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Throughout the period between approximately 900-1300 AD there was a warming period called the "Medieval Warming Period", in which the temperatures were higher than normal averages of the area. During this time the Norse were exploring different areas and discovered Greenland where they settled probably due to the green pastures and rich soil along the coast. They were often dependent on farming and raising cattle, so the main source of their value and living was based on their ability to farm the land and raise animals for food and other products. Fishing was also something that the vikings did, but they were better known for farming. The land that Greenland offered was perfect during the time because the warm period gave a lot of sunlight to crops and water surrounded Greenland making the soil probably rich.

Then came about the "Little Ice Age" where the area of Greenland and other Northern areas became increasingly cooler, which many attribute to volcanic eruptions of the period as well as maybe some decrease in solar radiation. The main idea though is that the eruptions shot sulfate high into the atmosphere and blocked some sunlight from reaching all the way to the ice sheets and snow causing more snow to build up and turn to ice sheets, termed the ice-albedo effect. During this period there was extended and greater coolness and during summers they were still cold and very wet. With these cooler temperatures in the area vikings were unable to farm the land well and often caused long periods of inability to farm the land. This in turn hurt their products not only for themselves but also in trade. The farming was not the only thing affected, because of the cooling and increase of ice the previous routes of traders to get to Greenland were ridden with ice sheets or beds that either may it impossible to travel or they would have to go another much longer route. Either way this was risky and was often incredibly dangerous, therefore many traders either stopped going to Greenland and those that still went would go less often simply to avoid making risky trips for small amounts of crop and product that the vikings could make. This forced either many settlers to move out of the area unable to sustain life, or some that most likely died from the cold without being able to get much food and needs.

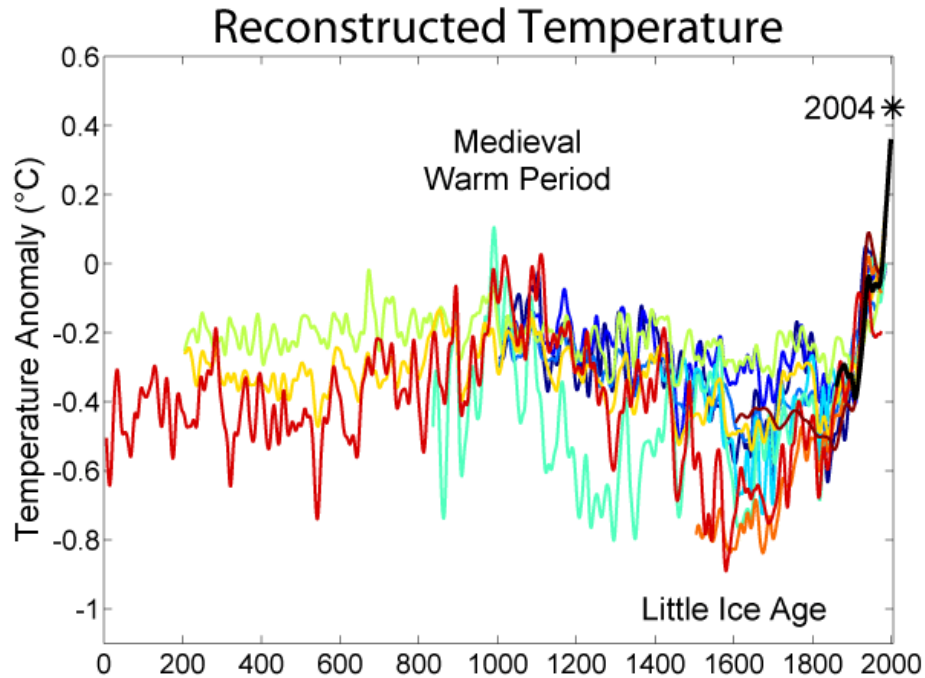


Figure 1: This shows the periods deemed the “Medieval Warm Period” and the “Little Ice Age” where the temperatures were slightly higher and slightly lower(in that order) than previous averages. This affected mainly areas in Northern Europe, specifically the Viking settlement in Greenland, first giving prime land for farming, then when the cool period came caused the decline of their ability to farm and continue living in the area.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c1/2000_Year_Temperature_Comparison.png