

The Fourteenth Annual Midlands Viking Symposium

Schedule



A48 Sir Clive Granger Building

9.00 – 10.00 Arrival, coffee and registration

10.00: Professor Dawn Hadley (Sheffield/York): In the footsteps of the Viking Great Army

10. 40: Dr Marek Jankowiak (University of Birmingham): Were the Scandinavians really slave traders?
Interpreting the dirham hoards from northern Europe

11.00 – 11.30: break

11.30: Dr Luke Murphy (University Leicester): Odin, Thor, Frey, and the Viking Pantheon: Who
Worshipped Who?

12.00: Jessie Yusek (University of Nottingham): Understanding Gender in Saga Translations

12.30 – 13.30: Lunch

During lunch participants have a chance to explore Viking replicas made by BlueAxe Productions and view poster presentations. There will also be a book display and poster presentations.

13.30: Dr Christina Lee (University of Nottingham): North by Norse: the reception of Old Norse
mythology in Germany 1650-1850

14.00: Professor Richard Bell (University of Nottingham): Norse mythology and Wagner's *Twilight of
the gods*

15.00 -15.30: Coffee

15.30: Joshua Neal (University of Nottingham): 'Northamptonshire is really a border county': a
historiographic re-analysis of *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire's* Scandinavian place-names

16.00: Jessica Treacher (University of Nottingham): Viking Horticulture? 'Orchard' place-names in the Danelaw

16.30 – 17.00: Tea and Coffee

17.00: Creative writing workshop: Justin Hill (author of *Shield Wall* and *Viking Fire*): Viking Fiction (included)

18.00: Wine reception, courtesy of the University Museum

19.00: Close



Andre Picture Stone from Tjängvide, Gotland, Sweden (now in the Statens Historiska Museet, Stockholm)

Abstracts

Professor Dawn Hadley, University of York/Sheffield

In the footsteps of the Viking Great Army

Metal detecting has been critical to identification and characterisation of the winter camps of the Viking Great Army, especially at Torksey (Lincolnshire) and Aldwark (North Yorkshire). New research has utilized this artefactual 'signature' to trace the activities of the Great Army, and its offshoots, beyond the winter camps, principally using data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme database. This has led to the discovery of some 30 new sites which were visited by the Viking Great Army in the mid to late 870s, and their relationships with the local landscape, communications networks, and estate centres are explored.

Dr Marek Jankowiak, University of Birmingham

Were the Scandinavians really slave traders? Interpreting the dirham hoards from northern Europe

Arab, Irish, or Frankish chroniclers often speak of captive-taking in connection with the Viking raids. Some of the captives were quickly ransomed, but others were clearly not. What happened to

them next? On the basis of Arabic texts, finds of Islamic coins from northern Europe, and recent archaeological evidence from the Slavic lands, I will try to reconstruct a system of slave trade of a surprisingly large scale, the mechanisms and implications of which we are only beginning to understand.

Dr Luke Murphy, University of Leicester

Odin, Thor, Frey, and the Viking Pantheon: Who Worshipped Who?

Traditional portrayals of “Viking religion” portray a united pantheon of gods – Odin, Thor, Freyja, and a small cast of others – worshipped by the Iron Age population of the North at large. Recently, however, scholarship has become more critical of our sources, and it has become increasingly clear that different deities were worshipped at different times, in different places, and by different people. This presentation explores this breakdown of unified Nordic paganism, examining how several conditions affected how deities were worshipped: when, where, and by whom?

Jessie Yusek, University of Nottingham

Understanding Gender in Saga Translations

Medieval Icelandic romance may have started with Norse translations of French works under King Hákon Hákonarsson of Norway (r.1217-63), though Icelandic authors not only took the French sources and revised them to fit their own ideals but they also created their own innovative motifs and tales. An interesting point of analysis for studying Icelandic romance is gender, particularly how medieval Icelanders understood gender and relationships between men and women. Thus, using romances such as *Erex saga*, *Partalopa saga*, and *Ívens saga* this paper seeks to explore gender in saga translations as well as the challenges those using translations face.

Dr Christina Lee (University of Nottingham):

North by Norse: the reception of Old Norse mythology in Germany 1650-1850

While the abuses of Norse mythology in Nazi Germany are well known, few people know about the decisive role that myth played in the formation of Germany from what were many small states. This paper will explore the knowledge and uses of Norse myths from the Reformation to the eve of the formation of the nation state. It will give a brief tour of the knowledge of Old Norse and translations that were available to scholars, but then increasingly also to a wider public.

Professor Richard H Bell (University of Nottingham)

Norse mythology and Wagner’s *Twilight of the gods*

This presentation first traces the downfall of the gods in the Icelandic poem *Völuspá*. The poem takes us from the icy beginnings of the world to its fiery end with the death of the gods but also tells of the rebirth of the cosmos. This poem was fundamental for Wagner as he wrote the libretto for his *Ring* cycle and many will know of “Ragnarök” in his version. But, as was his wont, he introduced

fundamental changes, the most important being the role of the Valkyrie Brünnhilde in bringing about the death of the gods.

Joshua Neal (University of Nottingham)

'Northamptonshire is really a border county': a historiographic re-analysis of The Place-Names of Northamptonshire's Scandinavian place-names.

This paper derives from my MA dissertation on the Scandinavian place-names of Northamptonshire, a linguistic legacy of 'Viking' settlement in the area. The dissertation is a re-analysis of the nomenclature interpreted as Scandinavian in the 1933 EPNS survey *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire* (PNNth).

This paper presents the results from my case study of the 'Scandinavian' personal names identified by the editors of PNNth in 96 Northamptonshire place-names. This re-analysis was completed in close consultation with secondary literature (e.g. Fellows Jensen (1968, 1978); Insley (1980); Lind (1905)), and yielded a potential 5% loss of PNNth's 267 'Scandinavian' place-names.

Jessica Treacher, University of Nottingham

Viking Horticulture? 'Orchard' place-names in the Danelaw

The place-name Appleton, 'apple-tree farm/settlement', is widely glossed as 'orchard' by place-name scholars. This paper examines whether the Anglo-Scandinavian place-name Appleby, 'apple-tree farm/settlement', should be considered to have a similar appellative meaning. This is achieved through as close analysis of the five Appleby settlements of the Danelaw: their geology, topography and the surrounding infrastructure, and a subsequent comparison with the more prolific Appleton settlements. My aim is to provide insight into Scandinavian integration from a horticultural perspective, as well as nuanced lexical meaning to a recurrent place-name of the Danelaw.