

Fall 2010

# The Barbarian North Research Project

Nicole Marafioti

*Trinity University*, [nmarafio@trinity.edu](mailto:nmarafio@trinity.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/infolit\\_grantdocs](https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/infolit_grantdocs)

---

## Repository Citation

Marafioti, Nicole, "The Barbarian North Research Project" (2010). *Information Literacy Resources for Curriculum Development*. 35.  
[https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/infolit\\_grantdocs/35](https://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/infolit_grantdocs/35)

This Instructional Material is brought to you for free and open access by the Information Literacy Committee at Digital Commons @ Trinity. It has been accepted for inclusion in Information Literacy Resources for Curriculum Development by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Trinity. For more information, please contact [jcostanz@trinity.edu](mailto:jcostanz@trinity.edu).

**Vikings, Saxons, and Franks: The Barbarian North**  
HIST 3392-2, Fall 2010

**Research Project**  
**Due Monday, 13 December 2010**  
**10-12 Pages**

**Assignment**

Write a research paper on any aspect of medieval Frankish, Saxon, or Viking history. Your final paper should be 10-12 pages long, include a bibliography of at least eight secondary sources, and employ adequate primary source material. All preparatory work is mandatory and will count towards the paper's final grade.

**Schedule of Due Dates**

W 10/13	Topic Proposal Research Session: meet in Coates Library, room 103
M 10/18	Preliminary Bibliography of Secondary Sources
M 10/25	Annotated Bibliography 1
M 11/1	Annotated Bibliography 2
M 11/8	Annotated Bibliography 3 <i>and</i> Working Thesis and Outline Research Session : meet in Coates Library, room 103
M 11/15	Updated Bibliography of Secondary Sources
M 11/22	First Draft: 3-4 Pages
W 12/1	Second Draft: 6-7 Pages
M 12/13	Final Paper Due at Noon: 10-12 Pages, in hard copy <i>and</i> by email

---

**Assignment Details**

Topic Proposal. On 13 October, we will meet with Amy Roberson, one of Trinity's research librarians. We'll review tools and methods for conducting research in medieval history, and you'll have some time to start finding sources. Please come to class with a list of two or three potential research topics; for each topic, write a couple of sentences explaining why the subject interests you or what historical questions you might ask. I will collect these proposals at the end of class.

Preliminary Bibliography. Choose which of your potential topics you'd like to research. Compile a preliminary bibliography of at least five secondary sources by at least three different authors. You may also include any primary sources you've found. All sources should be cited according to Chicago or MLA-style bibliographical guidelines (your choice).

- You do not have to read or even check out the items in this bibliography—yet. This should simply be a list of sources that you will consult as you begin your research.
- While I strongly encourage you to use electronic library databases (like JSTOR) to find sources, your bibliography should not include Wikipedia entries or other internet sources.
- All sources must be cited correctly! That means all bibliographical information must be in the right order and must follow style guidelines for punctuation, capitalization, spacing, abbreviations, underlining, and italics. For everything you ever wanted to know about bibliographical citations but were afraid to ask, see: <http://lib.trinity.edu/lib2/cite.php>.

Annotated Bibliographies 1-3. Once you've compiled your preliminary bibliography, start reading! For each annotated bibliography assignment, read one secondary source—one article or one chapter in an authored or edited book; these should all be in the 20-25 page range. Write a description and analysis of the source in approximately 150-200 words. Your annotation should include:

- A full bibliographical citation, in either Chicago or MLA style.
- A summary of the author's argument, including the primary sources he or she used.
- An analytical critique of the argument. Is the author's position convincing? Are there points with which you disagree? Can you offer alternative interpretations of the author's sources?
- A brief discussion of how this work relates to your research. How does the source enhance your understanding of your topic? What analytical questions does the author's argument inspire? What information will be useful as you begin to draft your paper?

Updated Bibliography. After our second library session, compile an updated bibliography of at least eight secondary sources and any primary sources that you plan to use. The updated bibliography should include the items you used in your annotated bibliography as well as any new items you've found, all cited according to Chicago or MLA-style guidelines. It's okay if you haven't read all of these items yet, but these should be sources that you plan to use as you start drafting your paper.

Working Thesis and Preliminary Outline. Draft a working thesis and preliminary outline. The thesis should explain your research topic and address the historical questions you plan to ask. The outline should provide the main points of your argument and supporting examples from primary and secondary sources. The outline should be approximately two pages long, and you may organize it in bullet points or in continuous prose—just as long as you've got a workable plan for the project.

- Remember: you don't have to squeeze your thesis into a single sentence.
- It's okay for your ideas to evolve and your thesis to change as you start drafting your paper. This is just a starting point!

Drafts. Start drafting the paper, using your outline as a guide. For the 3-4 page draft, there's no need to start at the very beginning of the paper—you may write up any part of the argument you like, but please include your working thesis (revised as necessary). For the 6-7 page draft, you should include a rough introduction and start thinking about what conclusions you can draw; please include an outline or overview of the sections you haven't written yet.

Final Paper. The final paper should be 10-12 double-spaced pages long. All sources should be cited according to Chicago or MLA-style bibliographical guidelines, and a Bibliography or Works Cited page should be included at the end of the paper. Please submit all preliminary work together with your final paper: this includes all proposals, outlines, bibliographies, drafts, and anything else you've handed in. Please turn in the copies with my comments on them.

- The hard copy (including all preliminary work) is due at noon on Monday, 13 December.
- An electronic copy of the final paper is due by email at the same time.

A Friendly Reminder. Remember that you're welcome to come talk to me—and I strongly encourage you to come in and discuss your project! The fabulous Trinity librarians are always available to help, too. Finally, it's worth consulting Rampolla's *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, a great resource with valuable tips on conducting historical research.

## Vikings, Saxons, and Franks: The Barbarian North

### Second Library Session and Updated Bibliography

#### From The Research Paper Assignment Sheet:

“Compile an updated bibliography of at least eight secondary sources and any primary sources that you plan to use. The updated bibliography should include the items you read for your annotated bibliography as well as any new items you’ve found, all cited according to Chicago or MLA-style guidelines. It’s okay if you haven’t read all of these items yet, but these should be sources that you plan to use as you start drafting your paper.”

#### Here’s the Catch

You must find three of your secondary sources *without* using any full-text databases (like JSTOR or Project Muse) as search tools. Once you’ve found your sources, go and get them!

In addition to your updated bibliography, write a paragraph of approximately 150 words for each of these three sources, explaining:

- How you found the source. What search tool did you use? What search terms did you enter and why? Did you have to narrow or revise your search to get results?
- Why you decided to choose this item. Do you have a good sense of what the article is about? Can you tell whether it’s a scholarly source? Why did you choose it over other search hits?
- How you got hold of the text. Did you go to the library stacks? Use interlibrary loan (ILL)? Go to a full-text database after finding the reference elsewhere?  
N.B. If you’ve requested a source through interlibrary loan but it hasn’t arrived yet, don’t worry—just explain that in your paragraph.

#### Some Rules

- You must use a different search method for each of your three sources.
- At least two of your three items must come from a *print* journal, book, or edited collection.

#### Some Search Tools

Bibliographical Databases. These usually don’t have full-text options, but they turn up a lot of useful hits that aren’t available in electronic format. Try starting with the International Medieval Bibliography or WorldCat, both available through the Coates Library website.

Reference Books. Look for your topic in reference books like the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* or *Ancient Europe 8000 B.C. to A.D. 1000: Encyclopedia of the Barbarian World*, which provide bibliographies for further research. Both are available in the reference section of Coates Library.

Print Bibliographies. Browse the bibliographies of scholarly monographs or journal articles.

Citations. Read through the citations of scholarly books and articles to find sources that are referenced frequently or considered authoritative by experts in the field.

Book Reviews. Check peer-reviewed medieval journals like *Speculum* for reviews of monographs and essay collections. Also try searching *The Medieval Review*, a dispatch of scholarly book reviews (online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tmr/>).

Library Stacks. Go to Coates Library, figure out where they keep the books on your topic, and browse!