

## **Texture in the Medieval World: Conference Report**

Building on the past success of N/EMICS events, this, the 21st conference of this research series, considered the possible visual and conceptual approaches to Texture in the Medieval World in its widest possible contexts, with papers examining written, archaeological, pictorial, architectural, geographical, cartographical and liturgical material in order to shed new light on the uses, understanding, purposes, and transformations of texture in the Middle Ages.

The interdisciplinary, two-day conference focused on the visual, conceptual and haptic qualities of textual and visual material and their importance and use in the medieval world. In order to explore the relationship between text, texture and materiality, papers explored ideas of decoration, colour or luxurious materials; manipulation of texture and materiality through skeuomorphism and symbolism or as exegetical devices; and the role of texture and materiality in conveying status, wealth and power in textual, social and material contexts and physicality, presence and scale whether actual, imagined or implied. Themes included: craft, technique and process; finished/unfinished; fragments; fraying; fabric; threads; woven, interwoven; embroidered and embellished; edges and borders; webs; networks and exchanges; thus lending itself as a topic to multiple interpretations across various media. The conference (re)considered various facets of textural constructions and understandings in the medieval past, as viewed from the present, seeking an interdisciplinary approach to this topic - including ideas of how texture and depictions of it change over time, and the significance of these changes to the construction of past structures and narratives. By reaching across boundaries of discipline and period, the conference provided a forum for the sharing of ideas, and the exploration of new thoughts on texture. It crossed various disciplines and periods, from Viking textiles to the concept of sound as a texture and bringing together speakers from the UK, Europe and the USA encompassing emerging scholars working across several fields of research with established academics to provide a platform for the reconsideration of the idea of "texture" in its widest possible connotations.

The programme included 24 speakers plus our keynote lecture from Rachel Moss of Trinity College, Dublin. The costs incurred in doing so, in relation to room hire, staffing and expenses (kept to a minimum for students), along with a conference dinner that facilitated networking for the early career scholars, were only possible through the funding we received from The Viking Society. Each of the papers generated lively discussion and the majority of our speakers have expressed interest in contributing to an edited volume of the proceedings for which we are currently seeking discussion with Boydell and Brewer. I and my colleague, Tracey Davison, would like to express our sincere thanks for your financial support that enabled us to deliver such a successful and well-received conference.