

Questions and Answers (William Pidzamecky)

- **How do these new archaeological discoveries impact the past Soviet and current Russian and Ukrainian history narratives about the Viking impact on Rus' heritage?**

Generally, the Viking contribution is a lot more widely accepted now as part of the national narrative but the focus is still very much on the foundation of the Rus' as a political entity and Slavic heritage which is a remnant of Soviet era thinking. Essentially, the period roughly from AD 750-830 is mostly ignored with focus being placed on the Rus' princes from the mid-9th century onwards. However, the new discoveries of Scandinavian sites and involvement is challenging this very narrow view in equal measure in both countries. The biggest issue is that the name Kievan Rus', even though in reality the Rus' polity was far more than that, causes many arguments in terms of who 'owns' the Rus' as part of their national narrative. This is something that these discoveries may help to solve by revealing more information on who the Rus' were and what they were doing.

- **What was the object with spikes with a blue toothbrush in the 2nd to last slide....right side bottom?**

Those were animal teeth. Likely, sheep or goat.

- **Excellent presentation William. Vicki Karpiak would like to know if you learned some Scandinavian languages in order to read the words on the runestones?**

I have been studying Old Norse, the language Scandinavians spoke at the time, for roughly 5 years and the two Futhark Runic scripts for about the same time. However, reading runes is a lot more than knowing the language. The degraded state of many of the runestones as well as combination runes, mistakes, and short forms make for difficult reading.