age burials outside the Faroe Islands, significant burial data can be obtained about burial customs. Last but not least, it is my hope that the results of this PhD will provide us with new knowledge about burials customs in the Faroe Islands during the Viking Age and, moreover, that the results will not only shed light on the burial customs of the Faroe Islands but also illustrate how these relate to other Northern countries.
The past in the present: Prehistoric barrows and Viking-age cemeteries west of the Lillebælt, Denmark

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The poster presents Viking-age burial customs in an area west of the Lillebælt, South-East Jutland. The excavated Viking-age cemeteries cluster around earlier burial mounds from the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, with graves typically arranged in remarkable radial patterns around the mounds. At the recently excavated cemetery Bredstrupvej, 50 graves were arranged around four mounds in this way, possibly representing family groups. Close to the mounds, several small constructions consisting of four posts were excavated. These constructions – AMS-dated to the Viking Age – may represent ritual buildings or "mortuary houses". The burial customs in the area thus clearly show an active use of ancient monuments, possibly defining, strengthening and legitimising rights of the living. The contemporary settlement to the Bredstrupvej cemetery has been excavated 300m to the east – clearly separating areas of the dead and living, but still within sight.

Claiming Vinland with an Alt-Right (Identitarian) flag

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With new forms of ethnonationalism on the march in Trump's America and elsewhere, medievalists and Viking scholars should be alert to the ways extremist elements deploy an imagined Scandinavia past to their own ends. As it happens, the iconography of today's white nationalism is long on crusader knights and short on barbarian Northmen, but a close reading of an increasingly popular symbol of the Alt-Right reveals a Viking connection.

This poster will break down the iconography of the Kekistani flag. “Kekistan” is a wholly fictional homeland claimed by an online subculture frequenting discussion boards like 4chan and Reddit. These wags – who range from anti-semitic white supremacists to those who think pretending to be anti-semitic white supremacists is hilarious – claim “Kekistani heritage” and strike an ironic pose as an embattled diasporised ethnic group in need of humanitarian aid. They rally around a banner that echoes German Imperial and Nazi regalia and, intriguingly, a flag made up by a now-defunct goth metal band. By using the colours and Nordic cross design of Type O Negative’s so-called Vinnland flag, the designers of the Kekistani flag tap into the conceit of the band’s 1996 “Liberation of Vinnland” tour. The tour figured North America as “occupied Vinnland” in need of “glorious liberation by the combined forces of the united territories of Europa.” Whatever the original intentions of the band, this narrative is a too-good fit for those who believe that the US should be a nation for people of European descent only, and, indeed, Type O Negative’s flag has been appropriated by American white supremacist groups like the Vinlanders Social Club. Layering the Vinnland flag into the flag of Kekistan invokes a narrative by which the events of Eiríks saga rauða and Grænlendinga saga are made to legitimise a desired social order. It also loops the Viking Age into the ideology and vocabulary of the American Alt-Right while still eschewing barbarian imagery that would ill comport with the movement’s striving for respectability.
The nature of the feast: Commensality and the politics of consumption in Viking and Late Norse Orkney

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‘After he had taken Earl Rognvald’s ships, Earl Paul went back to Orkney with a victory he could be proud of, so he celebrated with a great feast, inviting all his most favoured chieftains. … [he] presented his friends with gifts, and all of them promised him their undying friendship’ (Orkneyinga Saga Chpt. 66)

In the Norse world, feasting was an underpinning mechanism used by powerful men and women to acquire and legitimise power through commensal hospitality (Steinsland 2011). Conspicuous consumption, manifest through the hosting of lavish feasts for followers, was part of the paraphernalia of leadership and played a significant role in maintaining elite power structures. Reciprocal or promotional feasting amongst peers was equally important, creating bonds of obligation between the leading landowners and chieftains and promoting societal cohesion and connectivity through marriage, trade and other exchanges. Through the politics of commensality, feasting and, by extension, the mechanisms by which preferentially consumed foodstuffs were grown, procured and processed will thus have had a potentially transformative impact on Norse society (e.g. Zori et al. 2011).

This poster presentation will explore the nature, role and impact of feasting within Scandinavian Scotland, taking as a case study Viking and Late Norse Orkney. Analysis will focus in particular on evidence for food and consumptive behaviour within the zooarchaeological record at sites associated with the Earls of Orkney and their chieftains, including the Earls Bu in Orphir and Tuquoy in Westray as well as other likely lower-status halls such as Snusgar in Sandwick. It will address how feasting may have impacted on societal structure and organisation and explore the extent to which herding strategies geared towards consumption were associated with an intensification of resource utilisation, overstocking, expansion into environmentally fragile uplands, coastal margins etc. and, as such, potentially contributed to the decline in agricultural production and the marginalisation of the Northern Isles in the later-medieval period.

The Vikings – ‘our forebears’? The role of the Viking Age in legitimising modern gender ideology

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The Viking Age is a period which tends to foster strong feelings of ownership in contemporary Scandinavia. The reasons behind this, of the political and ideological use of the Viking Age in nation building, for example, are numerous and have been problematised in several excellent academic papers and publications in later years.

What is less-well studied, however, is the flip side of this appropriation of the past. By representing the Vikings as our direct ancestors, and as closely similar to us, we not only project our own beliefs and ideologies onto the past, but we also legitimise these by perpetuating a belief in the historicity of our own social divisions. This is particularly evident in relation to gender and gender roles in the Viking Age. The belief that the Viking Age shared a modern western two-sex model (using the terminology of Thomas Laqueur) with women and men as opposites, along with a value division which corresponds closely to our own, has been allowed to remain largely unquestioned for the best part of 150 years.
I contend this is a prejudice that ought to be shed, and that we are better served with viewing gender in the Viking Age as contextual and as more aligned with a one-sex model. Moving towards such an understanding of the Viking Age would entail abandoning belief in the period as a direct ancestor of our own social organisation and conversant ideologies and instead recognising it as much more fluid than the strictly patriarchal society which is often envisaged.

**Coinage as catalyst for societal change**

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Coinage is a core state institution. Moreover, it is a Western European institution that was taken over by the Vikings, whether back home in Scandinavia or in their colonies in Normandy and the Danelaw. A monopoly of national coins, implying a managed currency, was the model of the Western European medieval coinage. The compulsory exchange of silver and foreign coins meant income for the coin issuer (often the king), which must have been a strong motive for driving forward the process.

In turn, striking national coins of a uniform recognisable design and communicating the coin monopoly, as well as enforcing the compulsory exchange, must have required a well-organised administrative organisation, implying the development of state institutions. There may have been popular resistance to this advance of the ”state” into the ”civic society”. This is at least one of the possible explanations for the decrease in coin use in the late 11th century shown by the aggregate material of coins found by metal detectors in present day Denmark.

Coinage, and its derived effects, is thus a multiple driver for societal change. The presentation will put well-known evidence from Denmark into a new framework and present an interpretation of the Viking coinage of 10th-century Normandy based on my research in progress.

**Viking-age shields: Intersections between life, death and myth**

PhD student Kerstin Odebäck Näversköld
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This poster gives an introduction to my ongoing PhD project about Viking-age shields. Scandinavian Viking-age shields have generally been considered as functional parts of the ’Viking set of weapon equipment’ with a primary use in combat defence. However, different forms of shields are visible in the archaeological record as well as in literary sources, which indicates that shields carried important symbolic meanings.

My thesis will explore shields in archaeological contexts in relation to shields represented in two- or three-dimensional depictions and how they are described and in what contexts they occur in the Old Norse literature. Through four shield categories, I study how different shields relate to identity and social roles as well as practices during the Viking Age. Intersectionality, as a multi-dimensioned analytical tool for studying power structures and social hierarchy, highlights how different aspects of identity (such as age, gender, health, religion, class etc.) are conceptualised by the use of shields and shield symbolism. My study is based on full-scale shields as grave finds, shield-shaped pendants as grave and hoard finds, shield depictions (namely on picture stones, rune stones and figurines) as well as literary shields.
When analysing the material with regards to identity and objects as identity markers, I aim to understand how the different shields reflect identities and practices that intersect.

**From Norse to Scottish (or when is a castle not a castle): Revisiting Tuquoy, Orkney**

Visiting Reader Olwyn Owen  
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This presentation will be a brief foray into the 'Scottification' of Norse sites based on the evidence from the unusual high-status site at Tuquoy, Westray, Orkney. The major building identified by excavation has been called a Norse hall but bears similarities with several contemporary structures which have been discussed as possible Norse castles – in an era when castles of various types began to appear elsewhere in the landscape of Scotland. The presentation will therefore focus on cultural transformation towards the end of the Norse period in the Northern Isles.

**Violence and enculturation in Viking-age Scandinavia**

Dr. Ben Raffield  
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Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in the martial aspects of the Viking Age. It is now widely accepted that Scandinavian societies were militaristic in nature, and that warfare was a process firmly situated within broader contexts of everyday life, politics and even religious expression. However, significant questions regarding how warfare was fuelled and conducted during the period remain unaddressed. This is particularly true of those pertaining to social perspectives on military organisation and conflict. For example, there have been relatively few attempts to investigate the socio-cultural mechanisms that drove large numbers of people to participate in the conflicts that were taking place both within and outside of Scandinavia throughout the period. Why were so many individuals willing to face the rigours of long-distance travel and warfare and the likelihood of death? How were people, including those that we would today recognise as children, socially conditioned to do so? In order to address this question, this paper will apply a psychosocial approach to the archaeological evidence of Viking-age childhood. Focusing on the concept of enculturation, it will explore how children were exposed to socially sanctioned ideologies that promoted competition, violence and fatalism, and how these drove individuals to participate in conflict from an early age.
Erritsø: A remarkable, fortified site from AD c. 700–850 at the Lillebælt

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in collaboration with Christian Juel, Charlotta Lindblom and Anne Pedersen

The Little Belt is the smallest of three waterways that divide present Denmark into the three main lands of Jutland, Funen and Zealand. In this poster, we present new scientific results from recent investigations from an extraordinary aristocratic-looking early Viking-age manor. At the site, already located in 2006, there were traces of several buildings, a so-called main hall of 40m and, as something special in Denmark at this time, a 110 x 110m square moat with traces of a palisade. Recent investigations in 2016 have confirmed this hypothesis and newly processed C14 dates have narrowed down the window of occupation to AD 700–850. The discovery of this highly unusual and defended settlement type at this point begs the question as to which role – culturally, strategically, politically and administratively – the Little Belt played in the period between AD 700 and 900, a dynamic period where the organisation of power of the Danish Kings, known from the few chronicles that survive was challenged several times. Also, we must contemplate that this site lies only 30km to the south of Jelling, that Jelling from where Gorm and Harald supposedly ‘won’ the entire Kingdom only about 50–100 years after the strategically important Erritsø manor, according to the latest dates, faded out.

Early Vikings in the Isle of Man

Dr. Dirk Steinforth
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For the previously Celtic Isle of Man, the settlement of Vikings in the 9th century was a momentous event: new settlers, new ways, new traditions. The Island was changed forever but not destroyed. Today, the Manx still like to consider themselves of both Celtic and Viking ancestry. However, important questions regarding the circumstances, the processes and indeed the date and manner of the Vikings’ arrival long remained unresolved. My research in recent years suggests that a conquest took place during the third quarter of the 9th century, preceded by violent and probably also non-violent contacts and succeeded by a phase of harmonisation and merging. Situated as it is between Ireland and Britain, the island’s position must have played a part in its earliest Viking-age events as well as the conquerors’ origin, and the proposed date of the decades around AD 870 may also have a special significance, a time when Viking presence in the British Isles created new political and economic conditions, while the Scandinavians themselves found that their world was changing. It is the intention of this presentation to follow up the questions as to why the Viking settlement in the Isle of Man was founded later than those in Ireland, how the conquest was linked to developments both in Ireland and Britain, and how the originally distinct groups were able to coexist and eventually to merge with traditions from both factions surviving, forming a new island community in the Isle of Man.
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Abstracts – papers and posters, published July 2017
Editors: Christina A. Levisen, Anne Pedersen and Søren M. Sindbæk

Front cover: Harness-bow terminal in the shape of a dragon head.
(Photo: John Lee, copyright: The National Museum of Denmark)

Back cover: Aerial photograph of modern-day Ribe.
(Photo: The Museum of Southwest Jutland)

Printed in Aarhus, Denmark (SUN-Tryk, Aarhus University)