

TUESDAY, 23RD MAY 2017
MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
6:00 PM

EASTERN VIKINGS IN ARABIC SOURCES



This lecture talks about how the Middle Ages witnessed a remarkable expansion of peoples in two different parts of western Eurasia, the Muslims in the south and Scandinavian peoples in the north. The two ultimately came into contact which was maintained for the best part of two centuries, especially through trade. The circumstances of these contacts are preserved partially in the archaeological record, but above all in contemporary Arabic geographical and historical writings from the ninth and tenth centuries.

Thorir Jonsson Hraundal is a Lecturer in Medieval Studies and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Iceland. After graduating in general linguistics from the same university, he studied Arabic and Hebrew semitics at the University of Salamanca before obtaining an M.Litt from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Cambridge, where he examined the northwards expansion of Islam, specifically the conversion of the Volga Bulgars. His doctorate from the University of Bergen focused on accounts written mainly by ninth- and tenth-century Muslim geographers and historians on peoples they termed ar-Rūs ('Rus in Arabic Sources: Cultural Contacts and Identity', 2013).

