

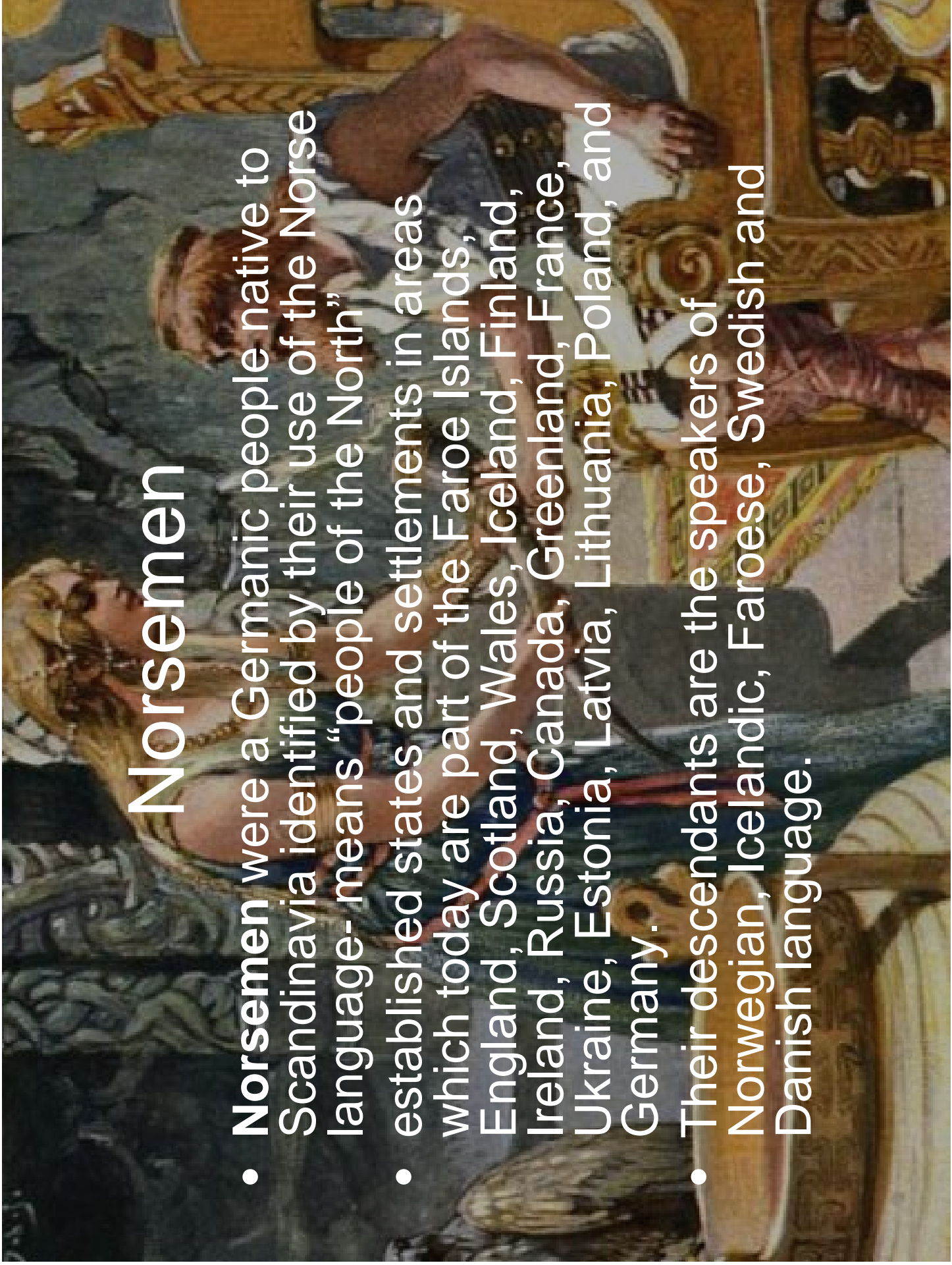


Norse Culture

Presentation Made by Sarah Winnicki, 2011

Norsemen

- **Norsemen** were a Germanic people native to Scandinavia identified by their use of the Norse language- means “people of the North”
- established states and settlements in areas which today are part of the Faroe Islands, England, Scotland, Wales, Iceland, Finland, Ireland, Russia, Canada, Greenland, France, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany.
- Their descendants are the speakers of Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish and Danish language.

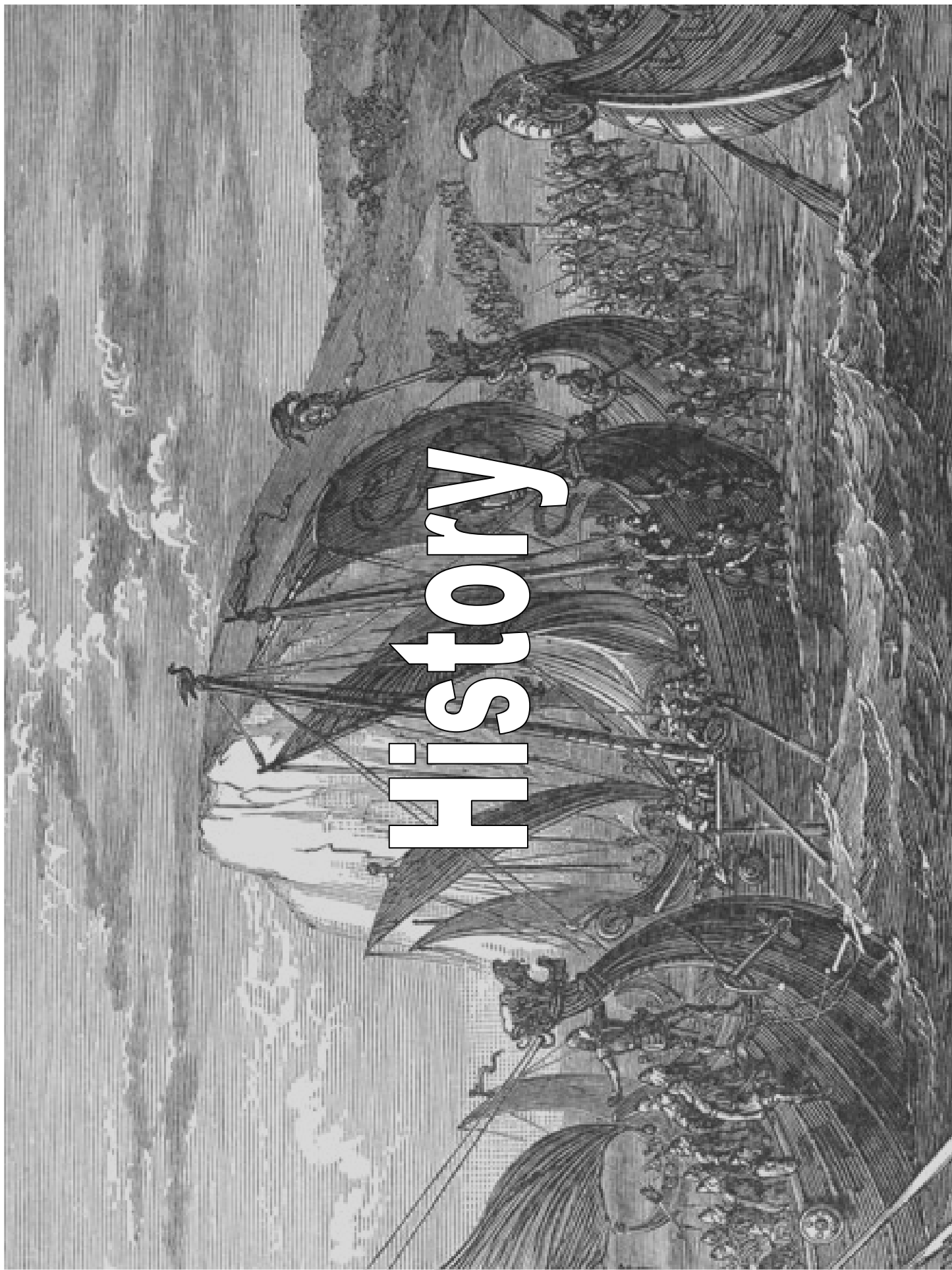


Vikings



- The term “Viking” (adapted from the Old Norse word meaning “to sail overseas”) refers to the Norse explorers, warriors, merchants and pirates
- most applicable to the 9th-11th centuries
- also commonly used to distinguish Scandinavian Norsemen from other Norsemen (i.e. Anglo-Saxons, Varangians)

History



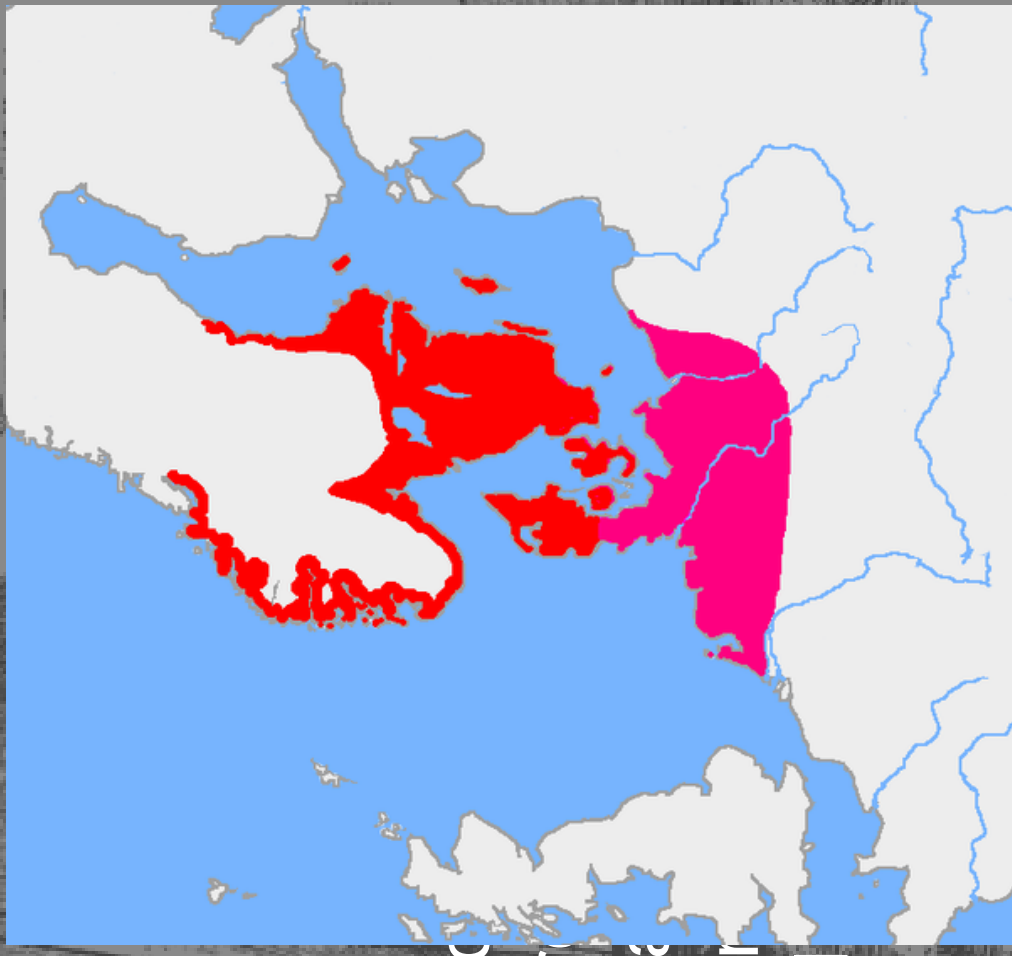
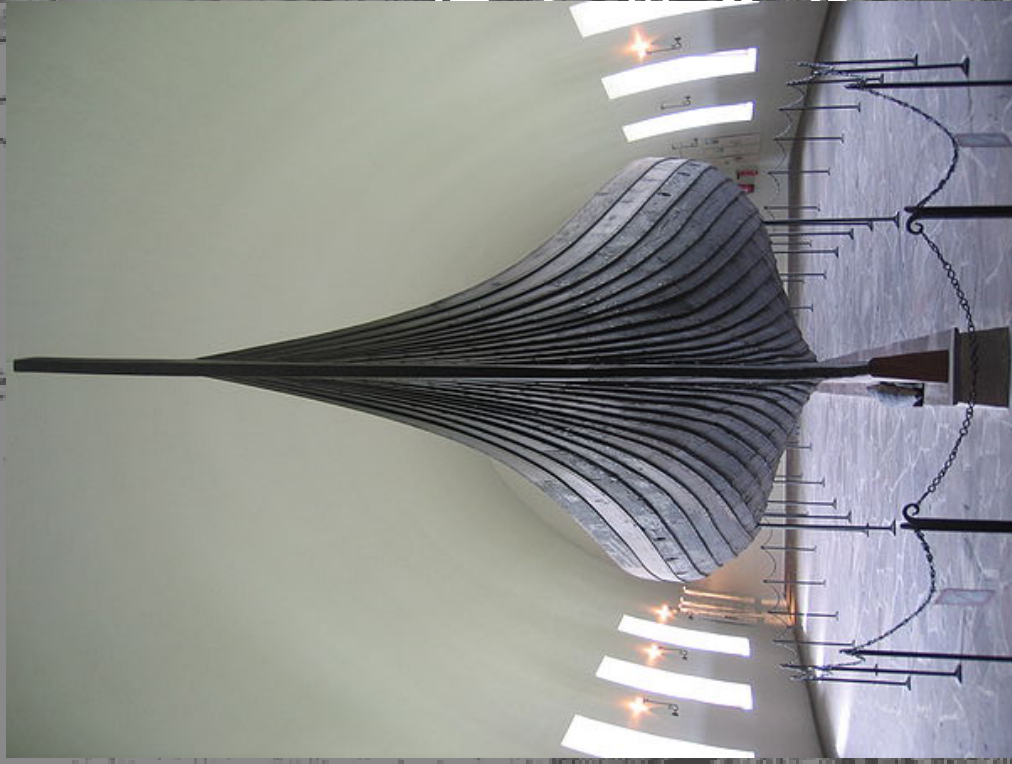
1700 BCE- 600 BCE



T U B S S

-

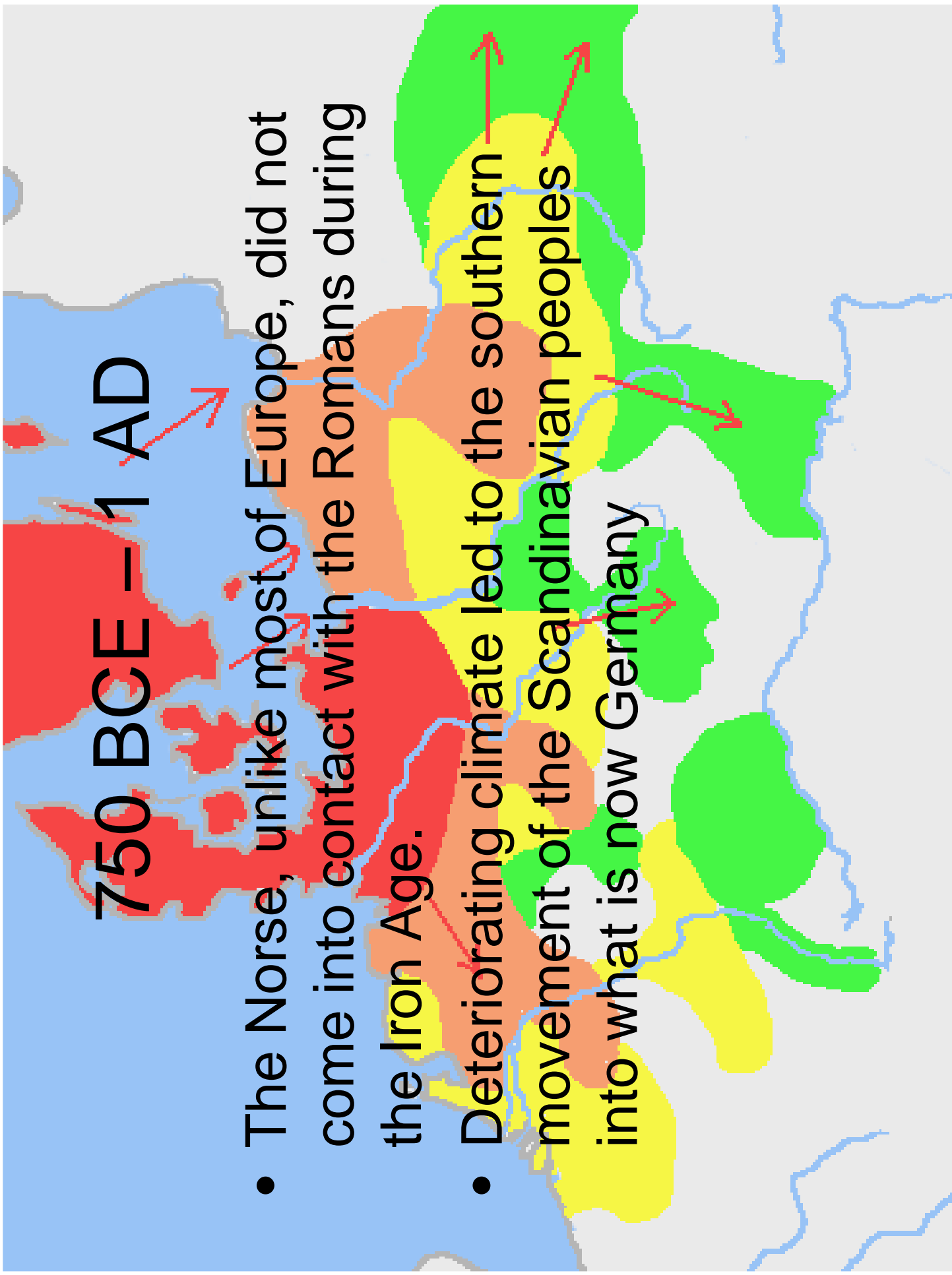
Longships



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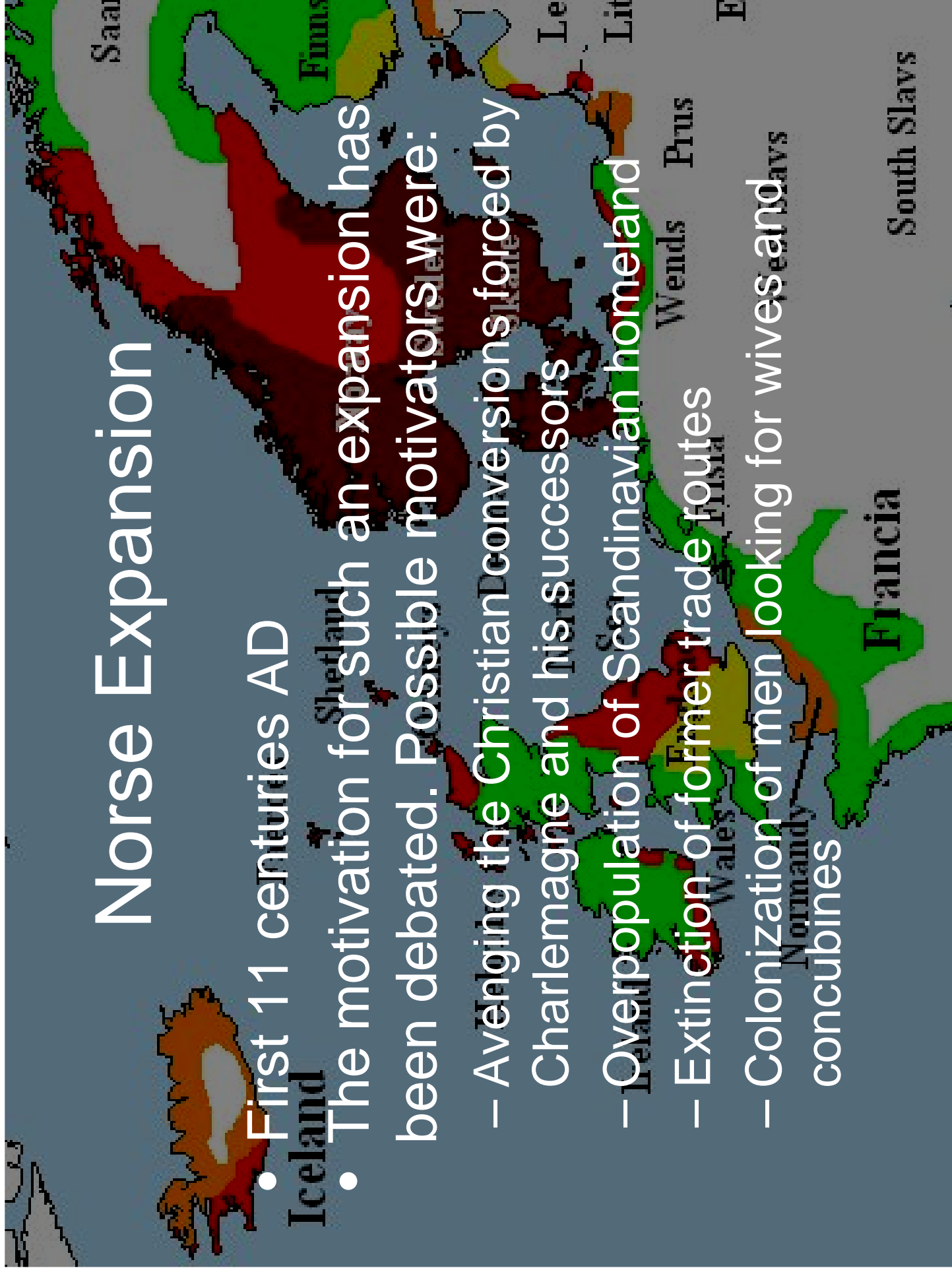
750 BCE – 1 AD

- The Norse, unlike most of Europe, did not come into contact with the Romans during the Iron Age.
- Deteriorating climate led to the southern movement of the Scandinavian peoples into what is now Germany



Norse Expansion

- First 11 centuries AD
- The motivation for such an expansion has been debated. Possible motivators were:
 - Avenge the Christian conversions forced by Charlemagne and his successors
 - Overpopulation of Scandinavian homeland
 - Extinction of former trade routes
 - Colonization of men looking for wives and concubines



Expansion by Region: British Isles

B R I T I S H I S L E S

- Anglo-Saxon raiding began in the England following the fall of Rome, and the culture of the British Isles was greatly influenced as the Norse Anglo-Saxons replaced the Romans

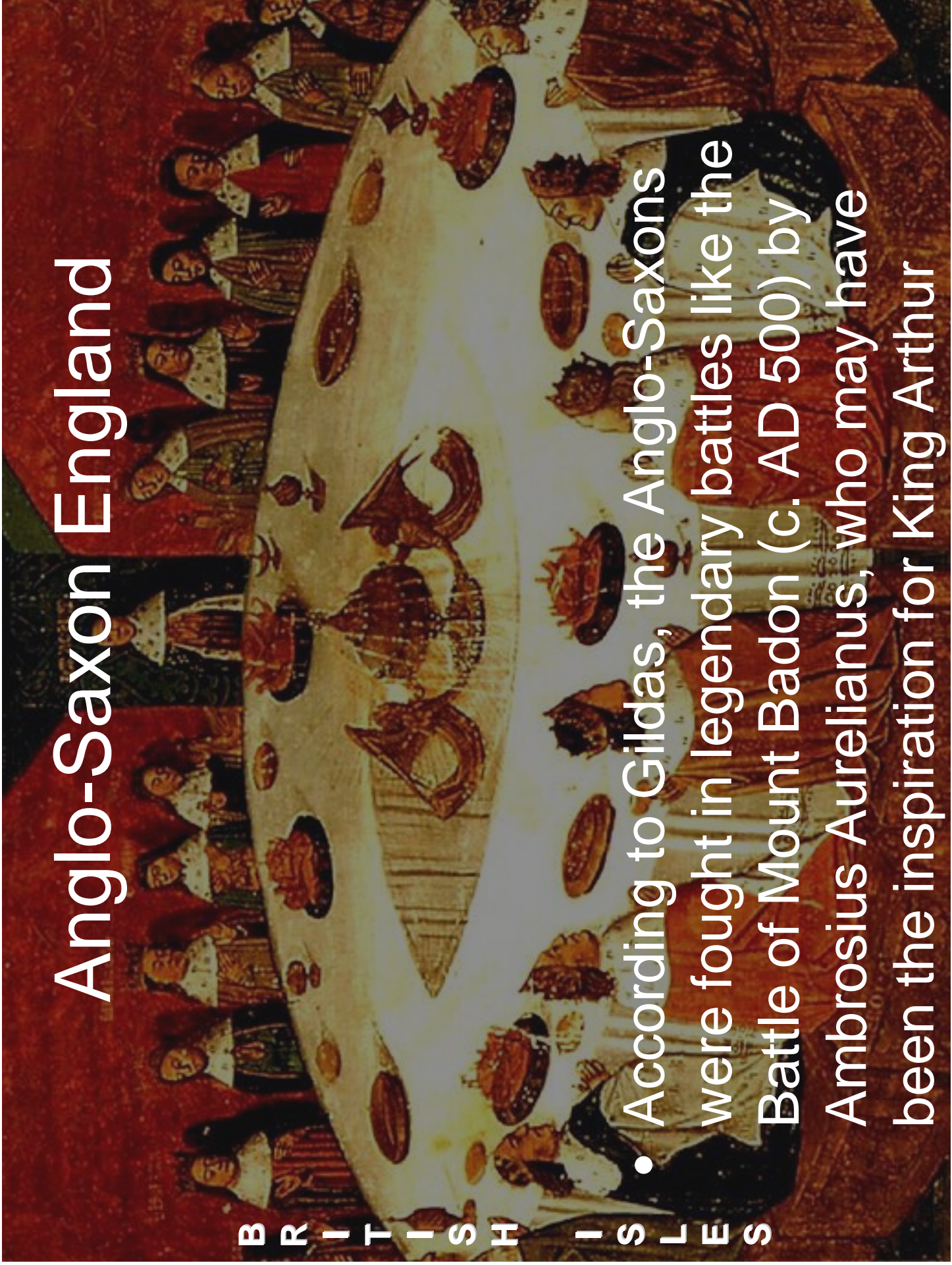
The British Isles would eventually be influenced by three separate groups of Norsemen: the Anglo-Saxons of modern Germany and Denmark, the Scandinavian Vikings and the Normans of Northern France



Anglo-Saxon England

BRITISH ISLES

- According to Gildas, the Anglo-Saxons were fought in legendary battles like the Battle of Mount Badon (c. AD 500) by Ambrosius Aurelianus, who may have been the inspiration for King Arthur



Development of Kingdoms

By 600 AD the Anglo-Saxons developed a heptarchy in Britain with seven major kingdoms

By the 10th century the Anglo-Saxons had united England



B R I T I S H I S L E S

BRITISH ISLES

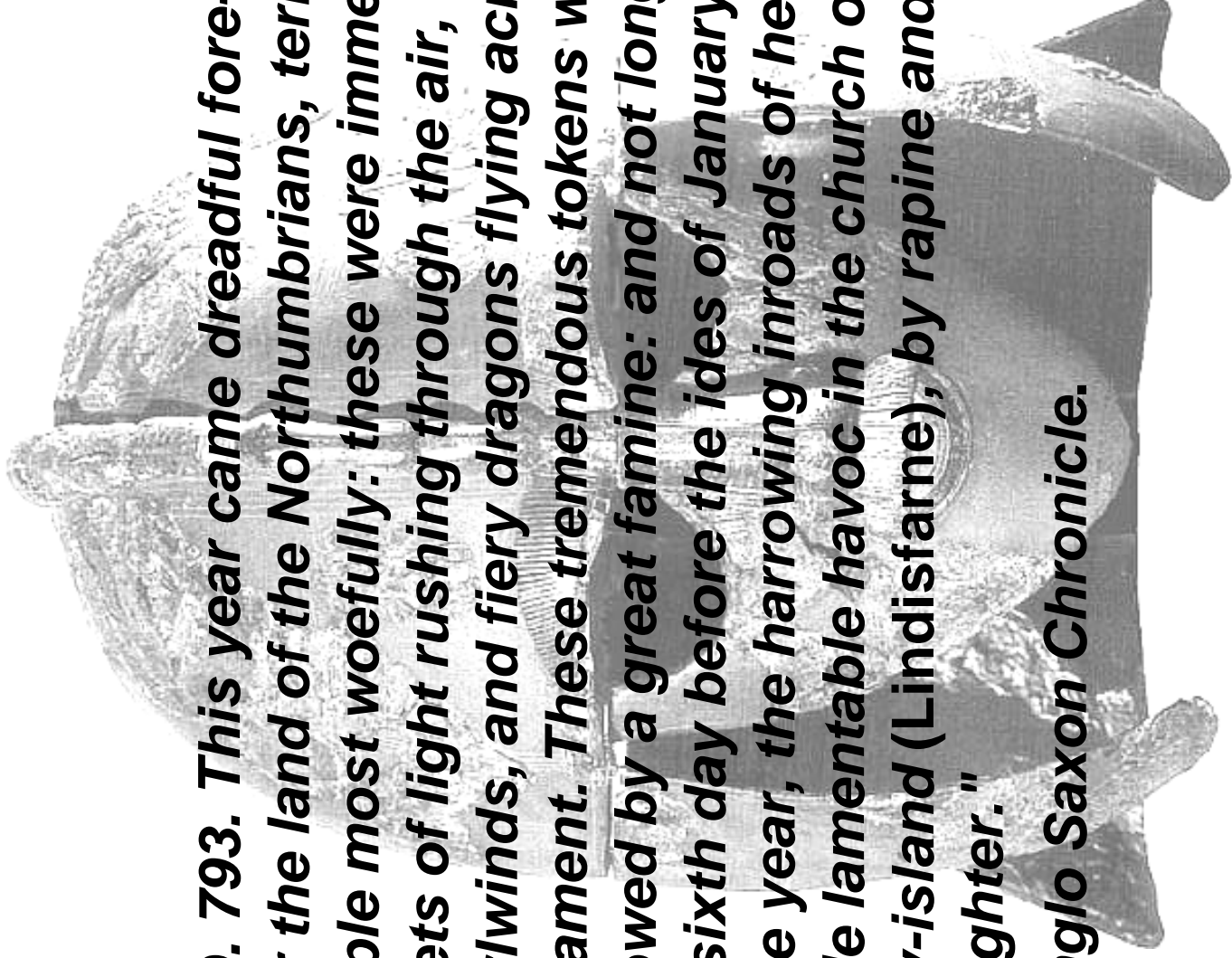
According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the first Scandinavian Viking raid on the British Isles occurred at Dorset in 787 AD - a merchant official was murdered



B R I T I S H I S L E S

"AD. 793. This year came dreadful fore-warnings over the land of the Northumbrians, terrifying the people most woefully: these were immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. These tremendous tokens were soon followed by a great famine: and not long after, on the sixth day before the ides of January in the same year, the harrowing inroads of heathen men made lamentable havoc in the church of God in Holy-island (Lindisfarne), by rapine and slaughter."

-Anglo Saxon Chronicle.



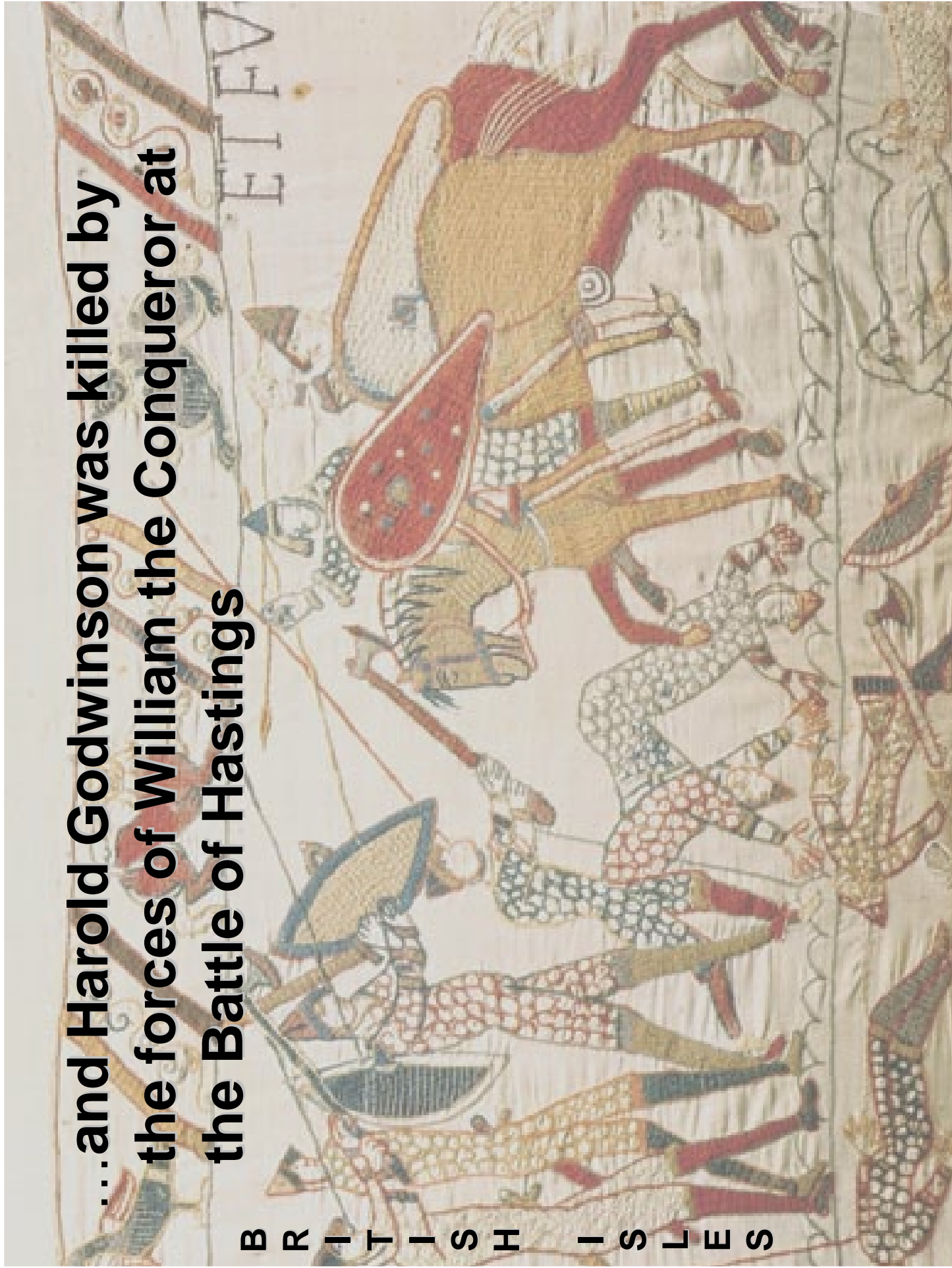
Anglo- Saxon and Scandinavian Viking influence in the British Isles came to an end in 1066, when Harald Hardrada of Norway was killed by the forces of English King Harold Godwinson at the Battle of Stamford Bridge....

B R I T I S H I S L E S



**....and Harold Godwinson was killed by
the forces of William the Conqueror at
the Battle of Hastings**

B R I T I S H I S L E S



BRITISH ISLES



**William the Conqueror was a Norman, a
descendant of Norsemen settled in France**



Expansion by Region: Eastern Europe

- The Viking Rurik expanded to the east and in 859 became ruler of the city of Novgorod on the Volkhov River
- His successors followed the river south, founding the Kievan Rus state with a capital at Kiev (modern capital of Ukraine)

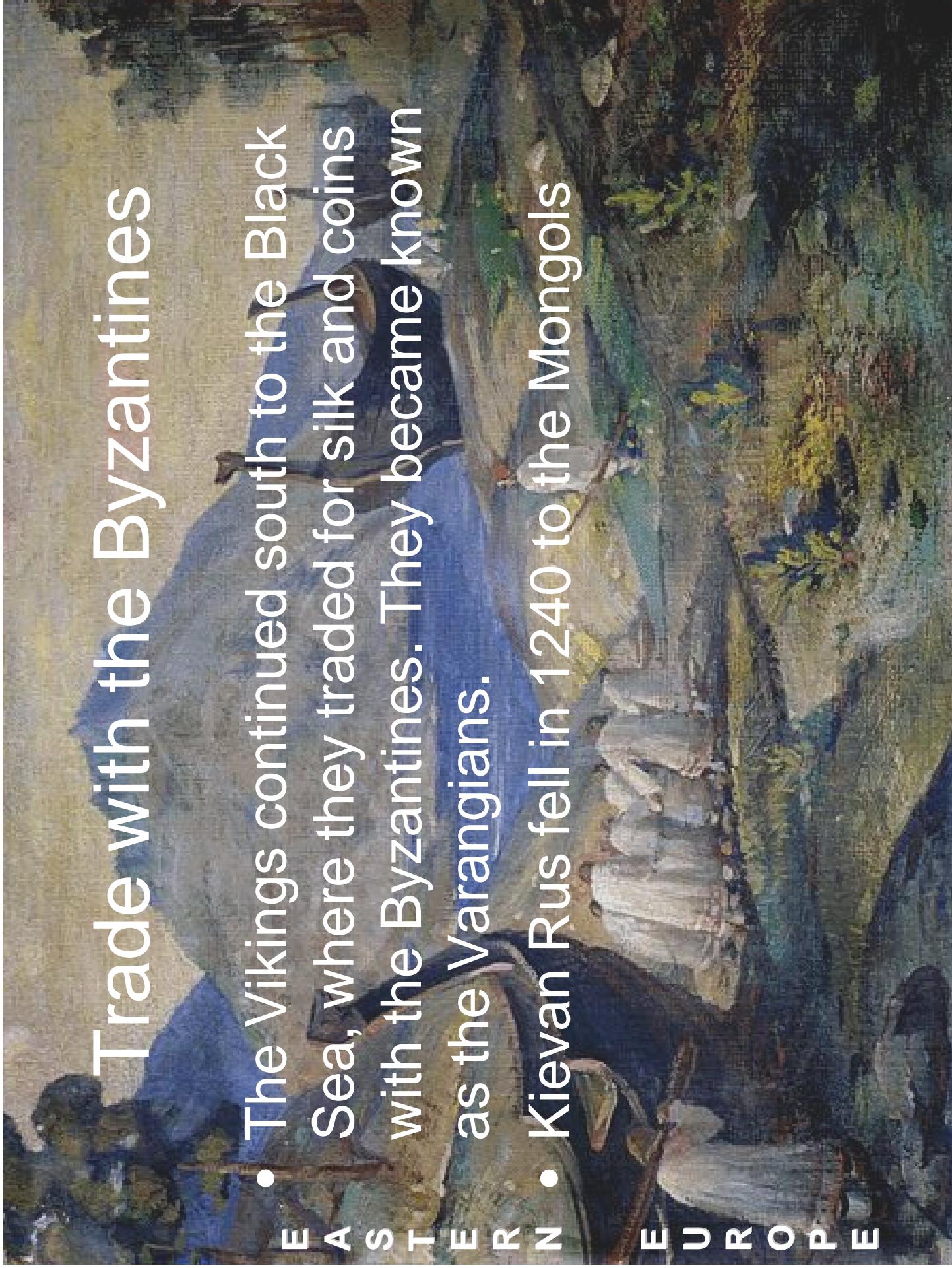
E A S T E R N

E U R O P E

Trade with the Byzantines

- The Vikings continued south to the Black Sea, where they traded for silk and coins with the Byzantines. They became known as the Varangians.
- Kievan Rus fell in 1240 to the Mongols

E A S T E R N E U R O P E



Expansion by Region: Western Europe

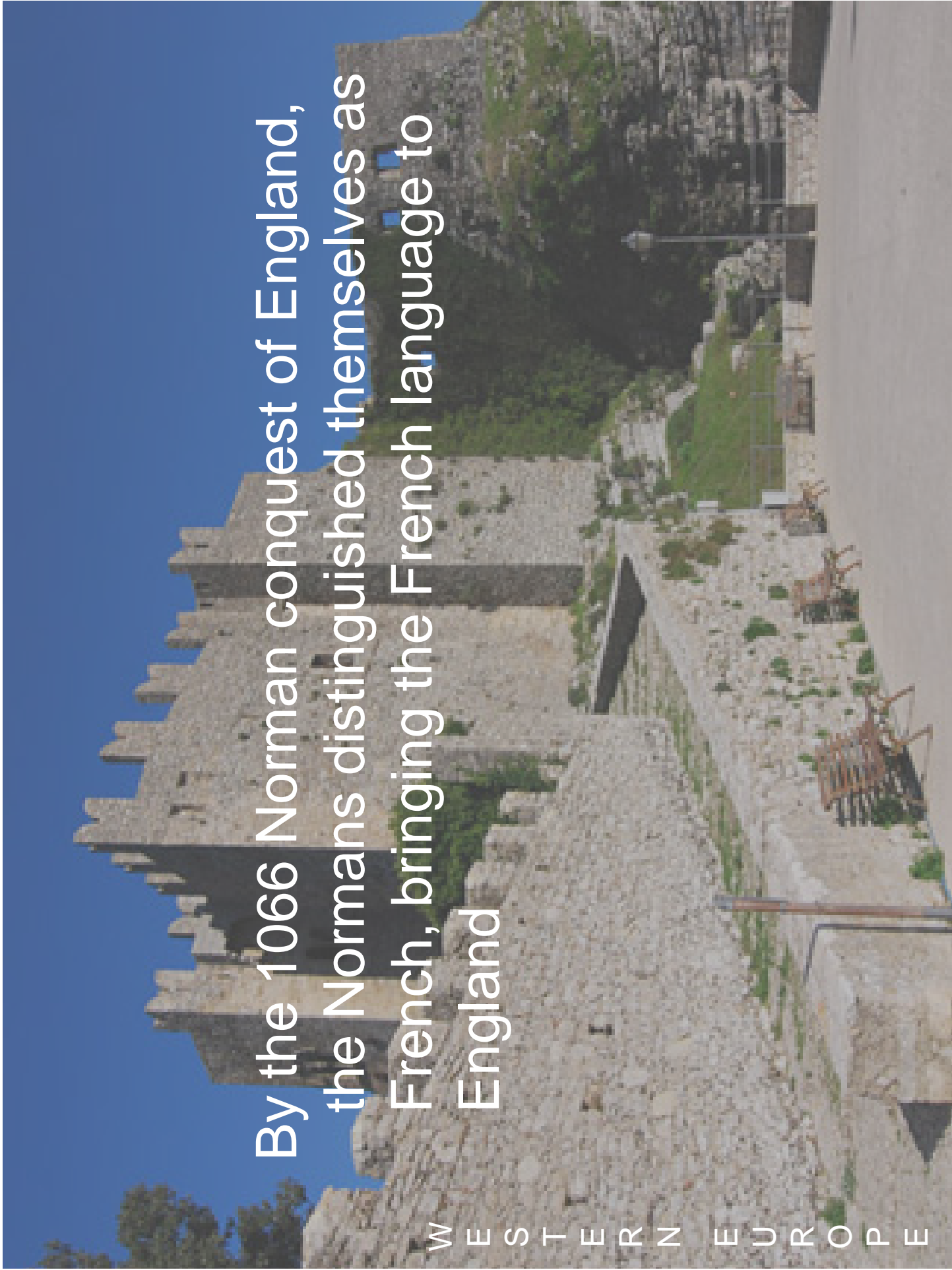
- Vikings in modern-day France (Carolingian Empire), pillaged the Frankish settlements
- In 911 Viking leader Rollo was given Normandy in return for fealty to Charles the Simple

WESTERN EUROPE



By the 1066 Norman conquest of England,
the Normans distinguished themselves as
French, bringing the French language to
England

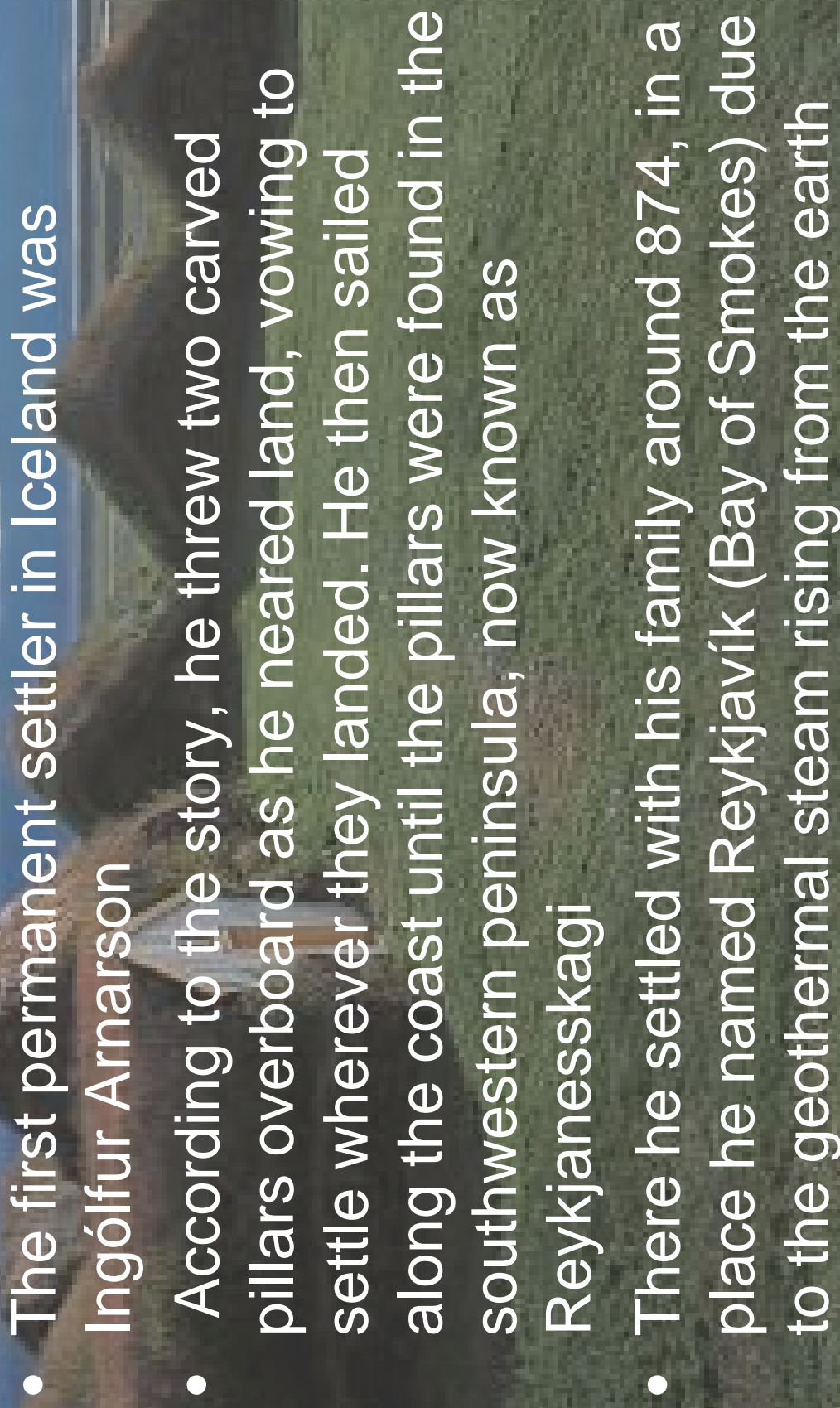
W E S T E R N E U R O P E



Expansion by Region: Iceland

- Iceland was discovered by Naddoddr on his trip from Norway to the Faroe Islands; he named it Snowland
- Flóki Vilgerðarson was the first settler to purposefully stay in the region; he stayed for a winter in the place he named Iceland

I C E L A N D

- 
- The first permanent settler in Iceland was Ingólfur Arnarson
 - According to the story, he threw two carved pillars overboard as he neared land, vowing to settle wherever they landed. He then sailed along the coast until the pillars were found in the southwestern peninsula, now known as Reykjaneskagi
 - There he settled with his family around 874, in a place he named Reykjavík (Bay of Smokes) due to the geothermal steam rising from the earth

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- Iceland was fully settled in 60 years
- Soon the Commonwealth was formed with the calling of the Thing (Assembly)
- fell under Norwegian control in the 13th century

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Expansion by Region: Greenland

- **Two areas along Greenland's southwest coast were colonized by Norse settlers around 986**
- **The settlers arrived during a warm phase, when short-season crops such as rye and barley could be grown.**

Expansion by Region: North America

- A Norwegian ship's captain named Bjarni Herjólfsson first came across a part of the North American continent c. 985 when he was blown off course sailing to Greenland from Iceland
- Trips were later made by Vikings like Leif Erikson, many of which sought timber

Regular activity from Greenland extended to
Ellesmere Island, Skraeling Island and
Ruin Island for hunting and trading with
Inuit groups in the land they called Vinland

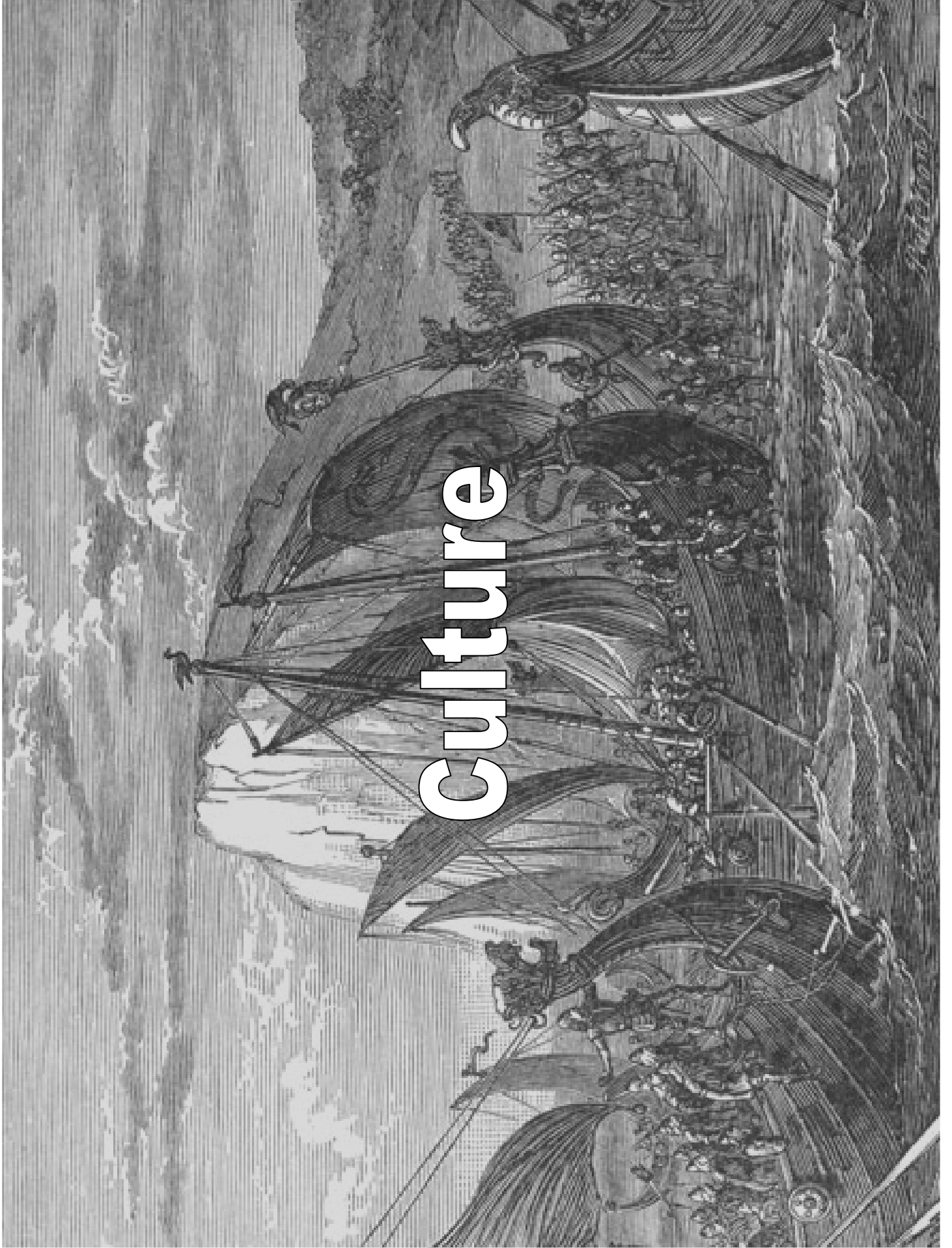
A M E R I C A

early 11th century

In Scandinavia the Viking age is considered to have ended with the establishment of royal authority in the Scandinavian countries and the establishment of Christianity as the dominant religion

Norwegians would no longer be called Vikings

Culture



The approximate extent of Old Norse and related languages in the early 10th century:

Old West Norse dialect

Old East Norse dialect

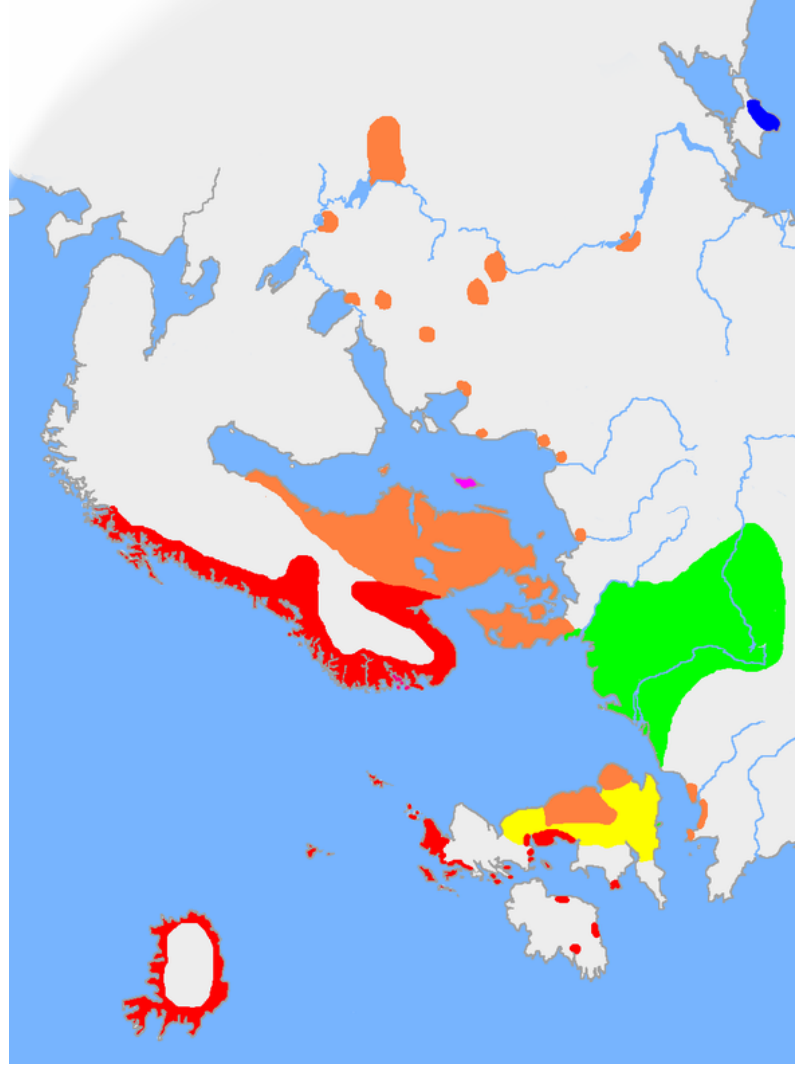
Old Gutnish dialect

Crimean Gothic

Old English

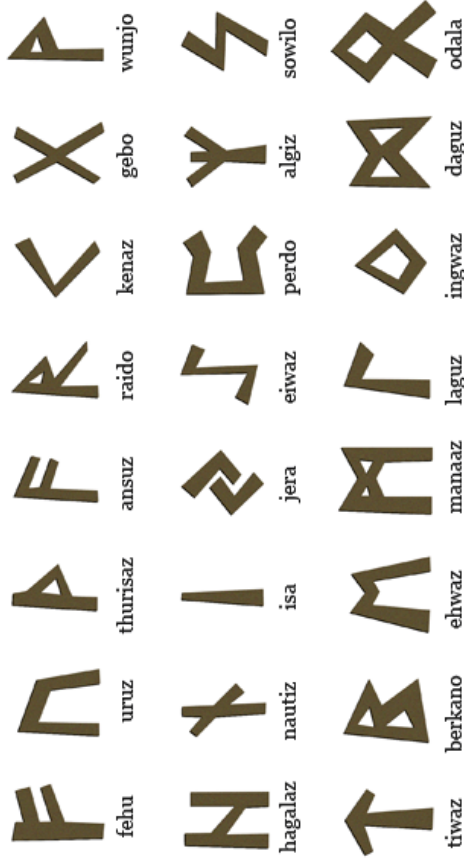
Other Germanic languages which still retained some mutual intelligibility

Language



Runic Alphabets AD 150- 1100 AD

- set of related alphabets using letters known as **runes** to write various Germanic languages before the adoption of the Latin alphabet
- also known as **futhark**



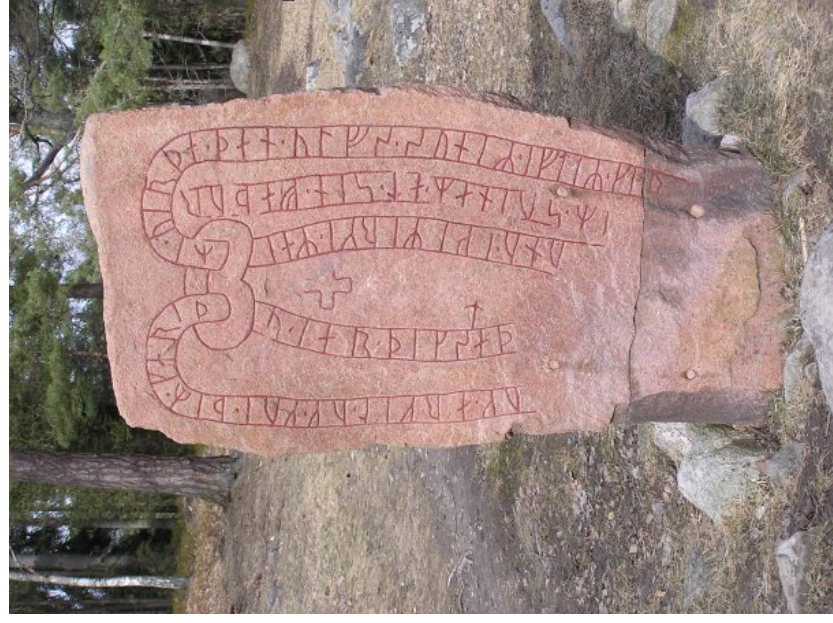


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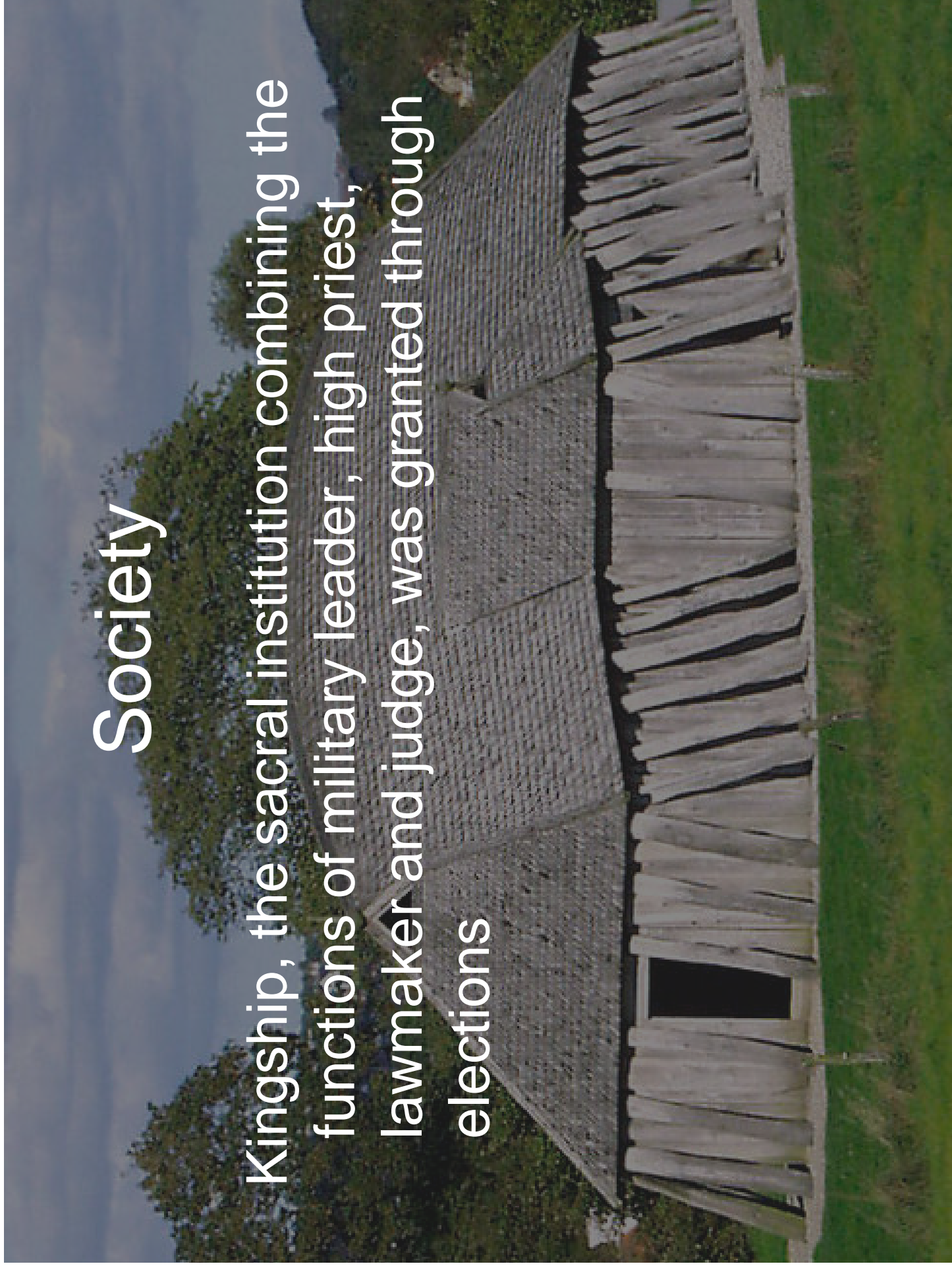
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БТ, ІАУ ХМТТВК

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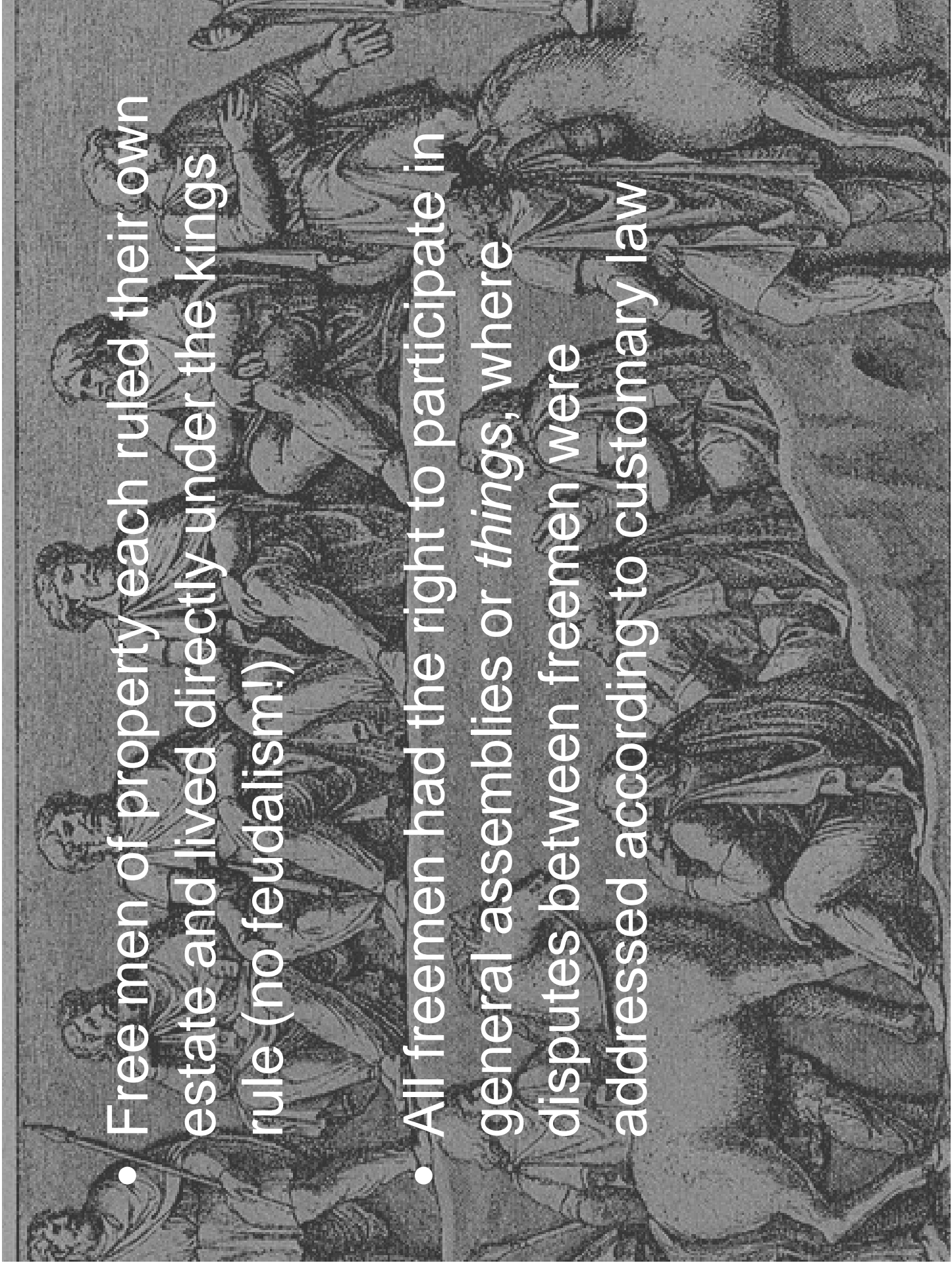


Society

Kingship, the sacral institution combining the functions of military leader, high priest, lawmaker and judge, was granted through elections



- Free men of property each ruled their own estate and lived directly under the king's rule (no feudalism!)
- All freemen had the right to participate in general assemblies or *things*, where disputes between freemen were addressed according to customary law



Law and Order

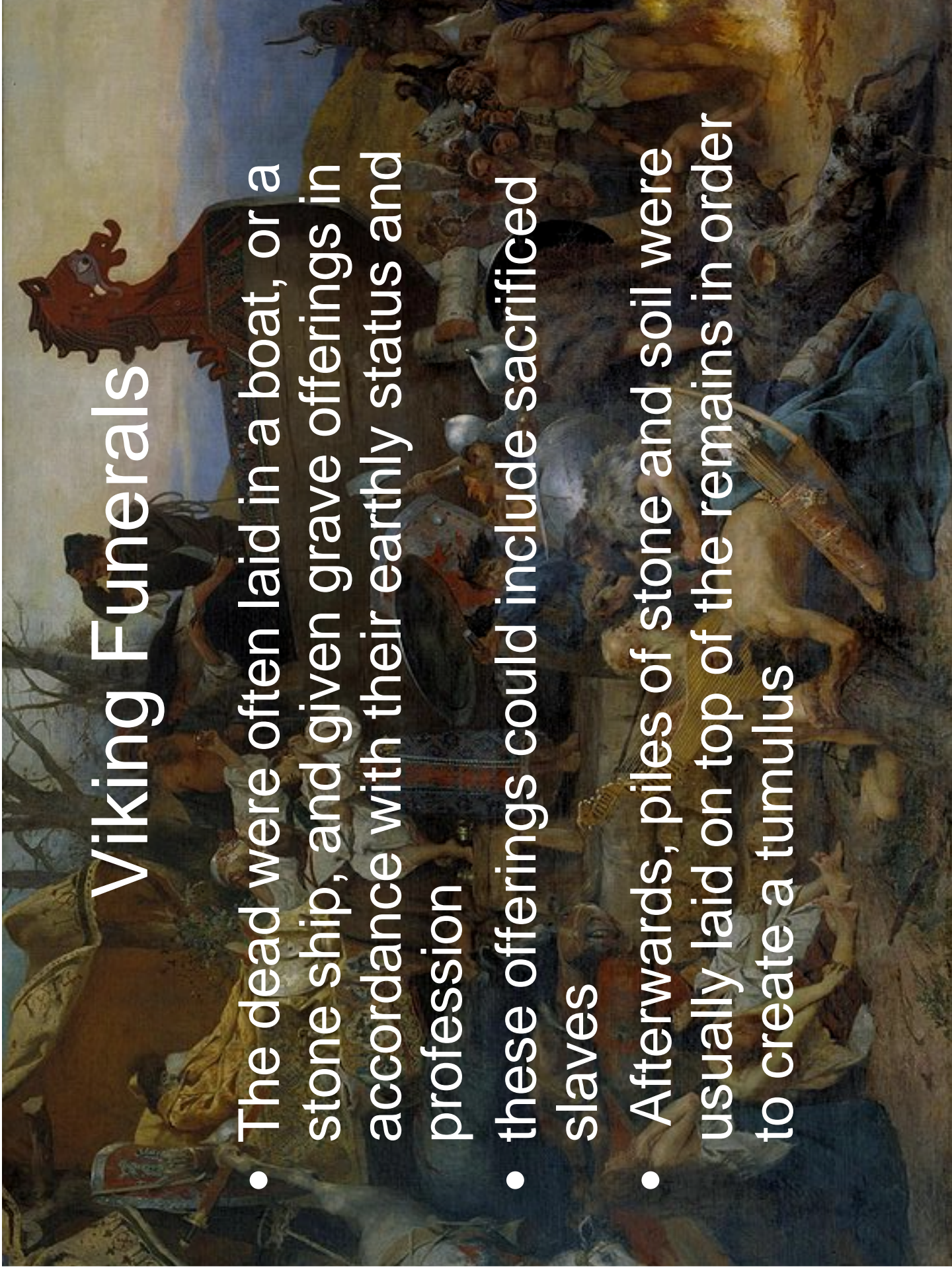
- the accused could avoid punishment by presenting a fixed number of free men (their number depended on the severity of the crime) prepared to swear an oath on his innocence
- Failing this, he could prove his innocence in a trial by combat called Holmgang

Weapons

- all free Norse men were required to own weapons, as well as permitted to carry them all of the time
- a wealthy Viking would have a complete ensemble of a helmet, shield, chainmail shirt, and sword

Viking Funerals

- The dead were often laid in a boat, or a stone ship, and given grave offerings in accordance with their earthly status and profession
- these offerings could include sacrificed slaves
- Afterwards, piles of stone and soil were usually laid on top of the remains in order to create a tumulus



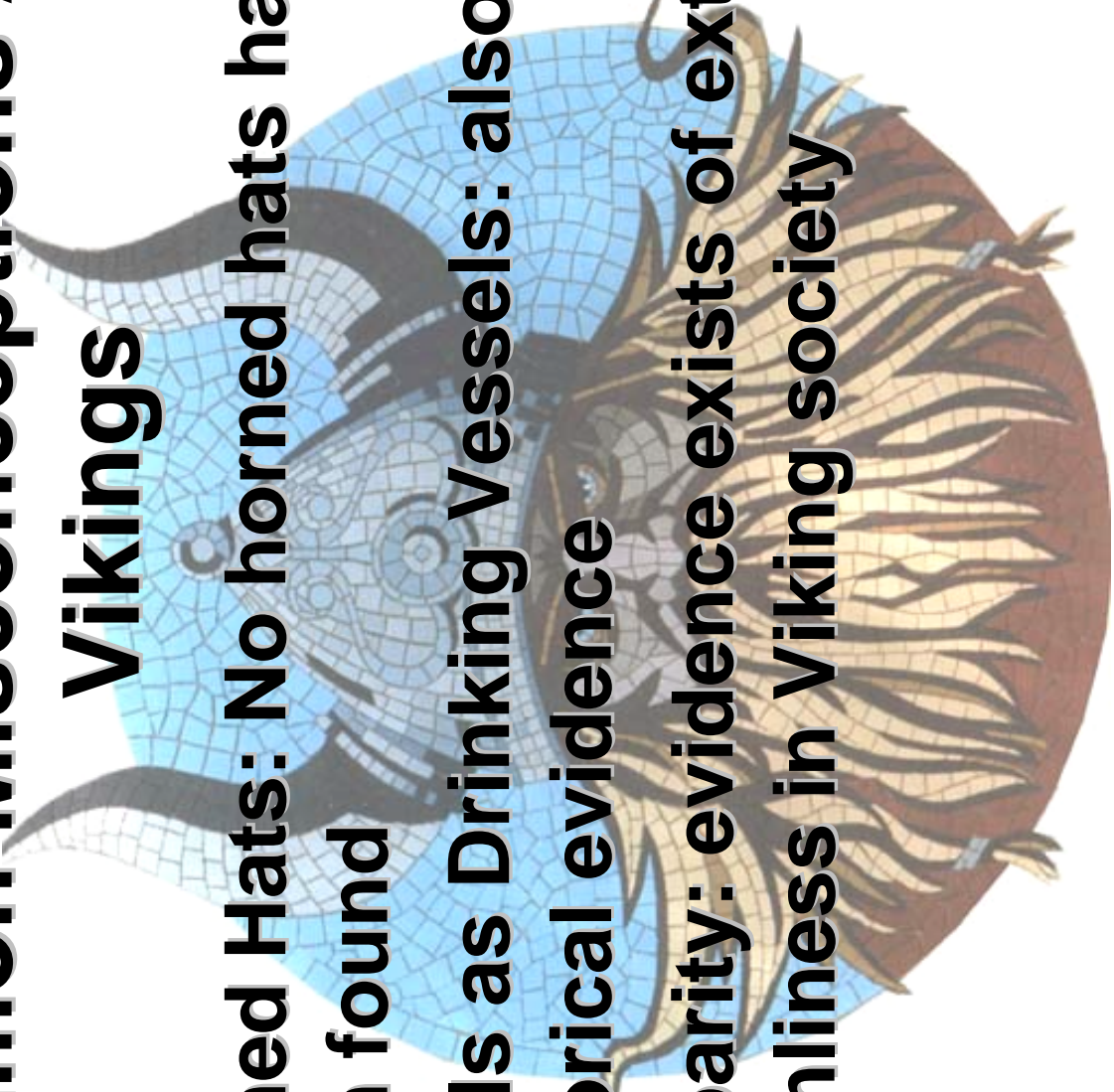
Tumuli

- mounds of earth and stones raised over a grave or graves
- often accompanied by runestones



Common Misconceptions About Vikings

- **Horned Hats: No horned hats have ever been found**
- **Skulls as Drinking Vessels: also has no historical evidence**
- **Barbarity: evidence exists of extreme cleanliness in Viking society**



Famous Vikings

Cnut the Great, king of England and Denmark, Norway, and of some of Sweden- was possibly the greatest Viking king



Harald Hardrada, king of
Norway; died at Stamford
Bridge



his half-brother, **St.**
Olaf, patron saint of
Norway

Ivar the Boneless, the disabled Viking who conquered York, despite having to be carried on a shield



William the Conqueror, Norse ruler of Normandy and the victor at the Battle of Hastings in 1066

Leif Ericsson, discoverer of Vínland, son of Erik the Red



Religion



Source

Most of the existing records on Norse mythology date from the 11th to 18th century, having gone through more than two centuries of oral preservation in what was at least officially a Pagan society



Yggdrasill- the World Tree



immense tree that is
central in Norse
cosmology
nine worlds exist
around the World
Tree

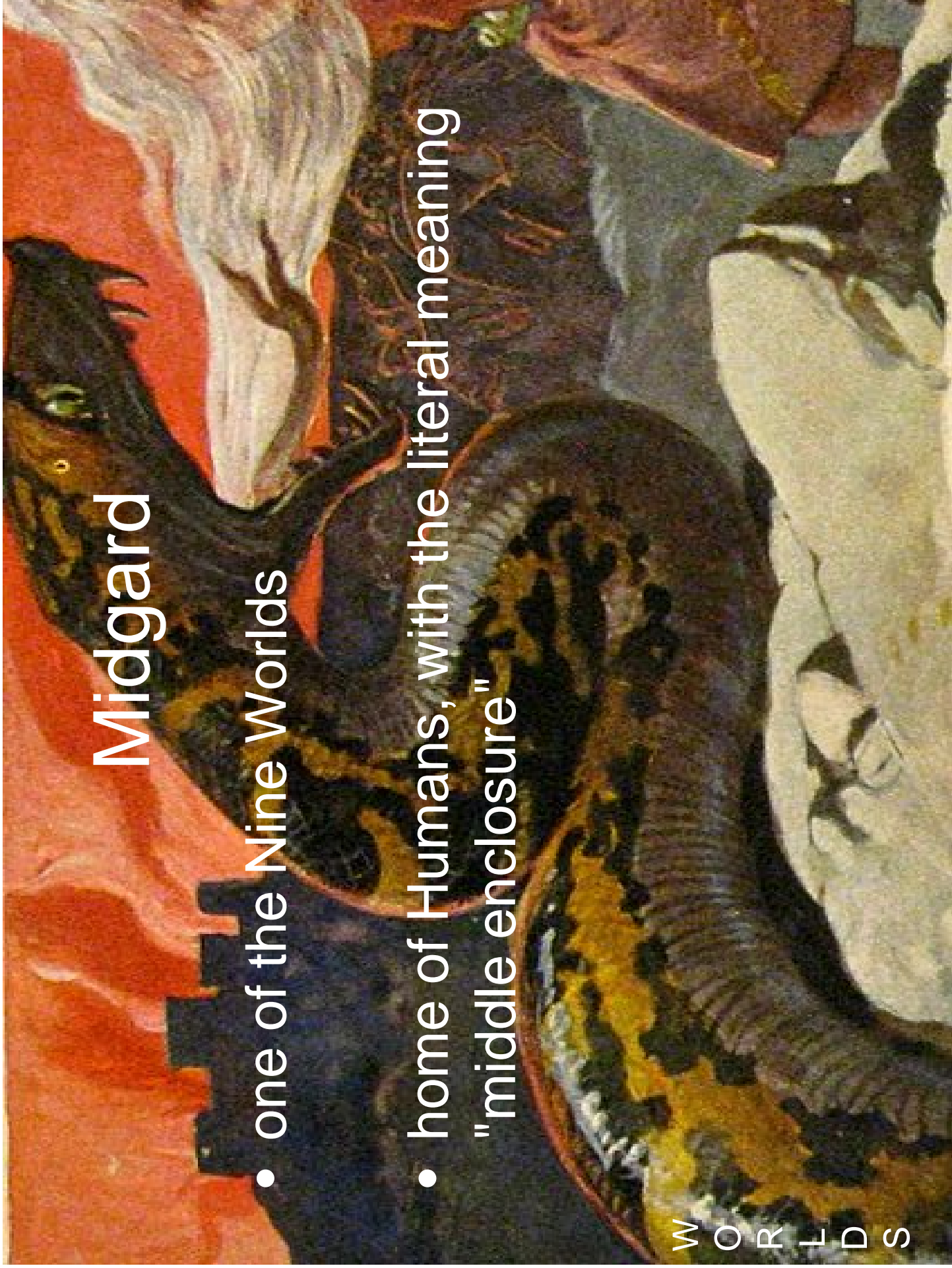
Asgard

- one of the Nine Worlds - the country or capital city of the Norse Gods
- Valhalla is located within Asgard
- Odin and his wife, Frigg, are the rulers of Asgard



Midgard

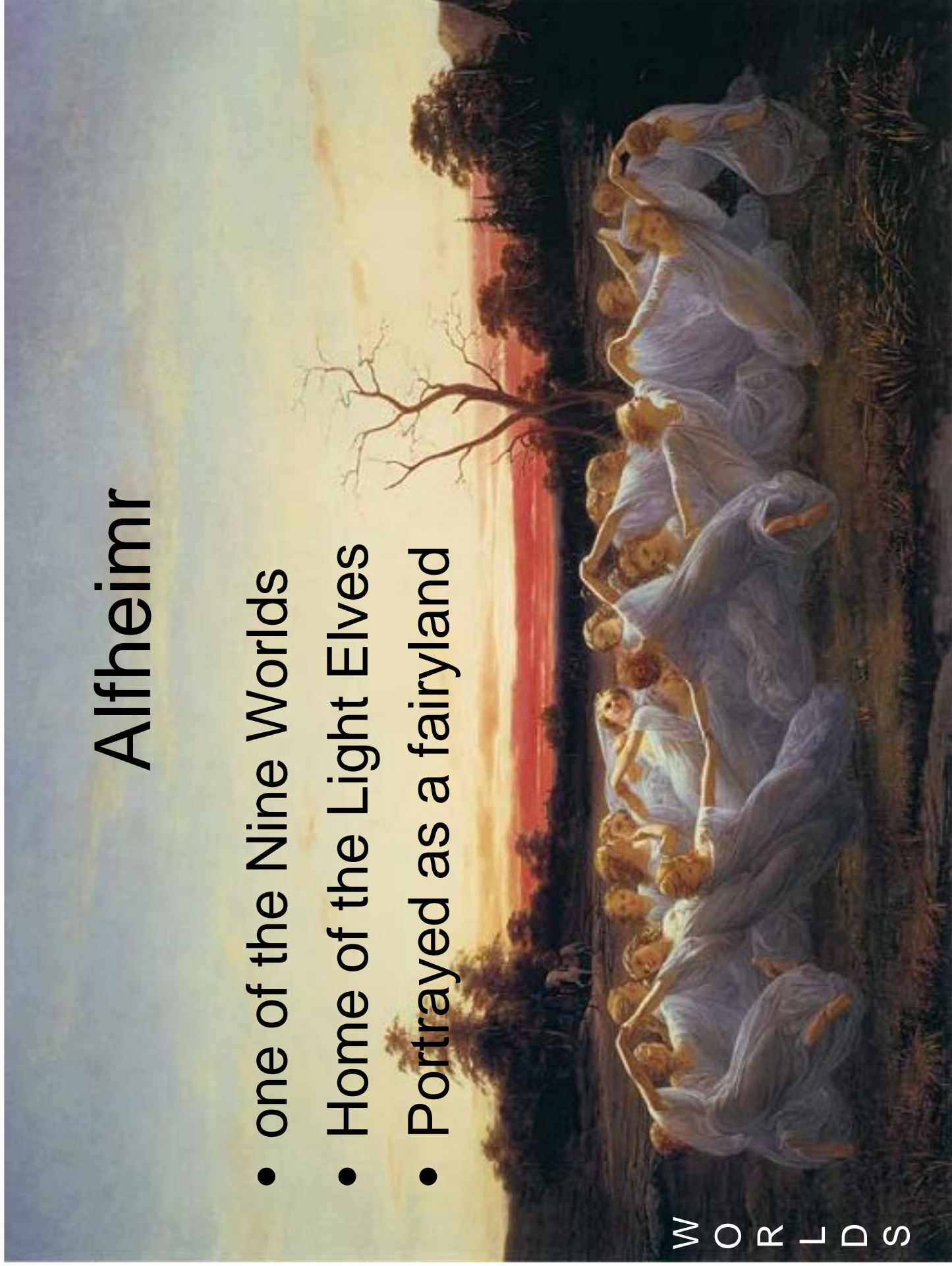
- one of the Nine Worlds
- home of Humans, with the literal meaning
- "middle enclosure"



Alfheimr

- one of the Nine Worlds
- Home of the Light Elves
- Portrayed as a fairyland

W O R L D S



Niðavellir / Svartálfheimr

- One of the Nine Worlds- home to the Dwarves ruled by Hreidmar
- home to the “smart elves”, the “Black Elves”

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Vanaheimr

- One of the Nine Worlds
- Home of the Vanir, a group of gods associated with fertility, wisdom, and the ability to tell the future

Múspellsheimr

- One of the Nine Worlds
- Realm of fire
- Home to the fire jotunn, the Sons of Muspell, and their leader Surtr

Jötunheimr

- One of the Nine Worlds
- Homelands of the giants- the Rock Giants and the Frost Giants

Niflheim

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- One of the Nine Worlds
- World of ice



Helheim

- One of the Nine Worlds
- House of Hel, the ruler of the Underworld
- world of the inglorious dead
- located within Niflheimr

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Valhalla

- Odin's hall located in Asgard
- Half of those that die in battle are carried by Valkyrie to Valhalla
- Used to prepare warriors for the events of Ragnarok



Norse Beginning of Life

- In Norse myth, life began when fire met ice, and two supernatural beings (a giant and a cow) were produced
- When the offspring of the first giant killed him, his body became the world
- Humans were created from trees and the middle-earth was built for them

E V E N T S

Ragnarök

- refers to a series of major events, including a great battle foretold to ultimately result in the death of a number of major figures (including the gods Odin, Thor, Freyr, Heimdall, and the jötunn Loki) and the occurrence of various natural disasters
- Afterwards, the world will be repopulated by two human survivors

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Fenrir

- **Monstrous wolf**
- **Son of Loki**
- **Has been foretold to kill Odin during the events of Ragnarok**
- **Bit off the right hand of Tyr**



Jörmungandr

- **Gigantic serpent that is wrapped around Midgard (when he lets go, the world ends)**
- **Offspring of Loki**
- **Mortal enemy of Thor**



Hel

- Giantess the presides over Helheim
- Appointed by Odin
- Daughter of Loki
- Perpetually gloomy and downcast



Loki

- God, trickster, shape shifter, and/or jotunn
- Appears as a salmon, mare, seal and fly
- Causes earthquakes



Huginn and Muninn



- Pair of ravens that fly all over Midgard to get information for Odin
- Given the ability to speak by Odin

Odin

- **Ruler of Asgard**
- **Associated with war, battle, victory, death, wisdom, magic, poetry, prophecy and the hunt**
- **Father of Thor**
- **Sacrificed an eye to drink from the Well of Wisdom**

Sleipnir

- Eight- legged horse belonging to Odin
- Offspring of Loki
- Described as the best of all horses, and is sometimes ridden to Hel



Freyr

- One of the most important Gods, Freyr is associated with the farming and weather
- One of the Vanir
- Possesses a foldable ship and a shiny boar



Thor

- Hammer (Mjöllnir)-wielding god associated with thunder, lightning, storms, oak trees, strength, destruction, fertility, healing, and the protection of mankind
- Son of Odin
- Known for fierce battles with Jörmungandr



Tyr

- god of single combat, victory and heroic glory, portrayed as a one-handed man



Freyja

- goddess associated with love, beauty, fertility, gold, war, and death
- rules over her heavenly afterlife field Fólkvangr and there receives half of those that die in battle



Frigg

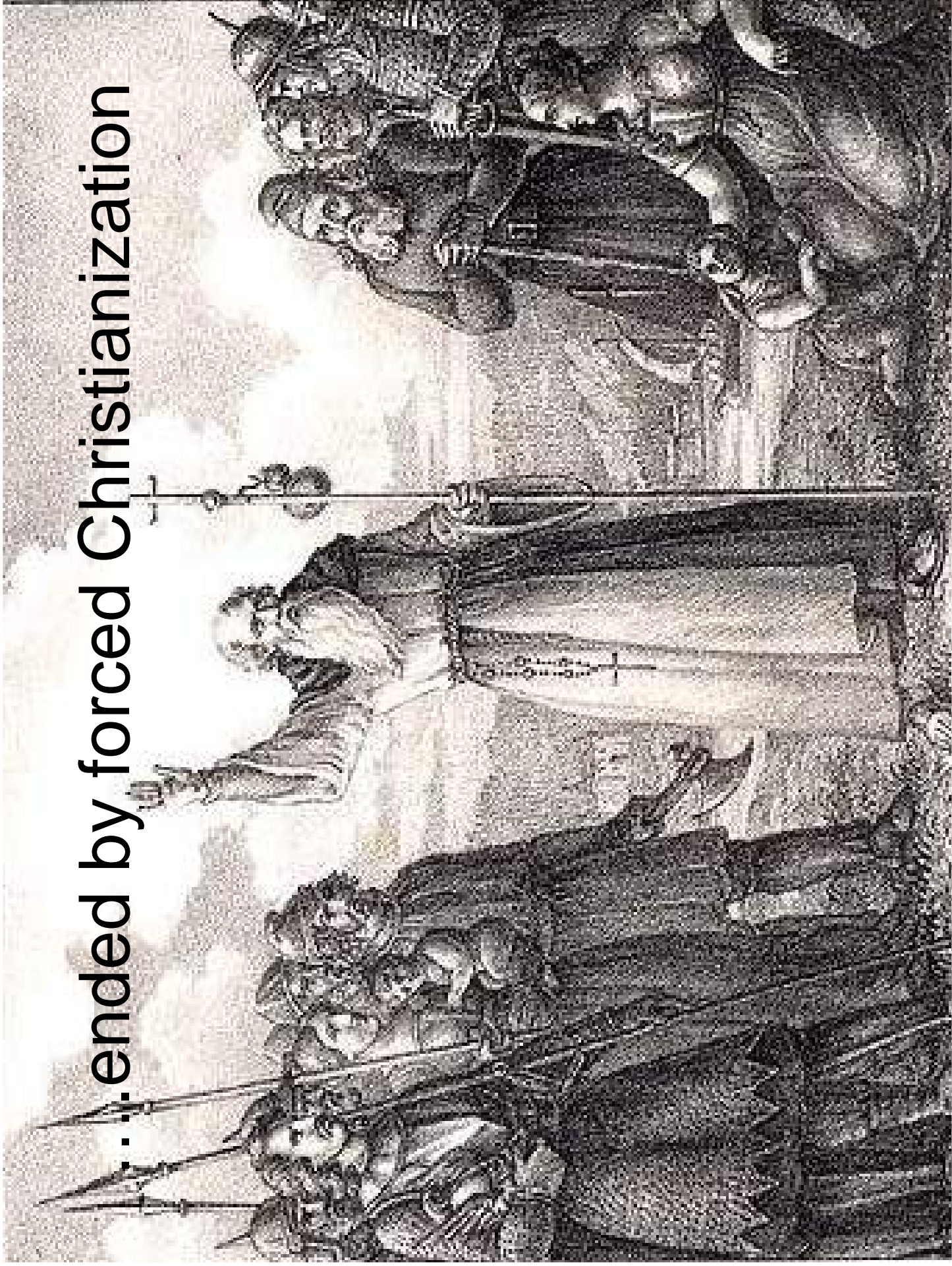
- Wife of Odin
- Queen of Asgard
- “foremost among the Goddesses”
- described as having the power of prophecy yet she does not reveal what she knows
- Primarily a mother and wife

Worship

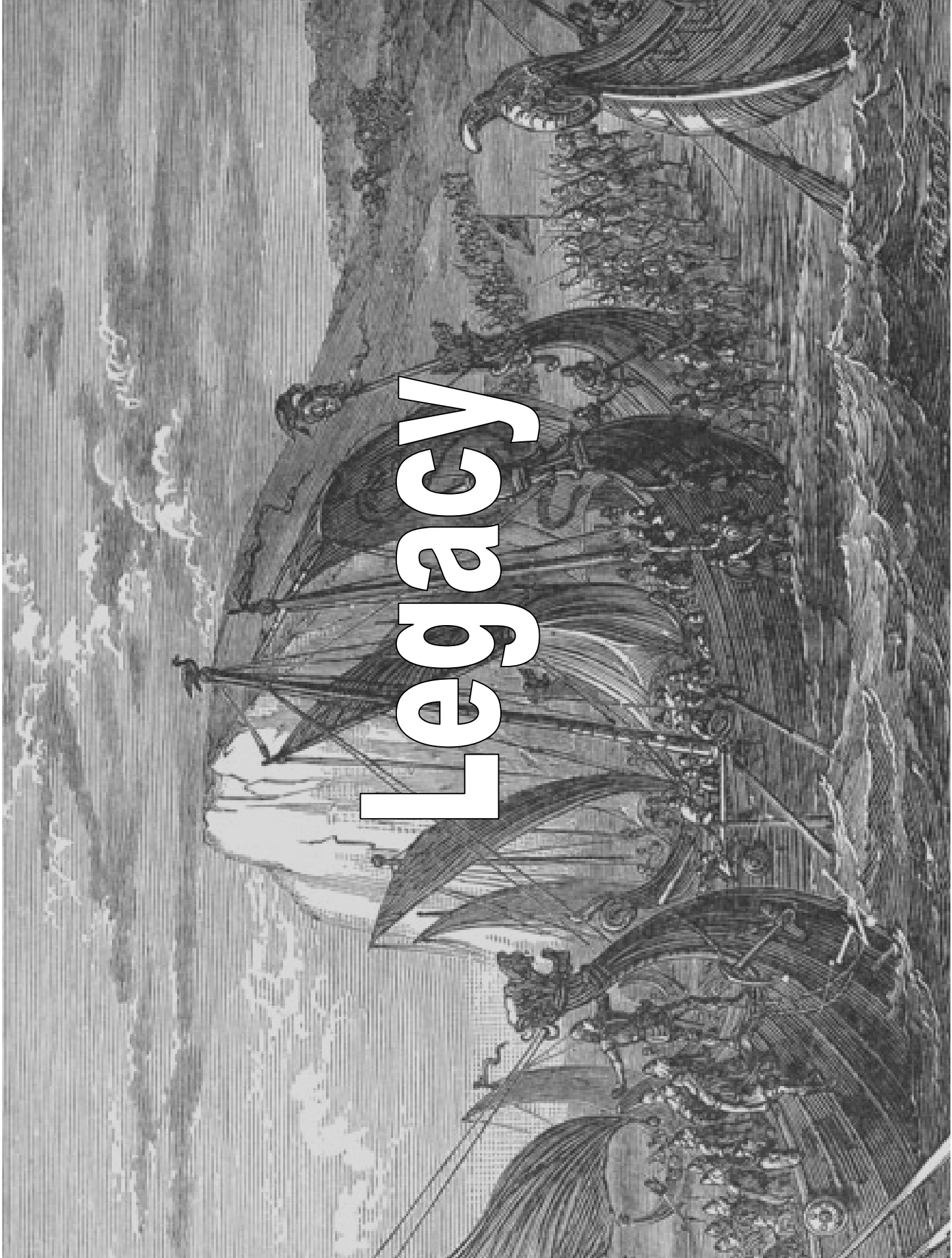
- Worshiped in sacred groves, at home, or simple altars
- Female shamans called Volvas led religion
- Burial rituals often included human sacrifice



...ended by forced Christianization



Legacy



Days of the Week

	Day (Old Norse)	Meaning
Mánadagr	→ Monday	Moon's day
Týsdagr	→ Tuesday	Tyr's day
Óðinsdagr	→ Wednesday	Odin's day (Woden)
Þórsdagr	→ Thursday	Thor's day
Fríjadagr	→ Friday	Day of Freyr/Freyja
Laugardagr	Sunday	Washing day
Sunnudagr/Dróttinsdagr	↗	Sun's day/The Lord's day

NAZI propaganda



Sports Team Symbolism







ODIN

He kicks your God's **butt**