

**UNDERSTANDING TORKSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE:  
A GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO A  
VIKING OVERWINTERING CAMP**

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## ABSTRACT

Viking overwintering camps of late 9<sup>th</sup> century England have been excluded from most recent dialogues regarding Viking Age England. Although overwintering camps are directly mentioned in historical records such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, these sites have remained archaeologically elusive. The recent identification of the Viking overwintering camp at Torksey, now under investigation by the Torksey Project, has provided a key opportunity to fill the gap in the current literature about the relation between environment, landscape, and Viking winter camps. This thesis uses geoarchaeological techniques, including palynology, sediment analysis, and optically stimulated luminescence to determine that the location was defined by a waterlogged landscape with aeolian sediments. The landscape evaluation has identified sites within the surrounding area that would have been integral in shaping the physical and political form and long-term effects of the winter camp, including a royal estate, a burhdyke associated with Torksey, an intermittently active canal at the Foss Dyke, and historical documents linking the site with the Mercian royal family. The methods employed during this have produced results that definitively demonstrate that the character of the environment was largely responsible for the Viking's choice of site for their overwintering at Torksey, and how the early medieval population would have interacted with the environment in the Lower Trent Valley.

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