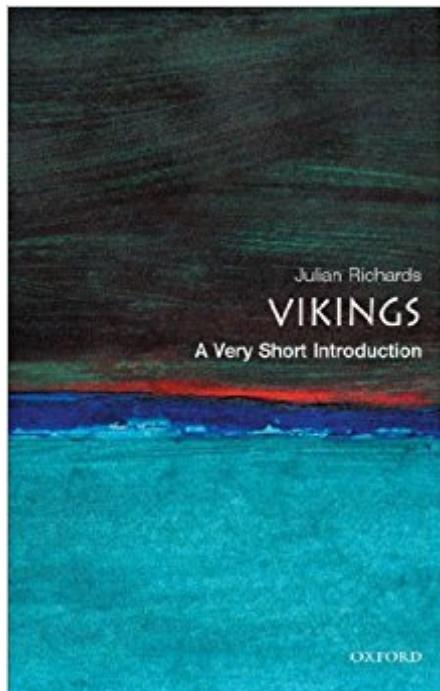


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The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

The Viking reputation is of bloodthirsty seafaring warriors, repeatedly plundering the British Isles and the North Atlantic throughout the early Middle Ages. Yet Vikings were also traders, settlers, and farmers, with a complex artistic and linguistic culture, whose expansion overseas led them to cross the Atlantic for the first time in European history. Highlighting the latest archaeological evidence, Julian Richards reveals the whole Viking world: their history, society and culture, and their expansion overseas for trade, colonization, and plunder. We also look at the Viking identity, through their artistic expression, rune stones, their ships, and their religion. The Viking story is also brought up to date, by examining their legacy from the medieval Icelandic sagas to 19th Century nationalism, Wagner, and the Nazis.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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Customer Reviews

A common misperception held by individuals today is that the Vikings were a group of bloodthirsty, village plundering warriors who wreaked havoc amongst the civilizations of the British Isles and the North Atlantic throughout the Middle Ages. In his book *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction*, Julian D. Richards, a professor of archaeology at the University of New York, provides an in depth look at the true Viking world by introducing the reader to a Viking history, society, and culture based upon the latest archaeological discoveries. Through these archaeological finds he attempts to alter this misperception that is held throughout most of the modern world. Professor Julian D. Richards begins his introduction into the Viking legacy by comparing the Vikings of the past with the Viking ancestors who currently inhabit the British Isles. He then carries the reader on a journey through the early Scandinavian kingdoms, the religious transition from Paganism to Christianity, the daily lives of the average Viking, the trials of seafaring and overseas expansion, the survival and reinvention of a Viking identity and culture, and finally backs to his original thesis, which focuses on a determination to change the world perception of the Vikings by introducing a network of traders, farmers, and settlers with a complex artistic and linguistic culture. Professor Julian D. Richards does provide some key factual evidence to support his claims on the existence of a network of traders, farmers, and settlers within the Viking communities. He provides archaeological evidence of dozens of settlements that display a growing concentration of power from the seventh century onward.

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