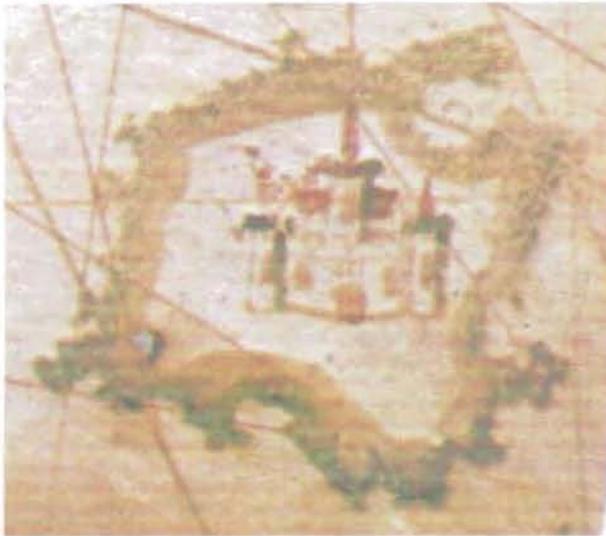


## Ancient Newfoundland Maps Challenge Traditional Columbus History

By Gunnar Thompson, Ph.D. – September, 2016

**NOTE:** Related peer-reviewed article about transatlantic trade *before* Columbus is in the “Winter Edition” (No. 97) of *Portolan Journal* by the Washington Map Society – November 2016.



**Newfoundland on  
“Italian Portolan”  
c.1482 \***

State Archive Collection  
Florence, Italy

Document: “Carta Nautica No.6”

### ***Introduction: Was America “Isolated” from Contact before Columbus?***

American historians have clung tenaciously to a long-standing belief that the New World continents were effectively isolated from Old World contacts until after the 1492 Voyage by Christopher Columbus. This concept of “New World Isolation” has been the foundation of academic thinking in the fields of history, geography, and anthropology for the past century. It has been assumed that New World Civilizations developed entirely independently from Old World contacts as a consequence of the vast oceans that prevented access along both sides of the American Continents. Presumably, Columbus was the first significant explorer who penetrated this cultural barrier in a so-called “Great Encounter.” In recognition of this “once-in-a-lifetime” achievement, Columbus was honored by a special exhibition called “Seeds of Change” at the Smithsonian National Museum in 1992. Historians acknowledge that a Nordic seafarer named Leif Eriksson stopped briefly at an unknown campsite called “Vinland” someplace along the Eastern Seaboard in about the Year 1001.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Morison summed up the significance of Erikson’s visit by stressing: “Vikings left not one footprint on the Sands of Time.”<sup>2</sup> This gross misinterpretation of the evidence has completely misled historians, geographers, and American archaeologists for the past century. Most scholars believe America was “isolated.” But this is not true.

---

\* This image is from a Russian language book about ancient maps by Bozhidar Dimitrov, *Bulgaria in the Medieval Maritime Mapmaking*, Sofia: 1984, Plate 31. This item was obtained from a used book dealer by associate Robert Ness for the New World Discovery Institute in Seattle. Dating and authentication of the map was by Italian scholars.

Typically, professional historians, geographers, and archaeologists scoff at reports of Old World contacts across the oceans. Ancient Nordic relics found in Eastern North America have generally been discredited as worn-out “Colonial farmers’ implements” or “hoaxes;” Roman coins found in the Eastern Woodlands (and as far south as Mexico and the Coast of Venezuela) have been dismissed as “discards” from modern coin collectors; and reports of ancient “Indian maize” and “turkeys” being used as food in medieval Europe have been branded as “mistakes” made by deluded 16<sup>th</sup>-century botanists.

Unlike the scattered coins and enigmatic engravings that amateurs have stumbled across in their wilderness wanderings, antique maps have been acquired by reputable museums and subjected to considerable examination by professional scientists who are knowledgeable concerning the methods and technology of the ancient mapmakers. Seattle author Gunnar Thompson has persuaded a growing number of cartographic scholars that newly-identified images of ancient Newfoundland and other New World territories on early Roman maps and medieval *portolan* maps are sufficient scientific grounds for a complete reinterpretation of early American History. He calls the new evidence: “a cartographic ‘Game Changer.’” It is the equivalent of a NASA “midcourse correction” for a space flight that has gone off course and needs to have its direction adjusted accordingly. In this case, the professional obsession with the belief in New World Isolation before Columbus has gone on for over a century – with the resulting misinterpretation of how New World Peoples adapted to the impact of Old World voyagers on the physical environment, economic opportunities, and spiritual wellbeing.

Maps are the indelible “fingerprints” of ancient Old World explorers. They are the equivalent of photographic images of medieval geography as it was known to the earliest navigators. Those that survived the passing centuries contain vital clues that have not yet been deciphered. They may very well compel historians, geographers, and anthropologists to abandon outdated academic paradigms that have previously assumed that the New World was effectively “isolated” from Old World influence.

### ***Cartographic Evidence: Newfoundland on Early Maps***

Three pre-Columbian maps of Newfoundland have been identified by scholars at the New World Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington. They emerged during a routine investigation of discrepancies that were encountered involving the growth of European economies during the Middle Ages (roughly 500 AD to 1450). The focus of our study was the increasing wealth, power, and independence of Hanseatic merchants of Germany who began their rise to prosperity by acquiring the Nordic Codfish Industry.

The three maps are:

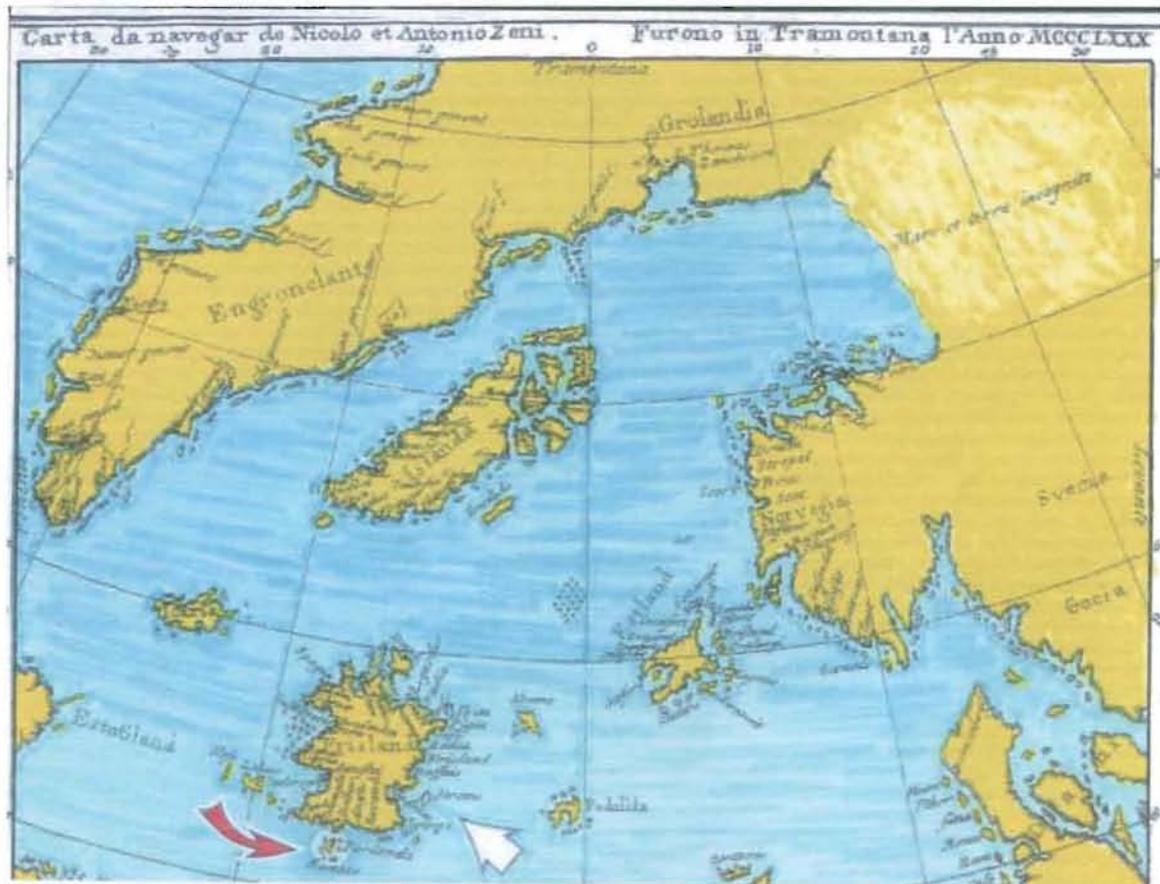
1. the “Florentine Portolan” of c. 1482;
2. the “Catalan Map” of c. 1480; and
3. the “Zeno Map” of c. 1380 (reprinted at Venice in 1558)

Modern European museums have eagerly acquired *portolano*-style maps that were produced during the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. “Portolan Maps” refer to commercial geographical charts whose coastal features were delineated by using magnetic compass bearings to plot locations of port cities and major geological features (such as mountains, promontories and rivers). Many portolan maps include images of similar isles in the extreme northwestern quadrant. These are typically identified as

*Fixlanda* (“Fishland”) or *Frisland* (“Land of Frisians”). The outlying northwestern isle is not named on many of these maps. As the Mediterranean Sea and Baltic were the principal areas of commercial interest, most medieval portolan maps did not have room for the distant territories in the North Atlantic (such as Arctic Greenland, Iceland, and New World Isles that were beginning to emerge in the west). Cartographers who included the Arctic or western isles on their maps were forced to place them in close proximity with Ireland, Scotland, and Norway – thus the scale of this area on maps has been greatly compressed and distorted. About all we can determine from this misplacement is the approximate latitude or longitude of isles that are actually much farther away from Europe than they appear to be on the portolan maps.

A total of fourteen maps were included in our study. Doubtless, many more have been stashed in the nooks and crannies of European archives and private collections.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest dated portolan featuring Frisland is the “Zeno Map” of 1559 (Figure 1). A Venetian publisher and a distinguished author, Nicolò Zeno “the Younger,” claimed that the map was originally compiled by his ancestor – Nicolò “the Elder” – in 1380.



**Figure 1.** The “Zeno Map” (dated 1380 in Roman Numerals) includes the Isle of Frisland (arrows) in the North Atlantic west of Norway and south of Iceland. Modern historians suspected the Venetian map was an effort to defraud Columbus, because it included New World mainland called “Estotiland” and “Drogeo” (lower left). As there never was an island at this precise location in the North Atlantic, many historians regarded the map as a “hoax.”

The “Zeno Map” and “Zeno Narrative” of North Atlantic adventures were printed at Venice by Gian Ramusio in 1558. At the time, Ramusio was a respected Senatorial Secretary. He was part of an effort among Venetian merchants who wanted to establish Venice as the leading European center of book publishing and map production. Nicolò Zeno the Younger, author of the Narrative, was a respected ambassador who claimed that he compiled the “Zeni Adventure Story” from remains of letters that he had torn up when he was a child. The map was described in his memoir as being a convenient “chart” that seemed like a suitable means of providing a geographical context for events that were described in the 14<sup>th</sup> century letters. Actual origins of the document are entirely unknown.

According to Zeno’s story, his ancestor was a wealthy merchant who fancied a voyage of adventure into the North Atlantic. His ship supposedly ran aground on a Western Isle that he called “Frisland” – presumably because it was occupied mostly by “Frisian” immigrants from the Frisian Isles that are situated north of the Netherlands. Zeno and his crew were reportedly rescued by a gallant sea captain who was nicknamed “Zichmni.” The hero is later described as a Scottish Duke who owned property on a nearby island. Zeno mentioned that merchants from Scotland, Norway, England, Holland, and Brittany obtained valuable cargoes of “salt fish” from the island. This product consisted of codfish fillets that were preserved with salt in airtight barrels.<sup>4</sup>

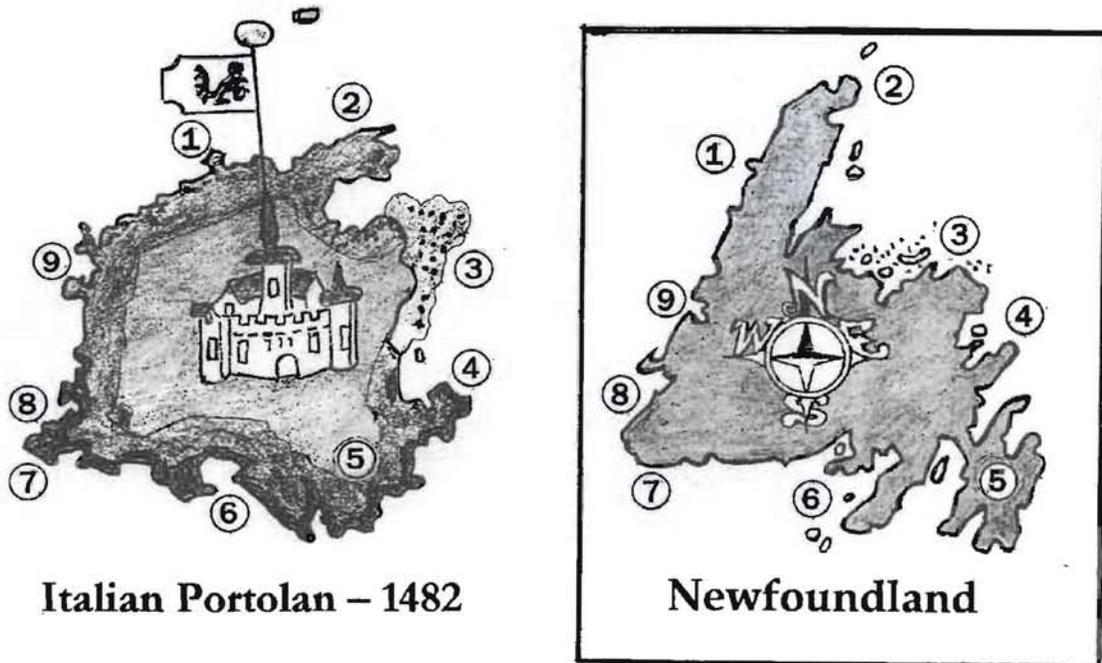
Zeno noted that Frisland was located south of “Greenland” – although whether this was a reference to Arctic Greenland or Labrador (which was sometimes called “Green Land” because it was covered with forests) is uncertain. Zeno added that Frisland was a single island that consisted of numerous peninsulas and bays; it was larger than Ireland; and it belonged to the King of Norway.<sup>5</sup> All of these characteristics would have been an excellent description of Newfoundland. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Royal Norwegian Banner is featured on the “Italian Portolan” of 1482 above the Northwestern Isle (that is, above the survey map of ancient Newfoundland). It is situated west of Iceland. Newfoundland (a.k.a. Frisland) is identifiable on the basis of Diagnostic Geographical Markers (hereafter called “DGMs”) which we will discuss in a moment. Frisland is not specifically named on this portolan.

Zeno’s description of the economical, political, and geographical characteristics of Frisland alerted the Institute scholars that the enigmatic isle on portolan maps was an excellent candidate for being an ancient image (or nautical survey map) of Newfoundland. We also noted that the principal region of shoals (and thus the best fishing) was along the western shore of Frisland on the Zeno Map as well as the enigmatic isle on “the Italian Portolan” of 1482. This was contrary to the best shoals and fishing that were situated along the East Coast of Newfoundland. Thus, we suspected that the original map of *Fixlanda* (or “Fishland”) by Venetian navigators was made using a magnetic compass during the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most early medieval maps were oriented with “North” at the bottom of maps. Since the Magnetic North Pole was situated west of Baffin Island, cartographers evidently assumed *Fixlanda* was north of Iceland – when it actually was southwest. When Renaissance geographers decided to compile maps so that the terminology was correctly aligned with “North” at the top (instead of the bottom), they apparently failed to reorient the earlier medieval map of *Fixlanda*. Thus, the title appears upside-down on the Catalan Map of 1480 and the Prunes Map of 1559.

In any case the identification of “Cape au Choix” (in Northwestern Newfoundland) along with the “St. John Islands” of St. John Bay enabled us to correctly orient the maps.

**Geomorphology: Diagnostic Geographical Markers**

The “Key Geographical Marker” (or DGM) for use in aligning maps of *Frisland* is “Cape au Choix” and the associated “St. John Islands” (identified as No. 1 in Figure 2). The Cape juts out in a northwesterly direction into the Gulf of St. Lawrence midway along the “Northern Peninsula” of Newfoundland.

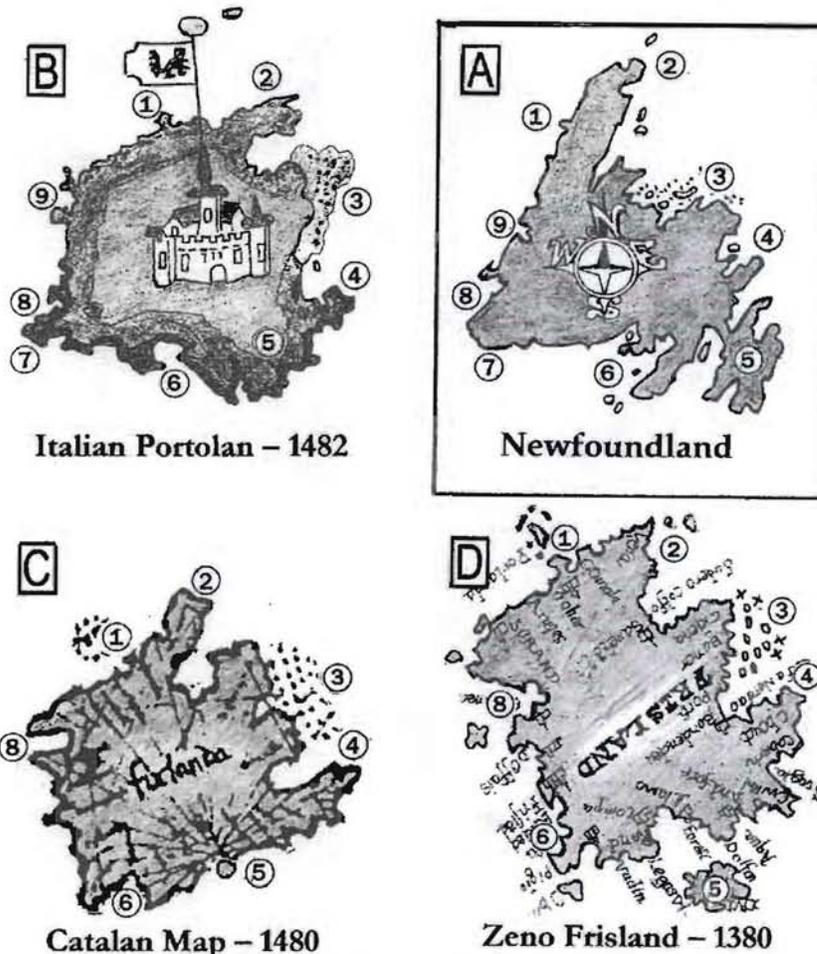


**Figure 2.** Comparison of the pre-Columbus “Italian Portolan” in the State Archive at Florence shows a remarkable sequence of similar geographical markers (or “DGMs”). These include: (1) the “Key Marker” – a distinctive headland peninsula on the northwest shore called “Cape au Choix” on the modern map; (2) Northeastern Peninsula and Belle Isle towards the north; (3) central eastern shoals and small islands – “Notre Dame Bay”; (4) southeastern peninsula – “Bonavista”; (5) southeastern lowlands – the Avalon Peninsula Region; (6) major southern bay – “Burien Pen.”; (7) southwestern “stub” peninsula; (8) southwestern bay – “St. Georges”; and (9) large Midwestern bay – “Bay of Isles.”

Royal Nordic Banner (rampant lion on a field of gold) flying above the castle identifies this territory (Nyaland, Landanu, or Markland) as belonging to the King of Norway.

While the particular promontories, bays, and other landmarks are subject to some variability on the portolan maps, this basic sequence along the Newfoundland coastline is unique across the entire planet. The “Key Marker” is of particular significance as it was often represented by a distinctive circular pattern of isles on the portolan maps. The presence of the eastern fishing shoals (3) is a standard feature of most Newfoundland

maps. The Avalon Peninsula (5) was a particular problem for the early navigators and cartographers – because the topography is quite unlike the mountainous northern territory of Newfoundland. The countryside is much lower and the connecting peninsula is so narrow that Avalon has the appearance of being a separate isle. This is how it was portrayed on Early Colonial maps – such as maps by the Dauphin in 1543, Sebastian Cabot in 1544, and Andre Thévet in 1575. The “Catalan Map” of 1480 showed Avalon as a tiny isle (Figure 3) – whereas it was portrayed by Nicolo Zeno as a large isle with numerous complicated bays and peninsulas. This improved accuracy in the portrayal of the Avalon Peninsula is one of many reasons for accepting the Zeno Map as being a legitimate example of an actual nautical survey that was produced in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 3.** The Avalon Peninsula on the Catalan Map (C) and the Zeno Map (D) was inaccurately portrayed as being separate from the mountainous northern territory of Newfoundland. Nevertheless, the general consistency of the sequence of DGMs is sufficient to confirm that both maps portray ancient nautical surveys of the Nordic Dominion that was known in Medieval Times by such names as *Nyaland*, *Landamu*, *Markland*, or “Icelandic Isles.” The “Key Marker” (1 – Cape au Choix) is of particular importance – as it was often portrayed as a circular group of isles or fishing shoals.

### *Discrepancies in the Traditional Paradigm of History*

Scholars at the Institute had two objectives (or questions) at the outset of the present cartographic research project. These were: I – “How did ‘ethnic pride’ influence the scientific paradigm of American Discovery?” And II – “What role did Newfoundland codfish play in the incredible fortunes generated by the Western Hanseatic League?”

#### **I. Was the Zeno Narrative a “Hoax” Motivated by Excessive Ethnic Pride?**

The first objective was implicit in the decision by modern historians to declare the Zeno Map and Narrative to be a “hoax” during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This revision in the status of the Venetian account greatly diminished the reputations of three prominent historical characters – “Nicolò Zeno the Younger” who wrote the “Zeno Narrative,” “Giovanni Battista Ramusio” who was the esteemed Scribe of the Venetian Senate during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and “Henry Sinclair” who was a Scottish naval hero.

Sinclair’s role in the somewhat mixed-up Zeno Tale was ascertained by Henry Reinhold Forster. He was a Scottish naturalist who accompanied Captain James Cook on the Second Discovery Expedition that sailed across the Pacific Ocean from 1772 to 1775. Certainly, Forster would have to be regarded as a distinguished intellectual to have been chosen for such a demanding and pivotal scientific enterprise. As a descendant of Scottish lords, Forster was familiar with the ancient tales of legendary heroes. According to Forster, Sinclair was the principal character who was nicknamed “Zichmni” in the Zeno Narrative. He was the Scottish Lord of Rosslyn Castle and a Midlothian Barony during an era of Nordic conflicts with Frisian Pirates and Hanseatic merchants of Germany. The Sinclair family had for many years been the principal patrons of French Templar Knights who had been arrested, tortured, and otherwise mistreated by King Philip “the Fair” in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>

King Haakon VI of Norway instituted Henry Sinclair as “Earl of the Orkney Islands” in 1380. This honor was bestowed upon the Scottish Baron (who was also related to the Norwegian Royal Family) largely because the Sinclair Family had a large fleet of merchant ships operating in the North Atlantic. Zeno’s Narrative mentioned that Sinclair was: “worthy of immortal memory as a consequence of his humanitarian deeds and great military achievements.”<sup>7</sup> As Earl of the Orkney Islands, the Scottish-Nordic naval commander probably had a significant role in defeating Frisian Pirates whose Baltic Sea War spilled over into the Atlantic Theatre between 1380 and 1390.

The Zeno Narrative is principally about the heroism of the Scottish Lord and his successful battles against the Frisian Pirates who had taken over control of “Frisland” (i.e., Newfoundland) which was evidently called by that name at this point in time. In 1261, King Haakon IV proclaimed sovereignty over all the territories between the Baltic Sea and the North (Magnetic) Pole. At that time, Newfoundland was generally referred to by such names as *Nyaland* (“New Island”), *Landamu* (“New Land”), or *Markland* (basically “Land of Lumber” but alternatively “Forest Land”).<sup>8</sup> Hanseatic sea captains evidently called Newfoundland by the name of “Iceland” – because it was managed by Icelandic merchant barons.

On the “Modena Map” of 1350, Newfoundland was portrayed as an archipelago of isles directly north of Iceland. A caption on the map indicated that: *questas illes son apellades islādes* (that is, “these isles are called ice-lands”).<sup>9</sup> As there never were any

such isles in this location of the Arctic Sea, most historians seem to have assumed that the mention of “Icelandic Isles” on Catalan maps was entirely mythical or fictional. They actually represented the somewhat vague reports of seafarers whose ships obtained lumber, furs, whale oil, and stockfish (or dried cod) from new industries being managed by Frisian and Hanseatic merchants. Another name for Newfoundland that was popular among German seafarers was “Vinland.” This title was first used by the Icelandic traveler Leif Eriksson who found “wine grapes” in abandoned vineyards – probably in the region of Cape Cod. The title “Vinland” for an overseas colony and island in the Northwest Atlantic area can be seen on numerous copies of the German Vinland Map – called *Rudimentum Novitorium* that was printed in huge quantities at Lübeck (1475) and at Paris (1488). These maps were part of the Hanseatic promotional program that was needed to recruit thousands of young men to join enormous fleets that carried valuable cargoes (principally of dried codfish, lumber, whale oil, and furs) from Newfoundland to ports in Northern Europe.

In any case, the Zeno Narrative had practically nothing to do with promoting the notion that Venetians beat Columbus to the New World. Indeed, throughout the Narrative, Zeno mentions that wherever Zichmni’s fleet traveled, they found the region already occupied by Britons, Scots, Norwegians, Frisians, Englanders, and the Dutch. It is principally the fame of the Scottish Lord (Sinclair) that is at issue.

Oh, the Zeno Narrative has its faults. Evidently, the author or publisher chose to include plagiarized materials relating to the Spanish Conquest of Mexico. A spurious reference to a fictitious Scottish King Daedalus was perhaps added to impress gullible readers hungry for romance; and a detailed treatise concerning the cuisine and habits of a remote Greenland monastery was purloined from a previously published account by Olaus Magnus. These “literary gimmicks” filled in the blank pages of otherwise dull reading material. They do not constitute evidence that the publication is devoid of historically-relevant materials concerning early North Atlantic commerce or the military exploits of Henry Sinclair in ancient Newfoundland.

## **II. Newfoundland Codfish and the Rise of the Western Hanseatic League**

King Haakon IV’s Trade Treaty with Lübeck in 1250, the rise of industrial shipyards in Germany and Holland, and the onset of the “Little Ice Age” (roughly 1300 to 1850) combined to transform the marginal colonial economies of Newfoundland into a vital commercial reservoir for medieval Europe.

Initially, the Lübeck Trade Treaty was a “fish-for-grain” arrangement that was designed to guarantee the transport of sufficient Baltic grains to meet the demands of Bergen, Norway – the principal Nordic city – and the outlying villages of fisher folk and farmers who were unable to grow oats, wheat, barley, and rye due to the mostly-rocky ground and short growing season. Hanseatic merchants of the Eastern League that were situated on the Baltic Coast traded grains for Nordic *stocfis* (or dried cod). The light-weight dried fish could be transported over long distances into Central Europe at a considerable profit. The fish could be stored in warehouses for decades. Thus Nordic cod became the economic backbone of the Hanseatic League. Cities in the Western Hanseatic League in Hamberg, Bremen, Nuremberg and elsewhere west of the Rhine River were effectively locked out of the trade in Scandinavian fish that was dominated by the Lübeck run Kontor in Bergen.

Onset of the “Little Ice Age” created problems for Norwegian shipping on the North Atlantic, because the beach-built *knørrs* (or merchant vessels) were not strong enough to survive the increasing severity of storms and waves on the ocean. Another problem was that the cargo capacity of Nordic vessels was less than 50 tons – making it uneconomical for Nordic sailors to carry the stockfish from Iceland. Another problem caused by the shift in weather was that the cooler seas around the Arctic Colony forced the breeding codfish to migrate towards the warmer seas southwest near Newfoundland.<sup>10</sup>

Industrial shipyards developed by the Hanseatic League were able to build cogs and carracks that were able to withstand the rough seas during the Little Ice Age; and they had cargo capacities in excess of 300 tons by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Gradually, ships from the Eastern Hanseatic League took over all of the transport of cargoes (particularly stockfish) along the Norwegian Coast. Western Hansa ships carried merchandise to-and-from Iceland. Evidently, Western Hansa captains became aware of the valuable cargoes (such as furs, lumber, whale oil, and stockfish) that were available in Newfoundland; and they began transatlantic cartage of these goods by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As the Newfoundland industries were initially under the management of Icelandic Barons, the outlying scattered isles of the Newfoundland Archipelago were simply referred to as “Icelandic Isles” – or more simply as just plain “Iceland.”

As the source of stockfish and “Norwegian lumber” from *Markland* (or ancient Newfoundland) was identified in European port records as “Iceland,” modern historians simply assumed that huge cargoes of lumber, codfish, and whale oil were being imported in enormous Western Hansa fleets originated in the Arctic Colony of Iceland.<sup>11</sup> Actually, Newfoundland was the source. The unfortunate consequence of this misunderstanding was the grossly-distorted assumption that Hansa ships never sailed beyond the Arctic Isle of Iceland. It was further assumed that the “insularity” of ancient America was never broached by these huge Hanseatic fleets. John Gade noted that one Hansa Fleet sailing in the seas between Newfoundland and Iceland consisted of ninety vessels.<sup>12</sup> These annual convoys had been going on for more than a century before Columbus supposedly discovered the “totally-isolated” New World.

### *Consequences of Ancient North Atlantic Commerce*

During the “Enlightenment Era” in European History, scholars set about “correcting” the supposed “mistakes” that had been made by their predecessors. All the major 16<sup>th</sup> century botanists had reported that Romans had “Indian corn” (or New World *maize*); and they had “long-peppers” (or New World chilies). It was also claimed by some rogue scholars that Romans smoked tobacco (a New World weed); and they ate turkeys (a New World fowl). Icelandic sagas reported that resident Irish settlers in ancient New England rode on horseback before Columbus.

“No!” – insisted the revisionists historians who claimed the New World was “isolated before Columbus.” Only the intrepid Spanish explorer deserved credit for a “Great Encounter” that first united two previously unknown hemispheres. Supposedly, there were no turkeys in the Old World before Columbus. Supposedly, claims that the Romans had pumpkins, tomatoes, Indian corn, and tobacco were all wrong.

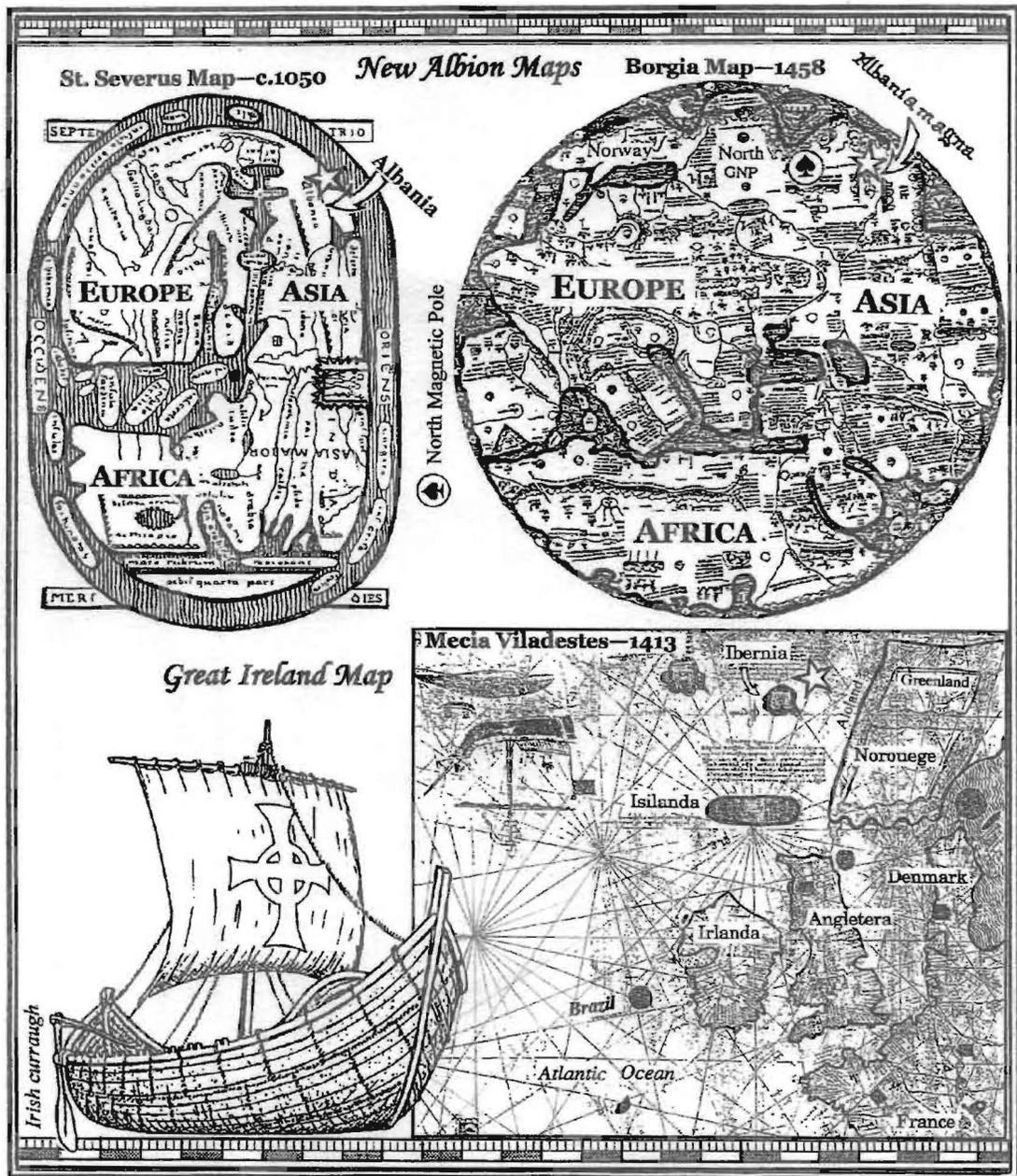
However, the evidence has been all around us in cartography, legends, art, and actual artifacts excavated by archaeologists digging at the ruins of ancient Roman Cities. Details concerning the enormous impact of ancient commerce can be found in Gunnar

Thompson's book: *American Discovery: World Heritage*; Raleigh, NC: lulu.com 2013. Several examples from this publication include the following items.



**Figure 4.** The “Italian Portolan” (Nautical Chart VI) shows Frisland (unnamed on this map) directly west of Iceland and Norway. Inclusion of both Frisland and Iceland on the same map confirms the popular belief that these isles represented two separate commercial destinations. In a statement that has been attributed to Columbus, the Spanish mariner also confirmed that “Frisland” was the name of an island that was the destination of English mariners in 1477 – when he visited the Isle 300 leagues beyond Iceland:

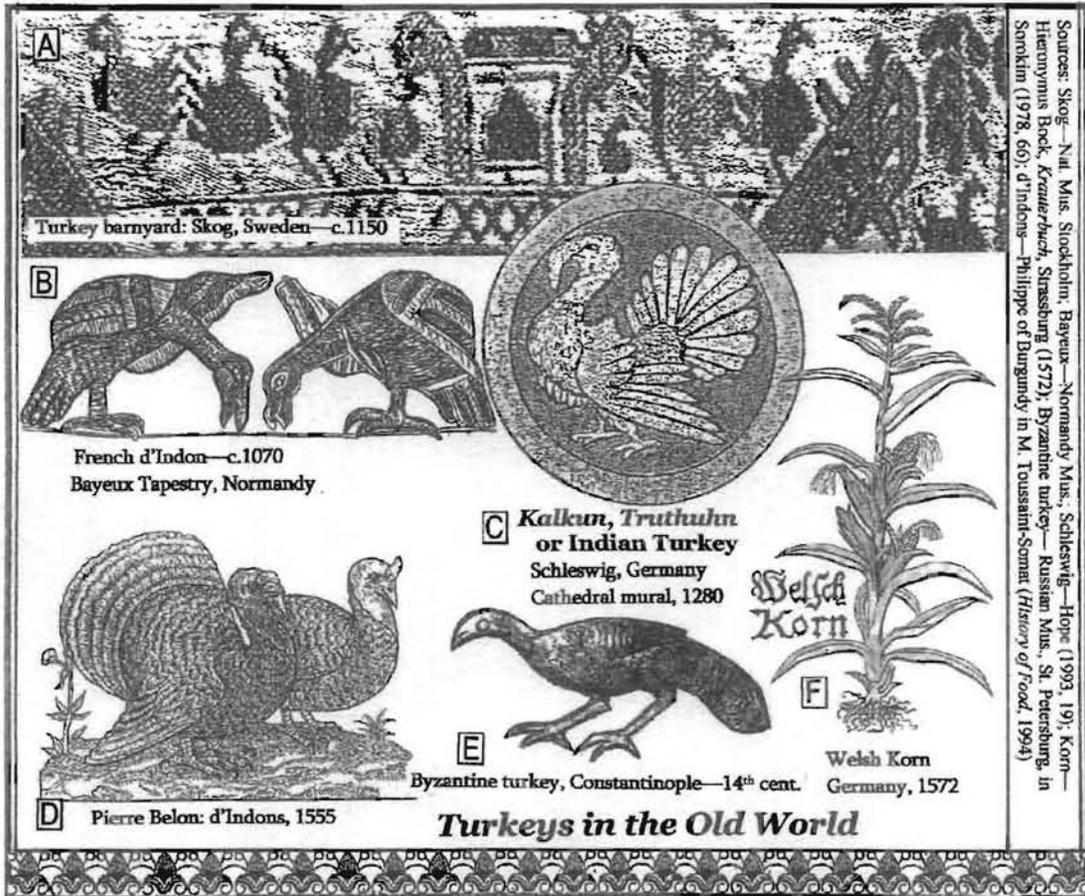
In February 1477, I sailed a hundred leagues beyond the island of Tile, ... It is true that the Tile mentioned by Ptolemy lies where he says it does, and this is called by the moderns *Frislanda*.<sup>13</sup>



**Welsh & Irish Colonies: New Albion & Ibernia (or Great Ireland)**

Church geographers kept track of evangelists and the sites of Christian settlements in the so-called “Western Isles.” Of course, the Western Isles were actually the mainland of North America. King Arthur’s Colony of New Albion was registered on Church Maps as “Albania” or “Albania Magna.” It was placed in a cartographic region designated as Asia, because officials thought Asia was directly west of Europe. *Ibernia* (or Great Ireland) was placed *north* of Iceland by sailors using magnetic compass directions. The actual location was along the Eastern Seaboard near modern-day Nova Scotia.

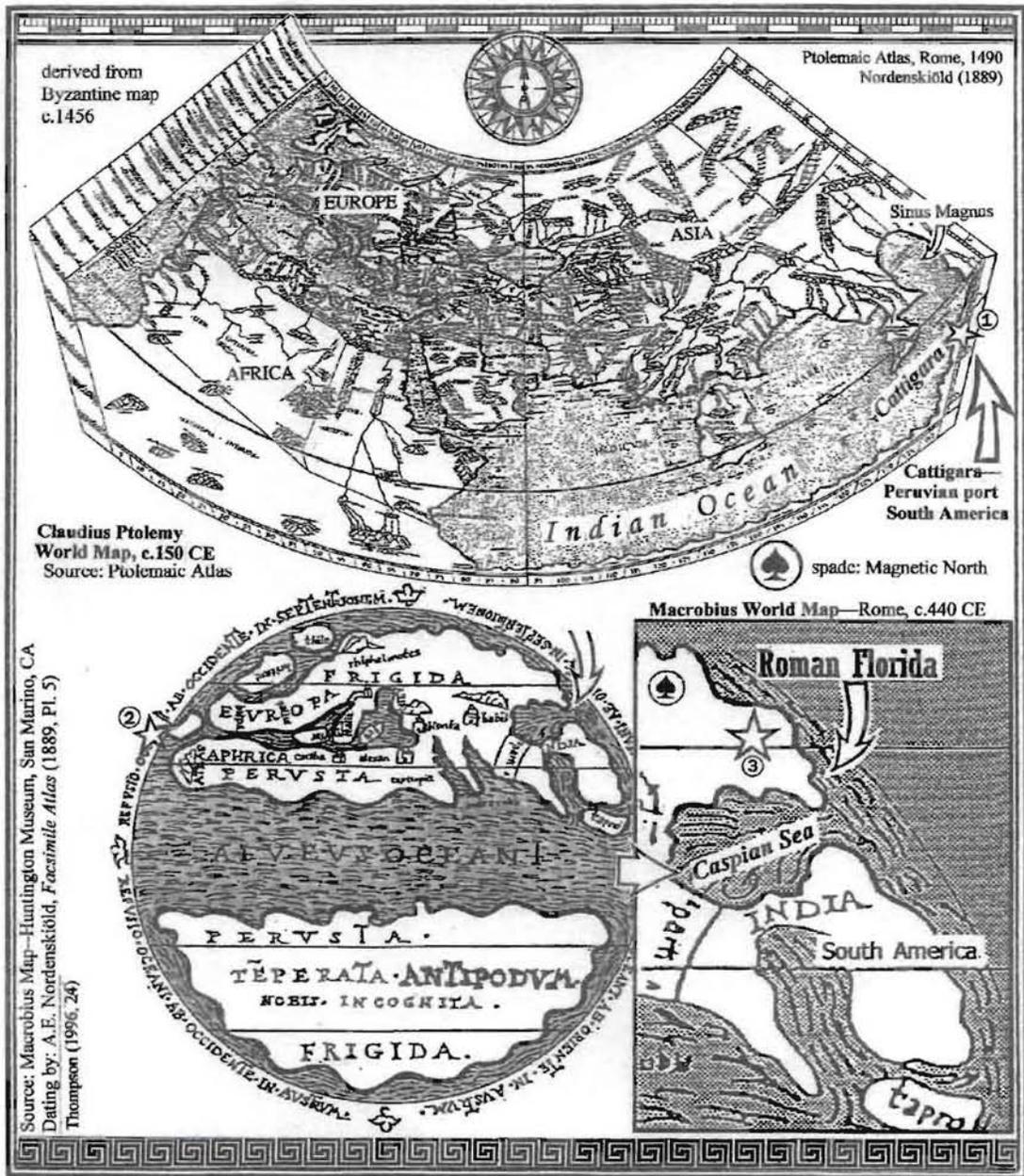
(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



Sources: Skog—Nat. Mus. Stockholm; Bayeux—Normandy Mus.; Schleswig—Hope (1993, 19); Korn—Hieronymus Bock, *Kramerbach*, Strassburg (1572); Byzantine turkey—Russian Mus., St. Petersburg; in Sorokin (1978, 66); d'Indons—Philippe of Burgundy in M. Toussaint-Somat (*History of Food*, 1994)

The wild American turkey gobbler roamed the forests of Mexico and North America. It was imported to the Roman Empire along with "turkey corn" and "Indian millet" (or maize). Carried onboard Turkish grain ships, it acquired the name *turkey* in Britain. In Gaul, it was called *d'indon* (or "the bird of India"). Norse ships carried the fowl to Sweden where it was known as *kalkhun* or Welsh hen. Hansa merchants resumed imports of the tasty fowl in 1250. The bird was known in Germany as *trut huhn* or "Welsh hen." Targus (1552) noted that birdfeed was also called "Welsh corn"—indicating that it was imported from the Welsh Colonies. A.W. Schroger (1966, 471) noted that ancient turkey bones were common in Ireland. Toussaint-Somat (1994) noted that *d'indons* (or turkeys) were served at a French wedding feast in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. A Spanish Franciscan noted in *the Book of Knowledge* (1350) that the Celtic inhabitants of Ibernica (or Great Ireland) in the Far West served "fat birds" that tasted good either boiled or roasted. None of the names used for the fowl in Europe suggest a post-Columbus or a Spanish source.

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



Ptolemy's Greek/Roman Map (top) includes the West Coast of South America in the extreme east. All the Renaissance geographers agreed, "Cattigara" was in Peru. This was the site of King Solomon's Mines. Macrobius (bottom) placed Antillia (Star-2) directly west of Spain. He located Roman "Florida" (Land of Springtime) directly north of the Caspian Sea (or Gulf of Mexico). This "Zonal Map" shows *Peusta* (Peru) near the equator. The word "perusta" denotes hot, arid climate; and that is certainly true for the coast of Peru.

The Western Caspian Sea was left unnamed on the Macrobius Map. It is in a location that corresponds to the Gulf of Mexico. Florida on this map is

sufficiently accurate to indicate that Romans planned to develop the temperate peninsula with plantations.

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



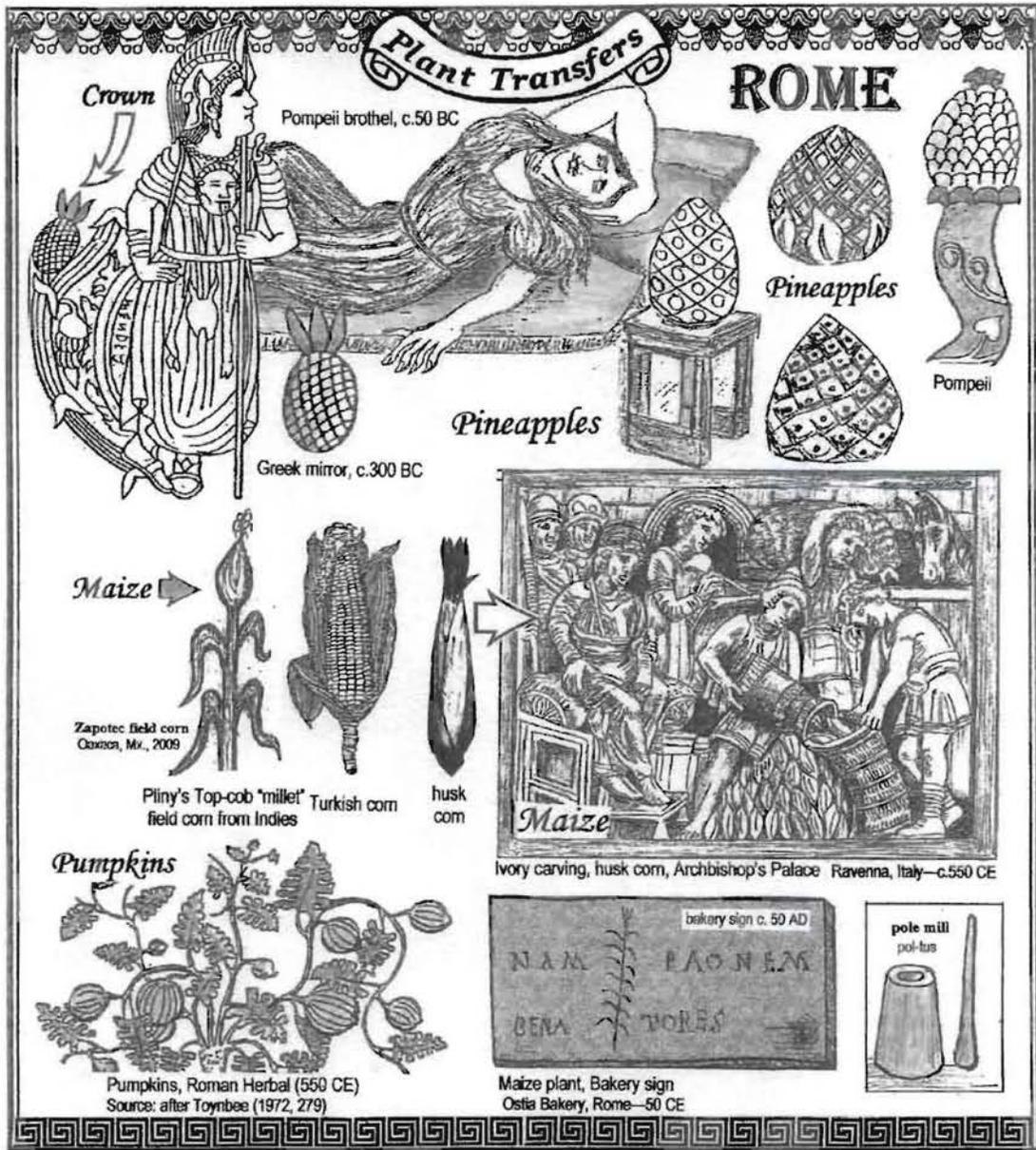
Romans imported plenty of tobacco to Britain. It was a soothing smoke for guards who had to walk along the cold stone pavement of the fog-enshrouded "Hadrian's Wall." A 16<sup>th</sup> century botanist, Dodoens (A), identified the Roman plant, yellow henbane, as "tobacco." Roman pipes are common at the ruins of Romano-British Cities. Antiquarians found similar clay pipes at East Coast burial mounds. Virtually identical pipes in 10<sup>th</sup> century Ireland and Denmark were called "Irish fairy pipes." Indian pipes, such as those of the Eastern Powhatan Tribe are also similar to the Irish-style pipe. Imports of tobacco fell off during plagues or periods of bad weather in the North Atlantic. Demand in England fell sharply as a consequence of a Church-sponsored crusade against tobacco. Raleigh and Drake resumed imports in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (B); and it is evident that housewives were not happy (D).

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



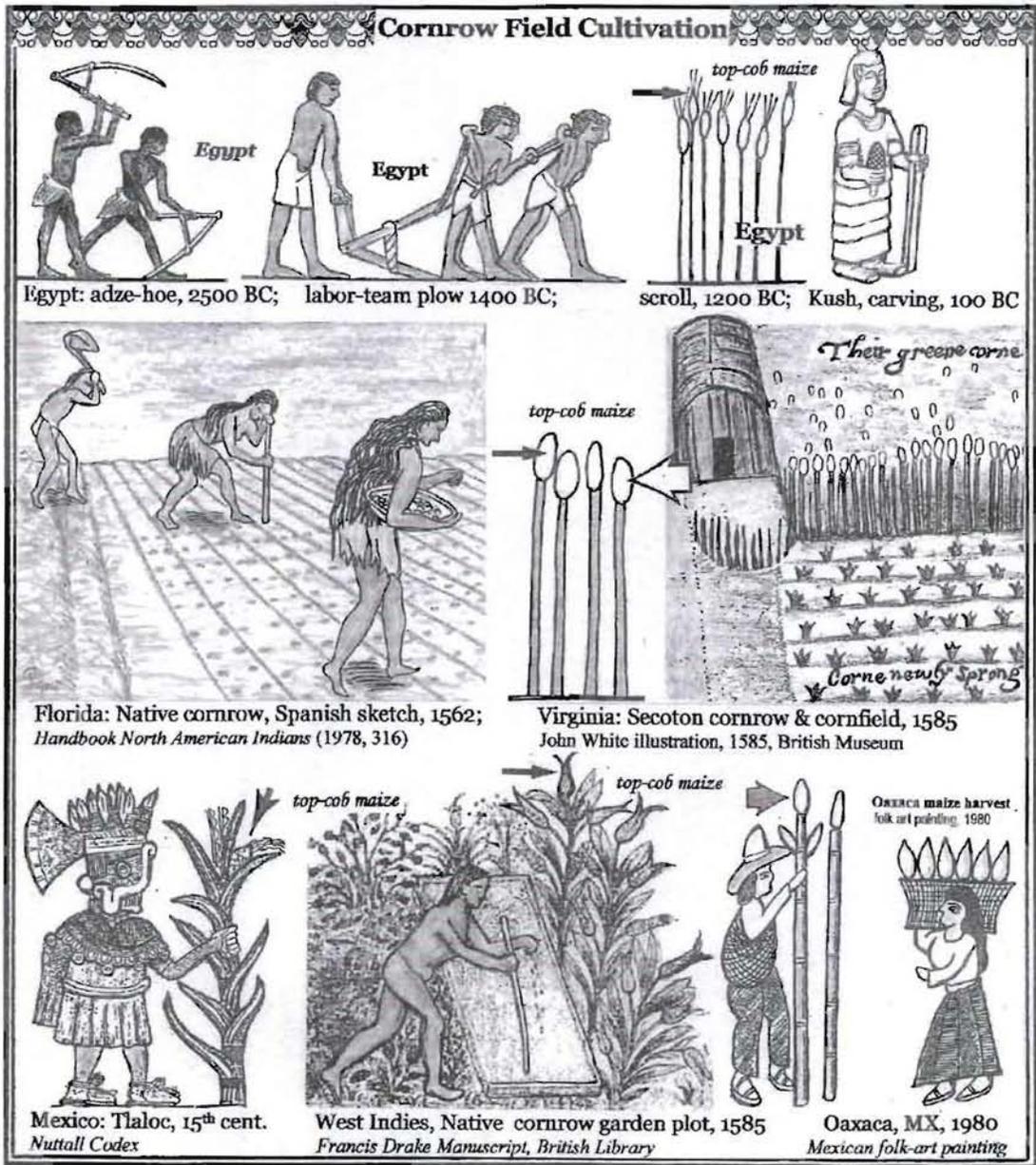
Arabs named tobacco *taba*, *tabgha*, *toba*, or *tu-bak*; and they introduced it into North Africa and the Sudan where it was known in the markets by Arabic names. The New World yellow tomato (or *banadura*) was grown in Andalusian gardens; and it was later named *pomodoro* (or "golden apple") by the Spaniards. Haricot beans were mentioned by Ibn al-'Awwam in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Chilies were used in a fiery-hot Tunisian sauce called *harisa*. The first European herbal to identify maize was written by Jean Ruell in 1536. He identified the plant as "Saracen millet." Most called it "turkey corn."

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



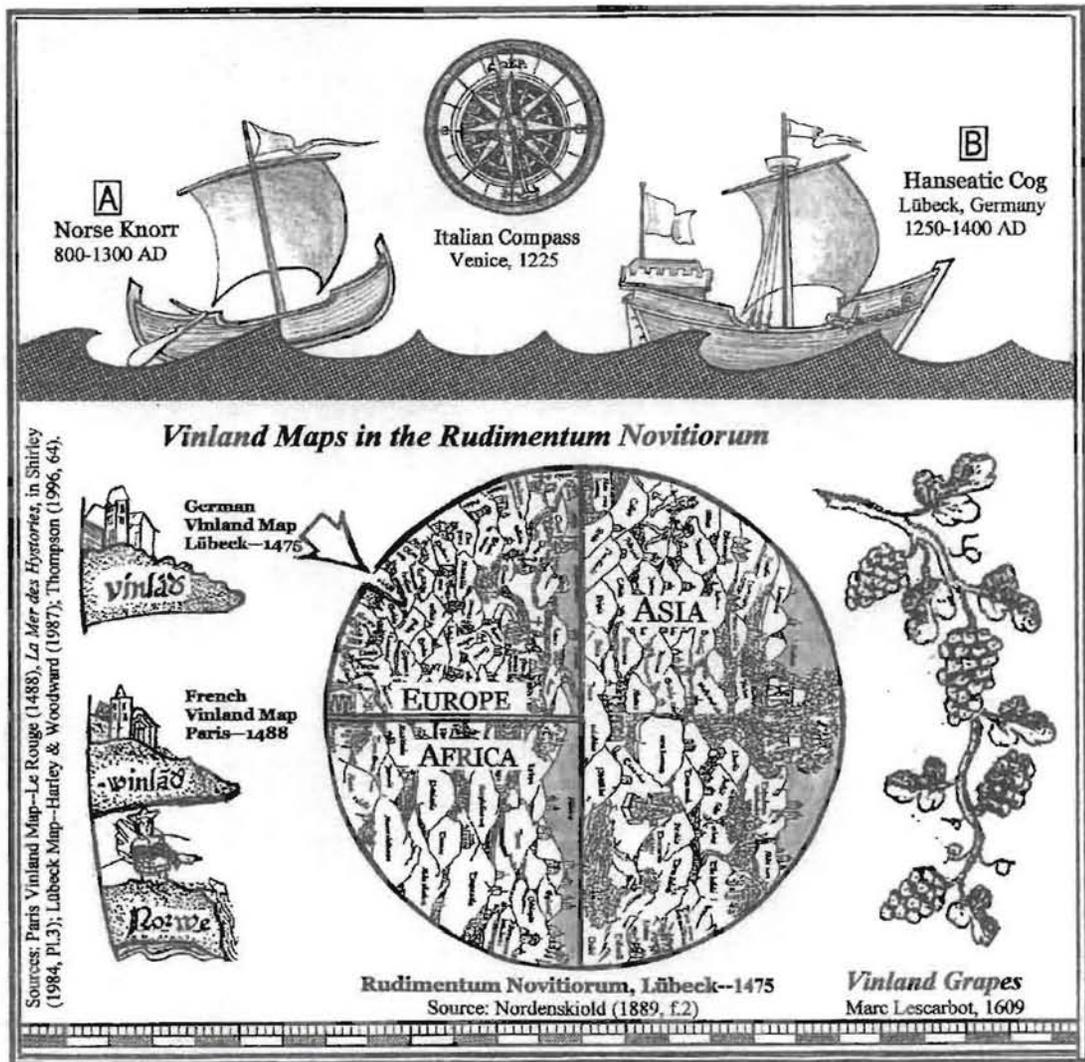
### New World Plants in the Roman Empire

Merchants had about two months to bring fresh pineapples (top) across the Atlantic to markets in Italy. The distinctive "leafy crown" of leaves verifies that the fruit is a pineapple and not simply a local, Italian pinecone. Pliny the Elder described all the characteristics of "top-cob" maize (center). The ivory panel from Ravenna shows "corn ears" still in the husk. Greek writers Aristophanes and Hippocrates referred to the American garden bean as *dolickos*. A Roman herbal mentioned "pumpkins." The pole mill (bottom, right) was used by legionnaires to make corn mash from water-soaked corn. The mash was eaten as porridge or as "ashcakes." Indians also used "pole mills."



In Olmec Mexico, Nubian overlords introduced methods of field-farming without the benefit of draft animals. Shown above are laborers with hoe-choppers, plows, and "dibble sticks." The sticks were needed because corn requires "deep" planting. Cornrows enabled the effective growing and harvesting of maize. On-the-spot sketches by artists who saw Native Farms reveal that most Indians raised "top-cob" maize with the corn ear located at the very tops of cornstalks. These are featured in the bottom two rows. The only place where this sort of "field corn" is still being grown is in the Mexican State of Oaxaca. Modern genetically-modified varieties are rapidly replacing all of the heirloom varieties of Indian corn.

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)



### German Ships & the German “Vinland Maps”

During the Medieval Warm Period (850-1300), the Scandinavian transport ship (called a *knorr*, A) was suitable for hauling fish and lumber across the Atlantic Ocean. However, when the Little Ice Age hit (from 1300-1850), German sailors from the Western Hanseatic League took over all the transport services between Vinland (or North Norway) and European ports. German *cogs* were much more seaworthy than Norse *knorrs* in the stormy Atlantic seas. German publishers printed a map in a navigational textbook that showed “Vinland” northwest of Norway in 1475. Thousands of copies of this map were in circulation throughout Europe. A later map (1488) published in Paris changed the spelling to “Winland” (meaning “Wine Land”). The purpose of the map was to promote enlistments in the Hanseatic ships sailing “to the warm overseas land of wine grapes.”

Marc Lescarbot, a French explorer, sketched the “Vinland grapes” in 1609.

(From G. Thompson, *American Discovery*. Lulu, 2013)

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nordic archaeologists Anne and Helge Ingstad excavated a Viking site at “L’anse aux Meadows” on the northern tip of Newfoundland at Cape Bauld in the 1960s. This was an outlying way-station, or beacon, on the route to lumber camps, trading posts, and codfish processing industries on Markland (“Land of Lumber”). However, traditional-minded historians have long presumed this was Leif Eriksson’s “Vinland” – representing the “farthest” Nordic penetration of the American Mainland. See: Helge Ingstad, *Westward to Vinland: the Discovery of pre-Columbian House Sites in North America* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> S.E. Morison, *The Great Explorers: the European Discovery of America*, NY: Oxford Press, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Three maps were available to scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These included the “Catalan Map” (1480), the “Zeno Map”\* (1380/1558), and the Prunes Map (1559). Three “Frisland-style” maps were included in a book by Bozhidar Dimitrov, *Bulgaria in the Medieval Maritime Mapmaking*, Sofia: 1984. These are: the “Italian Portolan” (Nautical Chart VI)\* (c.1482) in the Italian State Archives at Florence – Plate 41; “Borgiano X” by Joan Martinez (1586) in the Vatican Library – Plate 53; and “Borgiano IV” \* (16<sup>th</sup> cent.) in the Vatican Library – Plate 62. Maps identified at Internet sites include: “Joan Martinez Maps” \*(1579) and \*(1582) in the British Library; Viscount Maggiolo Map” \*(1541) in the Berlin State Museum; the “1525 Portolan\* in the British Museum; the “Croatian Portolan”\* (1553) at Yale Library, “Croatian Map”\* (1590) at Yale; “Los Ojos Atlas” in the National Museum of Portugal; “Portolan Map of the Mediterranean”\* (1647) at Yale – for a total of 14. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) indicate inclusion of both Iceland *and* Frisland on the same map – for a total of 10.

<sup>4</sup> The Zeno Narrative was translated into English by Richard H. Major, *The Voyages of Nicolo and Antonio Zeno to the Northern Seas in the Fourteenth Century*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1873), xx, fold-out map. Major suggested that Zeno’s version of “Frislanda” was derived from an arbitrary synthesis of the Shetland Islands which are located north of Scotland and west of Norway. This suggestion was offered in an effort to explain the puzzling terminology used as place-names on the map. These place-names might have been derived from the Shetlands by Zeno the Younger who may have had some difficulty understanding their locations as they were mentioned in half-forgotten 14<sup>th</sup> century letters.

<sup>5</sup> These details are enumerated in Major, *The Voyages*, 74-77.

<sup>6</sup> In 1784, Johann Reinhold Forster announced his revelation that Zichmni represented a Scottish-Nordic naval hero by the name of “Henry Sinclair.” This was reported in J.R. Forster, *History of the Discoveries and Voyages Made in the North* (Paris, 1788), 328-331.

<sup>7</sup> The achievements of the naval hero, Sinclair, are not specified in the Zeno Narrative – as related by Major’s English translation in *The Voyages*. Nevertheless, archaeological evidence of Scottish Masons building a “White Church” at Hvalsey in Greenland suggest that the Earl of Orkney (with Scottish Templar Knights) played a key role in transporting refugee farmers from Arctic Greenland to new homesteads in Newfoundland and along the shores of Narragansett Bay in 14<sup>th</sup> century Rhode Island (see G. Thompson, *Victorious*, lulu.com, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> J.Kr. Tornøe, *Columbus in the Arctic* (Oslo: Broggers Boktrykkeri, 1965), 49. Tornøe identifies *Nyaland* as Newfoundland. In 1258, Landa-Rolf of Iceland sailed around the entire coastline – whereupon he realized it was an island. A subsequent rediscovery by two priests, Adalbrand and Thorald, was reported in the Icelandic *Annals* of 1285.

<sup>9</sup> Illustrations of these maps are presented in Fridtjof Nansen, *In Northern Mists: Arctic Exploration in Early Times* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, Co., 1911), Vol. II, 232-3. The book is available at “Google Books.”

<sup>10</sup> Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age – How Climate Made History, 1300-1850*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 76.

<sup>11</sup> John A. Gade, *The Hanseatic Control of Norwegian Commerce During the Late Middle Ages* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951), 60.

<sup>12</sup> According to G.J. Marcus, *The Conquest of the North Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 154, one Western Hansa Merchant Fleet was caught in Icelandic waters during a storm in 1491. The fleet consisted of approximately 90 vessels with crews totaling nearly 3,000 sailors.

This catastrophe (bodies of sailors were gathered from the beaches) was reported in the Icelandic *Annals*. The cargo capacity of Hanseatic carracks in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century was about 300-600 tons. Thus, cargoes of stockfish and lumber carried in the Hansa Fleet could have totaled 30,000 to 60,000 tons.

<sup>13</sup> Major, *The Voyages*, xviii, quotes Columbus from the biography by Ferdinand Colon. Some writers have suggested that this was an interpolation made by Italians in an ill-conceived effort to promote the Zeno Narrative. However, presence of 'Frislanda' on the La Cosa Map of c.1500 and the Paris Map of c.1490 indicate that the enigmatic isle was well-known to contemporary geographers.

---

Correspondence address:

Gunnar Thompson, Ph.D.  
e-mail: [discovergunnar@hotmail.com](mailto:discovergunnar@hotmail.com)