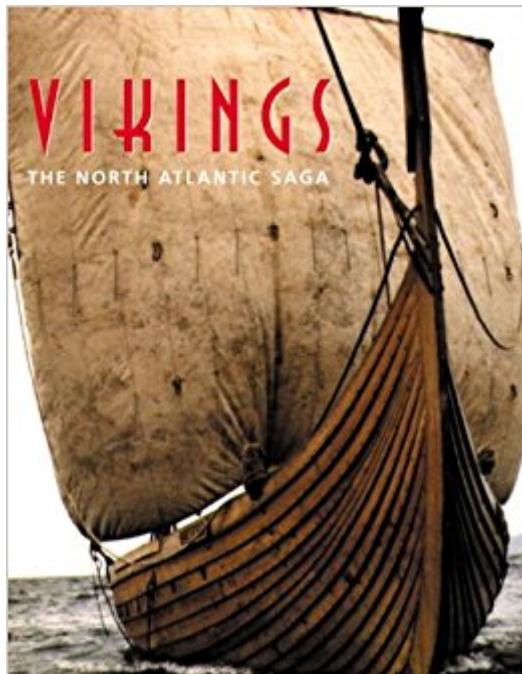


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Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga



Synopsis

Replete with color photographs, drawings, and maps of Viking sites, artifacts, and landscapes, this book celebrates and explores the Viking saga from the combined perspectives of history, archaeology, oral tradition, literature, and natural science. The book's contributors chart the spread of marauders and traders in Europe as well as the expansion of farmers and explorers throughout the North Atlantic and into the New World. They show that Norse contacts with Native American groups were more extensive than has previously been believed, but that the outnumbered Europeans never established more than temporary settlements in North America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH is the director of the Arctic Studies Center and curator in the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. ELISABETH WARD is a curatorial specialist of the Vikings exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

According to this excellent work, there's a lot more to the Vikings than the ill-informed contemporary imagination often allows. The book doesn't only correct misperceptions--it uses the history of the Vikings as a framework for a range of events in world history. Edited by Fitzhugh, the director of the National Museum of Natural History's Arctic Studies Center, and Ward, a curatorial specialist in Viking Studies, this volume is a companion to the Smithsonian's spring exhibition (which will later travel to five other cities). Appearing exactly 1,000 years after the landing of Leif Eriksson in North

America, the book first leads the reader through Scandinavian culture, art, religion and daily life and then to Viking expansion into Europe and the Mediterranean. The focus then shifts to the notorious North Atlantic raids that prefigured European expansion and settlement to come half a millennium later, to the effects of this settlement on the descendants of the raiders in Greenland and to the Viking legacy. In every instance, contributors impressively interpret a wealth of archeological and literary evidence in a lively and engaging manner; the analysis of the Vinland Sagas, the two surviving accounts of the settlements in North America, are particularly fine. Although the chapter on "The North Atlantic Environment" may tell more about lice than one wishes to know, it's a pleasure to read such lucid prose on topics that might otherwise seem arcane. Well designed, heavily illustrated and almost encyclopedic in scope and detail, this stimulating work gives the Vikings the place they deserve in the history of the world and will repay both extensive study and casual browsing. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I got really interested in Viking history after reading Jared Diamond's "Collapse" and this is one of the books he recommends as additional reading. The authors provide a deep, comprehensive look at Viking history and culture and provide a great picture for anyone wanting the bigger picture of how these people lived. The book is divided into a lot of different sections which makes it great for curious, independent readers like me. I can easily flip through the book to read about what I'm most curious about. For instance, I am most interested about Viking experiences in North America, so that is where I started. However, I jumped back to the beginning after I read all the book offers on Vinland, etc. GREAT pictures throughout the book, and I like them a lot more than I thought I would. The only reason I gave this book 4 stars is because it's really big and hard to hold up while reading it. The physical format just doesn't suit me but this definitely feels like a school book for college students. It's probably best to read this while setting it flat on the table. If Vikings interest you, don't hesitate to pick this up.

I was surprised at the scholarly focus of the articles in this book and feel I learned as much about the process of putting together a history as I did about the Vikings themselves. Every subject was covered from several different disciplines within science, not just on what I think of as traditional archeology describing articles discovered, but also looking at pollen counts or insect habitation. I was once again amazed at my ignorance of any history but that of the US and the poor job our school system does of teaching history. When I contemplate all the travel and trade accomplished

by early civilizations, I realize how much we as citizens of this world are connected rather than separated. This book made me think which is the reason I read.

Very good book on the general subject of Norse exploration of the North Atlantic. Beautifully produced aesthetically. I agree, some things are missing or not fully represented, but on the whole, a very good introduction to the subject. I would like to request, though, that the authors now turn their attention to the other half of the story...the Norse exploration of the Baltic region, what we now call "Russia", and going through into Turkey and beyond. I would love to see these authors produce a similarly comprehensive volume on that part of their trade network. Their eastern explorations are every bit as fascinating as their western ones.

Unusually for an exhibition catalogue, this volume of essay contributions by experts, each in his or her own field, amusing and hugely informative. The readability of individual essays may vary, depending on the reader's tastes, but the whole is agreeable. The editor's organization allows the reader to select a corner of his or her own interest and follow it to a highly satisfactory conclusion. The bibliography is good. On the whole, it is the best single volume of reference for the Viking Age that I ran across in months of library research and reading.

I owned this book once before and it had gotten very damaged when I had moved. I was very glad to find it and was quick to purchase it. It is a very comprehensive book on all things "Viking". The seller promised the book was 'like new' and it was! I highly recommend this book if you have an interest on this subject. Me? Love it, it's my cultural background and has very well written information.

Superb! A wealth of information, maps and pictures about the amazing navigators, ship-builders, explorers, sailors and plunderers known as the Vikings not easily found elsewhere. If you're a history lover, you MUST add this book to your library.

I bought this book for my father-in-law because he likes history books with maps and pictures but ended up keeping it for myself. I didn't know much about Vikings but was interested because I just finished a book about early British history. This book had a greater focus on the Viking voyages to North America. The photography is excellent and the text was written in an engaging manner. This is not a "history " of the Vikings, just a part of the story, but if you are interested it is very well done.

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