

Review by April Pohren, [CafeofDreams](#)

Axe of Iron: The Settlers

by J. A. Hunsinger

Historical Fiction

ISBN: 9780980160109

Perfect Bound

384-Pages

I have to say that before I read *Axe of Iron: The Settlers*, I knew next to nothing about the Norse and Viking Age. Not for lack of interest, I just never really thought about it, I guess (a bit of a contradiction, perhaps). In any case, when I read that this book pertained to this period and the exploration of unknown regions, I was highly intrigued! Though the names were a bit difficult for me to figure out - such examples are Halfdan Ingolfsson, the leader of crew and settlers, Gudbjartur, the second in command, as well as other characters such as Vilhjalm, Ulfar, and Athils, just to name a few. The names are very much of that heritage, but me being ignorant of that, just kind of made up my own names to go along with the true names.

All kidding aside, *Axe of Iron: The Settlers* is both an entertaining read, as well as educational. I found many intriguing areas within the story that left me with a sense of awe that I had learned something new. One instance is the following passage taken from page 64...

Two thralls placed soapstone pots directly in the coals of the fire pit to boil saltwater for the salt it contained. As the water boiled away they scraped out the accumulated salt, refilled the pots with seawater, and the process began anew. The two women tended the salt pots and gathered edible seaweed that the previous low tide had left on the beach in scattered piles. They filled two baskets for immediate use, and spread the rest out to dry above the high-water line on the stony beach. When dry enough they would rake it into piles and burn it to ash. This ash contained a very high concentration of salt. It provided another source of salt to cure dried meat and fish and to flavor other foods.

I, for one, never had a clue that seaweed could be of such use. It is examples such as this that really make the reader fall into the story and bring about fascination of a long ago time that is really not that widely talked about or explored (or at least not to my knowledge).

The story is smooth and the characters realistic and enjoyable. Beware - there is a bit of "ick" graphicness" such as the following from page 41...

The cloying smell of fresh blood was everywhere but the people welcomed it as a measure of success of the hunt. Almost everyone near at hand stuffed chunks of bloody blubber and skin into their mouths, chewed contentedly, and leered at others not fortunate enough, or close enough to partake.

There is action, adventure, and something for everyone. *Axe of Iron: The Settlers* is the first in a wonderful historical series, which promises many delights to come. If you enjoy being whisked away to another time and place with amazing historical accuracy, you will adore this novel. I look forward to the great talent that lies ahead from Mr. Hunsinger.
