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Home

This is the home page for the Vikings Research Network space.

The Vikings Research Network aims to encourage and facilitate collaboration between scholars working within the field of Viking Studies. It will develop team-based research and provide forums for members to share resources and knowledge, and to extend their own capabilities. Given the geographical isolation of Australia from much of the archaeological and manuscript material, one of the key functions of the cluster would be for members who, through travel, will have access to such material, to share it with others within the network.

Viking Studies within Australia has always been a scattered discipline, with the exception of the literature-focused hub at the University of Sydney. The only formal Viking Studies program in the country has recently been axed at the University of Melbourne, and the discipline is in grave danger of dispersal and dissipation without the kind of focus that a NEER Research Cluster would provide.

The study of Vikings is an effective focus for covering virtually all areas of early European history, both thematically and geographically. Viking raids and settlements affected most of the continent - and far beyond - while some of the themes that can be analysed within Viking studies include colonialism, warfare, women's roles and status, environment and climate, and the modern appropriations of past societies. The members of the proposed Vikings Research Cluster envisage the cluster as an on-going network, and as we are all in the early stages of our careers it will, we hope, span many years. For this reason we do not wish to define a narrow scope for the cluster but rather permit it to embrace the diversity which the study of Vikings allows.

Within these broad parameters we do have firm plans for the focus of our initial project. It will be a joint research project concentrating on the construction of identities within the nexus of Viking/European contact. The Viking Age is often characterised as the gradual integration of non-Christian Scandinavia into Christian Europe. We intend to explore and question the assumption that "Viking" and "Europe" existed as static constructs, and to consider the role played each played in defining the other during this extended and intense period of culture contact. This project links strongly to the NEER themes of 'Cultural Memory' and 'Social Fabric.' A further dimension to this investigation is the perceived conflict between non-Christian Scandinavians and Christian Europeans which tends to be foregrounded in cultural memories of the Viking period. We expect to challenge the notion of a monolithic and stable Church, and re-assess the centrality of religion within the conflict and exchange between Vikings and others. This specific project is expected to involve panel sessions at conferences and joint authorship of an article.

We hope in time to expand the network to include international academics and other Australian researchers who share our goals and interests. However we feel that a small and committed membership will be most effective in building relationships and momentum in the early stages of the cluster. The foundation members bring an range of inter-disciplinary skills to the network, including expertise in fine arts and literature, archaeology, history, languages and philology.

Members

Coordinator

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Research Cluster Members

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