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'Landscape, symbolism and identity around the Viking-Age Irish Sea'

Did the Viking settlements around the Irish Sea have any common sense of ethnicity or belonging? To what extent is this reflected in their material legacy? How extensive were their original settlements in the ninth and tenth centuries? Outlining evidence for burial, stone sculpture, portable material culture, buildings and territorial structures, this paper will begin afresh to address these questions. It will be argued that, whilst traditional discipline-specific preoccupations with empirical minutiae have given us an essential grounding, a broader interdisciplinary overview of the Viking imprint on the landscape (and seascape) is also necessary. Post-processual notions of symbolism and agency will be aired as keys to unlocking some of the more opaque or obtuse aspects of the material evidence; the aim being to open and regenerate debate rather than to seek prematurely conclusive verdicts.