



The Vikings: A New History

By Neil Oliver

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The Vikings: A New History By Neil Oliver

An archaeologist goes beyond the Vikings' bloody reputation to search for the truth, in a new and groundbreaking history

The Vikings famously took no prisoners, relished cruel retribution, and prided themselves on their bloodthirsty skills as warriors. But their prowess in battle is only a small part of their story, which stretches from their Scandinavian origins to America in the West and as far as Baghdad in the East. As the Vikings did not write their own history, we have to discover it for ourselves; and that discovery, as Neil Oliver reveals, tells an extraordinary story of a people who, from the brink of destruction, reached a quarter of the way around the globe and built an empire that lasted nearly two hundred years.

Drawing on discoveries that have only recently come to light, Scottish archaeologist Neil Oliver goes on the trail of the real Vikings. Where did they emerge from? How did they really live? And just what drove them to embark on such extraordinary voyages of discovery over a thousand years ago? *The Vikings: A New History* explores many of those questions for the first time in an epic story of one of the world's great empires of conquest.

16 pages of color and B&W photographs

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Inextricably tied up with the history of others—Romans, Britons, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Picts, Gauls, and Gaels—the Vikings have long been portrayed through their contemporaries' eyes. Not the scholarly type, the Vikings left only scant runes as their written record. Scottish archaeologist and historian Oliver takes clues from their contemporaries, burial remnants, and other cultural activities to tell their story. Instead of assuming the perspectives of the terrified writer of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, or Alcuin, or the Venerable Bede, or Tacitus, he takes the opposite point of view. And though one might question the objectivity of an author so clearly enamored with his subject, the result is a fascinating tale of explorers, chieftains, warlords, and a resourceful, stalwart people of immense seafaring prowess. Beginning before the sacking of Lindisfarne in C.E. 793, Oliver details their exploits from Kiev to Newfoundland, and the startling way they may have affected the Battle of Hastings in 1066—thereby changing the course of history—all of which makes for riveting reading. Though the book's organization is somewhat choppy, anyone interested in finding out more about these real-life raiders will enjoy everything Oliver reveals. Agents: Eugenie Furness, Furniss-Lawton (UK); Sophie Laurimore, Factual Management (UK). (Oct)

Review

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“Scottish archaeologist Oliver explores the vast influence of the relatively short Viking Age. The author has studied his sources in depth and provides a great chronicle of these nation-shapers who stretched the limits of the known world.” (Kirkus Reviews)

About the Author

Neil Oliver is a Scottish archaeologist, historian, broadcaster, and writer. He is perhaps best known as the charismatic presenter of the award-winning documentary series *Coast*, as well as his two critically acclaimed landmark BBC history series, *A History of Scotland* and *A History of Ancient Britain*. He lives in Scotland.

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