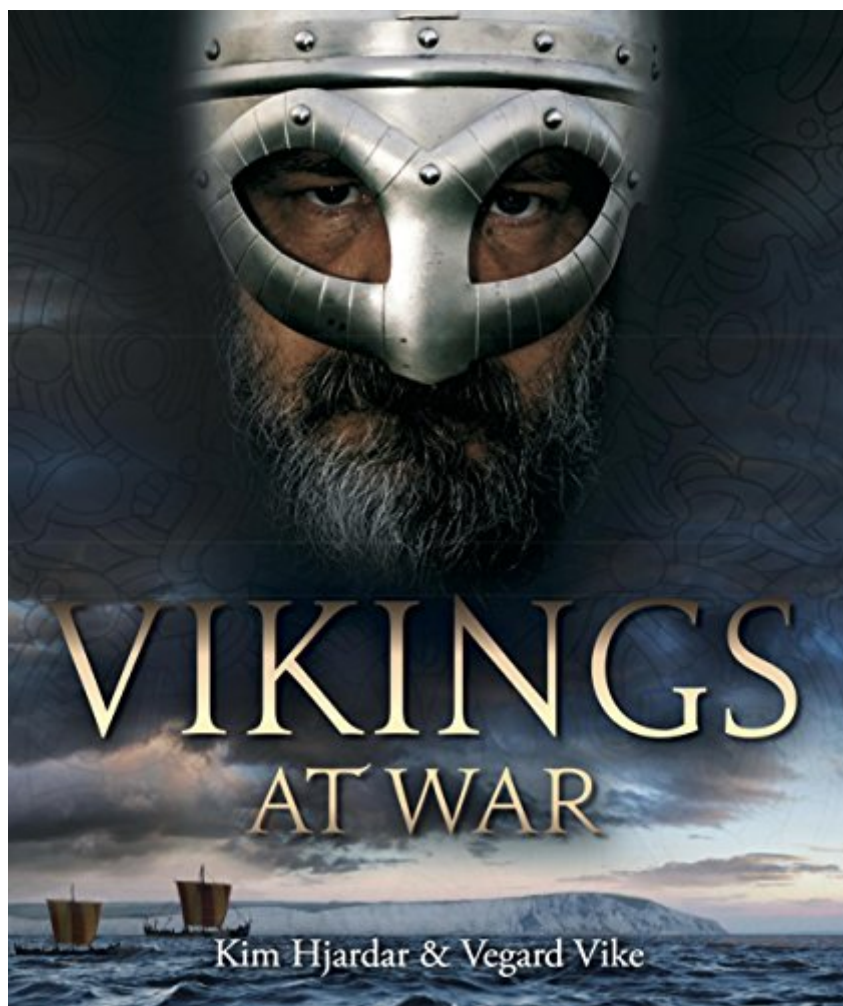


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# Vikings At War



## Synopsis

Vikings at War presents a sumptuous depiction of how the Vikings waged war; their weapons technology, offensive and defensive warfare, military traditions and tactics, their fortifications, ships and command structure. It also portrays the Viking raids and conquest campaigns that brought the Vikings to virtually every corner of Europe and even to America. Viking ships landed on almost every shore in the Western world during the 350 years that followed the introduction of the sail into the region, from the 9th to the 11th century. Viking ravages united the Spanish kingdoms and stopped Charlemagne and the Franks' advance in Europe. Wherever Viking ships roamed, enormous suffering followed in their wake, but the encounter between cultures changed both European and Nordic societies. Employing unorthodox and unpredictable strategies, which were hard for more organized forces to respond to, the most crucial element of the Viking success was their basic strategy of evading the enemy by arriving by sea, then attacking quickly and with great force before withdrawing quickly. The warrior class dominated in a militarized society. Honour was everything, and breaking promises and ruining one's posthumous reputation was considered worse than death itself. If a man offended another man's honour, the only way out was blood revenge. Never before have the Viking art of war, weapons and the history of their conquests been presented together in such detail. With over 380 colour illustrations including beautiful reconstruction drawings, maps, cross-section drawings of ships, line-drawings of fortifications, battle plan reconstructions and photos of surviving artefacts including weapons and jewellery, Vikings at War provides a vivid account of one of Europe's most exciting epochs. Vikings at War was awarded the Norwegian literary prize Æ-Saga Prize in 2012; currently in its fourth printing in Norwegian, the translation presented here makes it available for the first time in English.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Great Book

excellent

Great read and beautiful photos and diagrams. A must have for the Nordic collection.

The most comprehensive book about Vikings in decades.

this is a great book

REVIEWS "The best synthesis of Viking warfare ever produced: clear, authoritative, occasionally controversial and superbly illustrated." Neil Price, Professor of Archaeology, University of Uppsala Well illustrated with excellent maps, drawings and photos, it deserves a place on the bookshelf of any Viking enthusiast. Current Archaeology It's a magnificent piece of work. Although this is pitched as a book about the Vikings at War it's much more than that and provides a very excellent introduction to the Viking age as a whole. In short it's a book I'd recommend to anyone with an interest in the Viking period and I'm sure I shall be using it on set for 'Vikings'. Justin Pollard, Historical Consultant for the television series 'Vikings' This is a wonderful book. It is 400 colour pages dealing with the Viking art of War, setting it firmly in the historical and social context. The two authors are not only experts in the field but are also immersed in the modern representation of the era, with one being a re-enactor, and the other a producer of modern replicas of Viking weaponry...although it is somewhat trite to say "if you only buy one book on this subject it really should be this one. I cannot recommend it

highly enough. *Miniature Wargames* - Melvyn Jenkins-Welch Superb account of a race we're all familiar with... This is comprehensive, beautiful and readable, and brings to life the people we know as the Vikings. Books Monthly

*Vikings at War* is a beautifully produced book. This is a general history of Scandinavia from 750 to 1100. This is a work for the general reader, not a scholarly work. The graphics such as the maps and fortress cutaways are marvelously well done. The section dealing with Viking fortifications are very informative. The book also covers raids in the Iberian Peninsula. These raids are a subject that is not usually covered in works on Viking history. I have only read approximately half the book, so far, and so my comments will be limited to that portion. I have some serious problems with a number of comments made by the author. In the interests of brevity, I will only mention a few of the most glaring. The source for Viking society seem to be the Icelandic sagas. The Icelandic sagas were written between 1190 and 1320. To utilize late 12th to 14th century Icelandic sources to characterize Scandinavian society for the period from 750 to 1100 is really dubious. This is not the only subject for which the author uses sources from a later period to document Viking era conditions. The author discusses the possibility of female warriors and references to shield maidens. He then concluded by saying, "that warrior women would probably have represented too big a deviation from the gender roles of the Viking age." He has overlooked the DNA tests that indicate that female warriors did exist and in surprisingly high numbers. The author mentions Al-Tartushi and his visit to Hedeby. The author calls Al-Tartushi an Arab from Islamic Spain. This is misleading. Al-Tartushi was a Sephardi Jew. The author goes to great lengths in attempt to credit Danish Vikings with cavalry. He credits Denmark with knights in the 720s. At this time, Europe had not yet developed a knightly cavalry force. Frankish horseman moved on horseback but mostly fought on foot. There was no Frankish heavy cavalry at this time. At the battle of Tours in 732, the Frankish army was almost entirely on foot. If the Franks did not have a proper cavalry force, it is virtually impossible that the Vikings would have. The author mentions an incident a century later where the Vikings did achieve a victory at the River Gueule in 891 utilizing mounted warriors. However, as this was a raiding force in what is now in the south of the Netherlands, this would have been an ad-hoc force mounted on whatever horses they found in the area. There is a big difference between troops on whatever horses are available and a proper cavalry arm. This also seems to be a one-time event. The Vikings, even Danish Vikings, were infantry. They occasionally moved on horseback but fought almost exclusively on foot. These are only a few examples of the many problems I have with this book. There are a number of excellent,

general Viking history books on the market. Unfortunately, this isn't one of them.

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