

Viking Ships and Trade



The dragon prow of a 9th-century Viking ship from Oseberg, Norway

Map of Viking route for raiding and trading



How did the Vikings trade?

Silver was a favourite means of exchange, measured by weight and purity. This hoard from Denmark contains a mix of cut and hacked silver objects, with coins from both Western Europe and the Muslim Caliphate.

Types of Viking ship:

Skip

The standard word for ship.

Skeið

A warship.

Snekkja

A smaller warship.

Dreki

A 'dragon' ship, named from the practice of carving the prow into a dragon's head. This term perhaps denoted larger warships, probably bigger; maybe just a poetic word for a particularly large warship

Knorr

A large, seagoing ship.

Where did the Vikings trade?

Britain and Ireland

Greenland

North America

Russia

France, Germany and the Netherlands

The Byzantine Empire

The Muslim Caliphate