

The Middle Ages: The Viking Era

Background

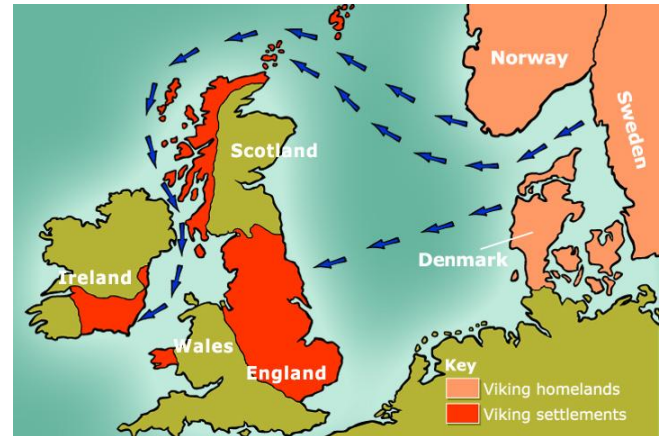
- Scandinavians
 - o Norway, Sweden, Denmark
- Agriculture based
 - o Limited farmland
 - o Fishermen
- Traders
 - o Used longboats to trade all across Europe and into western Asia.
 - Boats specially designed to work in rivers and oceans
 - Fitted with Oars, & Sails
 - Shallow draughts
 - First civilization with capability to navigate away from shore
- Polytheistic
 - o Gods similar to classical civilizations'
 - Different names
 - o Explained origins of earth
 - Creation
 - Natural occurrences
 - o Insight into human nature
 - o Tales of Sagas
 - Made good stories during long winters
 - o Religion passed orally
 - Recorded in Prose Edda around 1220 C.E.
- Legacy
 - o Runestones
 - Writing system carved into rocks
 - o Archeological Finds
 - Especially burial ships
 - o Primary Sources
 - Many contacts with other cultures
 - Ibn Fadlan

Viking Expansion

- Reasons for raid unclear
 - o Possibly trade disputes
 - o Possibly because of over population
- Viking Age begins in 793 C.E.
 - o Attack of Lindisfarne Monastery in Northern England
 - Monasteries easy targets
 - Full of riches
- Viking Raiders
 - o With ships could attack anywhere near water
 - Rivers included
 - o Equipment as raiders
 - Meant to move fast
 - o Ferocious Warriors
 - Berserkers
- Early Raids
 - o 793 – 864 C.E.



- Into British Isles
 - East Anglia
 - Ireland
 - Looking for slaves and plunder
- Protection
 - States able to pay Vikings off
 - Often close to 100% of total income
- England
 - 864 – 871 C.E.
 - All over British Isles
 - Great Heathen Army
 - Led by Ivar the Boneless
 - Established settlement of Jorvik
 - Stopped 8 Jan, 971 C.E.
 - Battle of Ashdown
 - Stopped by Alfred of Wessex
 - Viking leaders killed
 - Vikings keep Northumbria
 - Erik Bloodaxe
 - 947 C.E.
 - Captures York
 - End of Era
 - Harold Hardrada
 - Builds city of Oslo to be new Kiev
 - Defeat at Stamford Bridge
 - 1066 C.E.
- Russia
 - 862 C.E.
 - Rurik invited by Slavs and Finns in Eastern Russia
 - “to come and rule them”
 - Settled near city of Novgorod where they built trade network
 - 882 C.E.
 - Established Kievan Rus
- France
 - Took control of Northern France
 - Territory of Normandy
 - Land of the Northmen



North Atlantic

- Iceland
 - Discovered in 9th Century C.E.
 - Mostly settled by Norwegians
 - Very few impressed with island
- Greenland
 - Erik the Red
 - Late 900s
 - Banished from Iceland
 - Calls land “Greenland” as advertisement
 - Government
 - Public Assembly

- Equal voice for all citizens
 - Fails
 - Good Fishing
 - Harsh land
- North America
 - Leif Erickson
 - 1000 C.E.
 - Wanted to Explore
 - Follows rumors to North America
 - Established colony at L'Anse Aux Meadows
 - Fails
 - Too far from home
 - Fighting with natives?

End of Viking Era

- Conversion to Christianity
 - Not allowed to make slaves out of other Christians
 - Eliminates half the need of plunder
- Military Defeats
 - Stamford Bridge
 - 1066 C.E.
 - Castles
 - Fortifications made raiding difficult
- Kingdoms of Norway, Swede, and Denmark formed

