



HIBERN ð N ð RSE ð WIRRAL

archers

The Norse developed the use of a one piece bow. Used for hunting and for battles. Art, writing, and archeological demonstrates that archery did play an important role in Viking life.

Some sagas mention archery. Njáls saga written in the 13th century A.D. recounts events between 960 and 1020. Gunnar Hámundarson, a fierce warrior holds off a superior foe at his home primarily with the use of his bow and arrows.

Other sagas like Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar describe large sea battles where archers were used as snipers against enemy leaders.

Viking bows found in the archeological record were 'self' bows, made from a single stave of wood. Other bows have been mentioned in literature. It seems possible that the Vikings of the medieval age might have been quite familiar with composite bows.

The Konungs skuggsjá, a Norwegian text from around the year 1250 dealing mainly with politics and philosophy, was written for the Norwegian king Magnus Lagabøte as part of his formal education.

The book is divided into 70 chapters and 3 main sections. Chapter 38 pertains to the study of Viking archery.

The chapter is titled "weapons of offense and defense" and it mentions the term "hornbogi", described as a shorter bow that is ideal for mounted archery.

Could it be possible that the vikings could have come into contact with the Asiatic composite bows of the steppe by the 13th century?

