

Gathorne-
Hardy

The Norse Discoverers of America



Oxford

The Norse Discoverers of America

The Wineland Sagas

Translated and discussed by G. M. Gathorne-Hardy

With a new Preface by the Author
and new Introduction by Gwyn Jones

Norse Discoverers Of America Wineland Sa

Gustave Lanctôt



Norse Discoverers Of America Wineland Sa:

The Norse Discoverers of America: The Wineland Sagas Translated & Discussed Geoffrey Malcolm Gathorne-Hardy, In spite of a considerable bibliography the early Norse voyages to America provide a still unexhausted field for investigation and discussion So far are the authors who have dealt with the subject from reaching final and unchallenged conclusions that it may almost be said that each fresh commentator provides new matter for controversy Apart from the fascinating problem of attempting to locate on the map the various parts of the American continent visited by the first explorers the historic value of the evidence has been the subject of the most varied estimates though it may be said that nowadays no student of the subject has remained completely sceptical The relative importance to be attached to the different versions of the narrative has also been much debated and will no doubt continue to be so though on this point most recent critics will be found arrayed in the opposite camp to the present writer As regards the precise situation of the Norse discoveries most points from Northern Labrador and even Baffin's Land to well down the Eastern coastline of the United States have their advocates who by a judicious selection of the evidence have all managed to find something to say in favour of their respective points of view In these circumstances it is felt that no apology is needed from one who has given the matter close and protracted study if he ventures to add his quota to the discussion The topic is moreover one on which the man in the street at any rate in England stands in considerable need of enlightenment There are probably few acknowledged historical facts on which the general public is more surprisingly ignorant Considering that the available data compare favourably with what is known of the later discoveries of Cabot and Corte Real it is regrettable to find as any one will who takes the trouble to mention the matter to a dozen friends selected at random that to most of them the fact that the Norsemen visited America is quite unknown while by the remainder it is probably regarded as a vague legend containing perhaps a kernel of truth but to be ranked no higher than the Welsh tale of Madoc and similar insubstantial traditions When Dr Nansen's *In Northern Mists* appeared three allusions were made to it in *Punch* the point of which was in every case that the eminent explorer had proved that the honour of the first discovery of America belonged to his compatriots Of course as a matter of fact the proof was forthcoming long ago and Dr Nansen so far from adding to it is one of the most sceptical of the authorities dealing with the subject but here as is usually the case our leading humorous paper has faithfully represented the views and the knowledge of the average educated man It is perhaps not altogether surprising that the circle of the initiated has been so restricted The principal works dealing with the question with very few exceptions are either written in foreign tongues or entombed in the pages of inaccessible scientific periodicals or in works mainly concerned with a wider field or have been published so long ago that as the life of books goes nowadays the man in the street can hardly be expected to have read or to have remembered them Reeves *Finding of Wineland the Good* one of the likeliest books on the subject to have fallen into the hands of the general reader is now more than twenty years old How many books other than standard classics of a similar age come under the eyes of members of the

ordinary public It must be confessed too that a taste for Icelandic literature is not widely prevalent in this country The man in the street if the author s experience of him is typical does not find the method of story telling which enthralled contemporary Icelandic audiences at all to his mind He cannot stomach the long genealogies on which no doubt the original reader or listener insisted in order that he might add to the story the flavour of personal interest arising from the inclusion of ancestors friends or acquaintances He gets confused and irritated by names of unfamiliar sound with uncouth nicknames attached many of the former closely resembling one another When he has at length managed to become engrossed in some thread of the story he finds himself suddenly switched off to follow the fortunes of other characters the previous mention of whom he had forgotten and finally losing his bearings he throws the book down in disgust The present writer has on this account considered carefully whether it would not have been better to transpose the two parts of this work putting the translation last but he feels that such an arrangement would be illogical and would make the arguments used in discussing the question much more difficult to follow As a sop to the indolent he has however marked in the table of contents the parts of the story dealing with the American discoveries though he feels personally that those who skip the remainder will miss some very interesting matter including the vivid description of the sibyl s s ance *Medieval Scandinavia* Phillip Pulsiano,1993 With full page maps and supplementary photos this encyclopedia covers every aspect of Scandinavia during the Middle Ages including rulers and saints overviews of the countries religion education politics and law culture and material life history literature and art *Palmer's index to the Times newspaper* ,1921 **The Official Index to The Times** ,1921 **Subject Index of the Modern Books Acquired by the British Museum in the Years ...** ,1927 *Palmer's Index to the Times Newspaper* ,1966 **Official Index to the Times** ,1921 Indexes the Times Sunday times and magazine Times literary supplement Times educational supplement Times educational supplement Scotland and the Times higher education supplement **Subject Index of the Modern Works Added to the British Museum Library** British Museum. Department of Printed Books,1927 *A History of Canada* Gustave Lanctôt,1963 **Subject Index of Modern Books Acquired 1881/1900-**. British Museum. Department of Printed Books,1927 Palmer's Index to the Times Newspaper ,1921 **Dictionary Catalog of the University Library, 1919-1962** University of California, Los Angeles. Library,1963 *A History of Canada: From its origins to the royal régime, 1663* Gustave Lanctôt,1963 **The National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints** Library of Congress,American Library Association. Committee on Resources of American Libraries. National Union Catalog Subcommittee,1968 Dictionary Catalog of the History of the Americas New York Public Library. Reference Dept,1961 *A bibliography on the imagined North* Daniel Chartier,2007 *Subject Index of Modern Books Acquired* British Library,1927 *The Nation* ,1891 *Dictionary Catalogue of the Library of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, Canada: Manu-Rob* Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. Library,1972 *From its origins to the royal régime, 1663* Gustave Lanctôt,1963

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