

The Vinland Voyages:

A Short History of the Viking Settlement of North America

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During the 11th century C.E., Viking explorers became the first Europeans to reach North America, but failed to colonize it and were driven out due to violent interactions with the indigenous peoples and a lack of motivation for colonization. Later Europeans had greater motivations and technological advantages, which allowed them to create successful establishments.

In 1961, following the directions of a local towards a “group of overgrown bumps and ridges”, Norwegian archaeologists Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad discovered conclusive evidence of a Viking settlement at the L’Anse aux Meadows site in Newfoundland^{1,2,3}. Prior to the eight year excavation, the only evidence of the Vikings’ journey to the Americas had been two Norse sagas: the Saga of Erik the Red, and the Greenlander’s saga. Contained within these two sagas is a spectacular story of the voyages of Leif Erikson and the Vikings who followed after him. The Vikings explored the uncharted realms which they called Helluland, Markland, and Vinland. There, they encountered the native tribes of North America, engaging in both trade and violent conflicts, neither of which occurred again between Europeans and Native Americans until the voyages of Columbus. Although the two accounts agree in general, they often contradicted each other on many details and were not recorded in written form until two centuries later, making them not very reliable sources⁴. Before the discovery of the archaeological site and artifacts, it was disputed, and generally not believed, if Vikings had ever reached North America. Several stones inscribed with Norse runes were discovered in the Midwestern United States around the turn of the 20th century, a time when many Scandinavian immigrants entered the country. Most were agreed by experts to be hoaxes, but a few, most notably the Kensington Runestone,

¹ “Where is Vinland?”

² Hirst, K. Krist. “L’Anse aux Meadows—The Vikings in North America.”

³ “Discovery of the Site and Initial Excavations.” 2015.

⁴ “Vinland Sagas”

continue to be controversial today, as experts in many fields continue to debate its authenticity⁵. In any case, solid evidence was not uncovered until the excavation at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Despite this, much still remains unknown about the Vikings who reached North America and what they did there. Only one confirmed settlement has been discovered, along with a few possible sites containing Viking artifacts⁶. An excavation at Point Rosee on the southern end of Newfoundland shows promise for Viking artifacts, but is too recent to offer much in the way of new information.⁷ Leif Erikson's settlement described in the sagas is in a land he called Vinland, and the sagas describe his crew as having discovered wild grapes in the vicinity. Today, no wild grapes grow in Newfoundland⁸; some say the climate in Newfoundland a millennium ago was warm enough for the grapes to grow⁹, while other theories claim it was a "marketing ploy" that Leif used to promote his new discovery, much the same way his father, Erik the Red, named the land he settled "Greenland"¹⁰. Another likely explanation is that Newfoundland is only the northernmost part of Vinland, and grapes were discovered at a more southern location in Vinland. Wild butternuts, which have never grown in Newfoundland, were found at the L'Anse site, supporting the idea that voyages to lands further south along the coast were very likely¹¹.

Except for the butternut shells, very few artifacts have been discovered at the site. Excavations show slag and other evidence of iron working, but only a handful of actual objects. Ninety-nine broken nails were found at the site, as well as a few other miscellaneous objects¹². These objects were all likely discarded or lost, and it appears the rest must have been packed and taken away

⁵ Halvorsen, Ingrid. "North American Runestones."

⁶ Pringle, Heather. "Vikings and Native Americans." 2012.

⁷ "Vikings Unearthed." 2016.

⁸ "Vitis Labrusca."

⁹ "Yes There Were Grapes in Newfoundland."

¹⁰ Beck, Coby. "Vinland Was Full of Grapes—Or was it an early advertising campaign?" 2006.

¹¹ "Is L'Anse aux Meadows Vinland?" 2015.

¹² *Collapse*. Diamond, Jared. 2005.

when the site was abandoned. It was evidently not a hasty departure, but probably a planned exodus. Icelandic annals have recorded, however, the departure of Bishop Erik of Greenland in 1121 to seek Vinland¹³, as well as a voyage by Greenlanders to Markland for timber--a scarce commodity in Greenland¹⁴. The new land had been abandoned, but not forgotten. The sagas, though unreliable, provide the only clues as to what happened that caused the Vikings to leave.

The two sagas in question, the Saga of the Greenlanders and the Saga of Erik the Red, were both passed down orally for two centuries after the events they described occurred, until they were both finally recorded in written form in Iceland sometime during the 13th century¹⁵. Though they often disagree on the details, the two tell generally the same story. The expansion of Viking into the Northwest Atlantic began with Erik the Red, father of Leif Erikson. Erik the Red was exiled from Iceland for murder; during his exile he settled Greenland. Some believe he was the first European to “discover” Greenland, but records suggest otherwise¹⁶. In any case, Erik was the first permanent European settler. Shortly afterwards, many other Scandinavians made their way to Greenland, and it became an official colony of Norway until it was deserted some five centuries later. Among these early colonizers was Bjarni Herjulfsson, who was blown off course on his way to Greenland. Bjarni reported seeing an unknown land covered with “small wooded knolls”, but did not visit the shore¹⁷. Word of this sighting reached Leif Erikson, who gathered a crew of men and set out on an expedition to explore this new found land. On this journey, the first land that Leif encountered was described as inhospitable and named Helluland by Leif and his crew. It is believed that Helluland is modern-day Baffin Island—recent excavations have

¹³ “Annales Regii.” 2003.

¹⁴ “Markland and Helluland History.”

¹⁵ Haugen, Einar *Voyages to Vinland*. 1942.

¹⁶ Þórðarson, Sveinbjörn

¹⁷ Anderson, Rasmus, Arthur Reeves, and North Beamish. *The Norse Discovery of America*. 1906.

unearthed evidence of a Viking outpost there¹⁸. Although the sagas do not say Leif established a settlement, later explorers may have. After sailing further south, the explorers discovered another land along the shore, which they called Markland (Forest Land) presumably because of its large forests¹⁹. No archaeological finds have suggested its location, although it is almost certainly somewhere between Baffin Island and Newfoundland.

The third and most important location the Vikings encountered and named was Vinland, where the sagas record them as having built a settlement. As discussed above, it was named such because the explorers found wild grapes growing nearby (or so they claimed)²⁰. It is possible the L'Anse aux Meadows site was a settlement on the northernmost edge of Vinland, and that there were wild grapes to be found further to the south, where the Vikings explored during summers, spending winters at L'Anse²¹.

Travelling so far along the North American coastline, it was almost inevitable that the Vikings would encounter native tribes, likely the early cultures of the Mi'kmaq and the Thule that existed in the area at the time.²² Both of the sagas confirm this, but here they are especially contradictory. The Saga of Erik the Red describes initial friendly encounters in which the Norse exchanged milk and strips of colored cloth for furs and other goods, until the natives were frightened away by an escaped bull, which one Norse leader had brought with him on the journey. Possibly having interpreted this as a hostile action, the native people fled, returning three weeks later in a large war party of "superior numbers," which defeated the Vikings and forced them to flee. They returned to their camp, and decided that to remain in the land would be

¹⁸ Pringle, Heather. "Evidence of Viking Outpost Found in Canada." 2012.

¹⁹ The Saga of the Greenlanders.

²⁰ "From Adam of Bremen's Descriptio Insularum Aquilonis." 2003.

²¹ "Is L'Anse Aux Meadows Vinland?" 2015.

²² "Viking Ships Land in Mi'kmaq Homelands."

to live a life of “constant dread and turmoil,”²³ and they decided to pack up their belongings and return to Greenland. In the Saga of the Greenlanders, the story is similar, but instead a Native American is killed in a misunderstanding during a trade when reaching for a weapon. In this telling, the Norse prepared for the coming attack, and released a bull, to “let him go in advance.” The Norse won the battle, but their leader decided that they would return to Greenland that spring, rather than continue to explore. Along with this battle, another violent encounter is described in both sagas, in which Leif’s brother, Thorvald is killed. In both sagas, the Vikings make plans to leave and not return, taking their belongings with them, in much the same manner as it is believed that the L’Anse aux Meadows site was abandoned.

After the colonies were abandoned, the Greenlanders continued to make voyages to the North American coast, especially to Markland. Along with their hostile relations with the native peoples, a lack of motivation may have contributed to the failure of the Viking settlements. They returned to Markland to gather timber, a very scarce resource in Greenland, but it was not necessary for them to maintain any permanent colony there. These voyages continued for at least three centuries, or perhaps began a number of years after the colonies failed—the written records mention one such voyage in the year 1347²⁴. The Norse lacked enough motivation to attempt to settle North America after their hostile exchanges with the Native Americans, for a variety of reasons, one being that perhaps “Vikings did not consider the discovery of a new land as noteworthy as we would imagine”²⁵, perhaps since the countries of Europe were not as fully formed yet, and not competing so fiercely over land. The Vikings had also been discovering new lands for quite some time—they had colonized the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland before the voyages to North America. Europeans did not settle America successfully until five hundred

²³ The Saga of Erik the Red.

²⁴ Annales Regii. 2003.

²⁵ “Vinland History.”

years later, after the voyages of Columbus.

For a variety of reasons, the 16th century wave of European colonization was much more successful than the Norse attempts. These reasons fall generally into two categories—their motivations and their technological capabilities. Their motivations influenced people and especially rulers, who had more power in 16th century Europe than the Norwegian kings had in the 11th century. Their capabilities were greatly advanced, due largely to the Renaissance and the advances that it brought about.

The later European settlers had a variety of motivations that made them willing to spend more resources and time, and in some cases, lives, to successfully and permanently colonize the “new” world. Among these were religion—so motivating in the case of the Plymouth puritans that they stayed despite being in “a hideous and desolate wilderness full of wild beasts and wild men”²⁶ as well as trade (seeking a sea route to Asia), power (the many competing states of Europe sought advantages over each other), and material wealth. With increasingly mercantilist views, many saw the new world as a means to wealth and power, which the Vikings had not. Columbus, in a letter to the Spanish Royalty, wrote of how “in the eagerness to get gold, everyone will wish, naturally, to engage in its search in the preference to any other employment”²⁷. Additionally, most of the Europeans seeking to colonize the Americas at this time relied largely on domesticated agriculture for food, requiring more land and a more permanent settlement. The colonists of 16th century Europe simply had a much greater desire to permanently occupy and take advantage of this newly “discovered” land.

The later wave of colonization also had a number of advantages, mostly technological, that the Norse, as well as the Native Americans, lacked. Most notably among these was gunpowder—

²⁶ Qtd. in Deetz, Patricia Scott and Christopher Fennel. “William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647*.”

²⁷ Qtd. in Halsall, Paul. “*Medieval Sourcebook: Columbus’ Letter to the King and Queen of Spain, 1494*.”

though guns in this era lacked accuracy, they were still deadly weapons. This, along with steel blades and armor, helped the Europeans to be largely successful in violent conflicts and battles. The Sagas make multiple references to the natives attacking with slings and bow and arrows²⁸, and, while Vikings did have bows, they usually chose to fight with weapons of melee range (roughly five feet of reach), and likely had few ranged weapons with them in North America. In combat, the Native Americans had the advantage against the Vikings, while the reverse was true for the later Europeans.

Along with this military advantage, the later Europeans brought more with them—disease. Diseases were had possibly the greatest impact of anything that had occurred in the whole Columbian exchange, and led to millions of deaths. These included smallpox and the bubonic plague, which many Europeans had some natural immunity to by the 16th century. During the 11th century, these diseases were not common in Scandinavia or Greenland (the bubonic plague did not reach Europe until the 14th century)²⁹. Sometimes killing whole tribes before the Europeans reached them, these diseases had terrible impacts, and devastated native populations. Had this occurred with the Viking explorers, they would not have faced the “countless numbers” that the sagas spoke of, and the story of American history would have been a very different one indeed.

The Vinland Voyages were a unique period of time in the history of the Norse as well in the history of the whole Western hemisphere. Ultimately, however, their impacts were not felt throughout even Scandinavia, let alone Europe. Perhaps this was due to the seemingly inhospitable condition of North America and the Native Americans living there at the time,

²⁸ Anderson, Rasmus, Arthur Reeves, and North Beamish. *The Norse Discovery of America*. 1906.

²⁹ “The Black Death.”

combined with the fact that the Scandinavians had already discovered and begun to colonize Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroes.

Some have called Leif Erikson the man who nearly changed the world. Indeed, he quite almost ushered in an era of global connection and exchange, but instead, the encounters between the Norse and the Native Americans were not large enough, and did not continue long enough, to have a significant global impact. While Columbus, who opened up a world of exchange 500 years later, would be remembered throughout the coming centuries, Leif and the other Vikings, in the eyes of the world, slowly faded into legend and myth, until the discovery at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

The only primary sources of the Vinland voyages are the Norse Sagas. These were first passed down in oral tradition, until they were first recorded in Iceland sometime around the 13th century C.E. They are the only accounts from those who actually experienced the events; however, given their nature of saga and oral history, as well as the fact that they contradict each other, they are not entirely to be trusted. Having stated that these sources are unreliable, they are some of the most important sources in all of my research. Two of the sources listed here are individual sagas, the third is a collection. The first two pertain directly to North America, while the collection does not. Given my inability to read ancient Icelandic, all versions of these sources that I accessed were English translations.

Also included are primary sources of modern-day excavations of Norse sites, as well as Icelandic annals from the later voyages—although the sources are not from the era of the initial voyages, they were still recorded at the time of the events they describe.

“*Annales Regii.*” From the Icelandic Annals: American Journeys Collection. Wisconsin

Historical Society, 2003. Print. 26 February 2016. Found online at

<<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/aj/id/4211>>

This page from the Icelandic Annals was the oldest secondary source that I have. It describes the voyages to Vinland that took place in the 12th and 14th centuries, providing me with a source of the Icelander’s knowledge of Vinland, and that it was not forgotten.

Þórðarson, Sveinbjörn. *Icelandic Saga Database*. Web. 26 February 2016. < <http://sagadb.org/>>

This website, containing all the various Icelandic Sagas, as well as the Sagas describing the Vinland Voyages. The various sagas of Icelandic provide a good look at the historical context of the voyages. I have counted this as a primary source since the website contains sagas, which I have already classified as primary in the case of the Vinland-related sagas.

Pringle, Heather. "Evidence of Viking Outpost Found in Canada." *National Geographic*.

National Geographic Society, October 2012. Web. 3 March 2016. < <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/10/121019-viking-outpost-second-new-canada-science-sutherland/>>

This article helped me to further understand the extent of the archaeological evidence discovered at Baffin Island. Few sources mention any real artifacts found outside of L'Anse aux Meadows, and this source, along with the earlier article from National Geographic, show the extent of the Viking settlements and their exchanges.

Pringle, Heather. "Vikings and Native Americans." *National Geographic*. National Geographic Society, November 2012. Web. 25 February 2016. <<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/11/vikings-and-indians/pringle-text>>

This article explains a recent excavation in Canada that discovered Viking artifacts at new sites. It's my only source that has solid evidence for settlements beyond L'Anse aux Meadows, and usefully suggests the existence of a number of Viking settlements in North America.

“The Saga of Erik the Red.” *The Norse Discovery of America*. Trans. Anderson, Rasmus, Arthur Reeves, and North Beamish. London: Norrœna Society, 1906. Print. Found online at: < <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/nda/nda00.htm>>

This book contains an English translation of the Saga of Erik the Red. The first of the two Sagas I read, this contains the core story of the journeys to Vinland, as well as much of the earlier life of Erik the Red. It therefore includes much on the lives and histories of the Icelanders and the Greenlanders; however, it also claims that a Uniped shot and killed Thorvald, so perhaps in its account of the events in North America, it is the more fantastical of the two.

“The Saga of the Greenlanders.” University of Iceland, n.d. Web. 26 February 2016. < <https://notendur.hi.is/haukurth/utgafa/greenlanders.html>>

This page contains a translation of the Saga of the Greenlanders. This is the shorter of the two sagas, focusing largely on Vinland as a matter of fact, and has almost no information on Iceland. It helped me to understand more of the story of the expeditions, as well as the differences between the two. The Norse do win a key battle against the American Indians in this Saga, while the other Saga says it was lost, so perhaps this Saga glorifies some of their achievements.

“Vikings Unearthed.” *Nova*. PBS. KUNM, Albuquerque. 6 April 2016. Television.

This PBS special follows the recent excavation at Point Rosee in Newfoundland. It gives many possible insights into Viking settlements and exploration, and also definitive proof of their travel further south into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Rasmus, Arthur Reeves, and North Beamish. *The Norse Discovery of America*.

London: Norrœna Society, 1906. Print. Found online at: < <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/nda/nda00.htm>>

This book on the Sagas, like many at its time, contains much analysis of the sagas and the Icelandic records, seeking to prove that the voyages to North America were history and not myth. It also includes a full translation of the Saga of Erik the Red, and was generally useful in helping me to understand the story told in the Sagas.

“The Black Death.” *Saga Museum*.Sagamuseum.is, n.d. Web. 26 February 2016. < <http://www.sagamuseum.is/overview/the-black-death>>

This article explains the extent of the Black Death, as well as how and when it spread to Norway and Iceland. It showed that this was after the expeditions to North America, and also helped me to understand the total devastation that the disease caused.

Beck, Coby. “‘Vinland was full of grapes’—Or was it an early advertising campaign?” *Grist*.

Grist Magazine, Inc. 18 December 2006. Web. 25 February 2016.

<<http://grist.org/article/vinland-was-full-of-grapes/>>

This article explains reasons why there might have been no grapes in Newfoundland even at the time of the Viking voyages. It gave me insights into where Vinland could be, suggesting that it was probably still around the L’Anse aux Meadows site.

Deetz, Patricia Scott and Christopher Fennel. “William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation*:

1620-1647.” *Historical Archaeology and Public Engagement*. University of Illinois, n.d.

Web. 30 November 2015. <<http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/Bradford.html>>

This excerpt from the records of the Plymouth Governor gave me insights into the experiences of the puritans, and their motivations for seeking the new land and their expectations from it. It provided some contrast to the Viking colonization of a land not far from Plymouth, as well as their differences in how they perceived the land.

Diamond, Jared. *Collapse*. New York: Penguin, 2005. Print.

This book looks in depth at the collapse of various civilizations throughout history, including those of the Vinland (and Greenland) settlements of the Vikings. It helped me to understand the reason of the abandonment of the Norse settlements, as well as the archaeological evidence that supported this. I primarily used pages 205-210 for information on the L'Anse aux Meadows site.

“Discovery of the Site and Initial Excavations” Parks Canada. Parks Canada Agency, 24 July 2015. Web. 15 April 2016. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/nl/meadows/natcul/decouverte_discovery.aspx>

This article on the L'Anse aux Meadows site details the Ingstad's excavation and the artifacts that they found there. These artifacts are key to understanding the proof of the site as being Norse, and the article gave me insight into how unlikely the discovery was

From Adam of Bremen's Descriptio Insularum Aquilonis. American Journeys Collection.

Wisconsin Historical Society, 2003. Print. Found online at

<<http://www.americanjourneys.org/pdf/AJ-058.pdf>>

This page taken from a book by Adam Bremen, a late 11th century Icelandic historian,

contains records of Vinland. This gave me an impression of the Icelandic people's knowledge of Vinland, and of the stories they heard of its natural riches.

Halsall, Paul. "Medieval Sourcebook: Columbus letter to the King and Queen of Spain, 1494." *Fordham University*. Fordham University, n.d. Web. 30 November 2015. <<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columbus2.asp>>

This letter from to the Royalty of Spain explains Columbus' ideas and motivations in establishing a new colony in the Americas. I found it to be a useful comparison to the Vikings, as it rather clearly establishes some motivating interests for the Europeans of his time period.

Halvorsen, Ingrid. "North American Runestones" *Sunnyway*. n.d., Web. 25 February 2016. <<http://www.sunnyway.com/runes/americanstones.html>>

This web page on Viking Rune Stones in America detail many of those that have been found, as well as the equally numerous controversies over whether or not they are hoaxes. It also helped me to understand the influence of the Sagas in late 19th century America, as many people sought or made "evidence" to prove them true.

Haugen, Einar. *Voyages to Vinland*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942. Print. Found online at: <http://www.archive.org/stream/voyagestovinland013593mbp/voyagestovinland013593mbp_djvu.txt>

This book contains a thorough analysis of the two sagas, including plenty of information about Iceland and their recording in the records in there. It also was written before archaeological evidence of the voyages was discovered, and thus attempts to make some sense of the two sagas to find what actually happened in history.

Hirst, K. Krist. "L'Anse aux Meadows- The Vikings in North America." *About Education*.

About.com, 14 September 2015. Web. 3 January 2016.

<<http://archaeology.about.com/cs/explorers/a/anseauxmeadows.htm>>

This article on the L'Anse aux Meadows site in Newfoundland describes the excavation of the site, as well the implications of the evidence, such as how the inhabitants likely lived. I also got details about the discovery of the site from this source.

"Is L'Anse aux Meadows Vinland?" Parks Canada. Parks Canada Agency, 24 August 2015.

Web. 8 January 2016. <<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/nl/meadows/natcul/vinland.aspx>>

This article on the history of the L'Anse aux Meadows Historic Site discusses, like many sources, whether or not the L'Anse site was really Vinland, or what its connection was.

This source gave me the most definite answer, involving the discovery of butternut shells at the site, and suggests it was the northernmost part of Vinland, which was a large area rather than a site.

"Markland and Helluland History." *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. Smithsonian

Institution, n.d. Web. 8 January 2016. <<http://naturalhistory.si.edu/vikings/voyage/subset/markland/history.html>>

This Smithsonian web page discusses the historical references to Markland and Helluland in the centuries following the voyages. I found a very useful citation of a 14th century record of a voyage to Markland by the Greenlanders for timber, showing that the new world was abandoned but not forgotten.

“Viking Ships Land in Mi’kmaq homelands.” *National Library of Medicine*. National Institutes of Health, n.d. Web. 13 April 2016. <<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/166.html>>

This piece of a timeline of native history confirms the area in which the Vikings landed. It gives information on the tribes there at the time, and what cultures the Vikings may have had contact with.

“Vinland History.” *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. Smithsonian Institution, n.d. Web. 26 February 2016. <<http://naturalhistory.si.edu/vikings/voyage/subset/vinland/history.html>>

This web page describes historical documents outside of the Sagas that mention or relate to Vinland. It gave me the interesting insight that Vinland may have been common knowledge to the people of Greenland and Iceland.

“Vinland Sagas.” *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*. Smithsonian Institution, n.d. Web. 8 January 2016. <<https://www.mnh.si.edu/vikings/voyage/subset/vinland/sagas.html>>

This Smithsonian web page discusses the two sagas, which are my only primary sources, and helped me to understand them. It explained the general histories of the sagas, as well as the key points on which they contradicted one another.

“Vitis Labrusca.” *Plants For A Future*. Plants For A Future, n.d. Web. 25 February 2016. <<http://www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Vitis+labrusca>>

This web page describes the only wild grape found naturally in eastern North America, *Vitis Labrusca*. I found that the range of this grape does not extend up to Newfoundland

and the L'Anse aux Meadows site, suggesting that either grapes were once found, or, likely, that they never grew there at all.

“Where is Vinland?” *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History*. University of Victoria, n.d. Web. 8 January 2016.

<<http://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/vinland/home/indexen.html>>

This comprehensive website addresses the question of where the Vinland of the Sagas really was, and its connection to the L'Anse aux Meadows site. It helped serve as an in-depth introduction to my topic as I started looking at the details, and also analyzed Viking culture and life.

“Yes There Were Grapes In Newfoundland.” *Vinland Voyager*. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 February 2016. <<http://www.vinlandvoyager.com/7a%20GrapesYes.html>>

This web pages addresses the climate issue of whether or not grapes grew in Newfoundland in the 11th century C.E. I found this page helpful in understanding the controversy behind the issue of the grapes, and the larger problem of where Vinland may actually have been.