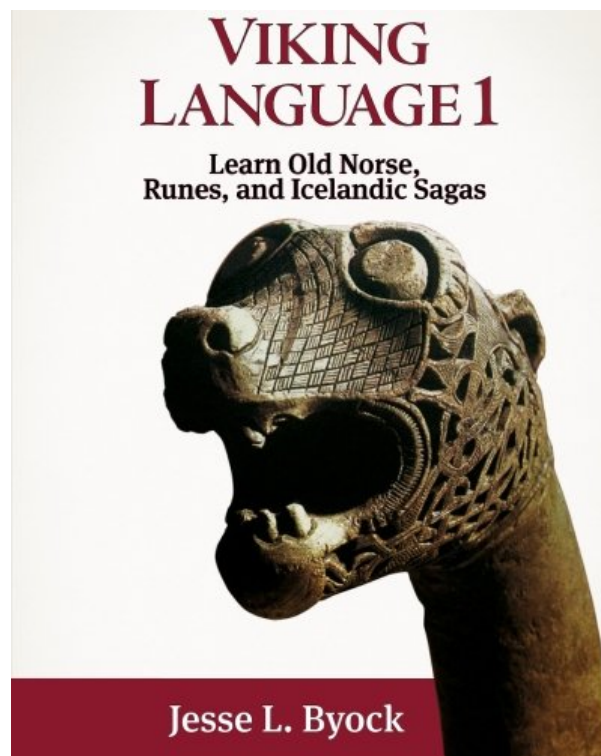


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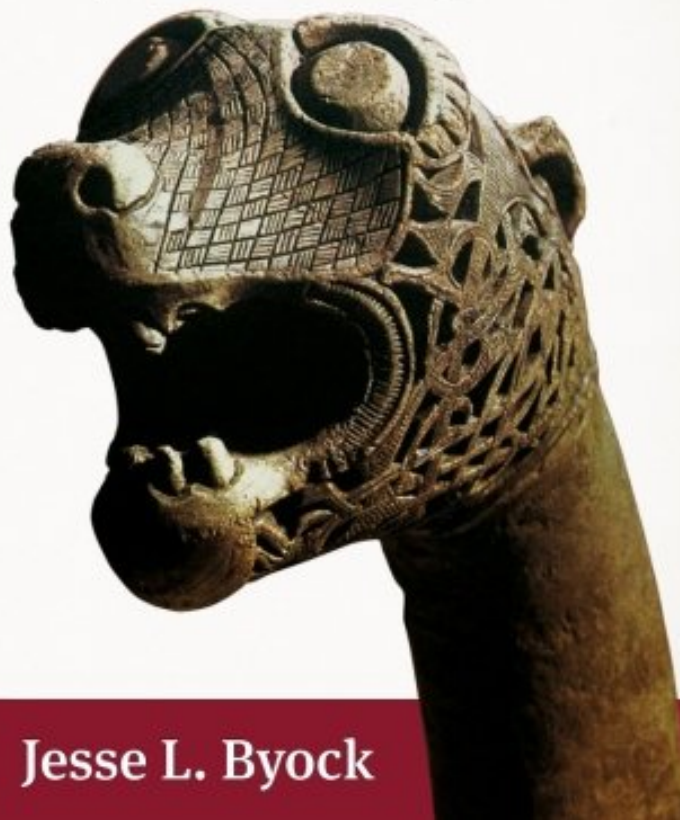


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Review

Even the many academics who have done their best to learn Old Norse old-style, and then to teach it, will benefit from working through the course. As for students coming to the language without prior experience, they have it all: a very thorough grammar, but carefully spaced-out, explained without short cuts, and reinforced by exercises graded from absolute no-knowledge upward; well-selected and well-varied texts, with considerable use not only of the sagas but also of runestone-inscriptions, eddic poems and even notoriously difficult skaldic poems; and cultural background which takes in strange reports like that of the Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan (which gave rise to the movie *The Thirteenth Warrior*), maps, explanations and reconstructions...There is no-one better-qualified than Professor Byock to link up sagas with archaeology. (Tom Shippey)

About the Author

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49 of 54 people found the following review helpful.

At Last!

By P. Ian McLeod

At long last, we have a respectable modern textbook on the Old Norse Language. All previous resources were either out of print and prohibitively expensive used, or reprints of archaic grammars with outdated instruction methods. As an experienced language learner in general, I see everything here that I look for in a textbook. It reminds me a great deal of Wheelock's renowned textbook for Latin in both its structure and teaching strategies. For those not in the know, that is a very good thing. Some will likely whine that the answer key (unreleased at time of writing) is sold separately, and I'm sure I'll find a flaw or two as I work through the book, but pickings are slim for Old Norse and such a giant leap forward in the field, by one of the world's most respected translators of Old Norse literature no less, deserves all the approbation it can get. I will likely replace this with a more thorough review once I have finished the course.

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

A whole lot of fun!

By Tina

My 'husbondi' gave me this book last Yule; I am crawling through the book at a snail's pace, but enjoying every minute I spend on it. I am an enthusiastic student of languages; but I am a dilettante, not a linguist, and I just LOVE this book. A better, more serious student of language would probably like it even more than I do. Because both Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon were FULL of noun cases and adjective declensions, the bane of anyone who has struggled through German or Latin classes, it was exciting for me to realize that modern English is mostly free of these horrors because Anglo-Saxon and Norse "knocked the edges off each other" in the Danelaw (that's not in this book, but it is a conclusion I have tentatively made after getting through the first third of this book). I think the "Most common words used in the sagas" method of teaching vocabulary is flat-out brilliant. Just to whet your appetite: land=land; egg=egg; bro(eth)r=brother; systir=sister; dottir=daughter; sonr= son; samr=same; at sja=to see; viss=wise; at hafa= to have, at lata= to let, skip=ship. Of course there are false cognates, too, and semi-cognates but learning a semi-cognate like "skip" is of course very cool because then you know where the word "skipper" came from.

I thought of giving it a "4" because there is no answer key, but I just enjoy the book too much. For folks like me, the fact that most of the text is in modern English is a blessing, not a problem!

I started an on-line basic Modern Icelandic course two months ago; what I had learnt from this book made it more fun rather than confusing, but many people might feel differently. I don't mind diving in and making a fool of myself in a new language, as long as the people I am trying to communicate with are good-natured.

22 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Resource and best available option

By S. Dondershine

Edit: The answer key has now been made available on the publisher's website, so I have adjusted my rating accordingly and the review below should be considered in that light. Thank you Professor Byock!

I have been reading Professor Byock's work on the Vikings since college, so needless to say, I was delighted

to see this course made available, in my case for self study. I am now two chapters into the book, and I think it incorporates a wonderful strategy and method and has tremendous potential. However, I have two criticisms that prevent this from being a 5 star purchase: the first is that the answer key really needs to be made available *now.* I understand that perhaps the book is intended for college courses and oftentimes the answer key is presented in a "teacher's only" reader, but for those of us doing self-study, it is absolutely crippling and seriously hampers the ability to use the book effectively. It's boggling to my mind that they would release this book at all without making the key available as a download on the website. I believe the intention is to have the key in Viking Reader 2, which I would be happy to buy, but it is not available and may not be for quite some time. The two books should have been published simultaneously. My advice if you are considering purchasing this book is to wait until the Viking Language 2 book comes out. My second criticism of this course is that the audio accompaniment, which you will have to pay for separately, is very fast and not terribly user friendly. It is not read in such a way that it is useful for a student unfamiliar with Icelandic and very difficult to emulate or to parse in accompaniment with the reading. All in all, this is still however the best option on the market for learning Old Norse!

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