



Laughing Shall I Die: Lives and Deaths of the Great Vikings

Tom Shippey

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Laughing Shall I Die explores the Viking fascination with scenes of heroic death. The literature of the Vikings is dominated by famous last stands, famous last words, death songs, and defiant gestures, all presented with grim humor. Much of this mindset is markedly alien to modern sentiment, and academics have accordingly shunned it. And yet, it is this same worldview that has always powered the popular public image of the Vikings—with their berserkers, valkyries, and cults of Valhalla and Ragnarok—and has also been surprisingly corroborated by archaeological discoveries such as the Ridgeway massacre site in Dorset.

Was it this mindset that powered the sudden eruption of the Vikings onto the European scene? Was it a belief in heroic death that made them so lastingly successful against so many bellicose opponents? Weighing the evidence of sagas and poems against the accounts of the Vikings' victims, Tom Shippey considers these questions as he plumbs the complexities of Viking psychology. Along the way, he recounts many of the great bravura scenes of Old Norse literature, including the Fall of the House of the Skjoldungs, the clash between the two great longships Ironbeard and Long Serpent, and the death of Thormod the skald. One of the most exciting books on Vikings for a generation, *Laughing Shall I Die* presents Vikings for what they were: not peaceful explorers and traders, but warriors, marauders, and storytellers.

Laughing Shall I Die: Lives and Deaths of the Great Vikings Details

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From Reader Review Laughing Shall I Die: Lives and Deaths of the Great Vikings for online ebook

Joel Zartman says

Tom Shippey knows what he's talking about, does it without pedantry, and even knows, in his deployment of the resources of language, when and how to use slang. If more scholarship were of the Shippey variety, our knowledge would be more accurate and achieved by more interesting means than it sometimes, unfortunately, is.

In this book he again corrects the world. When this age passes, he will be held in very high regard.
