

Possible second Viking site discovered in North America

4 April 2016, by Bob Yirka



The "Lofotr" viking ship and the smaller "femkeiping". Both reconstructions based on excavations from the Gokstad find. Credit: Geir Are Johansen/Wikipedia

A team of archeologists has found what may be the remains of a previously unknown Viking settlement on a south west shore of the Island of Newfoundland. If the remains can be confirmed, the site would make it just the second ever discovered that has given proof of Vikings inhabiting parts of North America. The team has been videotaping their work and a documentary of their efforts will be presented this month on PBS.

Leading the research is archeologist and National Geographic fellow, Sarah Parcak, who has been described as a "space archaeologist" because of her groundbreaking use of [satellite technology](#) to uncover Egyptian ruins. In this latest effort, she and her team have altered their methods to uncover what appears to be evidence of Viking iron smelting.

To find hidden artifacts, especially those that have been buried by some amount of dirt, using a

satellite, the researchers used computer tools to help them scan images, looking for human-like angles or long straight, unnatural lines. In the case of the newly discovered Newfoundland site, called Point Rosee, the team looked for changes in the richness of the grasses that grow near the sea—those that grow over stone, or other material are less robust, and can be made out from a distant satellite. The team also used magnetometer surveys to help isolate images below the ground once they were on site. That led to an initial excavation which revealed an iron-working hearth (with 28 pounds of slag in it) and what appeared to be the remains of turf walls. Radiocarbon testing has dated the site to between 800 and 1300 AD, which would coincide with the time of the Vikings.

Prior to this possible discovery, the only site ever officially designated as evidence of Norse activity in the New World was L'Anse aux Meadows, hundreds of miles north, on the tip of the same island. Archeologists do not have much to go on when attempting to prove that a settlement was made by Norsemen, rather than Basque fisherman or Native Americans—the one true hallmark of Norse travelers was the use of iron nails to build their boats, thus the discovery of an iron-smelting oven would be strong evidence of Viking activity.

If additional excavation and testing indicate that the [site](#) was indeed made by Vikings, it will likely lead to changes being made to the history books—it would mean they found and settled North America five centuries before Christopher Columbus arrived.

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