

SCAN S-178. The Vikings and the Nordic Heroic Tradition (CRN: 31509)

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Examines the heroic legacy resulting from the historical events in Northern Europe 800 to 1100 AD, concentrating on the medieval Icelandic sagas. Focuses on how these texts present their heroes as warriors, kings, poets, outlaws, and adventurers--as well as, to quote one nineteenth-century scholar, "farmers at fisticuffs." Considers several specific heroic traditions, such as the "Bear's Son's Tale" and the "Dragon-Slayer," and reviews how the Viking image is received and shaped in later periods (for example, the poetry of nineteenth-century Denmark, the art of Victorian England, the scholarship and pseudoscholarship of our contemporary world). The question of the North American colony of "Vinland" as a meaningful component of this legacy is examined in its scientific and imaginative contexts.