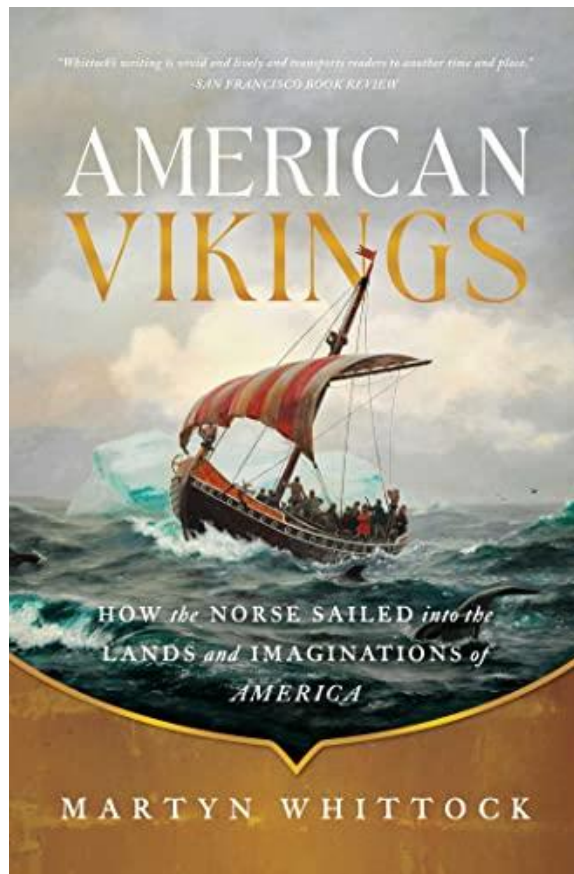


## VIKINGS IN NORTH AMERICA



WHITTOCK, Martyn. *American Vikings*. New York: Pegasus Book, 2023.

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*American Vikings* (2023) is the latest book by historian and writer Martyn Whittock, veteran in the world of publishing, Whittock has written more than 50 books, in addition to having received articles, journalistic subjects, as well as lectured at universities, institutions, radio and TV stations. His literary production is vast, ranging from Ancient Rome, through

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the Middle Ages, the French Revolution and World War II, dealing with politics, society, culture, war, religion, among other subjects.

Among the themes addressed by Whittock is the Viking Age (8th-11th centuries), a theme trained in other of his books such as 1018 and 1066: Why the Vikings Caused the Norman Conquest (2016) and The Vikings: From the Odin to Christ (2018), both co-authored with his wife Hannah Whittock. The first book dealt with the campaigns of the Viking kings for the conquest of England, starting with the reign of Cnut the Great in 1018, until the fateful Battle of Hastings, in 1066. In the second book, the theme addressed was about conversion from the Vikings to Christianity, showing the development of this process. Now, in his new book, Whittock returns to the Viking Age, but dealing with it from the Norse presence in North America and the legacy it generated more than four centuries later.

The book *American Vikings* consists of a work of simple and objective language, which does not detract from its work and its importance, even more so if we consider that the dissemination of knowledge must value accessibility, because what is the use of works of language to generate complex comprehension difficulties? In addition, in this book, Whittock addresses various subjects such as history, society, religion, politics, mythology, culture, ideology and pop culture.

The work does not have images, tables, graphs or maps, which would be useful in some chapters, especially numbers 3, 4, 8 and 9, which address the geographical issue, in which maps were important. However, the work provides the references consulted by the author and brings a remissive index at the end.

*American Vikings* is divided into fifteen chapters in which the first three are introductory in nature, presenting who the Vikings were, what time they lived, their countries of origin, their expansion, basic aspects of their culture, society, religions and myths. The first chapter entitled Who and what were "Vikings"? He was concerned to present the meaning of this word, in addition to the terms used in the Middle Ages to designate these peoples.

In chapter two we highlight information about Old Norse Religion and Norse Mythology, including comments indicating that the image we have today of Vikings associated with elves, giants and dwarfs is something much more explored by contemporary media. In turn, the third chapter, *The Viking World*, presents a historical overview of the

Nordic expansion, which took place between the 8th and 11th centuries. Even in this chapter we have our first contact with the central theme of the book: the Scandinavian presence in North America.

Finally, starting with the fourth chapter, the approach of how the Vikings arrived in North America begins, starting with expeditions from Greenland and Iceland, exploring the cold and dangerous North Atlantic, to finally reach a land called Vinland. In this chapter, Whittock was concerned with providing a documentary basis, presenting the written sources that deal with the colonization of the aforementioned islands and the Nordic presence in Vinland, which was mentioned in two important sagas: The Saga of Erik, the Red and The Saga of the Greenlanders. From these medieval sources written between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Whittock showed us the development of the expeditions that led the Vikings to arrive on what is now the coast of Canada, to the land of Vinland, discovered by Leif Eriksson, son of Erik the Red, the colonizer of Greenland.

It is underlined that the fourth chapter entitled Vinland the Edge of the World, is one of the most extensive in the book, bringing a good development of the expeditions made to Vinland, because after the arrival of Leif the Luck, around the year 1000 land adventures, other expeditions followed, coming to establish a colony there, having contact with indigenous populations in the following years. Thus, the fourth chapter covers the entire account of the colonization of Vinland as narrated by the sagas.

However, Whittock highlights an important aspect: there were people in the Middle Ages who doubted that Vinland was a real place, and this doubt is the subject of the fifth chapter, in which the author presents evidence based on chronicles from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, which mention to lands beyond Greenland. Finally, he enters into the archaeological evidence from the excavations carried out in L'Anse aux Meadows, on the island of Newfoundland, in Canada, putting an end to the doubts of whether the Vikings remained in North America or not.

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