

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project**  
**(North Cardigan Bay)**  
**On-line research into the wreck of the:**  
***Venus***



*A brig under sail*

Report compiled by:  
**Graeme Perks**

Report Title:

**Welsh Wreck Web Research Project  
(North Cardigan Bay)  
On-line research into the wreck of the:  
*Venus***

Compiled by:

**Graeme Perks**  
graperks@aol.com  
Sutton Coldfield  
UK

On behalf of:

**Nautical Archaeology Society**  
Fort Cumberland  
Fort Cumberland Road  
Portsmouth  
PO4 9LD  
Tel: +44 (0)23 9281 8419  
E-mail: [nas@nauticalarchaeologysociety.org](mailto:nas@nauticalarchaeologysociety.org)  
Web Site: [www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org](http://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org)

Managed by:

**Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit**  
17 Hornyold Road  
Malvern  
Worcestershire  
WR14 1QQ  
Tel: +44 (0)1684 574774  
E-mail: [MADUdiving@gmail.com](mailto:MADUdiving@gmail.com)  
Web Site: [www.madu.org.uk](http://www.madu.org.uk)

Date:

**April 2021**

Report Ref:

***Leave blank***

## **1.0 Abstract**

The “www Research Project” is about, discovering by on line research, details of ships on the MADU data base of wrecks of North Wales, the circumstances of their loss, details of the owners and crew, the cargo carried and their history.

The Venus was a brig about which little is known. The Venus made one recorded voyage from Wiscassett, Maine, USA and others to the Mediterranean returning to Liverpool. Venus was driven ashore in France in 1811 but not detained despite Britain and France being at war, so she may have been an American vessel as the masters name was Scott.

The Venus was wrecked near Aberdovey in December 1811 having been driven ashore in a gale but her crew and cargo were saved.

## 2.0 Index

<b>2.1 Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1.0 Abstract</b> -----	3
<b>2.0 Index</b> -----	4
2.1 Table of Contents	4
2.3 List of Pictures	5
2.4 Contributors	5
2.5 Abbreviations	5
<b>3.0 Introduction</b> -----	6
<b>4.0 Background</b> -----	7
<b>5.0 Research Methodology</b> -----	9
<b>6.0 Results</b> -----	10
<b>7.0 Analysis</b> -----	13
<b>8.0 Conclusions &amp; Recommendations</b> -----	14
<b>9.0 References</b> -----	15
<b>Appendices:</b>	
<b>Appendix A – Timeline for Venus</b> -----	16
<b>Appendix B – Ports and cargo details</b> -----	17

## 2.3 List of Pictures

## Page No.

Front Cover: A brig under sail -----	1
Fig. 1 Map of Europe showing ports -----	19
Fig. 2 Position of Maine in North America -----	20
Fig. 3 Map of State of Maine -----	21

## 2.4 Contributors

Madu

## 2.5 Abbreviations

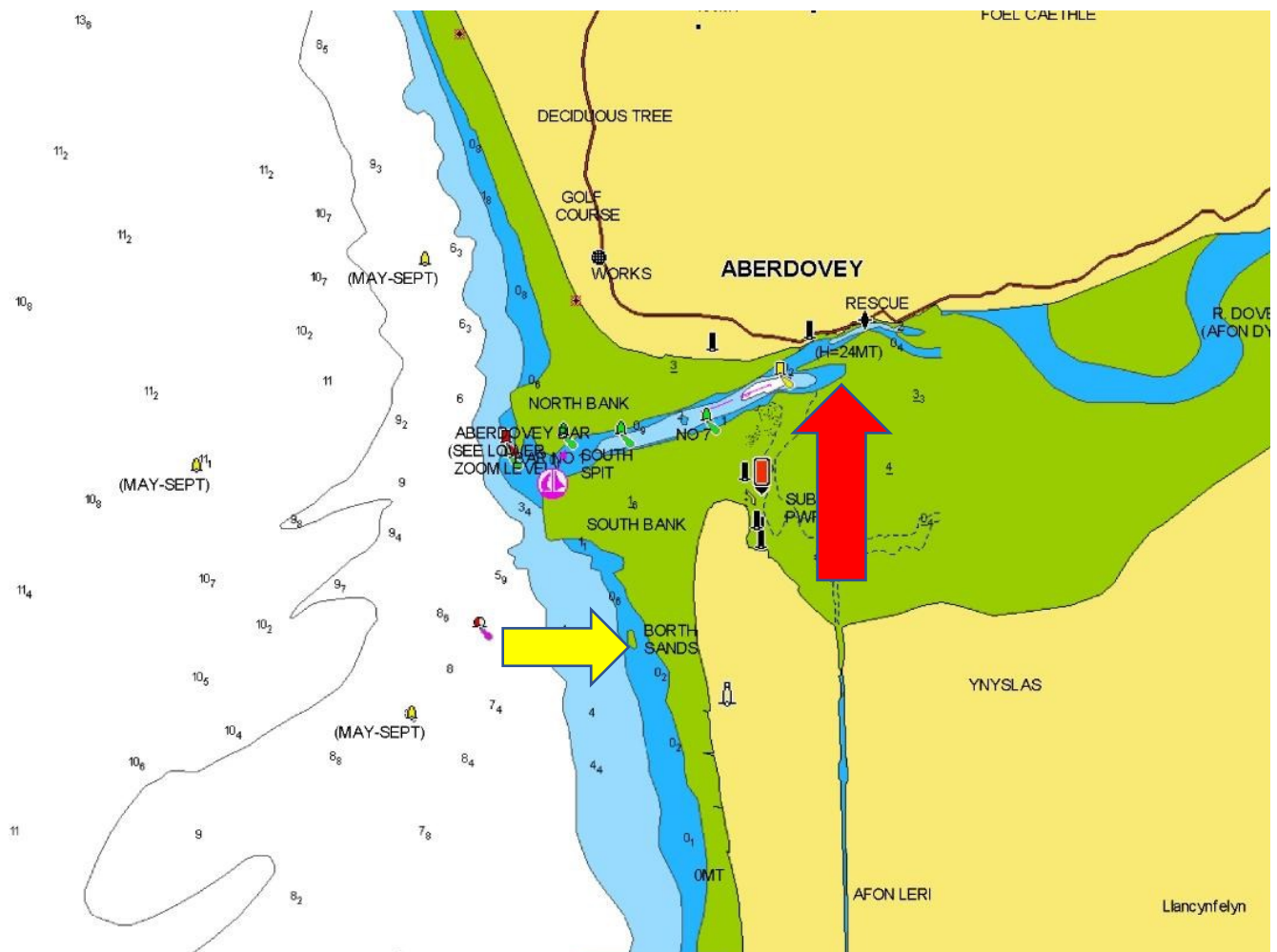
LR	Lloyds Register of shipping
BNA	British Newspaper Archives
MADU	Malvern Archaeological Diving Unit
NAS	Nautical Archaeology Society
NAW	National Archives of Wales
NPRN	National Primary Resource Number
OS	Ordnance Survey
WNL	Welsh Newspapers on Line
w/e	Week ending

### **3.0 Introduction**

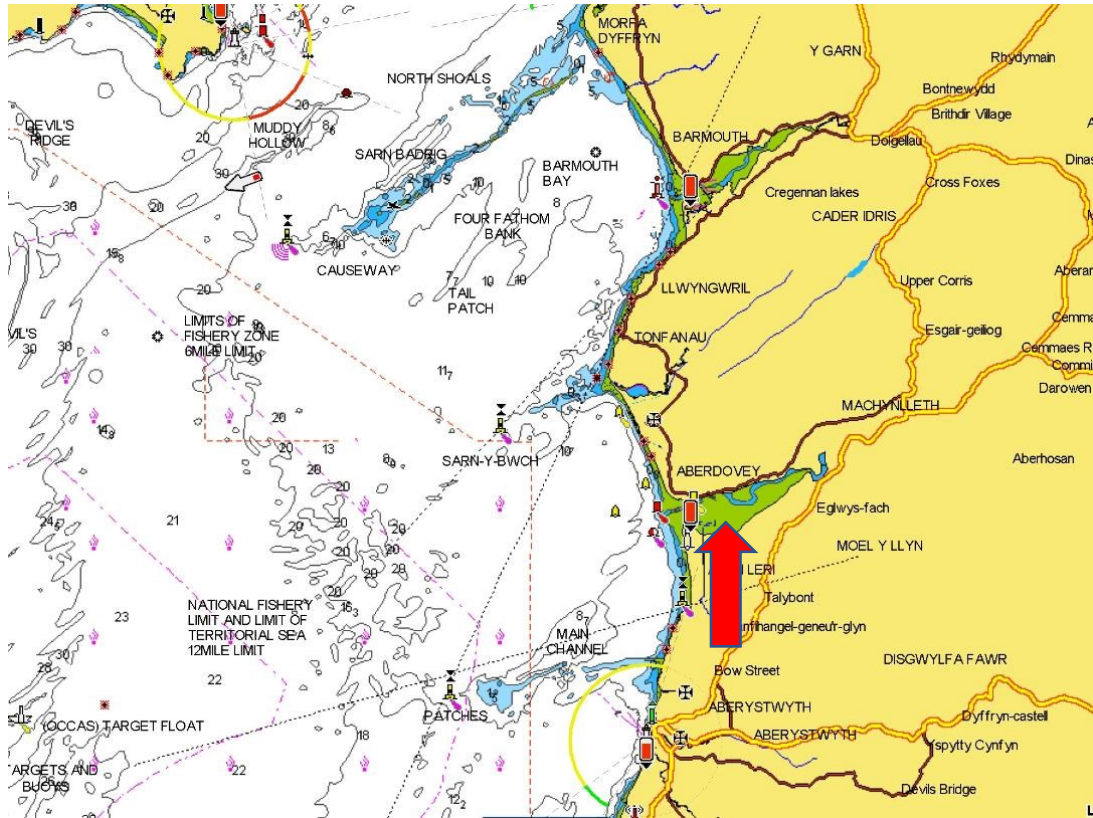
1. I selected Venus to research because she was a very old reported loss and wished to see how much information I could find about her. and I wanted to find out what happened and I wanted to discover:
2. The dimensions of the vessel, although for this period of time apart from the draught, they would have only been recorded in on line information if the Lloyd's survey was available or the vessel had been advertised for sale in a surviving newspaper. Who the builder was and when she was built and any other information available about her.
3. Information concerning the voyages, cargo's, any events affecting the vessel, details of its masters, crew and owners.
4. To find out the sequency of events leading up to the loss of the vessel, whenever that was and the event in 1811.
5. To discover the cause of the event in 1811 and if the vessel survived, the cause of its eventual loss.
6. The events that happened after the incident in 1811 and up to and after its loss if it survived.
7. If there were any previous research of the vessel for the 1811 incident and its story.
8. If there was a wreck site for Venus and if it had been identified, dived and recorded.
9. If any salvage of the vessel and its cargo had been carried out
10. If any previous reports had been produced for the Venus.

### 4.0 Background

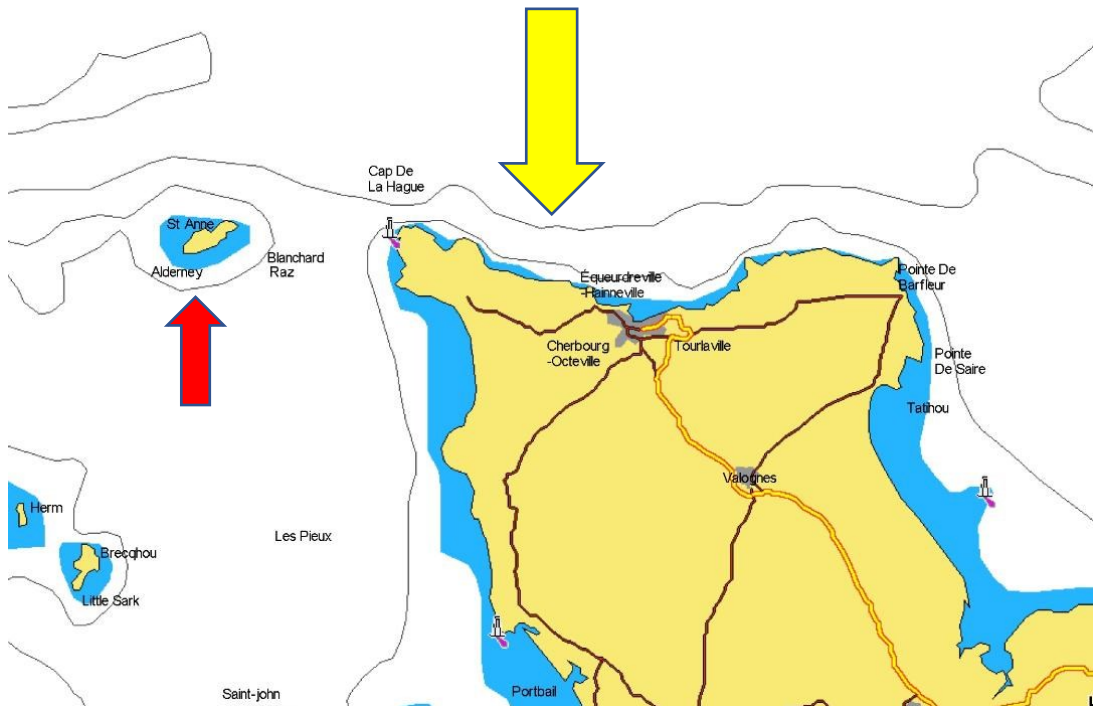
When I started my research it was reported that Venus a wooden sailing vessel had been involved in an incident ashore near Aberdovey, Merioneth on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1811.



Aberdovey, Borth Sands and Adjacent coast



Aberdovey and Cardigan Bay



Alderney and adjacent coast of France  
→ Alderney → French Coast.

## 5.0 Research Methodology

I used a Microsoft Pixel laptop with access to my home internet running windows 10 operating system. I also used my Apple I pad for research when I was away from the laptop and to assist in transcribing reports from the British newspaper archives. The new internet provider has now connected my home by a fibre connection so it is very much faster. The Lap top uses bling search engine but I also use Goggle which produces less advertisements and less Americanised content.

I searched Lloyds Register of Shipping ( LR ) for "Venus " looking for details of her dimensions, master, builders and owners from 1811 backwards with no matches. I did find what I thought was a match in 1808 for a brig Venus registered in Belfast.

I also checked every brig called Venus in LR in 1810 and 1811 looking for likely vessels without any matches.

I searched LR ships, plans and survey reports for "Venus" with no match.

I searched The British Newspaper Archives (BNA) for "Venus Scott", and "Venus", looking for sailings, arrivals, a launch, owners, builders, mishaps and any details of her loss and found a some of matches. I also searched "Venus Liverpool", "Venus Malta", "Venus Gibraltar", "Venus Wiscasset" and "Venus Messina" looking for possible other masters and voyages with no matches.

I searched Welsh newspapers on line for "Venus" looking for sailings, arrivals, a launch, owners, builders and any details of her loss and found a match.

I searched Coflein site for "Venus" looking for any details of the wreck and a chart with a match giving brief details of her loss.

I searched wreckeu site for "Venus" looking for any details of the wreck with no matches.

I searched on line for "Wiscasset ships" and "Wiscasset shipbuilding" looking for mention of Venus with no match although it was a major shipbuilding area there were no vessels listed on line as having been built or registered in Wiscasset.

## 6.0 Results

Vessel	Name/s	Venus	
	Type	Brig	
		Cargo	
Built	Date	Unknown	
	Builder	Unknown	
Construction	Materials	Wood	
	Decks	One	
	Bulkheads	None	
Propulsion	Type	Sail	
	Details	Square rigged	
Engine	Details	N/A	
	Boilers		
Drive	Type		
	Number		
Dimensions	Length	Unknown ft	ins
	Beam	Unknown ft	ins
	Draught	Unknown ft	ins
Tonnage	Gross		
	Net		
Owner	First	Unknown	
	Last	Unknown	
	Others		
Registry	Port	Unknown	
	Flag	Unknown, may be American	
	Number		
History	Routes	Liverpool to Malta and Messina	
		Wiscassett to Dublin	
	Cargo	Wine, liquorice paste, cream of tartar, galls fustic sumach, natron, brimstone, mohair yarn, madder root	
Final Voyage	From	Malta and Messina via Plymouth	
	To	Liverpool	
	Captain	Scott	
	Crew	Unknown	
	Passengers	None	
	Cargo	Raisins, Cotton, Lemons	
Wrecking	Date	16th December 1811	
	Location	Borth Sands, Aberystwith	
	Cause	Gale force winds	
	Loss of life	None	
	Outcome	wrecked	

**Star (London) - Thursday 16 November 1809**

NEWHAVEN, NOVEMBER 13.

The Venus from Malta and Gibraltar, is now lying in Seaford Road, wind-bound, with a quarantine flag flying.

**Manchester Mercury - Tuesday 02 October 1810**

LIVERPOOL IMPORTS.

MEDITERRANEAN

Venus from Malta, with wine, liquorice paste, cream of tartar, galls, fustic, sumach, natron, brimstone, mohair yarn and H W Ross, galls Geher Focks and Co., madder root, R Sherriff

**Carlisle Journal - Saturday 27 April 1811**

Liverpool arrived 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April

Venus, Scott, Messina, and Malta, brimstone, cream tartar, arcol, nuts, rags, gum, oranges, tartar, galls, bare skins, madder root, manna, lemons.

**Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser - Monday 23 December 1811**

The Venus, Scott, from Malta to Liverpool, is on shore near Alderney.

**Lloyd's List - Tuesday 24 December 1811**

The Venus, Scott, from Malta to Liverpool, was driven shore near Aberdovey 16 inst, cargo expected to saved, but the Vessel likely be totally lost.

**The Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Weekly Advertiser 28th December 1811**

In the tremendous gale on the 16th instant, the brig Venus, bound from Malta to Liverpool, laden with raisins, cotton and lemons, was driven on shore on Borth Sands, in the port of Aberystwith, a complete wreck: cargo and crew saved.

A brig is a sailing vessel with two square-rigged masts, the main mast of a brig is the aft or rearmost one. During the Age of Sail, brigs were seen as fast and manoeuvrable and were used as both naval warships and merchant vessels. They were especially popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Many Brigs were converted to Brigantine's because they required a relatively large crew for their small size and were difficult to sail into the wind. Their rigging differs from that of a brigantine which has a gaff-rigged mainsail, while a brig has a square mainsail with an additional gaff-rigged spanker behind the mainsail.

## 7.0 Analysis

I made a mistake identifying a vessel from LR and began to research a brig Venus of Belfast but she was still sailing until 1817 when she lost off Peel, Isle of Man.

The Venus may have been an American vessel, as after her arrival in May 1807 in Dublin from Wiscassett, Maine, USA there is no record on line of her until November 1809, which may fit the American embargo on foreign voyages of 1807 until March 1809. There is no record in LR for the vessel. Venus was also reported on shore near Alderney before she was lost in Wales, this would have been in France. If she had been a British vessel she would have been captured as Britain and France were at war, while an American vessel was neutral. She also appeared to sail independently rather than in a convoy, escorted by the Royal Navy as British vessels of the time were doing so to prevent capture. Numbers of British vessels were also armed to protect themselves. The reported Ports she carried cargo from to Britain was permitted under the British laws at the time for a foreign owned vessel. The island Sicily of was not conquered by the French during the Napoleonic wars.

The Liverpool newspapers are not available on line for the period Venus sailed and this appears to be her main port in the UK.

The newspaper reports all came from the BNA except for one from the WNL concerning her loss.

There are no records on line concerning vessels from Wiscasset or customs records for Liverpool, but many Liverpool records were lost during the bombing of the second world war. If any customs records still exist they may be an avenue for further research. 1811 is before national records existed in the USA and where Venus was registered could be anywhere on the East coast if it was an American vessel.

## **8.0 Conclusions & Recommendations**

I have spent about 20 hours on this project without the time I spent in error researching Venus of Belfast with about 95% of the time spent on line.

The Venus was driven ashore and wrecked so there is not a wreck site for her to dive or protect. The reports from the time state the cargo was saved and it follows the materials of the vessel were salvaged.

The lack of details on line made it impossible to achieve most of my objectives but I have achieved more than I thought when I was struggling to find records for her. There is no way of establishing if she was an American vessel but British vessels for this time generated more reports and the other factors of the war with Napoleon's France and American government actions tend to support my theory that she was American.

The lack of details fail to provide a story for the Venus so no further publications of any kind are feasible. The 210 years since her loss are too long a period to expect much more surviving material to be found.

## 9.0 References

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

<https://coflein.gov.uk/>

<https://www.google.com/>

<https://hec.lrfoundation.org.uk/>

<https://www.nationsonline.org/>

<https://www.navionics.com/>

<https://newspapers.library.wales/>

<http://ontheworldmap.com/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix A – The Timeline for the *Venus***

1807

May 12 1807 Dublin arrived Venus, Scott from Wiscassett, Maine

1809

November 13 1809 Sleaford Roads arrived Venus, Scott from Malta

1810

December 7 1810 Gibraltar arrived Venus, Scott from Liverpool

1811

w/e April 25 1811 Liverpool arrived Venus, Scott from Malta & Messina

June 22 1811 Gibraltar arrived Venus, Scott from Liverpool

w/e August 27 1811 Malta arrived Venus, Scott from Liverpool

December 6 1811 Plymouth arrived Venus, Scott from Malta

w/e December 16 1811 Plymouth sailed Venus, Scott for Liverpool under  
· quarantine

December 16 1811 Near Aberdovey driven ashore Venus, Scott for Liverpool

## **Appendix B – Ports and cargo explanations**

**Alderney** is one of the Channel Islands, 9 miles from France

**Messina** is a harbour city in northeast Sicily, separated from mainland Italy by the Strait of Messina.

**Wiscasset** is a town in and the seat of Lincoln County, Maine, United States. The municipality is located in the state of Maine's Mid Coast region. Incorporated as Wiscasset in 1802. The seaport became a centre for shipbuilding, fishing and lumber. Wiscasset quickly became the busiest seaport north of Boston until the embargo of 1807 halted much trade with England. Most of Wiscasset's business and trade was destroyed

**Brimstone**, an old name for sulphur.

**Cream of tartar** was often used in traditional dyeing where the complexing action of the tartrate ions was used to adjust the solubility and hydrolysis of mordant salts such as tin chloride and alum.

**Galls and Fustic** were used as dyes producing different colours when added to other dye materials.

**Liquorice paste**, apart from making sweets and sweetening food, water treated with liquorice extract was used to extinguish fires prior to our modern methods. Even the dregs of liquorice root, left over once the other useful parts of the root have been removed, have been used to make boards that are fairly sturdy and often used for boxes.

**Madder roots** - natural dyes Madder dye plants make one of the most light-fast of natural dyes that has been in use for thousands of years. The fleshy swollen madder roots produce madder red dye which is sensitive to temperature and to the mineral content of the water. Alizarin is the main chemical compound in this important natural dye and produces the red colour.

**Manna** is more than a literary anachronism, it exists today in Italy, in a small corner of the island of Sicily. When exposed to the hot summer sun of Sicily, this Italian variety of maple syrup solidifies into white stalactites of spongy sugar.

**Natron** is a naturally occurring mixture of sodium carbonate decahydrate (a kind of soda ash) and around 17% sodium bicarbonate (also called baking soda,) along with small quantities of sodium chloride and sodium sulphate. Natron is white to colourless when pure, varying to grey or yellow with impurities. Blended with oil, it was an early form of soap. It softens water while removing oil and grease. Undiluted, natron was a cleanser for the teeth and an early mouthwash. The mineral was mixed into early antiseptics for wounds and minor cuts. Natron can be used to dry and preserve fish and meat. It was also an ancient household insecticide, and was used for making leather as well as a bleach for clothing.

**Sumac** also spelled sumach, is any one of about 35 species of flowering plants. The dried fruits of some species are ground to produce a tangy, crimson spice popular in many countries. The leaves and bark of most sumac species contain high levels of tannins and have been used in the manufacturing of leather by many cultures around the world. An 11th-century shipwreck off the coast of Rhodes, excavated by archeologists in the 1970s, contained commercial quantities of sumac drupes. These could have been intended for use as medicine, as a culinary spice, or as a dye. A clinical study showed that dietary sumac decreases the blood pressure in patients with hypertension and can be used as adjunctive treatment.



Fig. 1 Map of Europe  
→ Messina → Alderney → Plymouth → Aberdovey → Liverpool



Fig. 2

Position of Maine in Northern America



Fig. 3 State of Maine, USA

 Wiscasset