

Crowdsourcing as a Means of Authority Assessment and Enhancement for Cultural Heritage Description

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES



IATH

The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities

**Aggregation portal of
pre-Christian Art & Artifacts
from the Northern Periphery
of Early Medieval Europe**

Thesaurus of pre-Christian Iconographic Art from the Northern Periphery of Early Medieval Europe

An Introduction to Iconography

Roelof van Straten

- **Pre-iconographic**
- **Iconographic**
- **Iconographical**

An Introduction to Iconography

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Rationale?

- Graduate student review of existing authorities
- Domain-specific authority promotes discoverability of cultural heritage resources (Patra)
- User-generated subject terms can offer descriptive terms not otherwise found in extant authorities (Strader, Trant)
- Crowd tags provide conceptual access at both higher and lower levels of specificity (Rolla)

MicroPasts

Conducting, designing and funding research into our human past.



<http://micropasts.org/>

The British
Museum



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



UCL

Transcription of the postcard collection: Contribute

[Tutorial](#) [Community Help](#) [Overlay](#) [View on Flickr](#)

Please help us to transcribe this postcard.

The date

The message

Possible language of message Afrikaans

Translation? (Only if you can)

Address

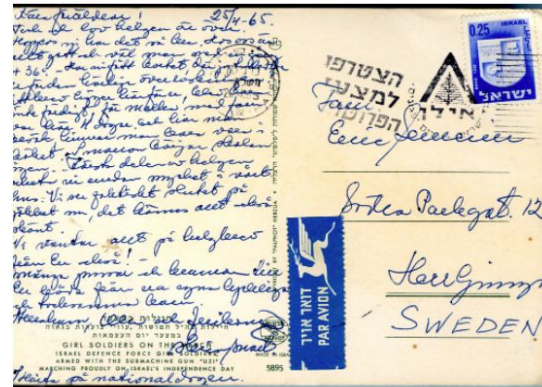
Transcriber's Comments

Add any comments you have

Submit your transcription

You are working now on task: 76748

You have completed: 0 tasks from 269







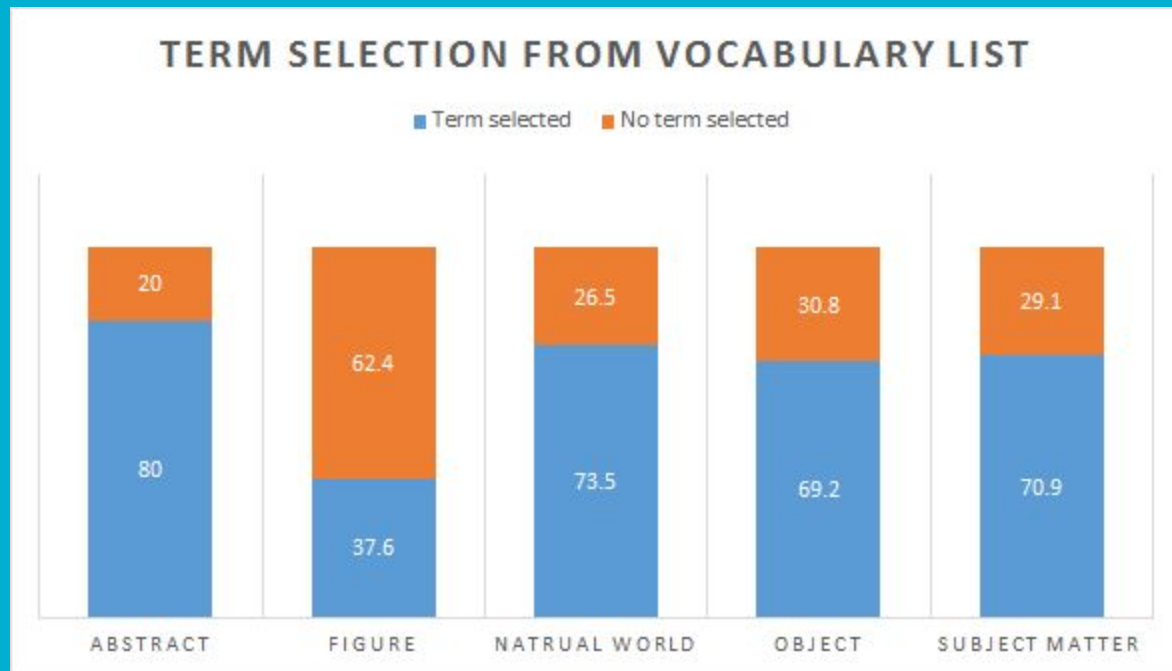


Findings

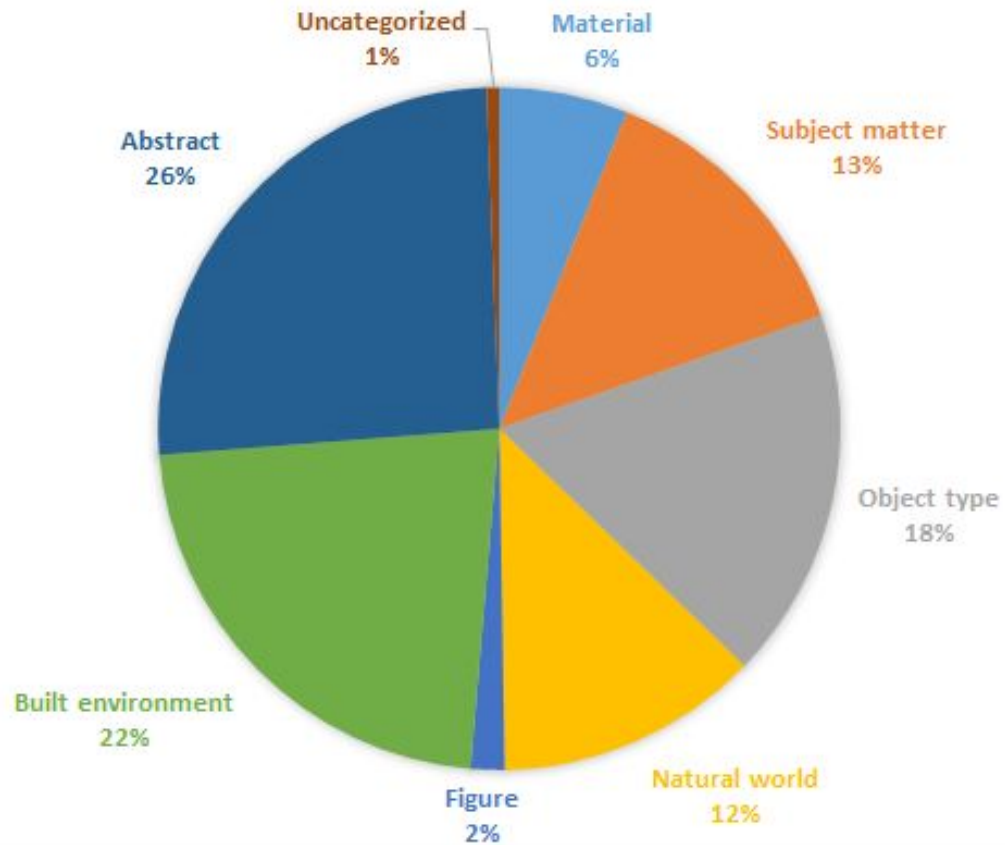
- 250 tasks
- 426 responses
- Asked to select terms from existing word list & suggest new terms
 - Conceptual areas
 - Abstract
 - Figure
 - Natural world
 - Object
 - Subject Matter

<http://crowdsourced.micropasts.org/project/andvari/tasks/export>

Responses



DISTRIBUTION OF USER-SUGGESTED TERMS



Challenges -- Images

Great difficulty in referring design to anything I recognise

Would be helpful to have a means of enlarging image.

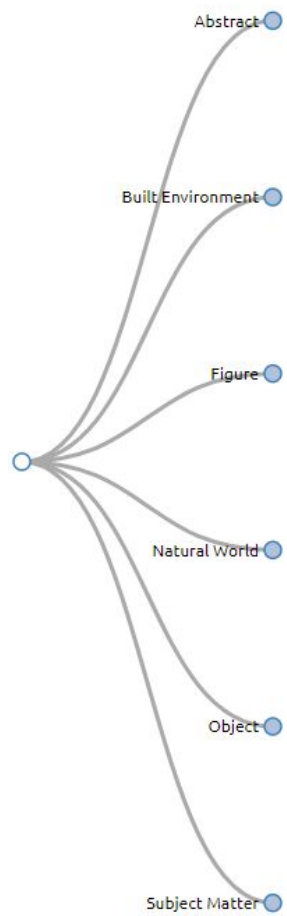
Wish I could zoom into this pic;

Challenges -- What am I describing?

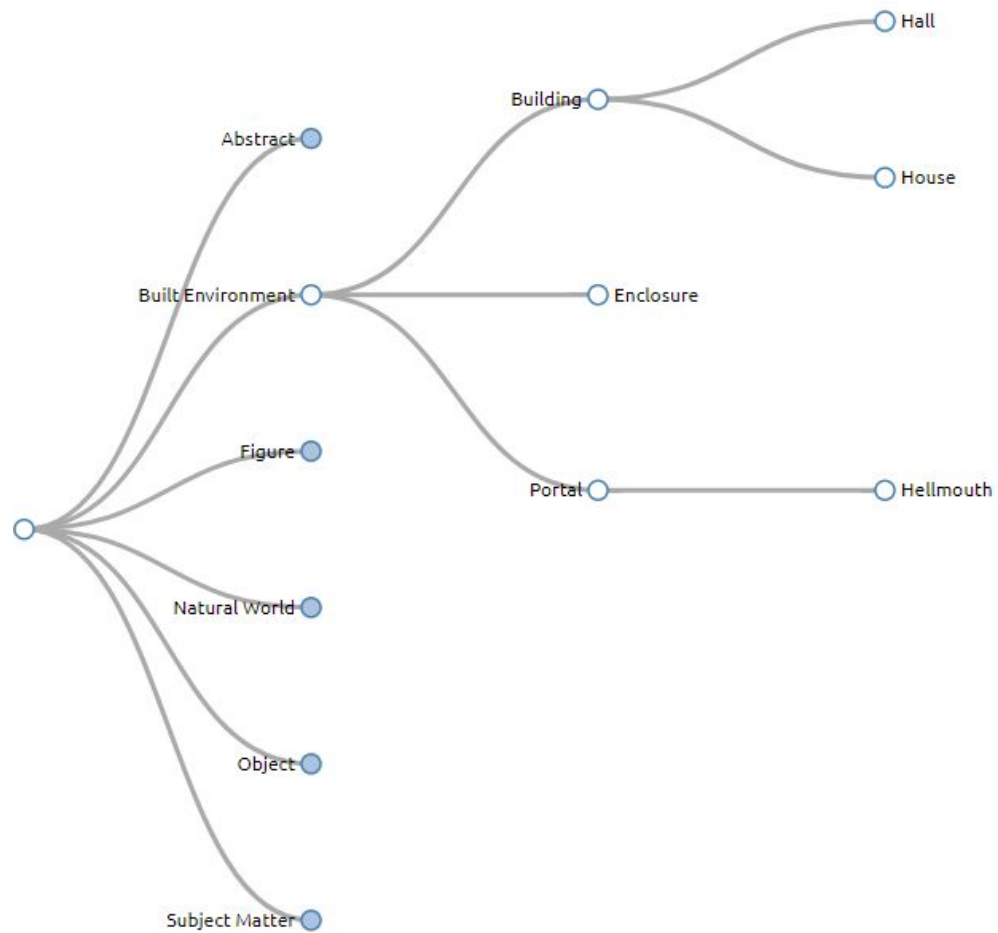
This is a high, dressed stone, standing at the end of a stone wall.
It is located in a grassy field, with a modern road nearby.

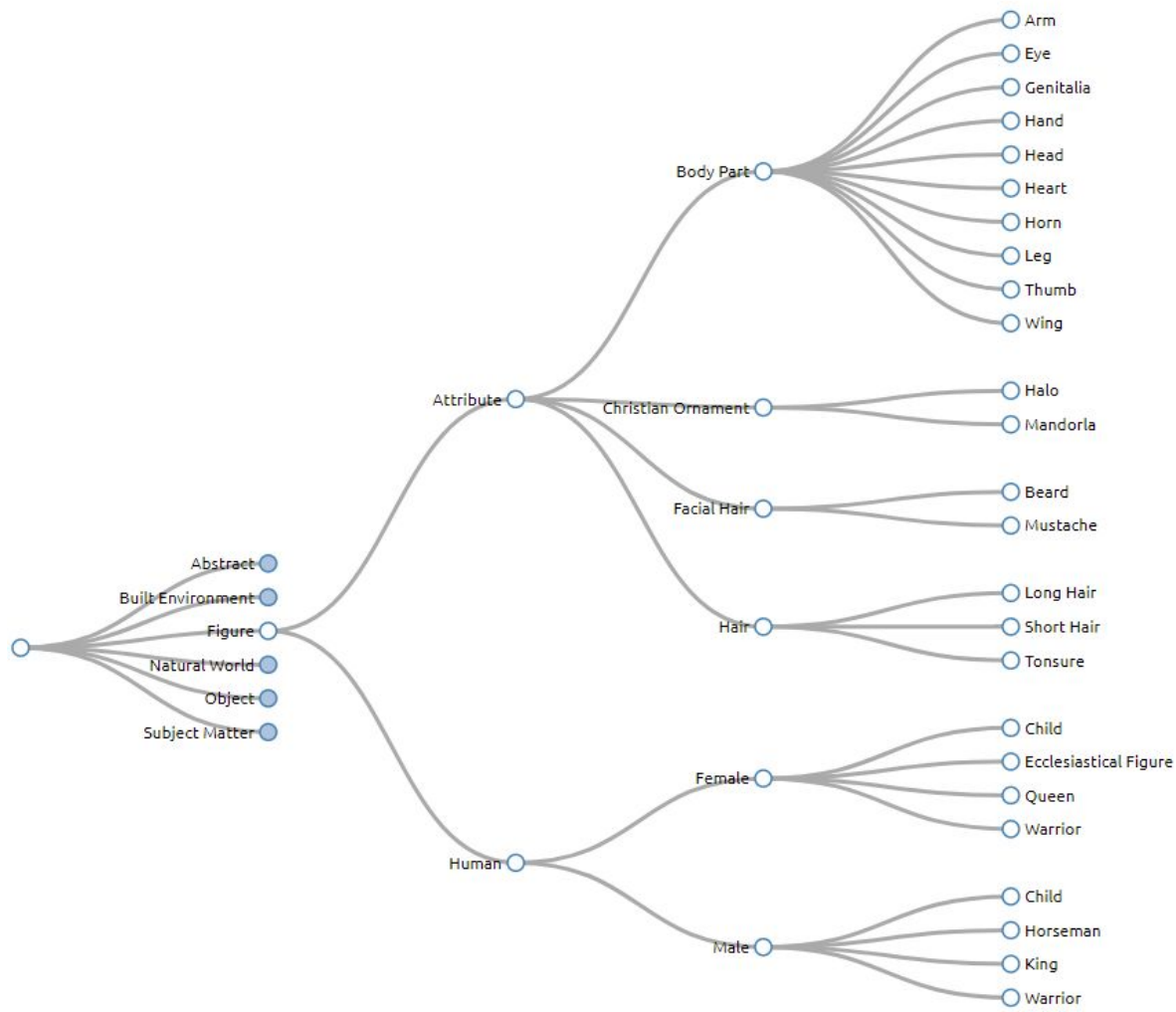
add buckle to object types?

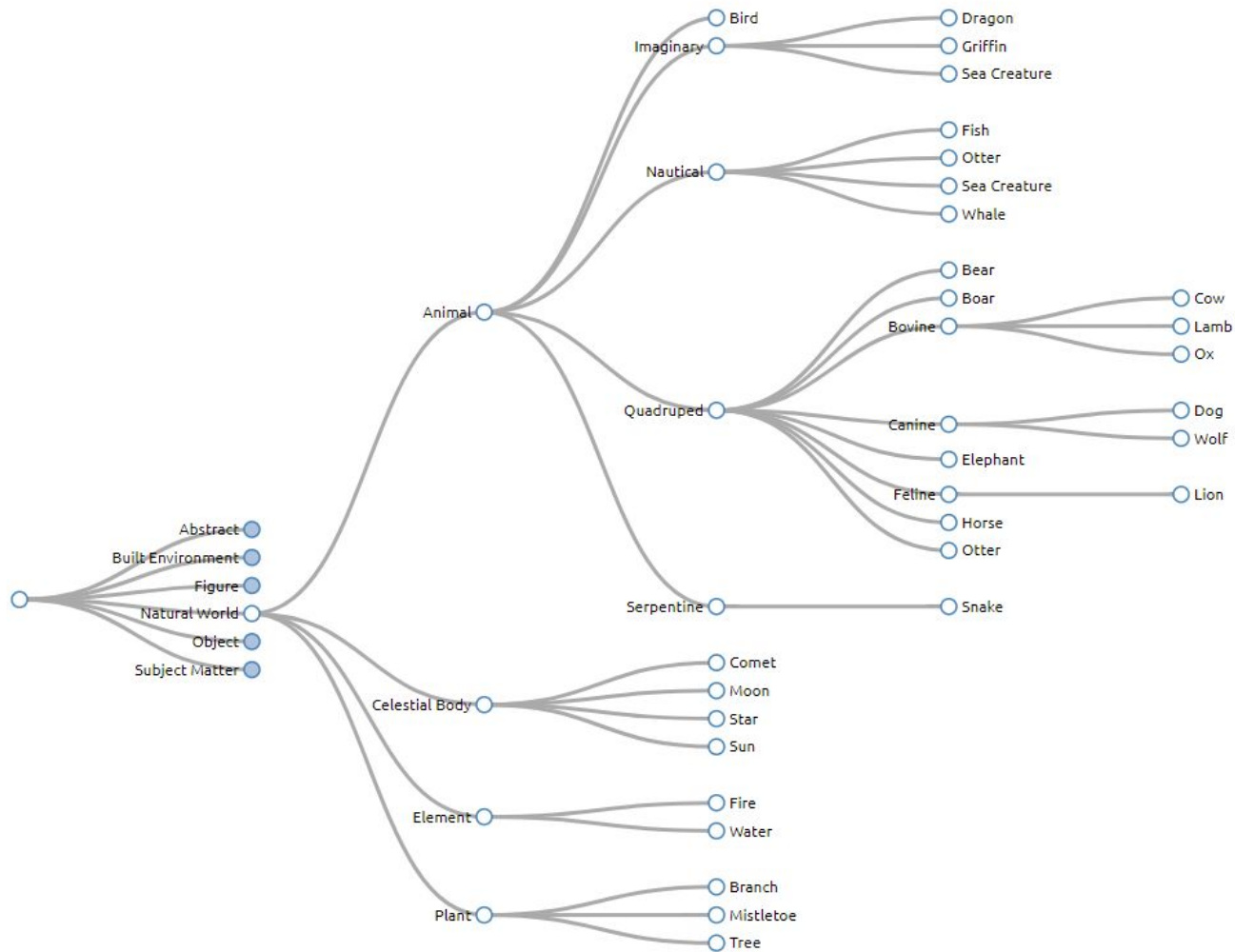
The stone appears smooth, unmarked from the angle of the photograph.

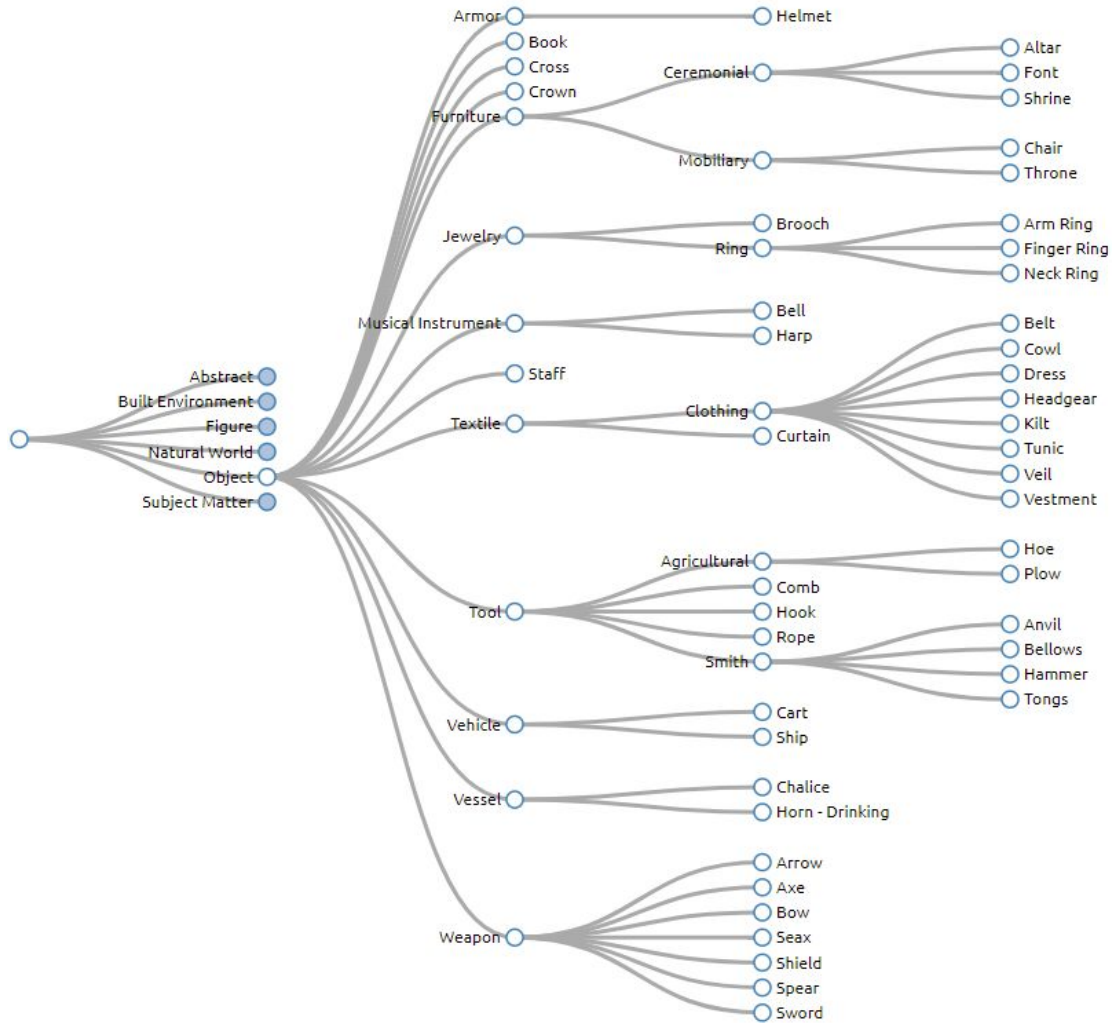


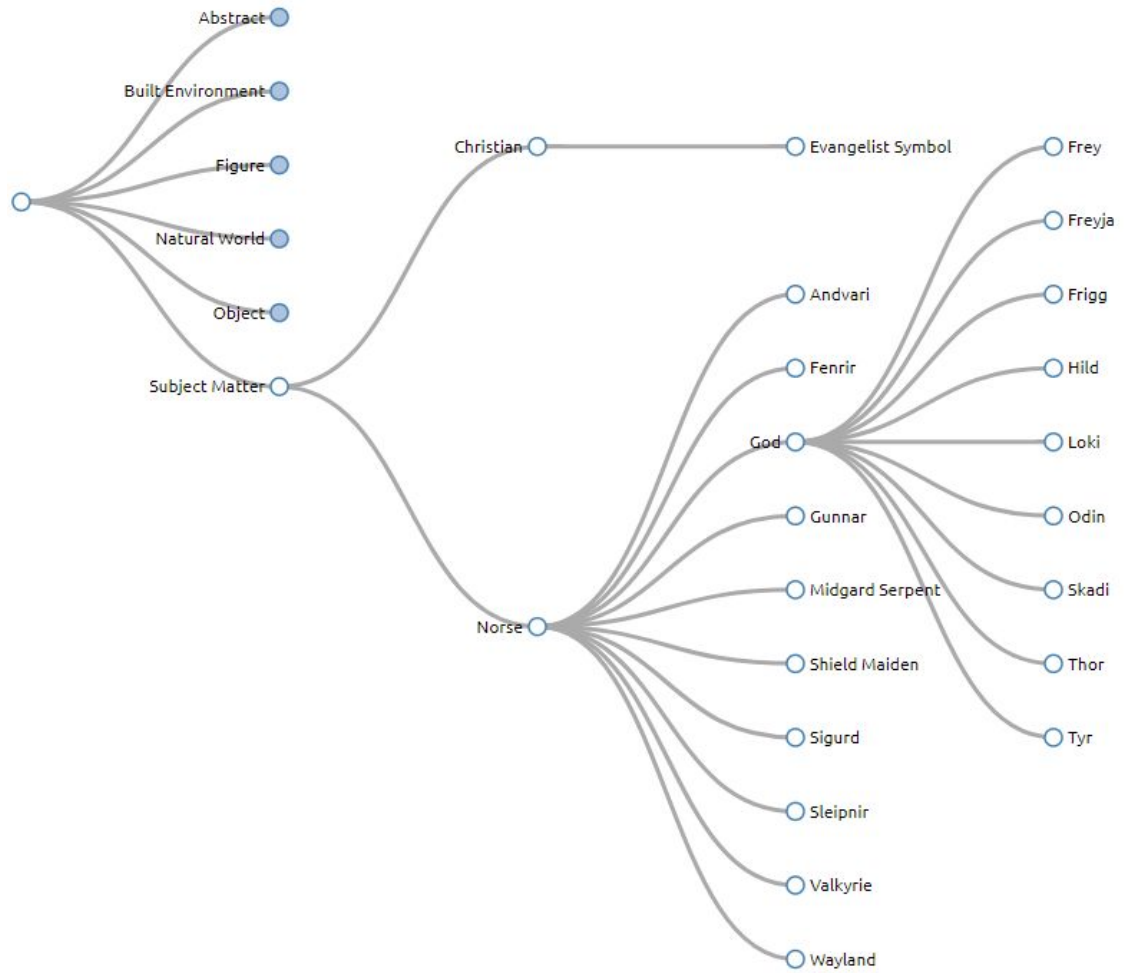












Discussion

- Term selection indicates usefulness of provided terminologies
- Suggested terms align with categories of iconographic description established for project
- Users maintain focus on object classification, not interpretive classification
- Focus on abstract iconographic elements -- patterns, motifs, ornamentation

Conclusions

- Crowdsourcing can be an effective approach towards authority creation and refinement
- Clear instruction necessary
- Expert review necessary
- Identifying effective workflows to integrate crowdsourcing

Next Steps

- Adding additional concepts
- Identifying equivalences between existing authorities
- Enhancing Andvari records
- Publishing concepts for public reuse

Works referenced

Patra, C. (2008). "Digital repository in ceramics: a metadata study." *The electronic library*, 26(4), 561-581.

Rolla, P. J. (2009). User tags versus subject headings: Can user-supplied data improve subject access to library collections? *Library resources & technical services*, 53(3), 174-184.

Strader, C. R. (2009). Author-assigned keywords versus library of congress subject headings: Implications for the cataloging of electronic theses and dissertations. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 53(4), 243-250.

Trant, J. (2006). "Exploring the potential for social tagging and folksonomy in art museums: Proof of concept." *New review of hypermedia and multimedia*, 12(1), 83-105.

Van Straten, R. (1994). *An introduction to iconography* (P. de Man, trans). Amsterdam: OPA.

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