

that “*Ágrip* is the only testimony to this Norwegian victory. According to Theodricus (61–62) there were two separate attacks, the second of which ended in defeat for Magnús, while in *Heimskringla* (III 225–29), *Fagrskinna* (310–11) and *Morkinskinna* (323–30) Magnús is defeated in both.” This information is incorrect: *Morkinskinna* (324, 328) records two battles against Ingi at Fuxerna, one in which Magnús was victorious (324 = *Ágrip*); the outcome of the second battle is not explicitly stated (328). According to *Fagrskinna* (Íslenzk fornrit 29, 310–11), Magnús went on two campaigns to Sweden and on the second fought one indecisive battle against Ingi at Fuxerna (= *Morkinskinna* 328). *Heimskringla* also records two expeditions and one battle against Ingi at Fuxerna, a battle which Magnús lost (*Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, vol. 3, Íslenzk fornrit 28 [Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1951], 226–28).

106n148: According to the author, “Both Scandinavian and foreign sources indicate that Sigurðr [Jórsalafari] left Norway in the autumn of 1107, spent that winter in England and arrived in Palestine in August of 1109.” The year Sigurðr left Norway is disputed (1107 or 1108). He arrived in Palestine in 1110, and the siege of Sidon took place from 19 October to 5 December 1110.

107n158: “*Sæheimr*” is not “the place now called Jarlsberg in Vestfold”; rather, it is modern Sem in Jarlsberg, Vestfold.

As stated at the beginning of this review, the present edition and translation of *Ágrip* is a welcome contribution to the field of medieval historiography and literature because it makes an important but hitherto rather obscure historical work available to an audience outside of a small circle of Old Norse–Icelandic scholars. Driscoll should be commended for his careful edition of the manuscript and for the faithfulness of his English translation. The work is, however, somewhat disappointing in the brevity of the introduction and the explanatory notes, especially in view of the volume’s long gestation period.

Kari Ellen Gade

Raleigh A. Skelton, Thomas E. Marston, and George D. Painter. *The Vinland Map and the “Tartar Relation,”* Foreword by Alexander O. Vietor, New Edition, with an Introduction by George D. Painter and Essays by Wilcomb E. Washburn, Thomas A. Cahill and Bruce H. Kusko, and Laurence C. Witten II. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995. 395 pages.

In October 1965, scholars at Yale University announced to an astonished world that they were in possession of a medieval world map showing America several decades before Columbus under the name of “Vinland” and described as having been discovered by the Icelanders Bjarni Herjólfsson and Leifr Eiríksson. The map — now known as the “Vinland Map” — had reached Yale in mysterious ways which are still not completely known. According to the experts, it had been drawn somewhere in the neighborhood of Basel, Switzerland, around 1440, evidently in ecclesiastical surroundings. In the media, the Vinland Map was hyped as the ultimate proof that Scandinavian Vikings, not Italians, were the first to make the long journey from the Old to the New World.

In fact, older and better sources existed already in the form of Icelandic sagas from the thirteenth century, telling about the journeys of Leifr Eiríksson and Bjarni Herjólfsson across the Atlantic to Vinland — and about their encounters with a foreign people, the “*skrælingjar*,” who seem to have been North American Indians. With the help of information provided in these sagas, and even before the appearance of the Vinland Map, the Norwegian Helge Ingstad had found a Scandinavian settlement in Newfoundland and dated it to the Viking Age, around 1000. But even if the newly discovered map really did not provide much new knowledge about the Vinland expeditions per se, its discovery nevertheless became a first-class sensation. It seemed to prove that these expeditions had been known not only in Iceland or Norway, but also further south on the European continent where Columbus

could have picked up the knowledge. Had he in fact been inspired by the Icelanders?

For a while it seemed that the Yale Map was everything it was made out to be. The part showing Asia was evidently closely connected with another recently discovered and genuine-looking document found bound together with the Vinland Map, the so-called *Tartar Relation*, a Latin report of the missionary journey of the Franciscan Friar John de Plano Carpini to central Asia 1245–47, which describes the Mongols and their conquests and was recorded and edited by an otherwise unknown Friar C. de Bridia following the (presumably oral) report of a companion of Carpini's, Friar Benedict the Pole. The handwriting indicated that both the map and the report had been copied around 1440 by the same scribe. It was furthermore convincingly proved by Yale scholars that the Vinland Map and the *Tartar Relation* had been included as appendices in a fifteenth-century copy of part of a well-known medieval encyclopedia, the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais.

All of this information was presented by the Yale University Press in a large and impressively researched volume, *The Vinland Map and the "Tartar Relation"* (1965), the first edition of the book under review, written by three well-established scholars from Yale and the British Museum, Raleigh A. Skelton, Thomas E. Marston, and George D. Painter. Their detailed and thorough presentation of the facts seemed to guarantee that the Vinland Map was genuine. Their book was widely read and quickly sold out.

After some time, however, other scholars began to suspect that the map was a forgery. First of all, there were details in the map that seemed rather suspicious: for example, Greenland was presented almost as it appears in modern maps, although its coastline is not known to have been explored and mapped properly until much later than 1440. Scandinavian maps of Greenland from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — generally assumed to have been the very best from that area — are not nearly as good as the representation of that vast island in the Vinland Map. Was it then conceivable that a fifteenth-century mapmaker in the Basel area had possessed such advanced knowl-

edge about Greenland that he could present it with this amazing realism? Was it not more likely that the map had been forged in our own century?

Secondly, it seemed impossible to obtain reliable information about the origins of the Vinland Map and the *Tartar Relation*. All that was known is that the documents had been obtained somewhere in Europe in the 1950s by a bookseller in New Haven, Laurence C. Witten II, who subsequently sold them to a private collector, who in turn donated both documents to Yale. This same Laurence Witten pointed out to the librarians at Yale that wormholes in the documents exactly matched the wormholes in a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Speculum historiale* which the librarians had recently purchased from a London bookseller. "Coincidences" of this kind seemed a bit too strange to be entirely reassuring. Witten could not say exactly where the Vinland Map and the *Tartar Relation* had been before they came into his possession, only that he had obtained them in September 1957 from their owner, a private collector whose family library he visited, but whose identity he was not at liberty to divulge. The owner's representative was an eccentric bookseller named Enzo Ferrajoli, an Italian who had served as a volunteer on the Fascist side in the Spanish Civil War and then settled in Barcelona and to whom Witten had been introduced by a respected Geneva bookseller named Nicolas Rauch (for sketchy details of the purchase, see Laurence Witten, "Vinland's Saga Recalled," in *Proceedings of the Vinland Map Conference*, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971], 3–14, here 4–5; the conference at which Witten spoke was held on 15–16 November 1966 in Washington, D.C.).

After more and more people began to question the authenticity of the Vinland Map, a chemical analysis of its ink was undertaken in 1972–74. This analysis revealed that the brownish yellow parts of the map's outlines contained a high percentage of anatase, a crystalline form of titanium dioxide which was not commercially produced before the 1920s and is therefore hardly the kind of thing one would expect to find in genuine medieval ink. As a result of this new

discovery — which was obviously somewhat embarrassing not only to Laurence Witten but also to the scholars who had staked their reputation on the map being authentic — official Yale spokesmen admitted that “the famous Vinland Map may be a forgery.” Following that admission, the map was absent for quite a while from serious scholarly discussion about Vinland and the discovery of America. Yet the original defenders of the map — and their followers at Yale and elsewhere — continued their search for new arguments in support of the map’s authenticity. Now, with the help of private sponsors, they have published an enlarged edition of their original best-seller from 1965.

The new material consists of a publisher’s note (VII–VIII), an introduction to the new edition by George Painter (IX–XIX), and articles by Wilcomb E. Washburn (“The Case of the Vinland Map,” XXI–XXVII), two physicists (Thomas A. Cahill and Bruce H. Kusko, “Compositional and Structural Studies of the Vinland Map and Tartar Relation,” XXIX–XXXIX), and Laurence Witten (“Vinland’s Saga Recalled,” XLI–LVIII). In the latter essay, first published in 1989, Witten provides a lengthy account of his dealings with Enzo Ferrajoli in Barcelona, but he is unable to shed new light on the map’s provenance and in several key points flatly contradicts the version of events which he promulgated in his paper of the same title in 1966 and 1971 (for example, he now denies ever having met the previous owner). The weightiest of the new contributions in the second edition is a new, thorough discussion of the ink problem by Cahill and Kusko, who try their utmost to show that anatase *could*, after all, have been an ingredient in a genuine medieval ink. However, they do not provide any convincing proof that the ink is in fact genuine.

Thus there is not very much which is new in this edition, and hardly anything in it is likely to convince serious scholars that the map is authentic. The book is evidently written for true believers, not for people who want to discuss pro and con. Clearly the authors have failed to seek the advice of any scholars whose views differ from their own. Perhaps that is the reason why they failed to consult any Scandinavianist or expert on the Vinland sagas; although there are many Old

Norse scholars who have a rather good knowledge of the Vinland problems, hardly any of them have ever believed in the authenticity of the Vinland Map.

The greatest mistake of this book — now as in 1965 — is that it bases its entire argument on the tacit but false assumption that the map is either totally authentic or totally forged. The authors do not consider the possibility that somebody may have tampered with a genuine medieval map by adding new details to it, thus forging a small but essential part of it: the Vinland part. And yet this is the simplest, most logical way to explain the strange mixture of modern and medieval thinking that characterizes this map. One can only assume that someone who knew the Icelandic sources concerning Vinland managed to procure a genuine medieval world map, originally made to illustrate the *Tartar Relation*, and that this person — who probably lived in the twentieth century — decided to fill an empty space on the map with drawings of Vinland, Greenland, and Iceland.

Upon publication of the second edition, a conference on the Vinland Map was held in New Haven on 10 February 1996. Among other speakers there, Garmon Harbottle from Brookhaven National Laboratory presented a statistical analysis of the distribution patterns for trace elements in the ink and concluded that the ink used for drawing the Vinland part of the map in fact has a composition which differs from the ink in the rest of the map: “I don’t attribute much to this in terms of the authenticity question. Maybe someone came along a few years later and added Vinland to a map that already existed. The island does seem to be stuck out on the edge. Maybe a monk copying the map ran out of ink and made up a new batch at that point. But the ink is different, no question about it” (quoted by John Noble Wilford, “Disputed Medieval Map Called Genuine After All,” *New York Times*, 13 February 1996, section C, pages 1 and 11, here C11). To show that the Vinland part has been added, however, it is hardly necessary to make a chemical analysis of the ink: it is quite sufficient to see how the map is structured and how it is related to other medieval maps.

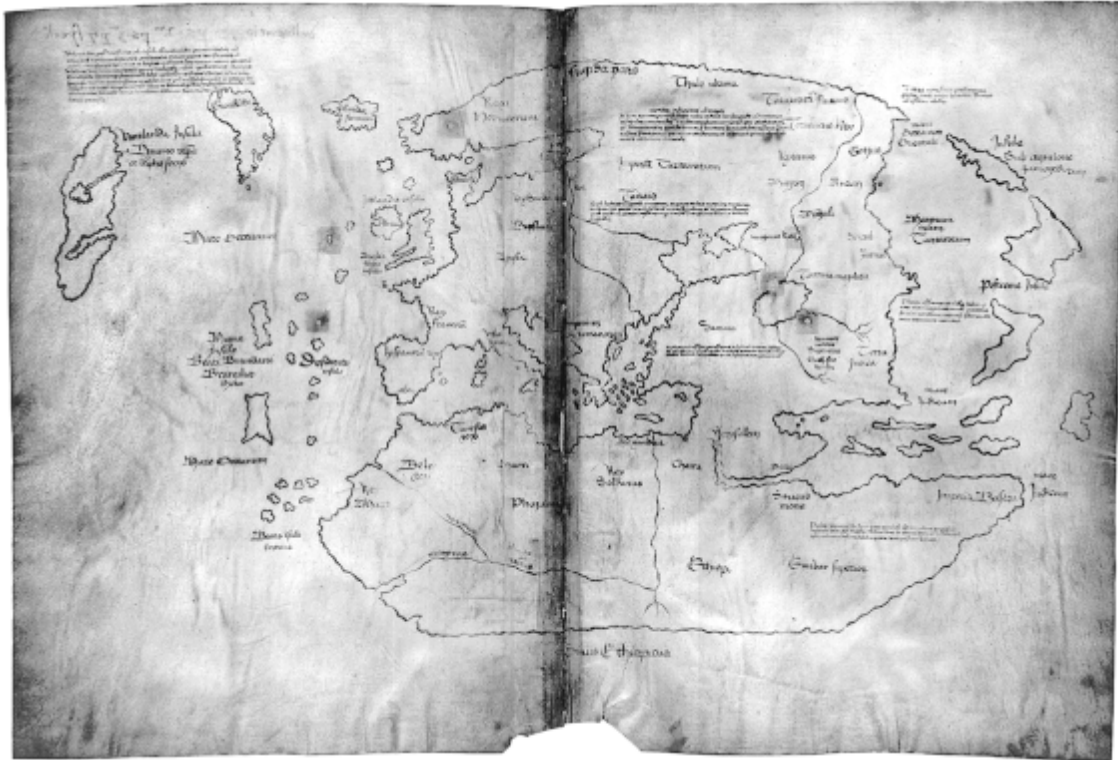
It should then first be observed—as was in fact shown in detail by Raleigh A. Skelton in his contribution to the book under review (“The Vinland Map,” 107–240 in both editions)—that most of the land shown in the Vinland Map has been confined within an oval outline. The oval—or, more commonly, circular—outline of the three known continents (Europe, Asia, and Africa) was, in turn, part of a medieval tradition which tended to imagine God’s creation in geometrical forms. The large oval outline on the Vinland Map is thus not only “unnaturally” symmetrical in itself but is also symmetrically divided into three segments of nearly equal dimensions: Europe to the left of the center, Asia to the right, and Africa below the horizontal diameter. People who used such maps in the Middle Ages either believed that the world was created in this symmetrical fashion, or they deliberately simplified their world picture to make it easier to remember.

Only a small part of the world shown on the Vinland Map falls outside of this symmetrical framework, and this is precisely the part comprised of Vinland, Greenland, and Iceland. These three large islands in the North Atlantic are the only ones which lie outside of the oval. Furthermore, both Greenland and Iceland are drawn with a modern realism and precision that is completely different from the way in which the rest of the northern countries have been drawn on the Vinland Map. Note, for example, that the Scandinavian countries, unlike Greenland and Iceland, have been drawn so crudely and unrealistically that they can hardly be recognized by modern readers. Sweden has been misplaced south of the Baltic, and Norway has been twisted and turned around to conform with the oval outline to the north. Whoever made this part of the map certainly had a very dim idea of northern Europe. And yet we are asked to believe that the same person could draw Greenland and Iceland almost as well as a modern cartographer! It is certainly much more natural to assume that Scandinavia belongs to the original and genuine map made in the Basel area, while Greenland, Iceland, and Vinland have been added by a modern forger.

The Vinland Map’s presentation of Europe and Africa is very similar to that of other fifteenth-century maps from southern Europe, also with regard to its errors and misconceptions concerning the Nordic countries. The original mapmaker evidently did not have much independent knowledge about that part of the world, so he mechanically copied what he found in older, not very reliable maps. His presentation of Asia, on the other hand, is quite original and full of unusual information, since it is based on the *Tartar Relation* and obviously intended to illustrate its account of the Mongol expansion from Mongolia and China to eastern Europe. At several points in this part of the map, explanatory texts have been added in order to give more information about the Mongols and about Catholic missionary expeditions to Asia. Such concerns are obviously the driving force behind the drawing of this particular world map.

In the western part of the map there are no such explanatory texts except in one place: the upper left-hand corner. The legend there differs from the others in several ways. First of all it is much longer. Secondly, it is placed far outside the oval-shaped world picture together with Vinland and Greenland. Thirdly, it has nothing to do with the *Tartar Relation*. The legend reads—in Skelton’s transcription and translation—as follows:

“Volente deo post longū iter ab insula Gronelanda per meridiem ad / reliquas extremas partes occidentalis oceani maris iter facientes ad / austrū inter glacies byarnus et leiphus erissonius socij terram nouam uberimā / videlicet viniferā inuenerunt quam Vinilandā [?or *Vimlandā*] insulā appellaerunt. Henricus / Gronelande regionumq finitimarū sedis apostolicae episcopus legatus in hac terra / spaciosa vero et opulentissima in postmo anno p. ss. nrj. [= *pontificis* or *patris sanctissimi nostri*] Pascali accessit in nomine dei / omnipotētis longo tempore mansit estiuo et brumali postea versus Gronelandā redit / ad orientem hiemalē deinde humillima obediencia superiori vo- / lūtati processit” [By God’s will, after a long voyage from the island of Greenland to the south toward the most distant remaining parts of the western ocean sea, sailing southward amidst the ice, the companions Bjarni and Leif Eiriks-



The Vinland Map, MS 350A, Collection of Early Books and Manuscripts, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

son discovered a new land, extremely fertile and even having vines, the which island they named Vinland. Eric (*Henricus*), legate of the Apostolic See and bishop of Greenland and the neighboring regions, arrived in this truly vast and very rich land, in the name of Almighty God, in the last year of our most blessed father Pascal, remained a long time in both summer and winter, and later returned northeastward toward Greenland and then proceeded (i.e. home to Europe?) in most humble obedience to the will of his superiors] (140).

This text is cleverly composed, but there can be little doubt that it was concocted in modern times by somebody who tried very hard to make it look like the genuine texts about Asia. It is thus written in the same clerical style, sometimes even using the same pious wordings, even though its content is based on well-known Old Norse sources which still exist and are available in English translation. The first sentence represents a sort of compromise between the two conflicting Icelandic accounts of the Vinland story found in *Eiríks saga rauða*, where Leifr Eiríksson makes the discovery, and

*Grœnlendinga saga*, where Bjarni Herjólfsson makes the same discovery. The second sentence is based on information in the Icelandic annals concerning Bishop Eiríkr of Greenland, often mentioned in books about the Vinland expeditions and especially in American works trying to prove that the Kensington Stone (another well-known hoax) had been erected in Minnesota by medieval Christian Scandinavians who were supposedly the descendants of Bishop Eiríkr's original congregation. The Latin phraseology of these sentences, however, is simply lifted from the *Tartar Relation* or from those parts of the map that have to do with the *Tartar Relation*.

The person who made this forgery — or, to be more precise, who forged the sensational Western additions to the original medieval map — was probably an academic. He evidently had some knowledge of Latin and of the Vinland sagas, and he was probably familiar with the controversy about the Kensington Stone. I do not believe that a person answering to this description is likely to have studied at a Spanish university. He may have had dealings with Enzo Ferrajoli,

but he did not necessarily live in Barcelona or Switzerland.

One early suspect was a Dalmatian Franciscan friar, Luka Jelić (1863–1922), who was proficient in Latin and interested in the Vinland Problem, but Kirsten A. Seaver has recently argued that we should regard the German priest Josef Fischer, S.J. (1858–1944), as a more likely candidate (“The ‘Vinland Map’: Who Made It, and Why? New Light on an Old Controversy,” *The Map Collector* 70 [1995]: 32–40; “The Mystery of the ‘Vinland Map’ Manuscript Volume,” *The Map Collector* 74 [1996]: 24–29; “The Vinland Map: A \$3,500 Duckling That Became a \$25,000,000 Swan,” *Mercator’s World* 2, no. 2 [March/April 1997]: 42–47). Fischer was proficient in Latin and knew much about medieval maps and also about the Vinland problem, so he could certainly have forged the map, but the evidence against him is hardly more conclusive than the evidence against Luka Jelić. To me it seems more likely that the forger was an American who had some contacts with the Scandinavian-American community and was familiar with the strange modern Midwestern mythology surrounding Leifr Eiríksson and the Kensington Stone. He might have been a Yale man, but he could have studied elsewhere, at the University of Minnesota or Saint Olaf College, for instance.

However that may be, we can safely conclude that the so-called Vinland Map has no value for the discussion about the discovery of America. It may be of great value for the study of the Mongols and early missionary expeditions to Asia, and contain other unsolved mysteries, but the part of the map containing Vinland may now be disregarded by serious medievalists.

Lars Lönnroth

Susanne Kramarz-Bein, editor. *Hansische Literaturbeziehungen: Das Beispiel der Þiðreks saga und verwandter Literatur*. Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 14. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996. 339 pages.

Someone with a bibliographical penchant will eventually write a (perhaps largely statistical) study of how the collaborative volume came to replace the single-author survey in the latter part of the twentieth century. That trend is clearly called for by increasing specialization and growing bibliographical pressures. It has gone hand in hand with the popularity of theme conferences over the last twenty years and has provided a welcome opportunity for closer cooperation among colleagues in particular subfields. The present volume is an excellent example of the trend. It grows out of a symposium with the same title that was held in Bonn on November 19–21, 1992.

*Þiðreks saga*, which had not received much scholarly attention for several decades, came back into fashion about ten years ago. The 1992 symposium therefore afforded a good opportunity to take stock and suggest new directions. The conference volume assembles fourteen papers of overall high quality, subdivided into five sections. The fullest section (six papers) deals with particular problems in *Þiðreks saga*, whereas the remaining eight papers, symmetrically grouped in four subsections of two each, are contextual or tangential in nature. The first subsection provides a large literary context by Alois Wolf and a similarly broad historical background piece by Thomas Behrmann. Wolf, with his characteristic encompassing view of medieval letters, explores the growth of the “long form” in medieval narrative and the question of whether the long form in Scandinavia is merely parallel or perhaps in some sense conditioned by literary developments elsewhere in Europe. He does not subscribe to Clover’s tracing of interlace structure in the Icelandic kings’ sagas and family sagas but locates a similar esthetic in the Norwegian version of *Þiðreks saga*. That