

ISSUE 03 • MAY 2018

HUGIN & MUNIN



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FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the third issue of Hugin & Munin.

The cold long winter is now behind us and the coming of spring heralds the “land of the midnight sun” for some of our readers in the far Arctic North. Recently the Follow the Vikings partners had the great pleasure of meeting a modern day Viking leader, Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, the President of Iceland. The official reception was held at Bessastaðir, once the home of Snorri Sturluson, godfather of the Icelandic Sagas. In this issue I would like to welcome renowned travel writer William Grey who travelled in the footsteps of the Vikings to Norway and Iceland.

This year marks the 1100 year anniversary of the death of Princess Æthelflæd of Mercia. Forgotten by history until now, she was one of the founders of the nation state of England and a fierce opponent of the Vikings of the Danelaw. While Hugin flew west to bring back the story of how the Vikings explored the North American continent, some 500 years before Columbus, Munin went North into the Kingdom of Jorvik to find out about the ancient craft of Nalbinding and how the Vikings kept warm and dry in an age before gortex.

Last, but certainly not least, we hear from Leszek Gardeła from the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Rzeszów, Poland about Valkyries in Viking art. As always I will leave you with some words of wisdom from the Norse poem the Hávamál (The words of Odin, the High One).

Ben Baillie

**Now I will speak openly, because
I know both: men's hearts are fickle
with women; when we speak most
fair then we think most false.
It deceives the heart of the wise.**



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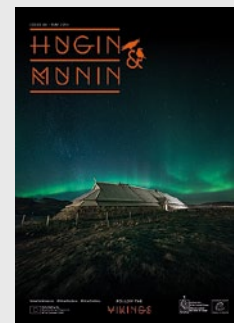
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Cover image: © Copyright, Lofoten Arctic Photography
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Hugin & Munin is the magazine for the Follow the Vikings project. This project was developed for the Destination Viking Association and all partners are members of the Association.





FIRST CONTACT VIKINGS AND SKRÆLINGS

Megan Arnott
Western Michigan University

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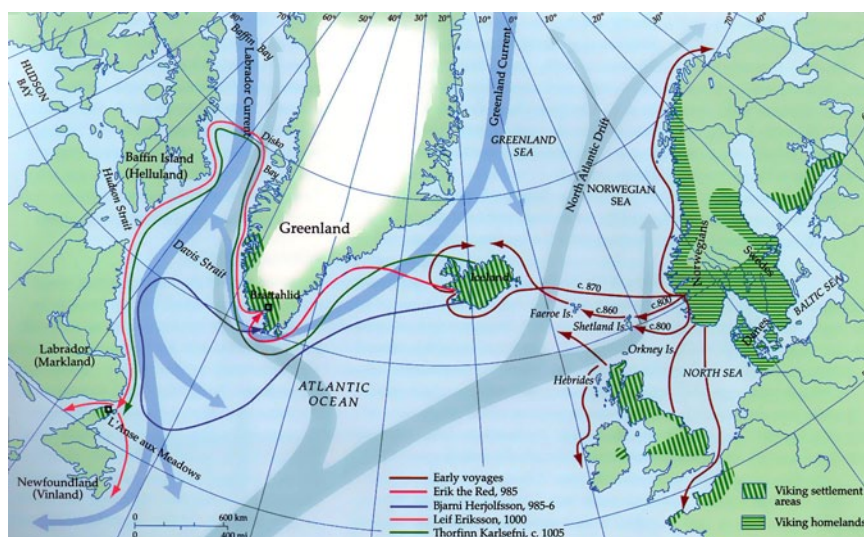
ome 500 years before Columbus, the Vikings explored and settled the North American continent. From their colony in

Greenland they ventured far into the Arctic north to Ellesmere Island and beyond. West of Baffin Island their dragon head long ships sailed into the vast expansion of the Hudson Bay and in the south they established colonies on Newfoundland. The Saga of the Greenlanders and Eirik the Red's Saga gives us a tantalizing insight of the 'first contact' between the first Europeans to set foot on the shores of North America and the 'Skræling' native Americans of Vinland.

In 1978 the archaeological site at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Following the evidence of the Icelandic Sagas, the Viking site was found in 1960. Over the next several decades it was established as one, possibly the only, verified Viking settlement in North America. The progress of migration which took people from Norway, to Iceland, to Greenland and then on to North America, was a significant event, worthy of commemoration by UNESCO, but the significance of the site for human history goes beyond this. It is on these North Atlantic coasts that, with the first meeting between Europeans and Native Americans, human migration makes a complete circle around the globe.

The nature of this first contact, however, is very hard to pin down. The Icelanders, historians of the Norse world, composed two sagas which discuss the Norse voyages to the west of Greenland; Eirik the Red's Saga and The Saga of the Greenlanders. Although they tell the same story, they are very different. A likely explanation is they are two written versions of a story or stories that were passed down orally, though that is a simplification of the transmission process. In both stories Leifr Eiríksson travels west with a crew, naming lands as he goes, starting with Helluland (slab-stone land), heading to Markland (forest land), and ending up in Vinland (vine/ grape land). After Leifr establishes a settlement, Þorfinnr Karlsefni and his wife Guðríðr lead another expedition, which they eventually abandon. The Saga of the Greenlanders tells of at least two more voyages to Vinland, three if you count Bjarni Herjólfsson, who in that saga is the first to sight these lands, though he never lands there. In Eirik the Red's Saga these voyages are condensed into the two trips.

In both sagas the voyagers encounter people they call Skrælings. The word does



not necessarily designate a certain people, but is more used like the word barbarian (or foreigners), with some of the same negative connotations. So, for instance, they wouldn't have had had one word for a proto-Inuit people they may have met in Greenland and another for a people along the east coast of Canada. It would be all covered under the same terminology, despite the fact they may have encountered Dorset, Thule or Innu people in the Arctic, and Beothuk in Newfoundland. In The Saga of the Greenlanders, contact between the Europeans and the Skrælings begins with violence: the expedition lead by Leifr's brother Þorvaldr, which directly followed Leifr's, encounters three hide boats with three men under each boat. Þorvaldr and his group manage to kill eight, but one Skræling escapes and returns with re-enforcements. In the resulting encounter Þorvaldr tells his men to fight back as little as possible, and the fighting does not last long. Þorvaldr is the only one from the party who is killed.

When Þorfinnr Karlsefni and Guðríðr

Top: Viking voyages west,
© Brandeis University

Above: First Contact depiction,
Norse Viking and Abenaki Indian,
© Ben Baillie



THE PROGRESS OF
MIGRATION WHICH
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AMERICA, WAS
A SIGNIFICANT
EVENT

return, after they had been there a year, the Skrælings approach the settlement with furs and skins to trade, but are frightened by the bellowing of the bull that the Vikings brought. The Skrælings try to escape into Þorfinnr Karlsefni's house, but he has barred the door. The saga mentions that the language barrier is a huge issue. The Skrælings want to trade their furs for weapons, but Karlsefni forbids this. Instead the Norse offer milk and milk products, which the Skrælings seem happy with. Before they come back a second time with greater numbers, Þorfinnr Karlsefni builds a palisade around his settlement. While the Skrælings are there, one is killed by one of Karlsefni's servants for trying to take weapons from them. The Skrælings flee, leaving their goods behind. Expecting a hostile third visit, Karlsefni clears a patch of land between forest and water as a place for a battle. He also places the cattle there hoping that the bull will be of some service. It is said that many Skrælings were killed there. After the battle, it is said that one Skræling picked up one of the Viking axes and struck his companion, killing him.

Another Skræling threw the axe into the sea, which concludes all mention of Skrælings in this saga.

The Eirik the Red's Saga interaction between Norse and Skræling starts with trading, and progresses to violence, as opposed to the other way around. Waving a pole from their boats, the Skrælings approach Þorfinnr Karlsefni's party to trade their furs for progressively smaller bits of red cloth. Only after the trading has started are they frightened away by the bull. When the Skrælings return, this time they are armed for a fight. The Skrælings arsenal includes catapults and a large round object, the size of a sheep's gut and black, which makes a noise when it lands. Karlsefni and his men retreat to a cliff wall where they can defend themselves. Freydis, sister of Leifr, who has come along with Karlsefni and Guðríðr, flees along with them, but she struggles because she is pregnant. When she comes upon the sword of a slain man, she picks it up and slaps it against her bare breast, scaring the Skrælings away. Only two of Karlsefni's men were slain, though it is said that they killed many Skrælings.

After the fight, again it is said that some Skrælings came upon one of the Norse axes, though in this case they do not use it on each other but try it out on wood. They are pleased with the tool until they try it against stone and it breaks, at which point they throw it away. Later, while sailing north the party comes across five men sleeping in skin sacks, all five of whom they kill. This is reminiscent of the eight men killed in The Saga of the Greenlanders, except that Eirik the Red's Saga mentions that they killed them because they thought they were outlaws, whereas no motives are given in the prior saga. A curious incident happens next, where the party comes across a one-legged man (not called a Skræling) who shoots arrows at the Norse, killing Þorvaldr. This is, again, similar to what happened in The Saga of the Greenlanders, with the important difference that in one version the assailants are Skrælings and in the other the assault is perpetrated by a one-legged creature.

Below: Canadian coastline,
© fraugun, Pixabay.com



Right:

A costumed interpreter
inside the hut, L'Anse
aux Meadows National
Historic Site.
© Parks Canada /
Dale Wilson

There is one final encounter with the Skrælings in Markland. They come across one bearded man, two women and two children. The children are caught by the Norse, baptised and taught the language of the Europeans. The children then tell their captors that their names are Avaidamon and Valdidida and that their mother is Vethild and their father is Ovaegi, a king in the land of the Skrælings. They also talk about another land where people wear white clothes, shout loudly and wave poles and banners. With that, description of interactions between the two peoples comes to an end. The saga does mention that attacks from the Skrælings are why Karlsefni and his men decide to leave their settlement, differing from The Saga of the Greenlanders, although the saga also points to the difficulty among the Norse because only a few women came on the expedition.

The sagas are interesting documents, but there is an obvious problem when looking to the sagas for evidence of the first interactions between Native Americans and Europeans. Perhaps the unipied is the best example of this particular problem: this is a detail that modern sensibilities absolutely cannot accept as historical. The medieval mind had a different sense of what history was than we do. The problem is not just with the sensational, extremely literary, or hard to believe details; there is also the problem that there are no other sources we can look to to substantiate the claims made in the sagas, so that any detail may be suspect.

Of course, this excepts the site at L'Anse aux Meadows and possibly similar sites in other places, like Ellesmere Island. Even if the details do not accord with our sense of history, it is hard not to see these sagas, detailing lands to the west of



THE
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AMERICA

Greenland already inhabited by another population, as speaking to a collective memory of Norse voyages to North America. Yet, what the archaeological evidence and the presence of the sagas show is that the Vikings were in North America, they do not necessarily show that the archaeological places are the places mentioned in the saga. Therefore, any historical truth in the saga is still a moving target. It does not help that, while there is archaeological evidence of different native communities at L'Anse aux Meadows, these do not overlap with the time period of the Viking finds, i.e. there was a native presence there both before and after the Vikings were there, but not during. This doesn't mean that Vikings here didn't encounter any natives. L'Anse aux Meadows was probably a base from which

Below:

Sunset on the sea,
L'Anse aux Meadows
National Historic Site.
© Parks Canada /
Dale Wilson

further voyages along the coast for supplies were conducted, so people could have been encountered elsewhere, but no evidence of such contact remains at the site.

In fact, not much remains at the site, suggesting that they had time to take down their settlement, piece by piece, before they left. The site was burned, but it is not unusual to burn a site oneself as you leave, for any number of reasons. Nothing about the site suggests that these people were defending themselves from another group or leaving in a rush, despite what the sagas say.

Particularly because the presence of Europeans in North America is a subject dear to the heart of colonial nations looking for mythology around the “founding” of their nations, so much has been written to try and establish a definitive place for the Vinland of the sagas. There will never be enough evidence to offer definitive proof, and we should be careful to examine our motivations when attempting it. However, many fairly convincing arguments have been put forth, including by Birgitta Linderoth Wallace, Parks Canada archaeologist at the site for many years, who identified the site as corresponding with Hóp, the settlement in Vinland in Eirik the Red's Saga. It does, at least, seem likely that there is overlap between the events of the sagas and the events that happened at L'Anse aux Meadows. It also seems likely that first interactions with Europeans would be characterised by intermittent peace (trade) and violence, lending credibility to the interactions portrayed in the sagas.

It is perhaps enough, however, that in Greenland and on the coast of Canada, these two groups could have come together, having encircled the globe and entered each other's sphere of influence.



FOLLOWING THE RAINBOW BRIDGE *'Bifröst'*

Part
One



Inspired by 'A settler's story' in issue two of Hugin & Munin, award winning travel writer and photographer **William Grey** goes on the trail of the Vikings in the Lofoten Islands (Norway) and Iceland.



ONCE THE GLACIER-CARVED PEAKS OF THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS HAD FALLEN ASTERN, HE WOULD HAVE LOOKED AHEAD ONE DAY TO FIND THE HORIZON NOTCHED WITH AN EQUALLY DRAMATIC SIGHT



A road teases through the snaggletoothed mountains of Norway's Lofoten Islands like dental floss

wound through the wonky jaw bone of a sperm whale. Its official name is the E10. I was beginning to think of it more as the road through Scandinavia's 'Middle Earth'. Over the past three days, I had dawdled from one fishing village to the next. Grisly garlands of Arctic cod festooned wooden drying racks, while clusters of bright red, stilted fishermen's huts, known locally as rorbu, teetered above the rocky shore.

The road burrowed through tunnels, arched across narrow inlets on whale-back

bridges or cut a fine line between sheer cliffs and kelp-wrapped bays.

Not only is the E10 one of the most scenic roads in Europe, but it also reaches a wonderfully quirky conclusion – fizzling out in a fishing village called Å (the last letter of the Norwegian alphabet, pronounced 'or'). Standing on a headland just beyond the village, I could see the mighty Lofoten Islands marching onwards for a few more kilometres – the islands of Værøy and Røst rising like stony warts above the lumpy hide of the Norwegian Sea.

I wondered what it must have felt like, gazing back at those Lofoten outliers, catching a final glimpse of them crouching low on the horizon as you sailed from home

Above:
Lofoten Islands,
© Pixabay.com

Right:
Cods head, Lofoten,
© William Grey

Top Right:
Lofoten Viking chief,
© Rebeca Franco Valle



into the great uncharted expanse of the North Atlantic. Olaf Tvennumbruni must have known.

I had come across the name of the Viking chieftain the previous day. A short drive west from Svolvær, the main ferry port of Lofoten, I had stopped at Borg where the Lofotr Viking Museum has reconstructed an 83m-long chieftain's longhouse.

"When archaeologists found the remains, they were ecstatic," enthused one of Lofotr's guides. Excavations began in the 1980s, she told me, when a local farmer's curiosity was piqued after he ploughed a field a little deeper one year and uncovered some unusual black soil. It turned out to be the foundations of the largest building known from the Viking world.

Inhabited from around 500-900AD, the longhouse once more stands proud above the windswept hills of Borg – one of the dozen or so Viking chiefdoms from Iron Age North Norway. Ducking inside the longhouse, with its open hearths and Great Hall, I was greeted by a woman who took me far beyond the hackneyed image of Vikings as plunderers and pillagers. "They were adventurers, traders, farmers, blacksmiths, carpenters, hunters," she explained. "Artefacts found here include beads and glass from as far as the Mediterranean." And, no, they didn't have horns on their helmets, she told me, but they were highly superstitious, shape-shifting into the spirit worlds of bears, wolves and eagles.

It's thought that Olaf Tvennumbruni was Borg's last chieftain. No one knows why he left. Conflict, land shortage, curiosity...? Whatever compelled Olaf to lead his followers away in a fleet of longships around 900AD, never to return, the voyage was destined to carry him westwards. Once the glacier-carved peaks of the Lofoten Islands had fallen astern, he would have looked ahead one day to find the horizon notched with an equally dramatic sight: the icecap-smothered volcanoes of Iceland.





There is something deeply satisfying – almost spiritual – about walking across one of Iceland's black-sand beaches. It's not simply that you might well be the only person leaving your footprints in the vast rippled swathes... It's also due to the sand itself: pure, black basalt – a sign of freshly-forged land; the promise of a new beginning.

No one knows exactly where Olaf Tvennumbruni made landfall on Iceland. Crunching across Reynisfjara on the south coast on the second stage of my Viking odyssey, I tried to imagine longships knifing through the surf; Olaf leading his fellow settlers onto the black-sand beach, their legs shaky after a long, hard voyage.





Above:
Lord and Lady of Lofotr,
© Kjell Ove Storvik

Left:
Rigging the little ship,
© Lofotr Viking Museum

Would they have scooped up the sand and marvelled at its strange colour? Or fallen to their knees in awe of the Mýrdalsjökull icecap and Katla volcano looming above them?

Like the E10 in the Lofoten Islands, the section of Iceland's ring road (Route 1) that skirts the south coast is another contender for Europe's most spectacular drive. Leaving Reykjavík, I had driven southeast, joining the dots between a head-spinning procession of natural wonders. First, the geothermal village of Hveragerði, with its strange hot-water river; then the brooding hulk of infamous Eyjafjallajökull, the horsetail plume falls of Seljalandsfoss and rainbow-garnished Skógafoss. Not far from the village of Vík, I took a short detour to Dyrhólaey where 120m-high sea cliffs, fussed over by seabirds, provided panoramic views of sea stacks rising like gnarled exclamation marks above seemingly endless strands of black sand.

As compelling as this extraordinary coastline is to modern-day visitors, Olaf Tvennumbruni pushed inland. Not surprisingly, he was more interested in fertile farmland than coastal geomorphology. According to the 12th-century Landnámabok, which describes the colonisation of Iceland, Olaf "went from Lofotr to Iceland [and] took the whole area of Skeid between Tjorsá and Sandlækjar".

The farm Ólafsvellir still exists. Backtracking towards Reykjavík, I drove north on Route 30, delving into a landscape of green fields grazed by wind-tussled Icelandic ponies. Mt Hekla, one of Iceland's most active volcanoes, rose defiantly in the west.

Olaf Tvennumbruni wasn't the first Norseman to step foot on Iceland. Even before the officially recognised settlement date of 874, the Landnámabok credits Naddoddr as the first Viking to venture ashore. Around 860, he was followed by Garðar Svavarsson who went full circle, circumnavigating Iceland and proving that it was, indeed, an island. Next came Flóki Vilgerðarson who toughed it out in the West Fjords for a harsh winter before returning to Norway. It was Ingólfur Arnarson who established the first permanent homestead in what is now Reykjavík. Within 60 years of his arrival, most of the fertile land in the southwest had been claimed, and some 1,500 farms had taken root in the Land of Fire and Ice.

Not that Iceland cured the Viking wanderlust. Greenland and Newfoundland still lay beyond the horizon. Another voyage. And another story.

FOLLOW IN THE TRACKS OF THE VIKINGS



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Follow the Vikings roadshow,
Copenhagen, Denmark,
© Mathias Vejerslev,
Follow the Vikings

follow the vikings



Welcome to our Instagram feature. We have selected a few photos from around the Viking world for you to enjoy. We would like you, our readers, to follow us on Instagram and tag your viking-themed photos with **#followthevikings**. We will then repost and publish the best of them on our Instagram account and in future issues of the magazine.







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#followthevikings

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Hnefatl game artefacts excavated at Dorestad, Holland
Rebeca Franco Valle | 4 The dawn of Viking York, Jorvik Viking festival, England
© York Archaeological Trust |
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© Gudvangen Viking Valley | 5 Oseberg ship, Viking Ship Museum, Oslo, Norway
Rebeca Franco Valle |
| 3 The Dragon Slayer sword sculpture, Waterford, Ireland
© Waterford Treasures | 6 Feeding time at Gunnesgård, Sweden
© Follow the Vikings, Frank Bradford |



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6

ATHLETIC



LADY OF THE MERCIANS, HAMMER OF THE DANELAW

Joanna Arman



Warrior queens have always played a major part in British history, from Boudica's rebellion against the legions of Rome in 60

AD to Queen Elizabeth I's defiant stand against the Spanish Armada in 1588 AD, but almost forgotten by history are the exploits of King Alfred the Great's eldest daughter in the forging of the nation state of England. This is the story of Æthelflæd "Lady of the Mercians, hammer of the Danelaw". On the feast of Twelfth Night (6th January), 878 England was lost. At least, that must have been how it appeared when the last King of the last Kingdom of the Anglo Saxons not to have fallen under Danish domination fled for his life into the night. Taken by surprise at his Hall in Chippenham by his nemesis Guthrum as the Christmas festivities were ending, King Alfred and his family barely escaped with their lives.

With them was his eldest daughter, Æthelflæd, only eight or nine years old. We can only imagine the confusion and terror the little girl experienced at the sudden and violent upheaval of her family from their home, in fear of their very lives. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that her father made a spectacular recovery only a few months later when he defeated Guthrum at the Battle of Edington.

At the time though, the outcome could not have been obvious and it is not hard to imagine that the events at Chippenham left an indelible mark on Æthelflæd. However, her father's recovery of his kingdom was to have a more obvious impact on her future. For the first forty years of her life, Æthelflæd was to all intents and purposes, a typical Anglo-Saxon royal woman, albeit one living

during a remarkable and dramatic period of war and upheaval.

She married c.886 Æthelred, Lord of the Mercians, a seasoned warrior and respected leader, and an important ally of her father. By the time of their marriage, the Kingdom of Mercia had been slashed in half by the incursions of the Vikings, who had settled in the North and West of the Kingdom, forming parts of the Danelaw the area known as the Five Boroughs.

In modern times, a legend developed that Æthelflæd's wedding party was attacked on the way to Mercia, and the resourceful young woman (16 or 17), successfully took charge of the effort to fight them off by making use of a convenient local hillfort. There is no evidence for this story: but we do know several things about the teenage girl who left her homeland to become consort to the ruler of Mercia.

She had at least a basic level of education, and may well have had the opportunity to read translated books her father sent to Mercia, as part of his famous programme of educational reform. In the year of her marriage, she and her husband attended a conference convened by her father in London devoted to town planning.

She put this knowledge to good use, she and her husband refortified the city of Worcester and established a new town at Shrewsbury on the Welsh borders. Together, they also established a school in the Abbey of St Peter's at Worcester, and a new Abbey in Gloucester. Evidence is scant for most of their 25-year marriage, but charters show them regularly working making land grants jointly, and Æthelflæd occasionally acting as a witness in her own right.



Left:
Tamworth Castle

Right:
Æthelflæd statue,
Tamworth, England,

In 906 however, she emerges into the light of history in remarkable style. Irish Annals claim that Vikings from Ireland, who had been settled in the Wirral Peninsula with Æthelflæd's permission, captured the city of Chester. The people came to their rulers for assistance, but the Lord of the Mercians had been struck down with a debilitating illness, and so his Lady took charge of the efforts to reclaim the city. Eventually, all military efforts having failed, she persuaded the Irish fosterlings among the Viking ranks to turn on their masters by effecting a feigned surrender. When they had put down their weapons the English were able to kill and drive out their enemies. Four years later, the Mercians won a decisive victory over the Vikings near Tettenhall in Shropshire, the culmination of a campaign that had been waged for four years over dominion of the Midlands. The battle marked a turning point, for the following year, the Lord of the Mercians died, and the Mercians took the unprecedented step of appointing his wife as ruler of the Kingdom in her own right. There had been powerful Saxon Queens before, but they had wielded power alongside their husbands or as something like Regents for underage heirs.

Æthelflæd's experience, at her father's knee and during the period of almost incessant warfare that marked most of her adult life, made her uniquely qualified to rule in a time of uncertainty. Her actions before her husband's death also reveal an aptitude for leadership, and that she seems to have been trusted by her people. It is no surprise that in the years following her husband's death in 911 the Lady of the Mercians colluded with her brother on a campaign to re-conquer much of the Danelaw, building or re-establishing a

series of burghs and towns, including Stafford, Warwick and Tamworth. In the year 916 she changed her tactics radically, and went from building settlements on the edge of Viking territory and making religious statements with churches devoted to Saxon royal saints. She took the war to her enemies and invaded the five boroughs. Derby fell to her in 917, with the loss of several of her thegns, and Leicester the following year.



**THERE WERE
WHISPERS AMONG THE
HEATHENS THAT SHE
WAS THE INVINCIBLE
WARRIOR WOMAN
WHOSE COMING WAS
FORETOLD**

Experts suggest that Æthelflæd was known to lead her troops on horseback on such expeditions, and later sources claim she made an alliance with the Scots and Britons against potential incursions from the North. They even place her at the Battle of Corbridge (c.918). An event that is more certain is that whereby she led an army into Wales in the summer of 916 following the death of a Mercian Bishop, which culminated in the burning of the crannog (a defensive dwelling on Llangorse Lake) belonging to the King of Bycheniog and the capture of his wife, then his later submission. Æthelflæd emerges considering these events, as a leader of remarkable capability and charisma, even forcefulness; more than capable of holding





her own the traditionally male sphere of warfare. A Warrior Queen in every way that mattered.

In her late 40s, she was at the height of her power, in control of two of the Five Boroughs: some even suggested there were whispers among the heathens that she was the invincible Warrior Woman whose coming was foretold before the cataclysmic battle that would mark the end of the world. If any were in doubt, she set her sights on the greatest prize of all, the city of York (Jorvik in Old Norse), which had been ruled by Viking Kings since the middle of the previous century. In early June 918, she was in her new capital of Tamworth: where she suddenly died on the 12th day of the month in the 48th year of her age.

Had she lived, Æthelflæd could have been the undisputed ruler of Northern England and most of Mercia (apart from some of the towns and cities her brother Edward had recaptured). She easily matched and even eclipsed the military achievements of her father, and certainly of her Iron Age counterpart Boudica. Her legacy was known across Britain and abroad as 'the most famous Queen of the Saxons', and the first Englishwoman to rule a Kingdom her own right, 600 years before Elizabeth Tudor and Lady Jane Grey.

Find out more by reading Joanna's book **'The Warrior Queen'** or visiting her **Facebook page:**
www.facebook.com/jarmanwriter/



Above:
 Æthelflæd, Cartulary of Abingdon Abbey,
 © British Library

FROSTBITE

Keeping warm in the Viking Age:
The Craft of Nalbinding



Emma “Bruni” Boast
Project Archaeologist at York
Archaeological Trust

From Glaciers to Glen

Long, harsh winters would mean that survival and keeping warm was a paramount concern for many people during the Viking Age, as it was throughout many periods of our ancient past. The key to this regarding Viking Age clothing and accessory garments is thickness and layering. Most textile fragments from this period are made from flax which is turned into linen or wool fibre and is spun into varying thicknesses of yarn, ready to be woven into fabric or used in nalbinding.

The archaeological evidence surviving for wool of this period suggest that for the most the fibres tend to be very dense, similar to the fibres of the Shetland and Icelandic sheep breeds of today. This dense fibre helps in the making of warm durable items; the Shetland wool variety in particular has small fibrous hooks within the fleece. This means that when these dense fibres are spun or nalbanded with, the wool naturally interlocks, providing extra warmth and durability. Fleece would be hand-spun on a drop spindle into yarn. It could be plied for extra strength or kept at varying thickness of a worsted type weight yarn, the choice was very much down to the individual crafter. There are examples of naturally un-dyed yarn, but also yarn that has been dyed with plants like weld, woad and madder to give bright vivid colours of yellow, blue and red. Adding mordants such as urine and alum can also make the colour more vivid and last longer on the textile. Of course being able to access certain colours and mordants can denote how wealthy an individual may be.

During the winter months, it would be expected that many individuals would be wearing an under tunic or kirtle made of linen with an over tunic or kirtle made of wool. A woollen hood also may be worn over or under a long woollen cloak or coat; these layers of natural fibres are going to lock the body warmth in. Furthermore you may decide to wear items to give warmth to the extremities of the body, a nalbanded hat under the hood to keep you even warmer, mittens and socks to protect fingers and toes from frostbite.



Left: Nalbinding technique,
© Emma "Bruni" Boast

Below Left: Viking age mittens,
National Museum of Iceland,
© Ben Baillie

Below Right: Viking sock from
Coppergate, York
© York Archaeological Trust

Yarn-Tamer, Knot-Maker, Warmth-Giver

Nalbinding, nãlbinding, naalbinding, nalebinding are but few ways of saying single needle or nal, knitting. It is the Viking Age form of knitting and the fore-runner of crotchet and double needle knitting. It is indeed the historical way our ancestors used to take natural woollen fibres and craft them into items that would help ensure their survival through the winter months. Items such as hats, socks, gloves, head-bands and mittens have all been found across the British Isles, Northern Europe and the North Atlantic in preserved archaeological form.

The actual craft of nalbinding itself has over 200 different types of stitches that have been discovered across the world. The basic premise is based on a single loop, with which you pass a bone needle through. The style and thickness of your finished textile can depend what stitch you use and how tight you pull the stitch. The most common stitches used when recreating nalbanded items from the Viking period tend to be Langet, or single Danish Stitch, York Stitch or Oslo Stitch. These stitches do range in difficulty for sure, however the reason we have so many different types of stitches from the Viking Age is most likely due to the regional variation and passing down of this practical skill.

Some stitches you use your thumb to guide the needle through, sometimes you create multiple loops to create a double or triple stitch in one go, speeding up the textile-making process. In the Viking Age you would sit down with someone and they would show you how to nalbind. It would become a learnt skill that may develop different nuances as the craft changes the items. Even if a stitch is messed up, we have examples of pieces of textile where the crafter has simply just turned the item inside out and started again; using what would be considered the reserve of the textile. Nalbinding is a very tactile and intuitive craft; if you mess up a stitch you're basically creating a whole new one! It's meant to be adaptable and unique depending on who uses it, but with the ultimate aim of warmth.

There is no evidence to suggest that this is purely a female craft during the Viking Age. Men, women and children would and could be taught this skill, just as with many survival crafts that were taught in the homestead during this period. There are of course examples of social variations dependant on status. There has been found a surviving gold silk and nalbanded cap in Germany which is said to have belonged to St Simeon in the 10th Century period and acted as a reliquary item to cure pilgrims of headaches used through to the 13th Century. Other discoveries have been a silk, tablet woven and gold nalbanded head-band or hlad found preserved in Denmark, showing that this everyday craft is being used by the elite, to show their status and wealth by nalbinding using other materials like silk and gold.

The craft and technology of the people living in the Viking Age is well practiced and taught by those who immerse themselves in living history. Craft re-enactment or experimental archaeology enables such insights in how to make these items from the past. Whether you are academic, seeking deeper insights into the social implications and developments of such a craft, or a member of the public who wants to just understand how the craft is done and give it a go for yourself. Nalbinding is a skill that although ancient has wonderful uses in the modern world. It can benefit everyone. To learn something new, make something yourself and share that with like-minded people is a wonderful mentality when attempting to bring archaeology and heritage to life.



Find out more in Emma's new book 'Nalbinding for Beginners', which can also be purchased along with a starter kit containing wool and a bone nalbinding needle. www.etsy.com/uk/listing/582542024/nalbinding-for-beginners-book-by-emma



MYTHS IN METAL

Armed Females
in the Art of the Viking Age

Leszek Gardela

Institute of Archaeology,
University of Rzeszów,
Poland

S

candinavian metalwork of the Viking Age attracts the modern eye with its remarkable attention to detail and intricate

symbolism. Images of humans, animals and supernatural creatures, skillfully depicted on brooches, pendants, amulets and other small portable objects, have the uncanny capacity to lead us into the world of past worldviews, stories and myths from over one thousand years ago.

Jewellery made of silver, copper alloy and gold is discovered by archaeologists in various contexts. We find it in graves, where it adorned the bodies of the dead on their last journey to the afterlife, but also in hoards, and occasionally as accidental losses at settlement sites. In recent years, the number of metal finds – especially those depicting anthropomorphic characters – has increased dramatically as a result of metal detecting in Scandinavia and England. Some of these discoveries shed a completely new light on Norse societies and force us to revise our preconceptions about their pre-Christian worldviews and beliefs. Among the most interesting new finds are small figurines that appear to depict armed females – in academic and popular imagination they are often regarded as representations of valkyries or, alternatively, as portrayals of real women who actively engaged in military activities in the Viking Age. This paper will revise these ideas and offer some new interpretations of this fascinating group of objects.

The rider and the standing figure

Around 20 examples of so-called 'valkyrie figurines' have been found in Denmark, England and Poland. Most of them are made of copper alloy (although examples made of silver and with additional gilding are also known) and depict a scene with two characters – a rider mounted on a horse and a standing figure which faces the animal. The conceptual link between these finds and valkyries has been made chiefly on the basis of parallel imagery from Gotlandic picture stones, for example from Bote, Broa IV, Lillbjärs III and Tjängvide I. It is argued that they depict a male rider who is welcomed by a valkyrie in Valhalla, the otherworldly hall where Óðinn and his brave warriors live and feast until the end of days. At first glance, this interpretation might seem fully plausible, but as soon as we start looking more closely, it appears that an alternative reading can be proposed. In order to unravel it, it is essential to pay very close attention to all of the details that the figurines portray.



All figurines from this group of finds are very similar, but some are crafted with more precision and attention to detail than others. The most evocative examples have been found in the settlement of Tissø in Denmark (Fig. 1). We can clearly see that the rider wears baggy trousers, holds a sword in the hand and has a spear (of a so-called 'winged type' – typical of Western Europe) under the leg. The small elongated shape on his foot could possibly be a spur. Behind him, on the horse's back, is a round feature with a swirling pattern – this is probably a shield, as suggested by its more clear depiction on an analogous find from Bylaugh in England (Fig. 2). The standing figure is clad in a trailing garment (probably some kind of dress), holds a horn in the hand and carries a shield. On the head of this figure there is a helmet with a ridged top or, alternatively, this is a depiction of some special hairstyle. One of the most striking features of all figures of this type is a square with nine fields located underneath the horse's belly – this detail can be interpreted as a banner or alternatively as a gaming board, as will be shown in the discussion below.

▲ Fig 3. Sigurðr roasting the dragon's heart on a spit. Detail of Andreas 121 stone from the Isle of Man. Photo by Leszek Gardela.

▼ Fig 4. Fragmentarily preserved figurine from Truso (Janów Pomorski), Poland. Photo by Leszek Gardela. Collections of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Elbląg.





THE NUMBER OF METAL FINDS – ESPECIALLY THOSE DEPICTING ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERS – HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF METAL DETECTING IN SCANDINAVIA AND ENGLAND. SOME OF THESE DISCOVERIES SHED A COMPLETELY NEW LIGHT ON NORSE SOCIETIES AND FORCE US TO REVISE OUR PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR PRE-CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEWS AND BELIEFS

Acknowledgements:

I wish to express my warmest thanks to Professor Jörn Staecker who first suggested the possibility of interpreting the figurines in light of the Sigurd story during our meeting at the Viking World conference in Nottingham in 2016.

Myths in metal?

Although the majority of scholars see the scene portrayed on the figurines as a 'welcoming motif' (with a valkyrie greeting a slain warrior in Valhalla), it is possible to offer an alternative interpretation based on a comprehensive reading of all the features they depict. Instead of being a scene that takes place in Valhalla, it is more likely that it refers to an episode of a story that was well known in Viking Age Scandinavia – namely, that of Sigurd the Dragonslayer (Old Norse Sigurdur fáfnisbani). The story is extant in a number of manuscripts and survives in several variants. It tells of a man named Sigurd and his many adventures, such as the slaying of the dragon Fáfnir and the winning of the hand of a beautiful valkyrie Brynhildr (also known by the name Sigdrífa).

In the Viking Age and the post-Viking period, the most memorable episodes of the Sigurd story – especially the slaying of the dragon Fáfnir – were represented on stone carvings in Sweden and the Isle of Man (Fig. 3), but also on a wooden portal from a church at Hylestad in Norway. Remarkably, no portrayals of this story have been found or recognised in Denmark... until now.

Based on a careful reading of the iconographic features of the miniature figurines, it is possible to argue that they depict an episode when Sigurd rode on his horse Grani to claim the hand of the valkyrie Brynhildr/Sigdrífa who lay asleep within a ring of fire or – in another variant of the account – behind a wall of shields. Volsunga saga (ch. 27) mentions that Sigurd had a sword in his hand and golden spurs on his feet. His hair was long and brown. The saga also says that Brynhildr wore a coat of mail

and a helmet and that she also held a sword. After being woken up by Sigurd, Brynhildr offered him a drink.

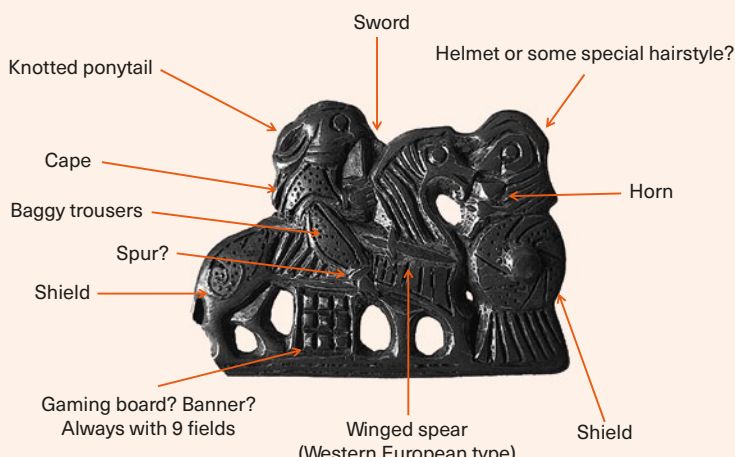
The military equipment of the story's protagonists closely resembles that on the miniatures – the mounted rider holds a sword and the standing figure wears a helmet. The shield that the standing figure carries and the strange square under the horse's belly can be better understood in light of another variant of the Sigurd story preserved in the Eddic poem Sigdrífumál. In this poem, the valkyrie Sigdrífa is said to be lying behind a shield-wall with a banner standing over it. In this light it is possible to argue that the square with nine fields is the banner – it lies on the ground signalling that the challenge has been overcome and that Sigurd has already won the hand of the valkyrie. Alternatively, the square with nine fields could be related to gaming boards and as such signal an idea of fate or destiny – in the Viking Age games and gaming pieces had strong symbolic overtones, similarly to the number nine.



Fig 2. The figurine from Bylaugh, England. Photo by Tim Pestell. Used by kind permission of Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

Although the interpretation proposed above requires a stretch of the imagination, not to mention the available evidence, it is evident that the miniature figurines and the scenes they depict were endowed with very special meanings. The fact that they have all been found in settlement contexts and in a wide range of locations in Denmark, England and Poland (Fig. 4) shows that their meanings must have been well known among the Scandinavian societies in those different parts of Europe. Because most figurines are known from Denmark, it is very likely that this was the original place of their origin. Perhaps the Danes, in contrast to the craftworkers of Sweden, Isle of Man and Norway, wanted to commemorate the Sigurd legend in their own, innovative way – instead of carving it in stone or wood, they cast one of its most evocative episodes in metal. But what exactly motivated them to do so, for whom were these figurines produced, and how exactly were they worn? The answers to these questions will hopefully be provided in the course of future studies.

Fig 1. Interpretation of the figurine from Tisso, Denmark. Digital rendering by Leszek Gardela





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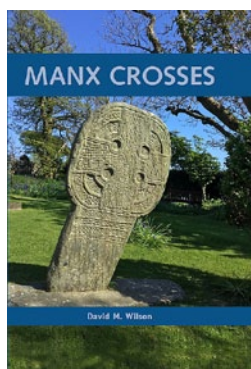


Fiction

Viking Fire

Author Justin Hill; Hardcover,
Paperback, Kindle; 384 pages; Little,
Brown, 7 Sep 2017

In 1035, a young fifteen-year-old Viking is dragged wounded from the battle. Left for dead, for the next twenty years his adventures lead him over mountains, down the length of Russia and ultimately to Constantinople and the Holy City of Jerusalem. Drawn into political intrigue he will be the lover of Empresses and the murderer of an emperor. He will hold the balance of power in the Byzantine Empire in his hands, and then give it all up for a Russian princess and the chance to return home to lead his own people, where he must fight the demons of his past, his family and his countrymen in a long and bitter war for revenge and power. Told in his own voice, this is the astonishing true story of the most famous warrior in all Christendom: Harald Hardrada, the last Viking.



Non-fiction

Manx Crosses: A Handbook of Stone Sculpture 500–1040 in the Isle of Man

Author David M. Wilson; Hardcover,
Paperback; 188 pages; Manx
National Heritage, 31 Jan 2018.

The carved stone crosses of the Isle of Man of the late fifth to mid-eleventh century are of national and international importance. They provide the most coherent source for the early history of Christianity in the Island, and for the arrival and conversion of Scandinavian settlers in the last century of the Viking Age – a century which produced some of the earliest recognisable images of the heroes and gods of the North; earlier, indeed, than those found in Scandinavia. This, the first general survey of the material from more than a century, provides a new view of the political and religious connections of the Isle of Man in a period of great turmoil in the Irish Sea region. The book also includes an up-to-date annotated inventory of the monuments.

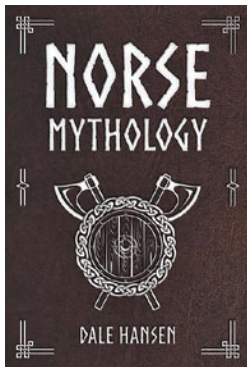


Non-fiction

Nalbinding for Beginners

Author Emma 'Bruni' Boast;
Paperback; 34 pages; 16 Feb 2018

Nalbinding is the Viking-Age term for single-needle knitting, a traditional wool craft that would be used to make woollen hats, socks, gloves and mittens. People would be taught this skill in-person and use different stitches to create varied textile patterns and thickness. This book contains 34-page spread of photographs and guidance. This book will enable you to learn, practice and develop this form of Viking-Age knitting with ease through this easy-to-follow photo guide with explanations along the way. Enjoy this traditional craft and study at your own pace. The book is also available as part of a nalbinding starter kit.



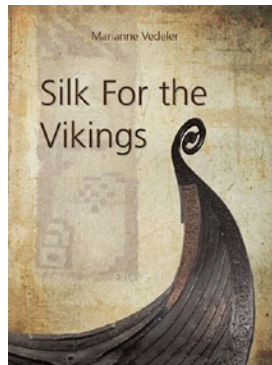
Non-fiction

Norse Mythology: Tales of Norse Gods, Heroes, Beliefs, Rituals & the Viking Legacy

Author Dale Hansen; Paperback, Kindle; 76 pages; CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 1 Dec 2017

Tales are often told marking the Vikings as no more than simple horn-helmeted explorers, infamous to abuse, pillage and plunder all that stood in their way. However, many of us do not see the parallels aligned with modern culture, and the influences our Viking ancestors provided and passed down to our own aspects of modern practices, beliefs, languages and pastimes. While there are numerous and vast differences with the Viking morality and way of life, we can also uncover many similarities that can be derived within today's culture.

Understanding the exciting and influential history of these brave and courageous Norseman will reveal a whole new world of truth. Unveil the Vikings rituals, Gods and beliefs as you travel alongside them to distant lands, partake in monstrous battles with army's as far as the eye can see, and witness the glory as the greats transcended to Valhalla. From Ginnungagap to Ragnarok, from Lindisfarne to the Battle of Stamford Bridge, from Kiev to Vinland and beyond, the Vikings have helped to shape and influence our modern world.

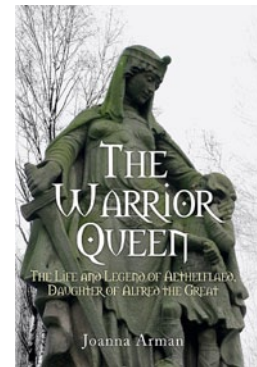


Non-fiction

Silk for the Vikings (Ancient Textiles Series)

Author Marianne Vedeler; Paperback; 120 pages; Oxbow Books, 23 Apr 2014

The analysis of silk is a fascinating topic for research in itself but here, focusing on the 9th and 10th centuries, Marianne Vedeler takes a closer look at the trade routes and the organisation of production, trade and consumption of silk during the Viking Age. Beginning with a presentation of the silk finds in the Oseberg burial, the richest Viking burial find ever discovered, the other silk finds from high status graves in Scandinavia are discussed along with an introduction to the techniques used to produce raw silk and fabrics. Later chapters concentrate on trade and exchange, considering the role of silk items both as trade objects and precious gifts, and in the light of coin finds. The main trade routes of silk to Scandinavia along the Russian rivers and comparable Russian finds are described, and the production and regulation of silk in Persia, early Islamic production areas and the Byzantine Empire are discussed. The final chapter considers silk as a social actor in various contexts in Viking societies compared to the Christian west.



Non-fiction

The Warrior Queen: The Life and Legend of Aethelflaed, Daughter of Alfred the Great

Author Joanna Arman; Hardcover, Paperback, Kindle; Amberley Publishing, 15 May 2017

Æthelflæd, eldest daughter of Alfred the Great, has gone down in history as an enigmatic and almost legendary figure. To the popular imagination, she is the archetypal warrior queen, a Medieval Boudicca, renowned for her heroic struggle against the Danes and her independent rule of the Saxon Kingdom of Mercia. In fiction, however, she has also been cast as the mistreated wife who seeks a Viking lover, and struggles to be accepted as a female ruler in a patriarchal society.

The sources from her own time, and later, reveal a more complex, nuanced and fascinating image of the 'Lady of the Mercians'. A skilled diplomat who forged alliances with neighbouring territories, she was a shrewd and even ruthless leader, willing to resort to deception and force to maintain her power. Yet she was also a patron of learning, who used poetic tradition and written history to shape her reputation as a Christian maiden engaged in an epic struggle against the heathen foe. The real Æthelflæd emerges as a remarkable political and military leader, admired in her own time, and a model of female leadership for writers of later generations.

DESTINATION VIKING ASSOCIATION AND FOLLOW THE VIKINGS

NEWS

DESTINATION VIKING ASSOCIATION

Governance Review by Edmund Southworth, Manx National Heritage

The Destination Viking Association (DVA) is a successful and thriving organisation. At its core are around 10 founding individuals representing organisations in Scandinavia and the British Isles who have previously worked together in various EU funded projects. The DVA now has over 60 institutional members - many of whom have joined relatively recently.

Founded in 2007 the DVA has, for most of its life, provided a series of networking opportunities based on meetings, seminars and study tours, mainly at the sites of its core members. Two major developments in recent years have extended DVA's remit significantly; firstly the acceptance of the Viking Route by the Council of Europe's European Institute of Cultural Routes, and the confirmation of the DVA as the "Keeper" of the route, and, secondly, the successful development of the current Follow the Vikings project funded by Creative Europe. The experiences of the last decade allow us to look forward with confidence and not to fear change – but change is essential to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. The DVA Board commissioned a Governance Review in March 2017 to examine issues including: succession planning; the role of the Board itself; communication with members; administration and project management. A working group (Denise Brophy, Ole Jakob Furset, Anne-Christine Larsen, Geir

Sør-Reime, and Edmund Southworth) reported back to the October Board meeting in Reykavík and formal recommendations will be put to the AGM in Stockholm in May.

One of the key issues identified for the DVA was the absence of a clear vision. This both informs members and stakeholders, and acts as a template against which actions and decisions can be measured. The suggested Statement of Purpose is:

The Destination Viking Association exists to bring together diverse organisations promoting, disseminating and demonstrating the widest Viking heritage, and to develop authentic and quality Viking Tourism experiences for local, regional, European and world-wide audiences.

There are high level critical success factors which contribute to our statement of purpose. We will be successful if we achieve the following:

- Recognition of the value of Viking Tourism by stakeholders and key audiences
- More sustainable and better quality Viking visitor attractions and tourism products
- The DVA being internationally recognised and respected as a key Viking Tourism body in Europe
- Positive working relationships and networks within a growing membership
- A clear and up-to-date shared and public understanding of the extent, context and diversity of Viking influence and contribution

More work needs to be done on the detail of how these aims are to be delivered and this will be done in parallel with the completion of the Follow the Viking project and transfer of assets to ensure the project legacy is sustainable.





News and Events

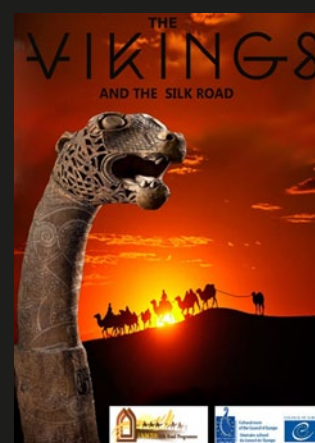
**Jorvik Viking Festival,
York, England**
2th – 18th February 2018



Every year the DVA hosts a promotional stand where members' marketing and promotional material is exhibited and handed out to tourists and visitors attending the Jorvik Viking festival, the largest festival of its kind in Europe. This year's theme told the story of the legendary Viking adventurer Ragnar Lodbrok and how York became Jorvik.

www.jorvikvikingfestival.co.uk

UNWTO Silk Road collaboration
22nd February 2018



Building on the work of the late Chairman of the DVA, Jimmy Moncrieff, collaboration with the UNWTO Silk Road programme has resulted in the creation of an online digital brochure 'The Vikings and the Silk Road'. This can be downloaded directly from the UNWTO Silk Road website and tells the story of the Viking connection to this lucrative trade route.

silkroad.unwto.org/news/2018-02-12/vikings-along-silk-road



FOLLOW THE VIKINGS

Roadshows

Building on the success of last year, 2018-19 sees the Follow the Vikings roadshow continue its travel around the Viking World. Starting over the Easter weekend in Dublin and Waterford, Ireland, the international visual celebration of Viking heritage will take a few months off before moving to Catoira, Spain and Gunnesgård, Sweden in August. It then moves on to Norway in September for performances in Oslo and Trondenes, before finishing the year in Shetland, UK in November.

The final two roadshows take place in 2019 - in Reykjavík in February and culminating in the final performance in York in March. A film of the roadshow is also being made to provide a lasting legacy for the Viking Cultural Route.

Follow us on social media to find out how you can become involved with the roadshow when it comes to your country. There's also the opportunity for the public to participate in the outreach programme that accompanies the show.

@followthevikings

#followthevikings

Roadshow dates:

Catoira, Spain **2-3 August 2018**

Gunnesgård, Sweden **31 August 2018**

Oslo, Norway **14 September 2018**

Trondenes, Norway **22 September 2018**

Shetland, UK **24 November 2018**

Reykjavík, Iceland **9 February 2019**

York, UK **2 March 2019**

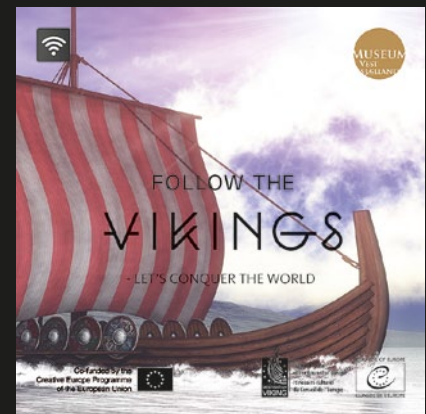
Meeting the President

Whilst attending the Follow the Vikings seminar in Iceland, project partners met the Icelandic president Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson. Various presentations were made to him, including a copy of Hugin & Munin!





Podcast



Listen to the intriguing tale about the travels of the Vikings. A radio documentary brings you by boat all the way from a small spot in Denmark to Byzantium or Miklagard as the Vikings named it. The Vikings travelled over long distances. What made the farmers and merchants from Scandinavia leave home? How did they navigate? And how did some of them manage to become mercenaries for the Emperor of Byzantium? You'll get all the answers in Museum Vestsjælland's podcast: Follow the Vikings - Let's conquer the world.

soundcloud.com/vestmuseum/follow-the-vikings-lets-conquer-the-world

COMING SOON

Havamal

In the next issue of Hugin & Munin we'll bring you news about our graphic novel due for completion in 2019. The creative team of Jouni Koponen, Ethan McQuerrey and Cat Mihos are hard at work creating a future classic based on the Viking myth, Ragnarok – but with a twist!

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS 2018

If you want to see Vikings up close, there are many festivals and events taking place around the Viking World this spring and summer. Here's a few to give you a taster!

International Viking Day, Fotevikens Museum, Sweden 8th May 2018



Some years ago, the Destination Viking Association proclaimed May 8th as the international Viking day. At Fotevikens Museum this day is celebrated in full Viking spirit! Assemble at 12.30 at the runestone, just outside the gates of the Viking town, where an inauguration ceremony will be held for the visitors and school groups. By tradition, one of the old Viking sagas will be read at Tinghöll. The same saga will be read by young and old at other Viking museums and Viking groups all over the world at the same hour of day.

www.fotevikensmuseum.se/d/en

Viking Festival, Avaldsnes, Norway 7th – 10th June 2018



The Viking festival at Avaldsnes has become the biggest Viking festival on the west coast of Norway. More than 200 Vikings from all over Europe will set up camp at the Viking farm. Only a 15 minute walk from the Nordvegen History Centre and the St. Olav church, Viking traders will be selling their goods and there will be food for sale to tempt your taste buds. Angry Vikings will entertain you in the arena, and you can also experience storytelling and music.

avaldsnes.info/en/vikingfestival/

Gudvangen's 15th Viking Market, Norway 17th – 22nd July 2018



Viking Valley, Gudvangen – in the heart of the unique UNESCO listed Norwegian fjord landscape - is the setting for the town of Njardarheimr, bringing to life the real history and culture of the Viking Age. This year's market will be an unforgettable experience for all! 500 Viking enthusiasts will come from all corners of the world – USA, Canada, Australia, Iceland and from every country in Europe.

Experiences will include: Viking wrestling, battles, concerts, storytelling, archery, a slave market, courses and lectures, Viking food and ancient crafts – nalbinding, tablet weaving, spinning, forging, leatherwork, woodturning, bow making.

To be part of the market, apply now @

www.njardarheimr.com/gvm.html

www.vikingvalley.com

www.facebook.com/GudvangenVikingMarket



Ornavik Viking village, Normandy, France every Sunday, 28th April – 16th September 2018



Ornavik is an historic themed park including a Carolingian village and Viking island, made for the sake of sharing Normandy's rich history from the 9th to the 10th century. The whole park is inspired by this era and every structure is rebuilt according to medieval techniques, with the help of many volunteers, archaeologists and scientific experts. With the purpose of

making the people of Normandy rediscover their heritage and sharing Normandy's history with the whole world, Ornavik aims to captivate everyone, adults and children alike. Travel back in time and let the medieval magic brighten your day with its tales of villagers and warriors!

www.ornavik.fr/



The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark 1st May – 21st October



Experience the Viking Age with all your senses!

Touch, feel, smell and try: get close to Vikings' life, craftwork and impressive ships. There are plenty of experiences and activities to try when you visit the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde this summer. Films about Viking ships and 'The Sea Stallion from Glendalough', dress up like a Viking visit the boatyard and go on board the Viking ships. There are holiday activities for children as well as the museum shop and new Nordic Viking food, all within a scenic harbour setting with old wooden ships and Viking ships you can sail! Daily sailing trips 1st May – 30th September Experience how it was to be a Viking on board one of the Viking Ship Museum's traditional Nordic boats, which are direct descendents of Viking ships. The wooden ships sail several times a day, for an hour-long trip on the beautiful Roskilde Fjord. To take part, you must be over 4 years old and have an adult with you. Everyone takes part in the activities on board such as rowing, setting the sail and other sailors' work.

www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk/en/





VIKING STAMPS

GEIR SØR-REIME

Eric the Red – from the Emirates!

Prior to the formation of the United Arab Emirates in 1972 and the issue of joint stamps from 1973, the seven emirates that constitute the country issued their own stamps between 1964 and 1972. One of the emirates, Umm al Qiwain issued a famous seafarer set in 1972, which included one stamp dedicated to Eric the Red.

Eric was born around AD 950 in Rogaland. His father was outlawed around 960, and Eric followed his father into exile in Iceland. In 982, Eric also was outlawed in Iceland for slaying his neighbour. Eric then set sail for what was to be known as Greenland, and explored the land. Upon his return to Iceland after his three-year outlaw sentence was over, he propagated for settling on Greenland, and together with many migrants, he returned to Greenland and settled at Brattahlíð, close to present-day Narsarsuaq. Eric died here in 1003.

The stamp depicts a Viking ship (apparently based on a model) and a 'portrait' of Eric. He probably got his nickname 'the Red' because of his hair colour.

Yet another horn-helmed Viking

From the US, we received a 2017 special cancellation for the Syttende Mai (7th of May, Norwegian National Day) celebrations in Stoughton, Wisconsin, celebrated on the 20th of May (Saturday, 17th was a Wednesday). The city is known for its Norwegian heritage and its celebration of the Norwegian National Day. Many Norwegians settled in this city, originally founded 1847.

Every year, the post-office in Stoughton, Wisconsin carries a special date stamp for the Syttende Mai celebrations, and in 2017, they chose the horn-helmed Viking, albeit they have issued several commemorative medals with more accurate depictions of Vikings.

**ISSUE 4
AVAILABLE
OCTOBER
2018**



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