

ISSUE 08 · APRIL 2024

# HUGIN & MUNIN



FOLLOW THE  
VIKINGS

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itineraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



# FROM THE EDITOR



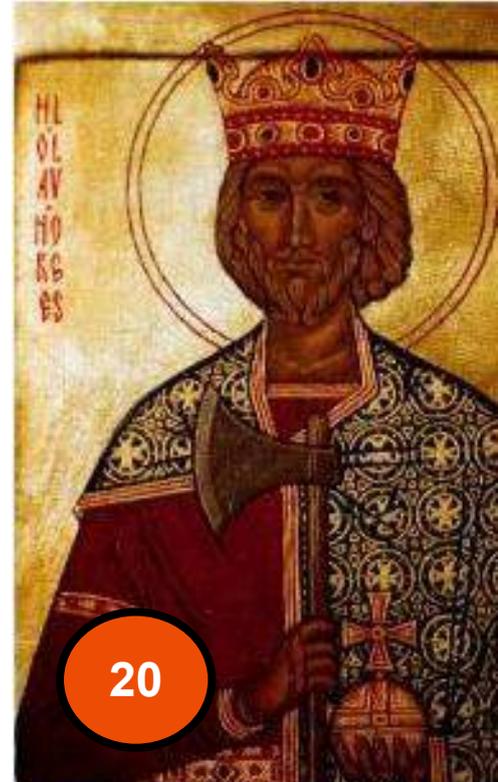
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## Welcome to issue 8 of Hugin & Munin.

In this issue of Hugin & Munin we follow in the tracks of the Vikings in the South. Our journey will take us on the greatest raid of the Viking age into the Mediterranean Sea led by the 'Saekonungar' Bjorn 'Ironside' and 'Hastein'. We will also see how Saint Olaf (Olaf Haraldson) abandoned the Norse Gods in the fledgling Duchy of Normandy and how Emma of Normandy became the Queen of the Viking 'North Sea Empire'. Odin's eyes and ears, Hugin will be flying south to Catoira in Galicia, Spain where the Destination Viking Association AGM will be held this month. Meanwhile Munin will discover the Norman heritage of the Molise region of Italy where the descendants the the Vikings of Normandy created a new kingdom in the sun. As tradition dictates, I will leave you with some words of wisdom from the Norse poem the 'Hávamál' (the words of Odin, the High One).

**Ben Baillie**

**“A guest must depart again on his way,  
nor stay in the same place ever;  
if he bides too long on another's bench  
the loved one soon becomes loathed.**



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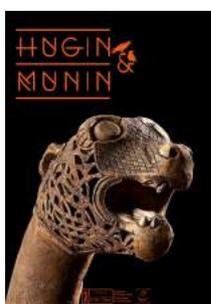
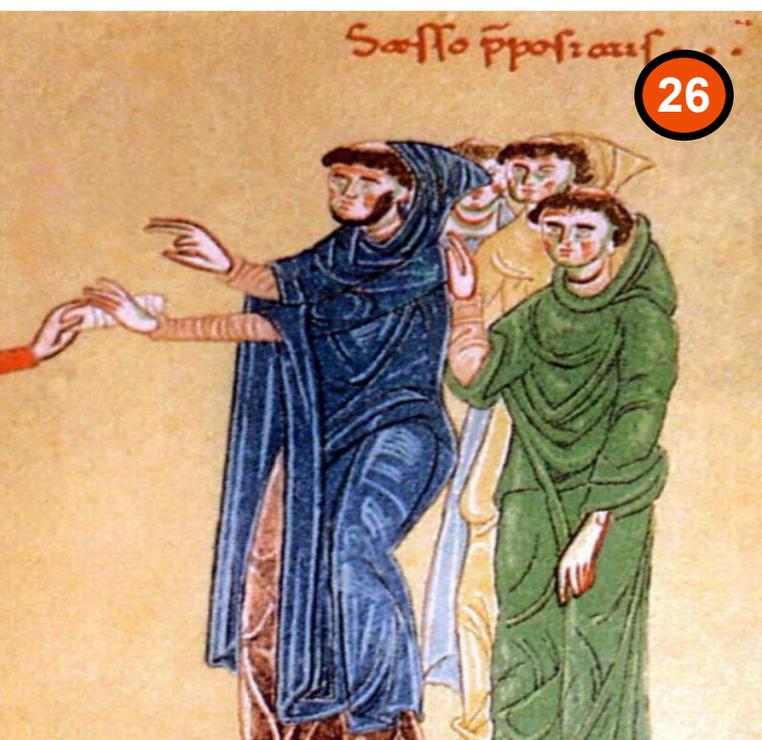
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Editor: Ben Baillie  
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Council of Europe's Viking cultural route.



# THE GREATEST RAID



# Bjorn 'Ironside' and Hastein's Mediterranean raid

By Ben Baillie

**“Ships are built, shields repaired, armour and helmets polished, swords and spears sharpened: the army is carefully supplied with weapons, Then on the appointed day the ships are dragged down to the sea, Sailors aboard in earnest, banners are raised, sails flutter in the wind and the wolves sail off to mangle the Lord’s sheep, offering their god Thor a taste of human blood”**

The above words from the Norman chronicular ‘William de Jumiéges’ offer us an insight of what it must have been like to prepare and participate in a great Viking raid or expedition. This must have been the scene on the river Seine in Northern France when two of the ninth centuries most fearsome warlords decided to head south on the greatest raid of the Viking age. With the ‘Danegeld’ extracted from King Charles II of Frankia, Bjorn and Hastein headed south to Noirmoutier island just off the western Atlantic coast of France. On this island they recruited and gathered a fleet of some 62 ships (2000-3000 fighting men). Upon favourable winds in the spring of 859 AD the fleet set sail and headed south towards Spain and the unknown.

Indeed they may have had inside knowledge or even sailors aboard from the original illfated Viking raid some twenty years before. Following the same route as 844 AD, Bjorn and Hastein’s fleet hugged the Aquitanian coastline and crossed over into Spanish waters. In the Kingdom of Astruria they plundered the Arousa estuary in modern day Galicia, before being forced to leave when Earl Pedro arrived the the Galician defence force. With the element of surprise lost in Galicia, the fleet headed south, raiding around the Gulf of Cadiz, near Seville. Both the Christian and Muslim Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsular had bolstered up their defences since 844 AD, which make raiding extremely hazardous for the Vikings. If caught, they could expect no mercy from the defenders.

After sacking the port town of Algeciras (Spain) the fleet slipped through the straits of Gibraltar and landed in force on the the Maghred Al-Aqsa Emirate of Northern Morocco, The town of Nekor was taken by surprise and ransacked.

**“The Madjus, God curse them landed at Nekor and plundered it and made its inhabitants slaves”**

The Emir sent a hastily gathered Moorish force to drive the invaders back into the sea, but they were slaughtered by Bjorn and Hastein’s men in a vicious encounter outside the gates of Nekor.

According to the Irish annals, the King of Mauretania fought against the sons of Ragnar ‘Lodbrok’ and was defeated, losing his hand in the battle.



**Above:** The imposing Arènes de Nîmes. This monumental Roman amphitheater was already over 700 years old when the Vikings attacked the city in 859 AD. © Guy Dugas amphitheatre-1807245\_1920 Pixabay.com

With no one to stop them, the Vikings looted the homes and buildings of Nekor. For 8 days they devastated the area, then returned to their ships laden down with booty and slaves. The Northmen also captured several black African slaves called 'blamenn' (blue men) in Old Norse. These unfortunate souls ended up in the slave market in Dublin, possibly taken to Bjorn's brother Ivar 'the Boneless' who was co-ruled of the Viking colony along with Olaf 'the White'. Still hungry for more adventure, the two warlords decided to continue on into the heart of the Mediterranean. The fleet now sailed up the eastern coastline of Spain attacking nearly every settlement in their wake. In the Valencia region Bjorn and Hastein infiltrated the Seguera river and captured the town of Orihuela.

The town's castle was besieged and finally taken by the raiders who used it as a military base over the winter period to strike terror inland and launch further raids on the Baearic islands. In the spring the raiders left the craggy outcrop of Orihuela and sailed towards the southern coastline of Frankia (France). The wine producing region of Languedoc Roussillon was the next region to face the fury of the Northmen. The old Roman towns of Nimes and Arles were attacked and for many of the Scandinavians it would have been the first time that they would have seen the monumental stone buildings such as the 'Maison Carée' and the arena of Nimes. The scale and size of the structures must have awestruck the raiders, relics from the power and splendor of imperial Rome.

Over-wintering in the Camague marshlands of the Rhone delta they raided deep up the Rhone river as far as Valence. The following spring the fleet set sail eastwards, this time towards Italy. Pisa and Fiesole was raided and upon hearing that the greatest city in the world 'Rome' was not far away Bjorn and Hastein decided to attack the 'Eternal City'. Mistaking Luna, now Lucca (some 350kms north of the capital) for Rome the Vikings immediately besieged it, but were unable to overcome its formidable Roman walls. As the siege dragged on, the warlords hatched a cunning plan to gain entrance into Luna. Bjorn let it be known that he had died, but had converted to Christianity on his deathbed and wished to be buried in consecrated ground inside the town. Eager to have the body



**Above:** . The Maison carrée in Nîmes. This would have been one of the first buildings encountered by Bjorn and Hastein's raiders in 859 AD. At 17m in height it stands as a symbol of power to the Roman Empire. © nîmes-11941\_1920 pcdazero Pixabay.com

interned in the town church out of hope of future patronage and pilgrim visits, the leading burgers of Luna agreed.

The unarmed Viking pall bears carried the coffin along the procession route and upon reaching the town gates they jammed the entrance open using it. At this very moment the supposedly dead leader Bjorn burst out of the coffin very much alive and handed his compatriots weapons hidden underneath him.

**“Bjorn burst out of the coffin very much alive and handed his compatriots weapons hidden underneath him.”**

Bjorn's men overpowered the guards, allowing Hastein to rush forward into the town. Believing that they had sacked Rome the fleet set sail with

their loot and plunder for home. We cannot be certain if they took the same route back or if they carried on south via Sicily and then North Africa, but in 861 AD they reached the straits of Gibraltar again. Since their raiding of southern Spain and Morocco, the Moorish Principalities had positioned their fleet in the vicinity of Gibraltar to check any further raiding. As Bjorn and Hastein's dragon headed prow ships rounded the Rock of Gibraltar they were confronted by Moorish warships blocking the straits near Cadiz.

Although outnumbered the Vikings were just as well at home fighting on the sea as they were on the land and Bjorn ordered his men to prepare for battle. In the fierce combat several Viking

longships were overrun and destroyed, but the majority of the fleet managed the break through the blockade into the Atlantic Ocean. As Bjorn and Hastein headed north they decided on one last incursion into the heartland of Spain. In a daring attack, they infiltrated the Basque Kingdom of Pamplona and captured King Garcia Iniguez I. The King was threatened with his life and forced to hand over his son and heir for security until an enormous ransom of 70,000 gold dinars was paid.

When the gold was handed over, the Vikings released their captive and headed back to the safety of Noirmoutier island with only 20 remaining ships where they shared out the gains of the raid. With the fleet disbanded, Bjorn



## BJÖRN "Ironside"

headed back to Scandinavia where he became a petty King of Sweden (House of Munsö / Munsöätten) and took part in the 'Great Heathen Army's invasion of Anglo-Saxon England with his brothers to avenge the death of their father Ragnar Lodbrok. Hastein continued raiding well into the 890s gaining the nickname 'the most wicked of all the pagans. The exploits of Bjorn and Hastein in the Mediterranean were passed down to generation after generation, earning them both a special place in folklore and history. Their raid will always be known as the greatest raid of the Viking age.

**Left** : Illustration of Bjorn 'Ironside' © Ben Baillie

**Below** : The Straits of Gibraltar, gateway in and out of the Mediterranean Sea © chengtzf gibraltar-2405953 Pixabay.com





# QUEEN OF THE NORTH SEA

**Neither English nor Viking, Emma of Normandy still ruled as queen of the greatest Viking empire**

**By Don Hollway**



In AD 1016 years of warfare between the Anglo-Saxons of England and the Vikings of Denmark finally came to an end. The kings Aethelred “the Unready” and Svein Forkbeard were both dead. Their sons Edmund Ironside and Cnut, having fought to a draw, agreed to split the kingdom, only for Edmund to die within weeks, assassinated while sitting on the toilet. That left Cnut as the last man standing, King of England. It was time for him to find a queen. Cnut already had an English wife, Aelfgifu of Northampton, daughter of a disgraced English Ealdorman. She had

given him two sons, Svein and Harold, but theirs was a common-law marriage, unrecognized by the church. And for that matter England already had a queen: Aethelred’s widow, Ironside’s stepmother, Emma of Normandy.

She was probably still a teenager, or not yet even a teenager, when middle-aged Aethelred married her as part of a treaty with her father, Duke Richard of Normandy, the as-yet unremarkable little duchy on the French coast. (Emma was a great-granddaughter of the Viking hero Rollo, who founded Normandy.) Like Aelfgifu, she had delivered her king two

sons, the aethelings (princes) Edward and Alfred, but when the Island Kingdom fell to the Vikings she had them spirited out of danger to Normandy. King Cnut needed to look no further for a queen. Though she was now in her early thirties, at least five or six years older than him, Emma was still quite the catch. The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (Biography of Queen Emma), which she sponsored and undoubtedly ordered written to her benefit, called her “a lady of the greatest nobility and wealth, but also the most distinguished woman of her time for delightful beauty and wisdom, and already a famous queen.”



In addition to having enjoyed a decade and a half or so on the English throne, Emma was half-Danish on her mother's side, and her Norman people were sometime allies of Vikings. As widow of dead king Aethelred and sister of Duke Richard II

of Normandy, she could bring an international alliance to her wedding bed. In the summer of 1017 Cnut sent emissaries to fetch Emma to him. One might think a widow would spurn the advances of her husband's enemy, but to take

a dead foe's woman as war bride was in those days hardly unknown, merely the spoils of victory. And for Emma, who had been facing the remainder of her life as a lonely dowager, this was the chance to once again be



Queen of England. It was in many ways still her duty, and she went willingly, but – well aware of Cnut’s previous marriage and sons – on one condition. Her biographer recorded, “She refused to ever become Cnut’s bride unless he swore to her that, if it

pleased God to give them a son, he would never raise the son of any other wife to rule after him.” Emma’s sons by Aethelred, the aethelings Edward and Alfred, were left out of this bargain. To regain her throne she abandoned them in

Normandy. Would-be queen Aelfgifu of Northampton must have taken word of Cnut’s second marriage with shock, dismay and even anger. Cnut, however, had not disavowed her nor their sons. Therefore she bided her time, awaiting further

events and nursing thoughts of revenge.

Though merciless as a conqueror, as King of England Cnut proved even-handed and wise. For the first time in generations the Island Kingdom rested in peace, while the king went overseas to subdue and regain the remainder of his father's empire. By 1028 Denmark, Norway, Scotland and possibly even Sweden acknowledged him as "Cnut the Great," ruler of the North Sea Empire, arguably the peak of the Viking Age. As his empress, Emma was its queen.

Yet Cnut did not forget or forego his first wife, or any of his children by either marriage. True to his bargain with Emma, he named their firstborn, Harthacnut ("Hard Cnut"), king of Denmark, with a promise to make him king of England. He appointed his eldest son by Aelfgifu, Svein, as king of Norway, and his second son Harold as earl and de facto king of Scotland.

As with many empires, all was well until the emperor died. In 1035 both Cnut and his son King Svein of Norway passed away. His surviving sons, and their mothers, immediately grabbed for power. By odd circumstance, each queen found herself in the domain of the other's son. Aelfgifu, having lost Norway to a rebel uprising after Svein's death, had retreated to Harthacnut's court in Denmark. Meanwhile Emma, in England, looked on with dread as her rival's son Harold hastened down from Scotland. Not for nothing was he called "Harefoot."

The English witan, the proto-parliament normally tasked with choosing kings, faced a similar quandary.

The rightful king was ex-empress Emma's son, Harthacnut, but he could not



**Above:** Emma fleeing England with her two young sons, Edward and Alfred from the 12th century manuscript, *Fugit emma regina cum pueris suis in normanniam cum pueris suis ut ibidem a duce patre suo protegatur* ©

**Pages 12-13:** Image by [Peter Dennis] from [Viking Warrior vs Anglo-Saxon Warrior] by [Gareth Williams] © [2017] Osprey Publishing

leave Denmark facing war with Norway. Harefoot, on the other hand, was in England and not taking "no" for an answer. Harthacnut could rule in title, but Harefoot ruled in fact. Aelfgifu soon arrived from Denmark, and together they schemed to cut Harthacnut and Emma out of the picture. They began by confiscating the English royal treasure from her palace at Westminster. In Normandy, Emma's sons Edward and Alfred received a letter summoning them to join their mother in England and reclaim their father Aethelred's kingdom. It was a trap. When Edward landed he barely escaped an army lying in wait

for him and fled back to Normandy. Alfred, landing separately, was soon betrayed to the forces of Harefoot, who had his men brutally executed and the aetheling blinded so cruelly that he died. Before Harefoot and Aelfgifu could do the same to Emma, she escaped across the channel to Flanders, midway between her sons Edward in Normandy and Harthacnut in Denmark. She had returned from exile to reclaim her throne once already, and now laid plans to do so again. Edward had spent most of his life in exile, abandoned by his mother, raised in

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His death simplified the witan's choice of kings. They invited Harthacnut to rule England, which he and Emma did gladly and peaceably. Aelfgifu, having lost both her sons and any

chance of retaining power, wisely vanished from history. Harthacnut began his reign by having his half-brother's body dug up, decapitated, and tossed in the Thames. Then, being of rather indolent nature himself, given to parties and drunkenness, he invited his older, monastic half-brother Edward to be his co-king. With Harthacnut handing out favors and Edward doing the paperwork, the pair ruled England ably and amicably enough, at least until Harthacnut dropped dead at a wedding feast. Whether by stroke, poison or simply random fate, nobody knows, but the crown of England passed to the least likely recipient, Edward son of Emma.

Unfortunately Edward's simmering dislike of his mother had not abated. She who might finally have sat securely on her throne as queen mother, found

her earlier abandonment of her eldest son coming back haunting her.

Like Harefoot, Edward confiscated Emma's wealth and lands and held her under virtual house arrest. She eventually returned to court, but never again held the kind of power once hers. (The story of "The Ordeal of Queen Emma," in which she was accused of adultery with her favorite bishop, forced to atone by walking barefoot across red-hot plow blades, and did so without being burned, was a 13<sup>th</sup> century fiction that can be disregarded.)

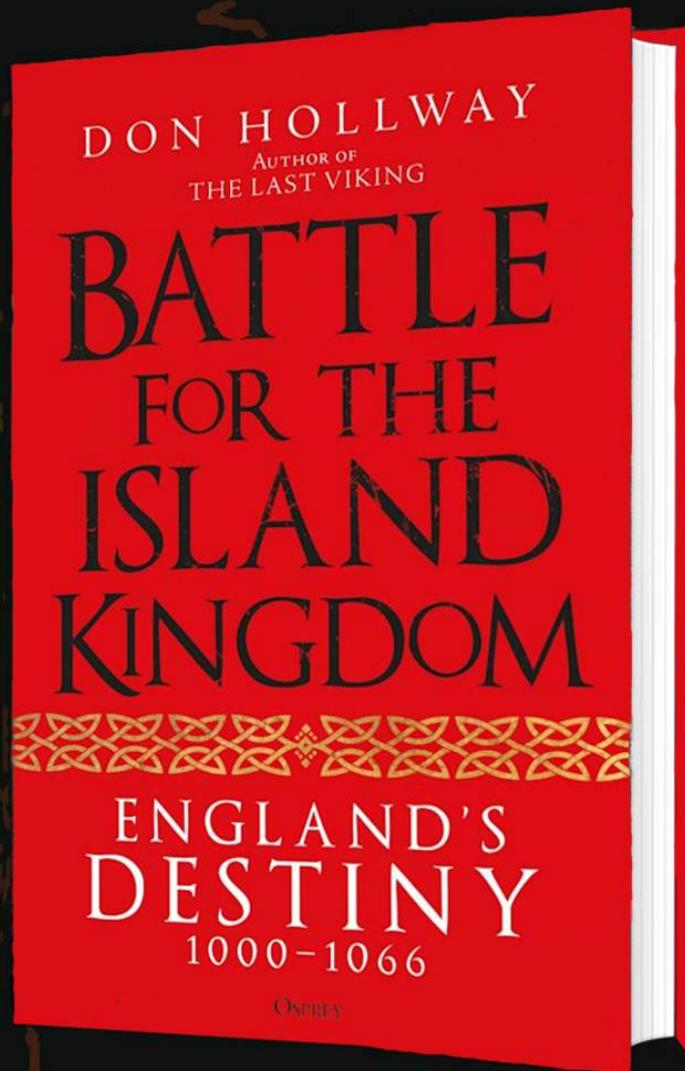
Emma of Normandy died on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1052, aged about 68. Queens were normally buried in the nunneries where they spent their retirement, but Emma was interred in Winchester's Old Minster, next to her husband Cnut and son Harthacnut, the first

English queen so honored since Ealswith, wife of Alfred the Great. It marked the end of an extraordinary life, particularly for a woman of her era. Twice an exile, twice a queen, wife of two kings and mother of two more, one-time empress of the North Sea Empire, she left an indelible mark on the Middle Ages. Her son Edward, called the Confessor, would rule Anglo-Saxon England right up to the catastrophic year of 1066, in which her great-nephew William, Duke of Normandy, crossed the English Channel to conquer the Island Kingdom. Decades later the prior of Winchester Abby, Godfrey of Cambrai, eulogized Emma in verse:

She had kings as sons and kings as husbands.  
She stood out for the glory of her issue of kings  
Unsurpassed in virtue even by the ranks of her glorious ancestors.

**Below:** The resting place of queen Emma of Normandy, Winchester Cathedral, England. Credit © Ben Baillie





“Almost a thousand years ago, the Battle of Hastings decided the future of England and half the modern world. Less well known are the six and half decades leading up to it: bloody wars, intrigues and sexual politics, in which three peoples vied for supremacy over the Island Kingdom. In this epic retelling of those critical years, master storyteller Don Hollway (author of the bestselling *The Last Viking* and *At the Gates of Rome*) recounts the clash of barbarian warlords, their rival queens, and their generations-long battle for supremacy.”

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# # follow the vikings

1



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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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3

## #followthevikings

1. Norman Rodolfo de Moulins festival, Bioano, Molise, Italy
2. Lionheart Tours Rollo themed tour, Rouen, Normandy
3. Cathedral en lumiere light show, Rouen, Normandy
4. Ornavik Viking ship, Orne canal, Normandy
5. Romaria Vikinga festival, Catoira, Galicia



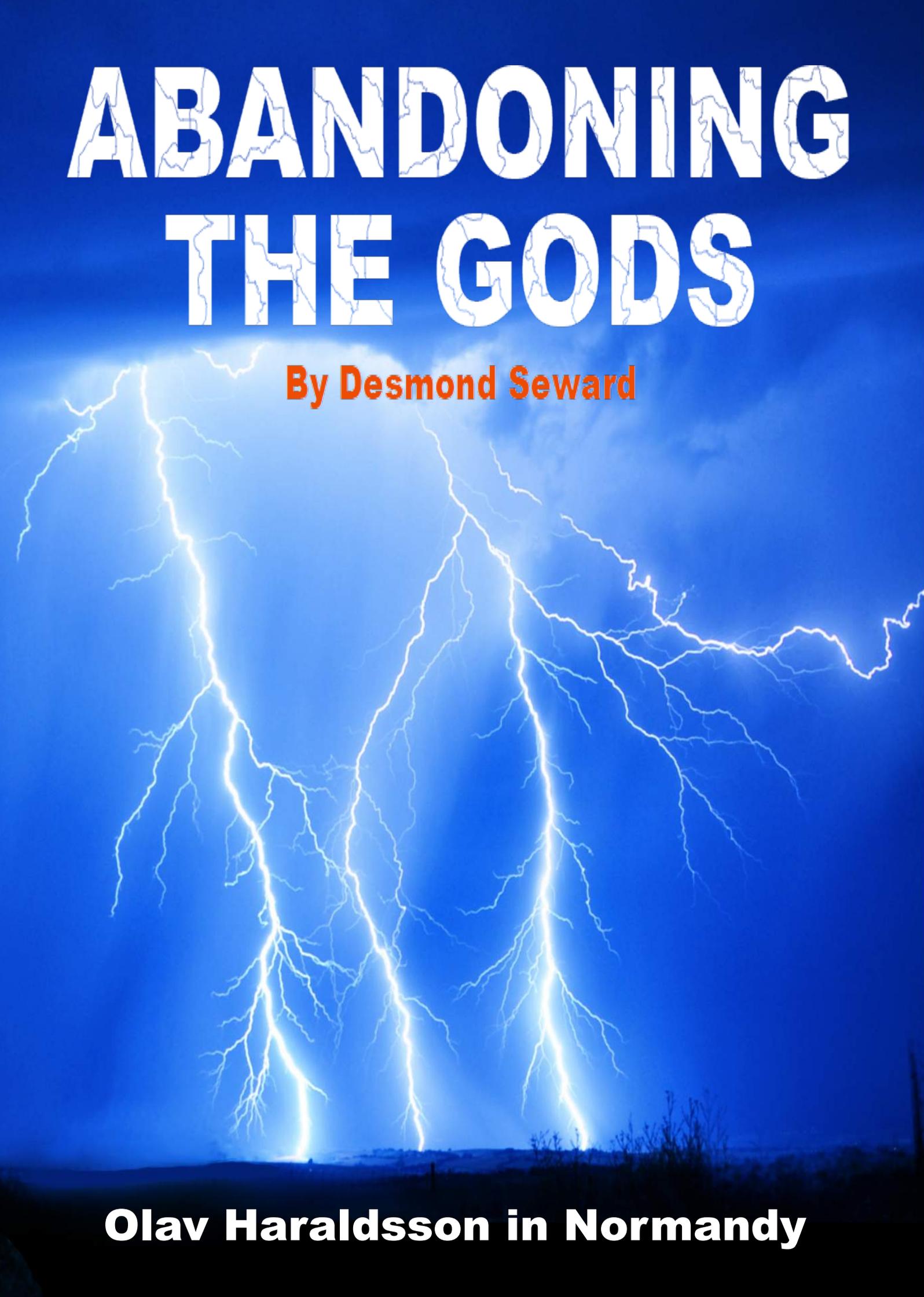
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# ABANDONING THE GODS

**By Desmond Seward**

A dramatic, blue-toned photograph of a lightning storm. Multiple bright, jagged lightning bolts strike down from a dark, stormy sky onto a dark, silhouetted landscape. The overall mood is intense and powerful.

**Olav Haraldsson in Normandy**



Snorri Sturluson tells us that 'from Ganger Rolf descend the Counts of Rouen (Roujarls) who have long reckoned themselves to be of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and they hold them in such respect that they were always the friends of the Norsemen; and every Norseman found a friend in Normandy'. Many people, including the modern Normans, are inclined to take this statement at face value.

**“Olav came in autumn, and stayed all winter in good peace and quiet”**

Olav came in autumn, and stayed all winter on the Seine in good peace and quiet'. Snorri also tells us that 'To Normandy Olav came in autumn, and stayed all winter on the Seine in good peace and quiet'. After a thinly spread colonisation in a few areas, such as the north

Cotentin, Caux and Roumois, especially on the coast, the leaders, who took over the estates of the French magnates and married French wives, had been assimilated.

Lesser men who secured good farms and likewise married local women must have become French even sooner. There is little archaeological evidence for a Viking presence, merely a single burial and a few swords and axes. The only solid proofs are the place-names, which are mostly Scandinavian in origin and Old Norse law in the Norman law code and Scandinavian words in the French language vocabulary.

By the time Olav arrived, which was a century after the conquest, Ganger Rolf's language was dying out. When a boy Richard II, who was the present Duke, had been sent to learn it at Bayeux where it was still spoken. People no longer understood it at Rouen, the Duchy's capital. The former Viking colonists of every

class now spoke French and looked like Frenchmen. Even so, the Norman Dukes and nobles were very proud of their Viking origins (the Ganger's spear was presented to each Duke at his investiture), while if it did not give birth to a new race, a dash of Norse blood produced a dynamic warrior elite that would conquer England, Ireland, southern Italy and Sicily. In the meantime, Normandy was becoming France's most powerful feudal state, its Dukes lavishing money on arming their subjects. They could easily afford to do so, as their capital was growing richer and richer from the river-borne trade along the Seine to Paris. Olav was made welcome, perhaps because of his value as a mercenary. During his stay, instead of smashing up medieval civilization he saw it in working order. It is odd to think of a Viking from the sagas wandering peacefully through Rouen's prosperous streets, entering sumptuously decorated Romanesque churches, listening to the



hypnotic Gregorian chant. He may have had the wonder of reading and writing explained to him and seen illuminated manuscripts gleaming with gold.

The chronicler William of Jumieges tells us that 'Urged by Archbishop Robert, King Olav, who had begun to find joy in Christianity, abandoned idolatry as did several of his men. Converting to the Christian faith, he was cleansed with baptism by the archbishop.'

This took place at the cathedral in the winter of 1013-1014 AD. He would have worn a white robe for a week afterwards, as Ganger Rolf had done after his own baptism.

Archbishop Robert was Richard II's brother, so it is possible that the deeply religious Duke, a Norse speaker, helped with his conversion. Another chronicler, Dudo of St Quentin, credits Richard with a temper not unlike that of the mature Olav – fond of clerics while

crushing a peasants' revolt by removing its leaders hands and feet.

Some historians question Olav's conversion, arguing that he saw Christianity in purely political terms, a basis for 'a system of gift exchange' for asserting his rule more firmly over Norway when he became king. This, they argue, was why he became godfather to men who following him in converting. 'God-parenthood was therefore perfect for reinforcing the relationship between chieftain and his followers,' and Olav was seen',,,as a warrior chieftain willing to use any means, including religion, to gain a greater following and more power.

Yet there is good reason to think Olav was sincere. A medieval man's life was so harsh that most men could not exist without the support of religion, and the old Norse faith was scarcely reassuring. Odin himself was going to die at Ragnarok while the world's entire land mass would be drowned by the sea.

Although Christianity also foresaw a terrible end to the universe, it did at least offer hope.

Admittedly, it is unlikely that Olav understood his new religion at this stage of his career. We can assume he was taught the basic foundations of belief, with the paternoster, Ave Maria and Creed in extempory Norse translations. But he could not read the Bivle which would have had to be translated from Latin and read to him, and lacked the mental equipment to grasp such concepts as the Trinity or what took place at Mass. No doubt as time went by he glimpsed more of Christianity's deeper meanings.

**Below** :Pages 10-11

The river Seine at Aizier. Viking super highway and gateway to Rouen and Paris Photo, Ben Baillie©



While at Rouen, Olav acquired a lasting admiration for 'St Charlemagne' - Karolus Magnus – the legendary Christian Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire who, as the skald Sigvat Thordason sang to Olav when he was king, 'had been the best man ever in the world'.

Olav did not forget the tales, read to him from such chronicles as Einhard's Vita Karoli Magni, of Charlemagne's achievements, of how 200 years before he had created a great empire and tried to rebuild Roman civilisation. He had heard how Charlemagne converted the heathen Saxons by force of arms, cowing them so that, in Einhard's words 'they promised to abandon the worship of demons and submit themselves willingly to the Christian religion'. He heard, too, how the emperor decreed that should any Saxon 'scorn to come to baptism and wish to stay a pagan, then let him be punished by death'. In one day alone, he had beheaded 4,500 Saxons for rebelling against the new faith. When Olav became king, his son was christened Magnus after the great emperor, while he named his mightiest longship the Karl's Head, which he adorned with a wooden figurehead of Charlemagne that he carved himself. Nor did he forget the emperor's methods of conversion in his own missionary work.

Despite spending a week in a white robe, it took time for Olav's new beliefs to alter his behaviour. As soon as he left Normandy in 1014 AD he went raiding again in Viking style, in Spain not before his conversion as Snorri says,



**Above:** Statue of Ganger Rolf (Roujarl of Rouen) in the gardens of St Ouen, Rouen, founding father of the Duchy of Normandy. Photo – Ben Baillie ©

but after. According to Sigvathe saw some hard fighting.

**“Where Olav’s  
honour seeking  
sword  
Gave the wild wolf’s  
devouring teeth  
A feast of warriors  
doomed to death”**

Sailing south, he established a base camp at the mouth of the river Mino from where he ravaged Christian Galicia with fire and sword, plundering and slaving, attacking Coruna and then Tuy which he burned to the ground. A charter from the following year records the declaration of a man selling land in the

Area: the Vikings had captured his three daughters, reducing him to poverty since he had been forced to pay a large sum of silver to save them from the slave market. Many others were enslaved or held to ransom, among them the Bishop of Tuy and his senior clergy who were made to pay in gold for their freedom. Going further south, Olav is said to have attacked the Moorish city of Cadiz although no details survive. Snorri says that he planned to sail through the Straits of Gibraltar and 'on to the land of Jerusalem', but then had a dream in which 'a great and important man of terrible

appearance' told him to give up his Viking life. Go back to you inalienable heritage' he said. 'For you are destined to be king over Norway for ever' He awoke convinced the the man had been his late cousin Olav Trygvason, whose message was that he, Olav Haraldson, was destined to be King of all Norway and that his heirs would wear the crown for centuries.

You can purchase **THE GREATEST VIKING** on the below link:  
<https://birlinn.co.uk/product/the-greatest-viking/>



**Above:** Chapel of Saint Olaf in Rouen Cathedral with relic bone from Olaf's arm. The baptism font where Olaf and also Ganger Rolf were converted still exists in the Crypt. Photo, Ben Baillie ©

**Below :** Reconstruction of the Jelling stone in Rouen. A symbol between the old Norse gods and the new Christian religion. Photo, Ben Baillie ©





# MOLISE

**THE NORMAN KINGDOM IN THE SUN**



**The Normans, Normanni (Italian) came from an area in north-western France named after them. Normandy 'land of the North-men' was created by Viking raiders in the early 10th century under the leadership of Göngu-Hrólfr / Rollo 'the Walker' (Count of Rouen). Within 100 years of establishing the Duchy of Normandy some of Rollo's descendants were looking for new conquests further afield. The arrival of the Normans in Italy has been shrouded in mystery for centuries. Some say the first Normans were pilgrims returning back from the Holy Land, others say they were mercenaries banished from their homeland. Whatever the truth maybe, their impact on the Italian mainland and the island of Sicily was as dramatic as their conquest of Anglo-Saxon England by William the Conqueror in 1066 AD. The region of Molise, became one of their power-bases with traditions and customs still active today over a 1000 years since their arrival in the early 11th century.**





Above: Ugo (I) (red dress) de Moulins, Count of Boiano, makes a donation to Abbot Saxo (blue dress).

### The first arrivals

The Benedictine monk Amatus of Montecassino recorded that the first group of Normans in southern Italy were pilgrims returning back from Jerusalem. En route back to Normandy they stopped off at great port of Salerno. At the exact same time a Saracen army sent from the Muslim Emir of Sicily attacked the town as retribution for none payment of tribute money. Knowing the fate of the town, the unarmed Normans pilgrims galvanised themselves into action and asked Guaimar a local lord to furnish them with armour and weapons. Now in the service of Guaimar 'the men of the North-wind' drove off the Saracen attack and forced the besiegers to retreat back to Sicily. Guaimar was so impressed

that he asked the Normans to stay and encourage more of their compatriots to come to the 'land of milk and honey'.

### "To come to the land of milk and honey"

Another chronicler, William de Apulia describes that the first Normans were also pilgrims. In his account they were visiting the shrine of Saint Michel located at Mount Sant'Angelo (Unesco Heritage) on the Gargano Peninsula in the region of Puglia. Saint Michel was indeed one of the Normans favorite warrior saints whom they also worshiped in Normandy at the island abbey of 'Le Mont de Saint Michel'.

### The 'De Hautevilles'

By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Norman mercenaries

were becoming a major power player in the turbulent politics of central and southern Italy. The most prominent family were the De Hautevilles, who like all the Normans claimed descent from the Vikings before them. Coming from a small village in Normandy, William 'Iron-arm' and Drongo were the first of their family to seek fame and fortune in Italy. After them, followed their half-brothers Robert and Roger. Within a decade of battles and plundering, the Normans faced a coalition of Lombard Italian nobility and even the Pope in Rome with Germanic 'Swabian' mercenaries who intended to the force them out of Italy for once and for all. At the battle of Civitate in 1053 AD the Normans, although outnumbered reversed the odds against them and defeated the

coalition army, They even captured and took prisoner Pope Leo IX. With their position stronger even ever before, the Normans would never again face a substantial threat to their power in Italy. By 1059 AD Robert Guiscard emerged as the de-facto ruler of the Normans in Italy and obtained the title Duke of Apulia and Calabria. Along with his brother Roger, they conquered the island of Sicily from the Saracens and became the 'iron fist' of the Popes in Rome.

#### **De Moulins = Molise**

In the south of Normandy at the village of Moulins-la-Marche, the frontier between Normandy and France was protected by Guimond II Lord of Moulins and Bonmoulins. In the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century Guimond chose the wrong side in the civil war between Duke William II (later William the Conqueror) and the rebel Norman barons. When Duke William crushed the rebellion,

Guimond begged for forgiveness. William spared his life, but confiscated Guimond's lands for five years. He then decided to make an example of Guimond and denied his many sons their noble inheritance and titles. Not one of them would become Lord of Moulins and Bonmoulins. Most of them left the Duchy and headed for southern Italy to start a new life. Guimond's eldest son Rodolfo I / Rudolf de Moulins arrived in Italy in the year 1045 AD. With his brothers, (Guimondo III, Ugo and Tristan), Rodolfo de Moulins hoped to be able to embrace the fellow Norman warlord Robert 'Guiscard' de Hautville. The meeting took place between the two after the Montecassino massacre during which Rodolfo and his family were taken prisoner. Freed precisely through the intercession of Robert Guiscard, historical chronicles report that Rodolfo was taken to Bojano by Guiscard.

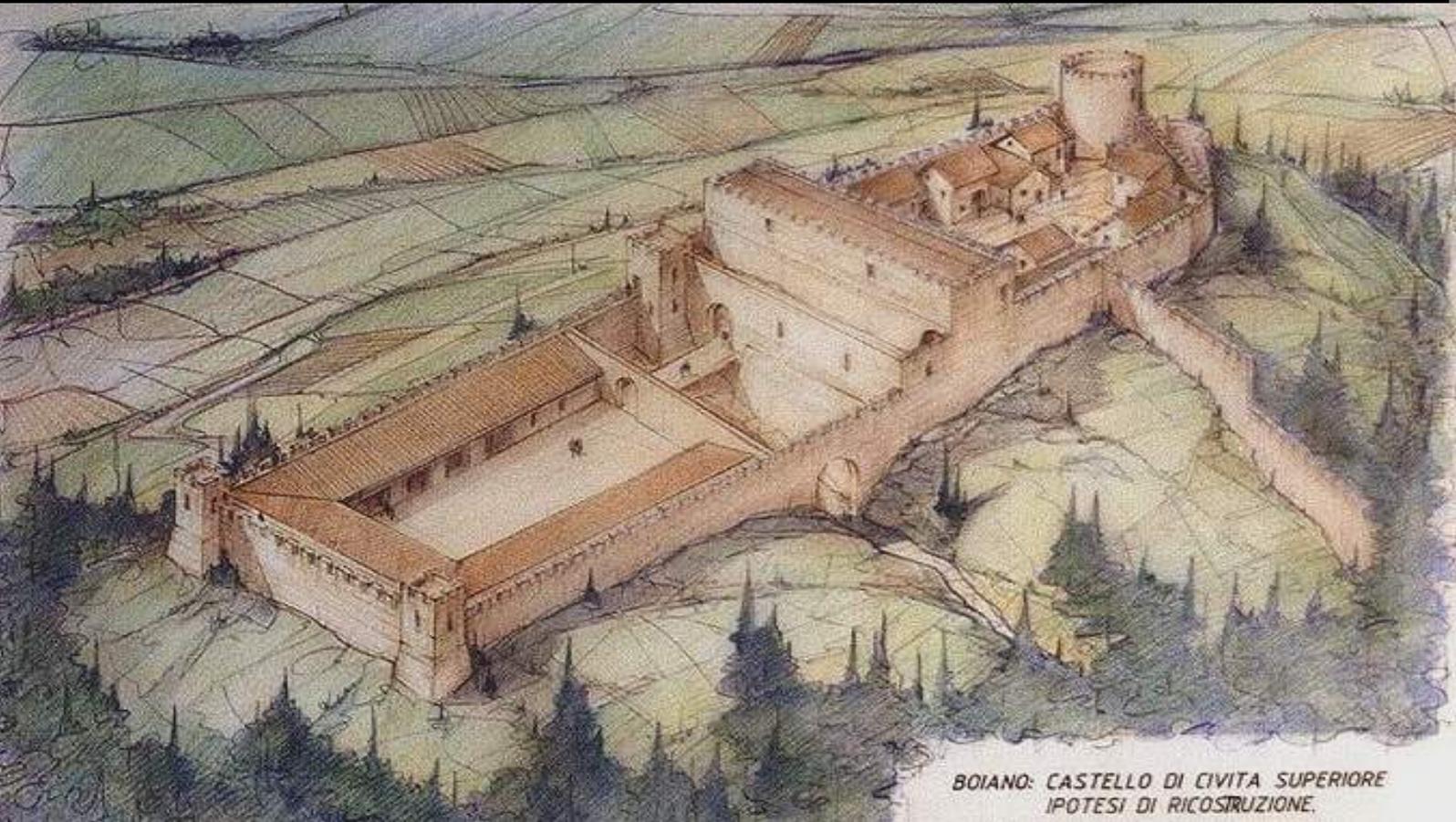
Seven years later, having returned victorious from the Battle of Civitate which took place on June 18th 1053 at the behest of Pope Leo IX, Rodolfo de Moulins became 'Count of Bojano'. A new Norman kingdom in the sun had been created.

In 1067 AD Count Guimond III was excommunicated by Pope Alexander II with two other Norman knights, Guillaume de Hauteville and Turgis de Rota, for attacking the lands of the church near to Salerno.

The configuration of the county changed in 1142 AD during the reign of Count Ugo II, when the name of the de Moulins was transferred to the entire county, forever replacing the reductive name of 'County of Boiano' which by now had extended over the territories of the Lombard counties of Venafro, Isernia, Trivento and part of the county of Larino.

The de Moulins intermarried and their descendants still live in the Molise region today.

**Below:** Illustrated reconstruction of Boiano castle, Molise, Italy. Once home and feudal seat of the Rudolf de Moulins and the Norman Counts of Bioano



*BOIANO: CASTELLO DI CIVITA SUPERIORE  
IPOTESI DI RICOSTRUZIONE.*



**Above:** The ruins of Boiano castle today still dominate the town from the rocky outcrop.

### **'Palomma' a culinary connection**

Salvatore Tomaro was a native inhabitant of Boiano who in the mid 1920s left his hometown for work in France. In 1990, Salvatore visited Moulins-la Marche in Normandy (the birthplace of Rodolfo de Moulins). On walking around the town he looked into the display window of a pastry shop. He was shocked by the shape of a sweet because it was the same one that was also available in Boiano during his youth 'Palomma'. Coincidence or a culinary delight brought to Italy by the Normans? Whatever the origin, today it is a symbol of Boiano's Norman cultural heritage. If you want to create 'Palomma' try out the 'Caruselle family' traditional recipe!

### **'PALOMMA RECIPE**

wheat flour for sweet 500gr  
eggs 4  
suet 80 gr.  
sugar. 250 gr.  
mashed boiled potatoes 125 gr.  
Mother yeast  
A teaspoon of ground cinnamon  
A pinch of salt  
1/2 glass of rum or other sweet and aromatic liqueur

Mix everything, leave it to rise and when it has doubled in volume, brush the surface with the egg yolk, place it in a preheated oven at 180 °C for about 1 hour.

**Buon appetito !!!!!!!**







**TORRES  
DE  
OESTE**

# Torres de Oeste, a defensive fortification against the Viking raids

By Diego Piay Augusto  
University of Oviedo

Every first weekend of August, since 1960, the majestic and undaunted Torres de Oeste, located in the municipality of Catoira (Pontevedra), silently attend the celebration of the Romaria Vikinga. Although the number of people attending the festival is increasing and the stories about the event are multiplying, few people know the origin of this picturesque celebration and, even less, the historical motivation that inspires it. The truth is that, despite its

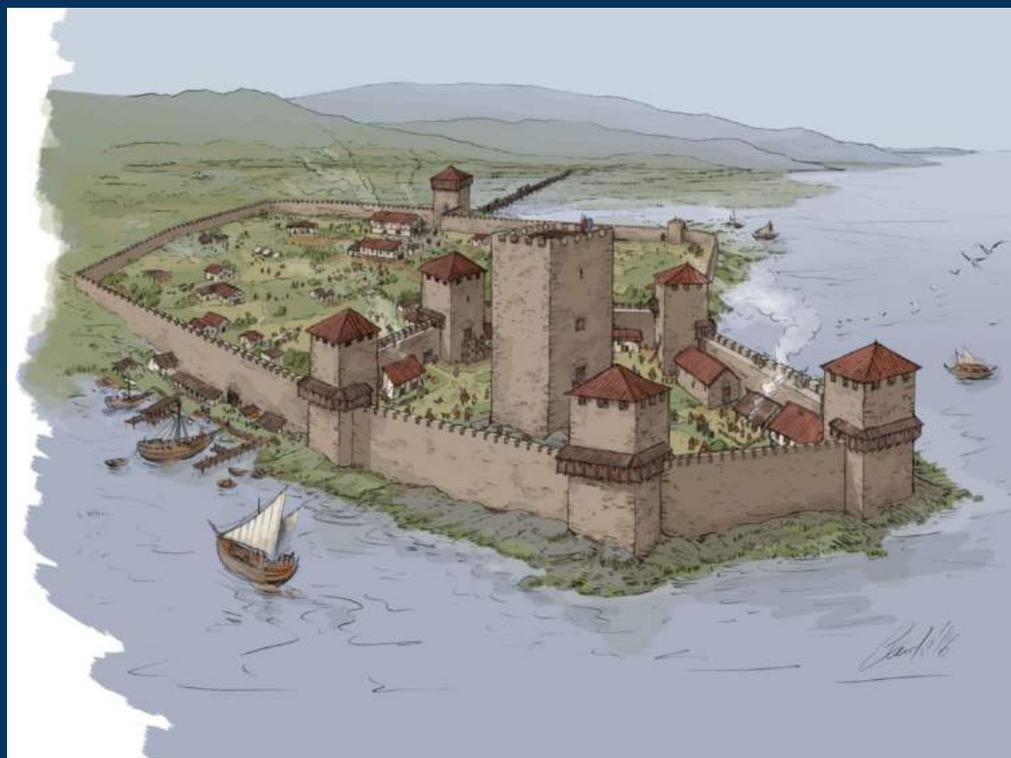
short history, the Viking Pilgrimage has already undergone important modifications since its origin. Created in 1960 on the initiative of two members of the circle of local scholars known as the "Ateneo del Ullán", the first editions commemorated an encounter between Ulf and Archbishop Diego Gelmirez, which ended with the formers expulsion and his subsequent Christianization. Since 1965, the main local industry, CEDONOSA, began to take over the management and

organization of the festival. The tradition of evoking the meeting between Gelmirez and Ulf was gradually lost, and little by little the historical content was reduced to a global remembrance of the arrival of the Vikings to Galician lands, without any reference to a specific event. The gastronomic and recreational aspect gained more and more importance, the popularity of the festival increased steadily, and in 1989, the town council of Catoira had to take over the management because the



event had reached such a high level that it required more planning and organization. Today the festival, declared of international tourist interest since 2002, has become an event of enormous importance, bringing together thousands of people and including the celebration of all kinds of cultural and leisure activities that have spread the name of Catoira urbi et orbi. The truth is that the members of the Ateneo del Ullán, chose to recall the Viking raids when it came to giving life to the Romaria Vikinga, but the historical events linked to the place where the festival is held are really numerous, and from the history of the site of the Torres de Oeste it is possible to review the entire history of Galicia.

The earliest archaeological evidence dates back to the Bronze Age (1300 BC), a period to which a number of bronzed swords, taken from the river bed and which may have been voluntarily thrown as offerings to the deities of the waters, are attributed. During the Iron Age, the river Ulla was crossed by Phoenician navigators, who traded their products with the Galician hillforts. In fact, the remains of a settlement with a strong commercial vocation dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century were discovered under the Torres de Oeste during archaeological digs carried out in 1970-1973, 1989 and 2011. This primitive settlement fell into the hands of the Romans after the conquest of the Hispanic Northwest in 19 BC. Since then, the site of the Torres de Oeste has continued to be used as a port enclave. Proof of this are the remains of amphorae found on the site itself and in the waters of the river Ulla. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the settlement was briefly used as a burial site and then abandoned during a little-known period that must



**Above:** Recreation of the Castellum Honesti after the work carried out by Archbishop Gelmírez © University of Oviedo

have lasted from around the 6th to the 9th century. An important epigraph found on the site at the end of the 19th century dates from the end of the 9th century or the beginning of the 10th century; it is a tombstone with a cross with equal arms accompanied by alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which recall the words of the Apocalypse (1, 8): Ego sum alfa et omega, principium et finis: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end". The inscription accompanying the cross reads: Hoc signo tuetur pius (h)oc signo vin[citur] [inimicus], with means, "with this sign the good Christian defends himself; with this sign the enemy is defeated". It possibly belonged to the reign of Alfonso III the Great (ca. 852-910), and the epigraph may have been placed at the entrance to the citadel, or on the façade of a chapel earlier than the one preserved in Torres de Oeste. The message was clear: divine help was requested to defeat

the infidels. This inscription must therefore be related to the fear of attack by the "men from the north", who from the middle of the 9th century began to ravage the Galician coasts. In fact, the first written reference places the Vikings in A Coruña in the year 844, where they had arrived from Gijón. In the following years they will attack Iria Flavia (858); the coast of Lugo (966); Santiago (968); and Tui (1024). The last incursions have as their protagonist Ulf "The Galician" (1028) and bishop Cresconius, the strongest protector of Galicia from the Viking incursions, who, curiously, died on the way to Torres de Oeste in the year 1068. The history of the fortress will not end at this moment, since Cresconius' successors will continue to strengthen and expand the Castellum Honesti, with Archbishop Diego Gelmírez playing a very prominent role, who will turn it into a treasure and chamber for the Archbishop of Compostela and his priests in times of

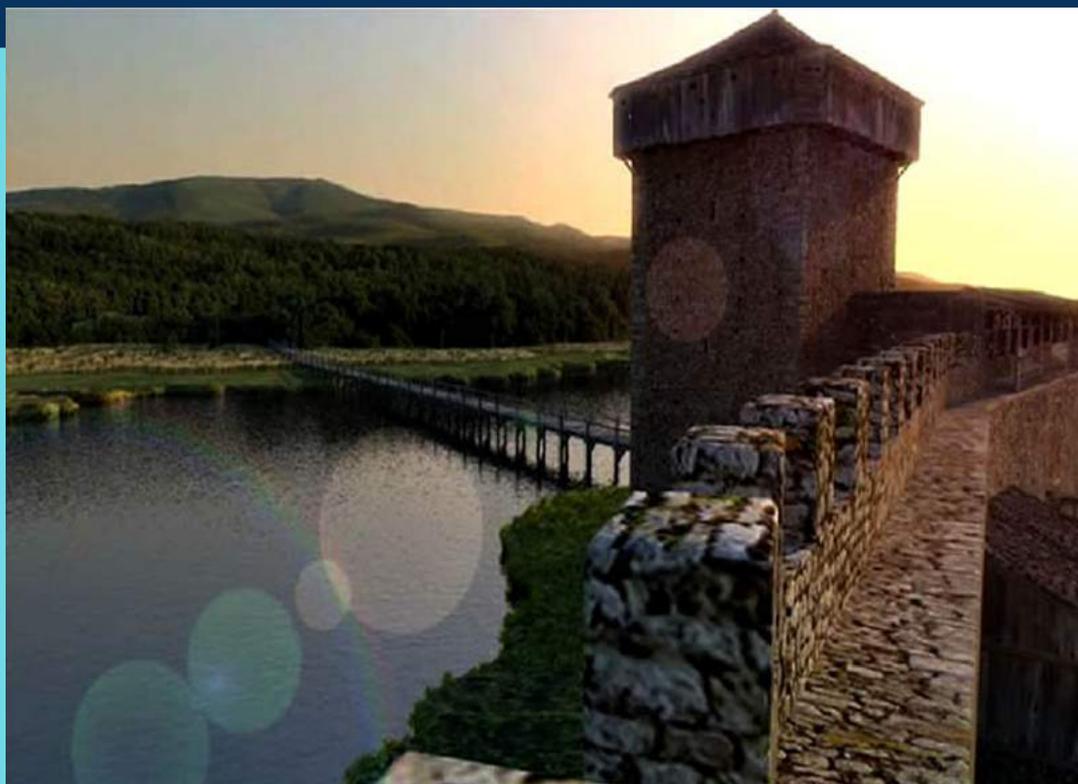


**Above and below right:** CGI images of the reconstruction of the Torres de Oeste. © Concello de Catoira

war, providing it with a church and rooms that turned it into a comfortable residence. It was then that the fortress acquired great monumentality, with a fortified enclosure next to the waters of the river Ulla with six towers, and a larger walled enclosure with another tower protecting the so-called Lugo gate.

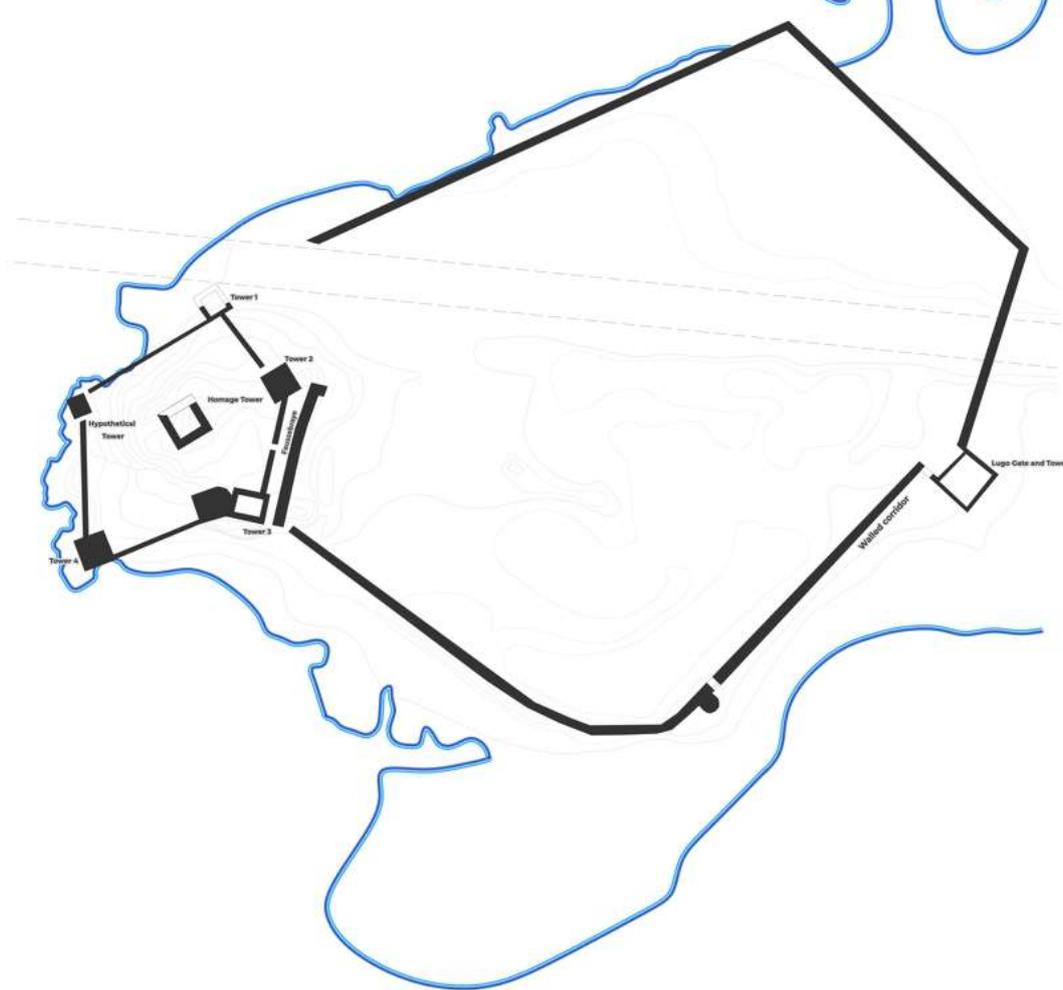
By then, the main danger to the Galician coast were the Almoravids coming from the south of the Iberian Peninsula, and Gelmirez was forced to promote the construction of a fleet that would end their raids and guarantee the security of Santiago de Compostela. Thanks to archaeology, we know that the fortress underwent further alterations in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the remains visible today belong mainly to this period.

Once the Almoravid danger was overcome, the fortress began to lose importance throughout the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its end was marked by the "Revueltas Irmandiñas", a popular uprising against the



abuses committed by the feudal lords that caused great damage to the Galician fortresses, including the Castellum Honesti, which would never regain its former splendor. In spite of this, when the British invaded Galicia in 1719, fearing that Santiago would be taken by British troops, a defense plan was drawn up to close the passage across the river

Ulla at the site of the Torres de Oeste: once again its strategic conditions were made clear, although on this occasion, fortunately for Galicia, the British attack on Santiago never took place. Therefore, in spite of its incredible and long history, Torres de Oeste is nowadays mainly known for its "Viking" past, and this is precisely due to the celebration of the



**Above:** Planimetry of the Castellum Honesti (Torres de Oeste) between the 13th and 14th centuries © University of Oviedo

Romaria Vikinga, which has now reached its 63rd edition. Catoira has managed to turn this festival into the main attraction of a municipality of around 3500 inhabitants. But, in addition, the Romaria Vikinga has allowed the municipality to obtain resources to continue increasing its potential and, at the same time, to bet on the valorization and conservation of the great natural, ethnographic, historical-artistic and archaeological heritage that it treasures.

Directly linked to the Viking pilgrimage is the Cultural Activation Centre of Torres de Oeste (CACTO), a dynamic space focused mainly on the period of the Viking raids and the pilgrimage, but which nowadays has 6 original pieces (a Roman altar dedicated to Bandua from

the 1st century AD; a complete Roman amphora from the 4th century AD; and the remains of three other Roman amphorae also from the 1st century AD.), and 11 replicas (a Bronze Age sword and petroglyph; a Punic askos, a small Iron Age sculpture; two Roman luxury pottery vessels (Terra Sigillata); a Roman lucerne; a Visigoth coin possibly minted in Catoira; and a Viking sword, helmet and axe). All these objects are part of an exhibition with numerous panels, models, audiovisual and didactic resources and an immersive video about the Viking Romaria, which are an ideal and essential complement to visit the Torres de Oeste and learn about the past of Catoira. An exceptional monument, an increasingly popular festival and a small museum in continuous

growth are the best proof that the municipality of Catoira has been able to combine leisure and culture to become an international benchmark when it comes to revitalizing heritage and history.

**For more information on the Torres de Oeste and the Romaria Vikinga visit the below link:**

[www.catoira.gal](http://www.catoira.gal)



**CONCELLO  
DE CATOIRA**

# DESTINATION VIKING ASSOCIATION NEWS



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



## Chairman's News

Dear all,

Last year's main events were our annual meeting on Iceland, and the re-certification of the European Viking Route by the Council of Europe.

47 delegates attended the AGM in Reykholt, Iceland 4 May 2023 and most delegates also participated in the associated events: the members' meeting, the seminar on the Icelandic Sagas and the Women in the Viking Age, and the site visits to Saga Sites in West-Iceland, and Golden Circle post-conference tour.

The European Viking Route was re-certified, this time for five years as opposed to the previous three year's certification, but there were a long list of conditions and obligations attached to the re-certification. Fortunately, the plan to introduce an annual administrative fee for all certified European Cultural Routes was withdrawn after discussions with the routes.

The most important obligation for the Viking Route is the required annual report of activities, where we depend on all members to contribute with information on their activities during the year, especially in relation to children and youth activities, the hosting of students, the contacts with academic institutions, activities towards visitors like events and other measures to enhance the visitor experience, and also how the route matters to you and you include the route and its logo in websites, social media, printed materials, and signposting etc.

Participation in Erasmus+ and similar EU programs is encouraged by the Council of Europe and should also be reported.

Last year, all members received stickers to display at their sites, a little step towards better visibility of the Viking Route. We have also been more active in collecting data about your activities and we sent out a questionnaire to all members to get a comprehensive picture of the fantastic range of activities that is ongoing at our members.

The Erasmus+ project "Sharing knowledge creating impact" with Dublinia, Museum Vest Sjælland, Jorvik Centre, and the Archaeological Museum, University of Stavanger was concluded the autumn 2023 and was a great success and is recommended as a model for other members.

We finally succeeded in establishing the required scientific committee (which is essentially an academic committee of experts). We are now looking into establishing a similar expert committee for tourism, and possibly also one for experts from public authorities and their support for the Viking sites.

Although we have a large membership, probably the largest of all certified cultural routes, our financial situation is still tight and currently we have no European projects to support the running of the association.

We are therefore dependent on our membership to continue the development of the route, and the Board wishes to thank all of you that have contributed and supported the development of the route during 2023 and looking forward to co-operating with you in 2024!

During the second half of last year, we have had the pleasure of welcoming 4 additions to the Viking route and hence, 4 new members of the Destination Viking Association. The new members are:

**Solvang Viking Museum** in California (USA) and among its treasures is 'Snorri' a replica Viking boat built by the Roskilde Viking Ship Museum in Denmark. It is a replica of the small boat found onboard the Gokstad ship. The museum also has a collection of authentic 1000 years old Viking swords, axes and spearheads.

The exhibits also tell the stories about the Viking discovery of America, and about Viking burials and their way to Valhalla.

<https://solvangvikingmuseum.com/>



**Snorrastofa** is in Reykholt, Iceland. It is located close to Snorri Sturluson's homestead, and it has an exhibition about him and other topics on the history of the area. Basically it is a research centre established in 1995.

Snorri settled down in Reykholt in 1206 and was murdered there in 1241. He probably wrote most of his works there.

Snorrastofa is a member of the Icelandic Saga Trail Association, a founding member of the Destination Viking Association and has previously participated in DVA activities through them.

<https://www.snorrastofa.is/en>



### **SVEG – Scandinavian Viking Explorer Group**

Scandinavian Viking Explorer Group - SVEG in short – is a non-profit association with the purpose to study and document our history with a particular focus on the Viking Age and Middle Ages.

It was founded in 1981 after Viking ship remains were found at Foteviken and was originally a maritime archaeological association and a pioneer in maritime archaeology in Southern Sweden. SVEG is now back in maritime activity linked to the open-air museum Vikingatider in Löddeköpinge and will work with marine archaeology research, experimental archaeology, and living history.

<https://www.svegviking.se>



### **Eysturkommuna (Eastern Municipality)**

The municipality was founded 2009 as a merger of the former municipalities of Leirvik and Gøta and lies on the eastern coast of Eysturoy.

The municipality has three archaeological sites that date back to the Viking Age. In a part of an existing museum (that shows old traditional rowing boats) we will show some of the objects found. Furthermore, the well-known Viking chieftain Tróndur í Gøtu lived in the municipality, and Eyð hin Djúphugaða put her feet on the ground here before continuing to Iceland.

All this is now being put together into a Viking trail so that the visitors can get a real feeling of the Viking Age seen from the perspective of Eysturkommuna.

<https://www.eysturkommuna.fo/>





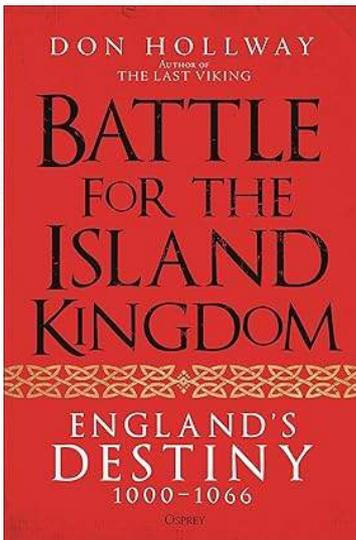
# HUGIN & MUNIN

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## BOOK CORNER

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WELCOME TO HUGIN & MUNIN'S BOOKCORNER. IN THIS ISSUE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND SOME BOOKS ABOUT THE VIKINGS IN THE SOUTH. AVAILABLE ONLINE OR AT YOUR NEAREST BOOK STORE

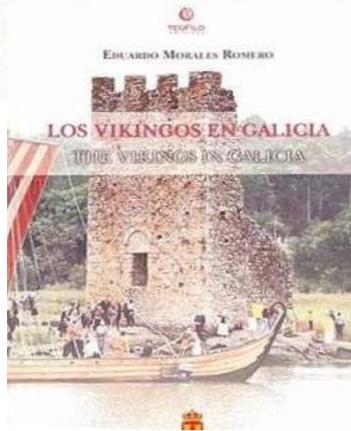


Non-fiction

### Battle for the island Kingdom

Author: Don Hollway  
Hardcover: Nov 7, 2023

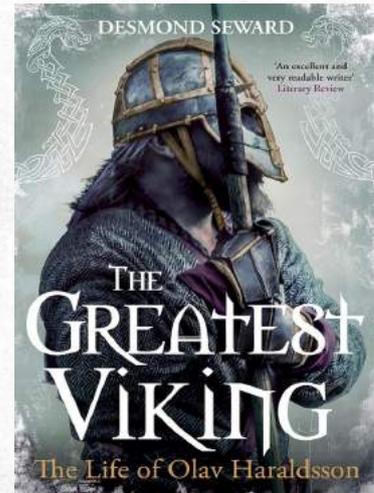
A rich history of the years leading up to 1066 when Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans vied for the English crown. A tale of loyalty, treason and military might. In a saga reminiscent of Game of Thrones and The Last Kingdom, Battle for the Island Kingdom reveals the life-and-death struggle for power which changed the course of history. The six decades leading up to 1066 were defined by bloody wars and intrigues, in which three peoples vied for supremacy over the island kingdom. In this epic retelling, Don Hollway (The Last Viking) recounts the clashes of Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans, their warlords and their conniving queens.



Non-fiction

**The Vikings in Galicia**  
Author: Eduardo Morales Romero  
Hardcover: Oct 7, 2021

In their journeys through Western Europe, the Vikings had already reached – by the middle of the ninth century – the southernmost cities of the French Atlantic coast, so that it was logical for them to look for new prizes, expanding into the South. The Vikings must have heard many stories about the richness and splendour of 'al-Andalus' which, at that time, was on full rise, a process that would make it the brightest and most lavish Kingdom in Europe at this time. This book brings together the history of the Vikings in Spain, especially Galicia, where they sort to capture the riches and wealth of the holy town of Santiago de Compostela.

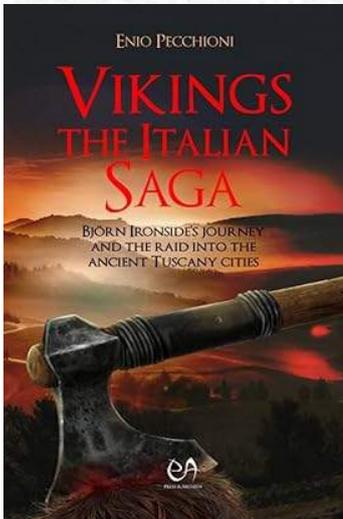


Non-fiction

**The Greatest Viking**  
Author: Desmond Seward  
Hardcover: Jan 3, 2023

This is the story of Olav Haraldsson, the greatest Viking who ever lived.

A ruthless Viking warrior who named his most prized battle weapon after the Norse goddess of death, Olav Haraldsson and his mercenaries wrought terror and destruction from the Baltic to Galicia in the early eleventh century. Thousands were put to the sword, enslaved or ransomed. In England, Canterbury was sacked, its archbishop murdered and London Bridge pulled down. The loot amassed from years of plunder helped Olav win the throne of Norway, and a century after his death he was proclaimed 'Eternal King' and has been a national hero there ever since.



fiction

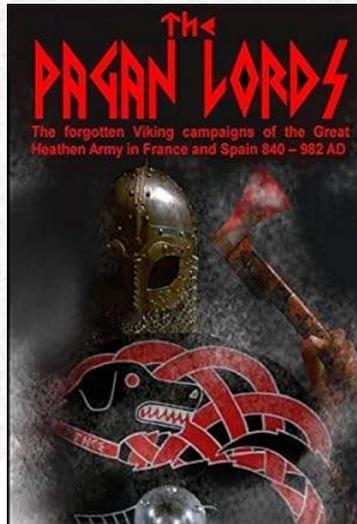
### **Vikings the Italian Saga**

Author: Enio Pecchioni  
Paperback: June 21 2023

In the year 860 a fleet of Viking ships penetrated the Mediterranean. After plundering coastal cities in Spain and France, commanders Hastein and Björn Jaernsida "Ironsides" decided to head for central Italy.

Having reached and raided the port of Pisa, the Vikings sailed up the Arno River and arrived in the territory of Florence and Fiesole. The "city on the lunate hill" and the castle of Bishop Donatus were conquered. So Florence was also besieged....

We are talking about a fact that is as little known as it is surprising and significant: the daring expedition carried out by those northern sailors, rough men, scornful of danger, who later knew how to participate as protagonists in the cultural development of Europe.

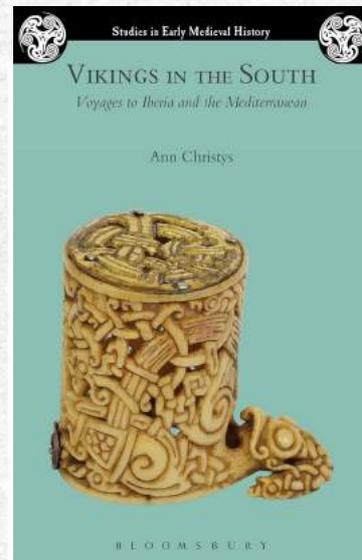


Non-fiction

### **The Pagan Lords: The forgotten Viking campaigns of the Great Heathen Army in France and Spain 840 - 982 AD**

Author: Ben Baillie  
Paperback: June 15, 2016

The Viking age exploded like a thunderbolt out of the blue onto the international stage during the latter part of the 8th century. In the West, the British Isles bore the brunt of this aggression in the form of the campaigns of the "Great Heathen Army" On the continent of mainland Europe Viking armies challenged the great Empire of Charlemagne. Ragnar Lodbrok's sack of Paris in 845 AD showed that no city or Kingdom was safe from the fury of the Northmen. His sons and other Viking warlords embarked on a reign of terror that would bring Western civilisation to its very knees, eventually resulting in the creation of the Duchy of Normandy at the Treaty of St Clair Sur Epte in 911 AD. However Viking campaigns to create a second Normandy in Brittany, Aquitaine and Spain have been shrouded in mystery until now.



Non-fiction

### **Vikings in the South: Voyages to Iberia and the Mediterranean**

Author: Ann Chrstys  
Paperback: Aug 27, 2015

In the ninth century, Vikings carried out raids on the Christian north and Muslim south of the Iberian peninsula (modern Spain and Portugal), going on to attack North Africa, southern Francia and Italy and perhaps sailing as far as Byzantium. A century later, Vikings killed a bishop of Santiago de Compostela and harried the coasts of al-Andalus. Most of the raids after this date were small in scale, but several heroes of the Old Norse sagas were said to have raided in the peninsula. These Vikings have been only a footnote to the history of the Viking Age.

Many stories about their activities survive only in elaborate versions written centuries after the event, and in Arabic.

# GALLICIA



VISIT THE  
**VIKINGS**



### **TORRES DE OESTE - CACTO**

Torres de Oeste fortress was the defensive shield for Galicia during the Middle Ages against Viking attacks. But this archaeological site tells us also of traces of the Iron Age, of the Phoenicians, it was a commercial port in Roman times and was also of great importance in Visigoth period. A permanent exhibition at the CACTO museum allows visitors to take this journey into Catoira's past.



1

### **ROMARÍA VIKINGA**

Every year, on the first Sunday in August, the inhabitants of Catoira recall the time when people fought for the defence of these lands against the Normans. Since its first edition in 1961, the Romaría Vikinga has turned this fight into a joyful celebration in which the attack to the Torres de Oeste fortress carried out by northern warriors is pacifically reenacted.



[www.catoira.gal](http://www.catoira.gal)

### **SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA**

Santiago de Compostela was the main target of Viking attacks in Galicia. From July 2024 to January 2025 the international exhibition "A Viking Life", comprised of around 120 pieces from different museums and collections, can be visited at Cidade da Cultura. The cathedral of Santiago, final destination for pilgrims, also worths a visit.

[www.saintjamesway.eu](http://www.saintjamesway.eu)

[https://www.turismo.gal/que-facer/top-ten-dez-lugares-unicos/santia-go-de-compostela?langId=en\\_US](https://www.turismo.gal/que-facer/top-ten-dez-lugares-unicos/santia-go-de-compostela?langId=en_US)



2

## O VICEDO

Os Moutillós, in the coastal municipality of O Vicedo, could have been a Viking settlement. Archaeological excavations point to a provisional camp, located next to the beach of San Román, where this past is recreated every summer in a festival at the end of July.

<https://turismo.concellodovicedo.org/es/>

4



3

## FOZ

The municipality of Foz, in the north of Galicia, holds every year a festival to recall the "Miracle of the ships". According to legend, when a Viking fleet was about to reach its coast, the bishop San Gonzalo saved the people by guiding them to a mountain and managed, with his prayers, to clutch the sea and sink the enemy ships.

<https://concellodefoz.gal/>

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# VIKING BRITAIN



## Royal Mail Viking stamps celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jorvik Viking Centre

By Geir Sør-Reime

Royal Mail, the British postal operator, released a set of eight Viking-themed stamps on 20 February as a tribute to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jorvik Viking Centre in York. The stamps feature iconic artefacts and iconic sites relating to the Vikings in Britain.

The Jorvik Centre is one of the corner stones in the Follow the Vikings, the European Viking Route. The archaeological excavation that took place 1976-81 at Coppergate unveiled the story of Viking York – Jorvik – and the Jorvik Viking Centre gives the visitor a unique insight into this story.

Two of the new stamps feature objects found during the excavations, namely a silver penny coin minted in Jorvik for the Viking king Olaf Guthfrithsson (ruled AD 934-41), and an antler comb with case.

Another corner stone of the European Viking Route is Shetland, and not the least the remains of Viking settlement at Jarlshof close to the airport. The Viking legacy is still vivid on Shetland and the Shetland Amenity Trust recently led a large European project focusing on the development of the Viking Route. The annual Up-Helly-Aa pageant in Lerwick is a strong manifestation of the islands' Viking heritage. The new Shetland Museum contributes to make new generations aware of Shetland's past.

One of the new stamps depicts Norse settlement remains at Jarlshof. More recent excavations nearby have unearthed additional remains.

One stamp features the ruins of the monastery on Lindisfarne in Northumberland where Irish monks settled in AD 635. The Viking attack and raid on the monastery in AD 793 marks the symbolic beginning of the Viking Age. The attack was recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and was also described in later sources, creating a fear of the pagan Vikings in the now Christian Britain and beyond.

The other stamps feature Viking objects found all over Britain:

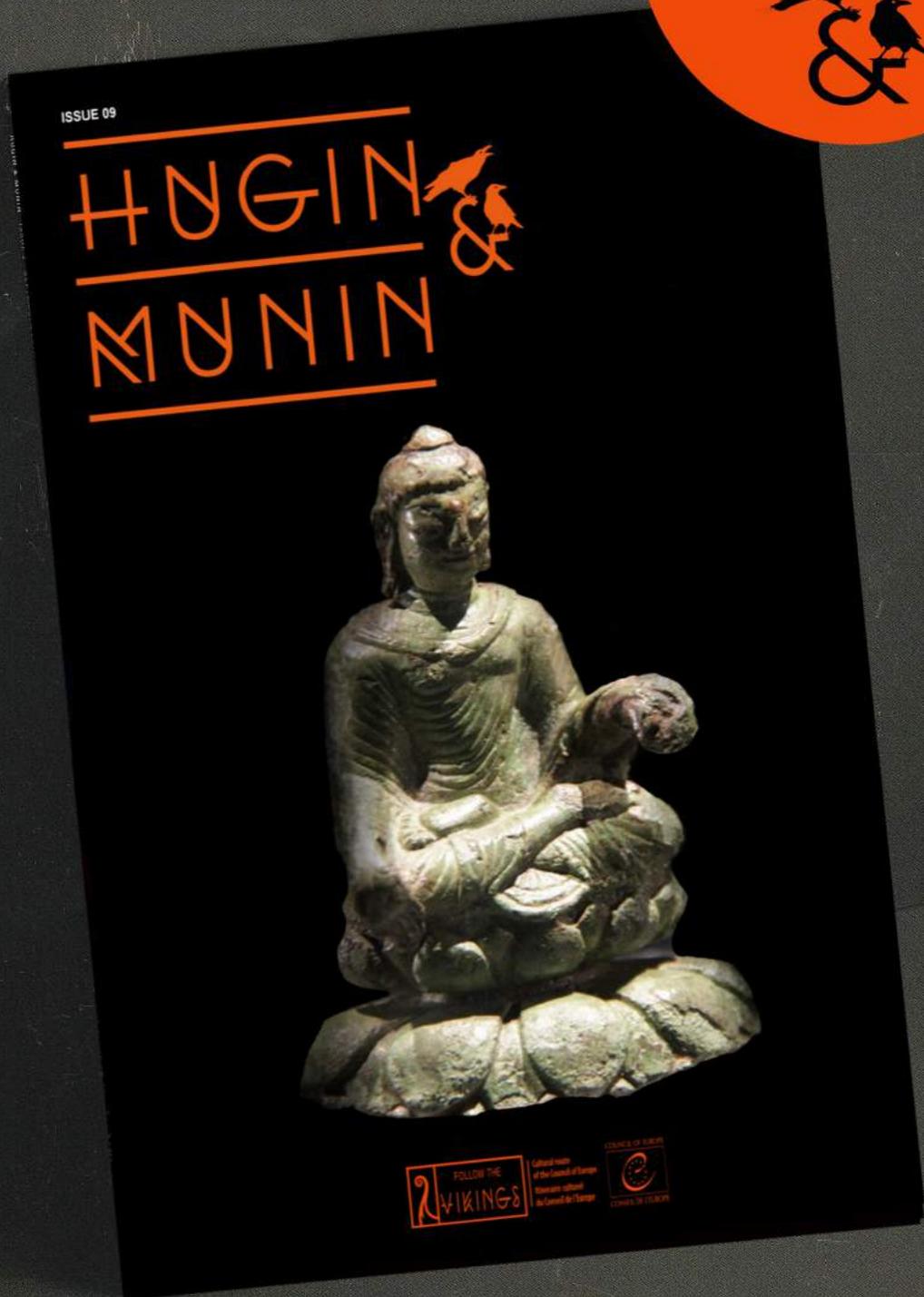
A Viking sword probably found in London during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and could have been lost there during one of the two 9<sup>th</sup> Century Viking attacks on London.

A 10<sup>th</sup> Century silver penannular brooch from the Penrith Hoard found at Flusco Pike, Newbiggin Moor near Penrith in Cumbria, now in the British Museum in London. The first brooch was discovered in 1785, another in 1830 and the rest by archaeologists in 1989.

A gilded bronze brooch for Pitney, Somerset, England, found 1870s in the churchyard in Pitney, now in the British Museum in London. The brooch has a Urnes style image showing a ribbon animal in combat with a snake.

One of the Govan Stones at the Govan Old Church, Glasgow, Scotland. The Viking Age burial stone laid in the Govan Old churchyard for over 1000 years but are now rehoused inside the church. This stone is known as a hogback stone, in reality it probably mimics a Viking longhouse roof.

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