



Odin's Whisper: Death and the Vikings

Neil Price

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The Viking period, which stretched from the eighth to the eleventh century, left behind half a million graves, many containing whole ships, sumptuous goods, and even the bodies of slaves or loved ones sacrificed alongside those who had died. Revealing that it was in death that the Viking view of life was most clearly distilled, *Odin's Whisper* uses Norse mythology and recent archaeological evidence to draw a compelling picture of the Viking mind.

In this in-depth account, Neil Price argues that it is by understanding Viking burial that we can best understand the thought and mythology of this fascinating culture. Price contextualizes how Vikings grasped death within the *Ragnarök*—the immense battle of the living, dead, gods, and humans that would ultimately consume the world in fire—and illustrates that their conception of the afterlife was seen only as a respite before this end. He also shows that this violent view of the afterlife informed their funeral practice, divulging blood-curdling accounts of the sacrifices and rapes that occasionally marked burials. Filled with striking illustrations and reconstructions of graves, *Odin's Whisper* casts new light on Norse beliefs about death and, in turn, what these notions tell us of their beliefs about life.

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