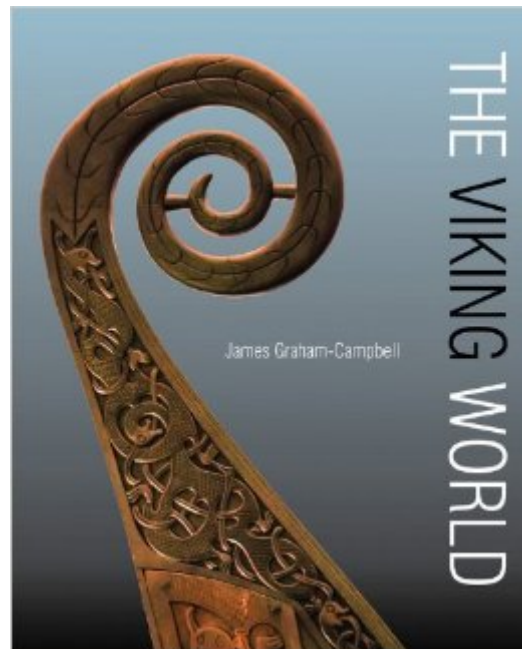


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# The Viking World



## Synopsis

For 300 years, from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, the power of the Vikings dominated Western Europe. Their voyaging extended westwards to America and as far south as the Mediterranean and North Africa. As well as being warriors and accomplished seamen, they were jewellers, sculptors and poets of great skill and originality: the forts, town sites, ships, burial mounds, carved stones, place names, sagas, art and artefacts they left behind substantiate their legendary exploits. This is a revised and updated edition of James Graham-Campbell's authoritative account of the Viking world, based on recent archaeological research, with an important chapter on ships, shipwrights and seamen from Sean McGrail. The text is complemented by a wealth of illustration, including maps and reconstruction drawings. Photographs, many of them especially commissioned, portray the brilliant products of the Vikings' culture and the beauty and harshness of the natural world they faced.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love this book. It has lots of maps and illustrations. Best of all it covers the entire gamut of the Viking universe. It is a wonderful resource for getting your head around the big picture of the Viking age. I have researched Viking Age history for years now and this is one of the BEST books I have ever found

You can spend five minutes or five hours at a sitting with this gem. Even a casual browse through a few pages will teach you something you didn't know about Vikings. A must for anybody studying

Norse culture, and a valuable addition to their collections.

-A cultural atlas presents its readers with a tremendous amount of information. Even a casual browsing through this work reveals enough information to provide the seeker of knowledge with a firm grasp on the history, geography, and culture of the efficient, effective "Warriors of the North" known as Vikings or Northmen. This atlas explains and defines the Viking Age, beginning in the 8th century and ending in the 11th century with the creation of the Scandinavian nations of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. These tall, blonde, blue-eyed Vikings also left their mark on lands from North America, across Europe into Russia -- which was named for the Rus, a Swedish tribe -- and into the Byzantine Empire of Asia Minor and beyond. The Vikings endowed the Europeans who followed them with the Viking genes for bravery, impudence, physical beauty, and intelligence, genes which Viking warriors spread widely in the Northern Hemisphere. The compilers of this work, edited by James Graham-Campbell, present the reader with a plethora of charts, maps, and captioned photographs illustrating and enriching cogent expository text. Everyone on the planet, ... will recognize this book as a valuable tool in the study of a great European people.

In general, you can find roughly three categories of books on various peoples of ancient and medieval Europe. There are simple introductions, lengthy textbooks, and popular picture books. This book is in the third category. Most books in this category attempt to summarize academic consensus and explain the vision the authors have of the subject matter to a non-academic audience. Unfortunately the format makes this very difficult and few books live up to that vision. Not only does this book live up to that vision but it does so going into detail in many areas where it's very helpful. For example the discussion of hull forms and speeds of Norse boats and ships in this book was something I found quite interesting. For example, the idea that a 21-foot long rowboat was capable of sustained 7-kt speeds was surprising to me (the normal maximum speed of a non-planing hull is  $1.3 * \text{the square root of the length (in feet)}$  to give you the max. in knots. However in this case, a boat is going about 20% above that, which speaks very well of Norse ship designs. The author suggests that the hull might assume some semi-planing behavior but if so, this would make it remarkable in that it would be a displacement hull at slow speeds and semi-planing at higher speeds. Quite remarkable a theory. The rest of the book includes similar details which should whet the appetite of folks for more answers and lead them onward. It's really the best book in its class. Anyone interested in the Viking Age should read it.

I received this book as a gift some time in the mid-1990s, but I put off reading it because I underestimated it. I didn't understand what "cultural atlas" was intended to convey, and the format of pictures, maps, and photographs intermixed with text seemed to give the book a scattershot, superficial appearance. After finally reading it, however, I find CULTURAL ATLAS OF THE VIKING WORLD to be an excellent introduction to the Vikings. The principal foundation of the book is an archaeological one (as opposed to one based on historical sources). The text appears to incorporate the latest scholarship (as of 1994), but it is not overly academic. To the contrary, it is aimed at the generalist and is quite readable. It is well integrated with the copious illustrations and photographs, which all are intelligently annotated with captions that reinforce the text. The photographs include the settings of various Viking sites, archaeological digs and reconstructions, and many artifacts. Many of the photographs are quite striking. The maps and drawings are also first-rate. There are four Parts: (1) the origins of the Vikings (including Scandinavia before the Viking Age); (2) Scandinavia during the Viking Age; (3) the Vikings overseas -- in Western Europe (including England), in the Celtic world (principally Scotland and Ireland), in the North Atlantic (the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, and Newfoundland), and in Russia and the East, including the Byzantine Empire and Persia; and (4) the decline and end of the Viking world. Although I still don't really understand what a "cultural atlas" is, this book is exemplary for an intelligent, illustrated introduction to a people or region that combines history and archaeology.

This is one of those base rock books if you are interested in extending your general knowledge of the Viking era (and who isn't after being engrossed in The History Channel's The Vikings?). The Viking World has wonderful photographs and illustrations. It does focus more on the artistic and cultural side of the Vikings.

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