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# The Vikings: A History



## Synopsis

A comprehensive and thrilling history of the Vikings for fans of the History Channel series, now on its fourth season. From Harald Bluetooth to Cnut the Great, the feared seamen and plunderers of the Viking Age ruled Norway, Sweden, and Denmark but roamed as far as Byzantium, Greenland, and America. Raiders and traders, settlers and craftsmen, the medieval Scandinavians who have become familiar to history as Vikings never lose their capacity to fascinate, from their ingeniously designed longboats to their stormy pantheon of Viking gods and goddesses, ruled by Odin in Valhalla. Robert Ferguson is a sure guide across what he calls "the treacherous marches which divide legend from fact in Viking Age history." His long familiarity with the literary culture of Scandinavia with its skaldic poetry is combined with the latest archaeological discoveries to reveal a sweeping picture of the Norsemen, one of history's most amazing civilizations. Impeccably researched and filled with compelling accounts and analyses of legendary Viking warriors and Norse mythology, *The Vikings* is an indispensable guide to medieval Scandinavia and is a wonderful companion to the History Channel series. "Integrating archaeological, genetic, linguistic, and literary information, Ferguson realizes a Viking history bound to satisfy." -Booklist

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sporting monikers such as Sven Forkbeard and Harald Bluetooth, the Vikings left arresting traces in saga and chronicle, in addition to their signature destruction and massacre. Ferguson synthesizes Viking scholarship for a general audience and follows the Vikings wherever they went. Spreading from Scandinavia, they entered written records as a result of raids on Britain and Ireland in the late

700s; soon the divisive Carolingian empire, and the land that would become Russia, would experience the Viking scourge as well. But along with slaves and booty came the encounter with Christianity, among whose proselytizers numbered the fearless believers who brought the Gospel to worshippers of Odin and Thor. The pagan-Christian interface informs Ferguson's narrative, and by emphasizing experiences of the conversion process by identifiable individuals within a centuries-long direction of Vikings forsaking their old religion, the author textures the pillage that he asserts is necessary to a complete understanding of the Viking age. Integrating archaeological, genetic, linguistic, and literary information, Ferguson realizes a Viking history bound to satisfy the interested reader. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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A relatively brief academic history--a bit dry in spots, or very dry if you're looking for a popularized history. And not for you if you're looking for a pseudo-history where women warriors fought alongside men and the fictitious Mother Goddess was worshiped until the eeeeeevil Christians came along. No--in this book women don't appear hardly at all, and calling a Christian priest homosexual in a poem results not in a Pride moment but in him hunting you down and killing you. But if you want to learn not just about the usual Viking raids in England, but the settlement of and life in Iceland and Greenland, along with many fascinating cultural details of Norse life, this is the book for you.

Engaging history of one of the world's great traveling peoples. I really liked the author's focus on the long, slow adoption of Christianity, which threw the Viking stereotype into sharp relief. Some choices, likely editorial, seemed odd. For one, I found the chapters dealing with the Vikings in England hard to read because, I think the book assumes that the reader is already familiar with medieval England (I am not). I suspect that the author wrote for an English or British audience, as he goes into greater detail about Ireland. Another odd choice was the lack of discussion of the runic alphabet. In a few passages, the author used unfamiliar letters without explaining how they'd be pronounced in English. Still, fascinating take.

Well done book

VERY GOOD

very enjoyable read.

The book is a long tedious read, but ultimately answered was more than it promised to be . I'm glad I read it, because it added to my knowledge not only of history but of my ancestors, and settled a couple of long-burning historical questions.

Can't wait till the next season comes out!!

Informative and enjoyable.

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