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Pursuing West: The Viking Expeditions of North America

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in History

by

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May 2015

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Keywords: Kensington Rune Stone, Runes, Vikings, Gotland

ABSTRACT

Pursuing West: The Viking Expeditions of North America

by

Jody Bryant

The purpose to this thesis is to demonstrate the activity of the Viking presence, in North America. The research focuses on the use of stones, carved with runic inscriptions that have been discovered in Oklahoma, Maine, Rhode Island and Minnesota. The thesis discusses orthographic traits found in the inscriptions and gives evidence that links their primary use to fourteenth century Gotland. Also connecting the stones to Gotland, is the presence of an unusual rune dubbed the Hooked X. This single rune has been the center of controversy since it was first discovered in Minnesota, 1898. Since that time, it has been discovered in connection with two of the other North American Rune Stones, Christopher Columbus and the Cistercian -Templars of Gotland. As of this year (2015), more of the Hooked X symbology has been discovered in Templar churches in Scotland and Portugal.

DEDICATION

This work is lovingly dedicated to my family: JoAnn Booth, Lily Bryant, Jake Smith, Kenny Ashby, Kim Fillers and Christina Baxter... and to you, Daddy... I hope you can see my progress. Thank you, to each of you, for putting up with me through all of the research and writing process and for encouraging me when I was at my wits end!

It is likewise dedicated to all of the ETSU history professors who have guided me through my years of Academia: Dr. Doug Burgess, Dr. Tom Lee, Dr. John Rankin, Dr. Henry Antkiewicz and Dr. Philip Wilson, thank you for your dedication to the students and for always being the wonderful people you are.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the family of Olof Ohman, who endured ridicule and humiliation for sharing the discovery of the Kensington Rune Stone with America. May affirmative scholarship of the inscription bring peace to the spirits of Solem Township.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the rolling hills of west Minnesota, lies Solem Township. It is located a few miles northeast of Kensington and just off the shores of Lake Oscar. What was once the working homestead of the Olof Ohman family has now been designated as a one hundred and ninety three acre state park. The area is quiet and very secluded with a one lane drive winding about the property. The Ohman home and outbuilding are still there, situated on a firm plot of rising land, perhaps an acre and a half in size. The ground slopes down and away from the house site turning into wooded marsh before, once again, gently climbing in elevation to a flat topped knoll that overlooks the surrounding land and the distant edge of the lake. It was here, that Olof Ohman, unwittingly, changed his life and a portion of America's history forever. In 1898, while working to clear his land of trees, Ohman uprooted what would be one of the greatest and most controversial artifacts ever associated with North American history, the Kensington Rune Stone.

Looking like a common grave marker, the Kensington Rune Stone is a two hundred pound slab of greywacke¹, carved on its flat, dressed² front and two sides with what is now known to be Viking rune script. For one hundred and seventeen years, scholars and the public alike, have argued over the genuineness of the stone's inscription. Supporters of its authenticity herald the stone as the single greatest historical discovery in America, while critics have condemned it as an elaborate hoax, perpetrated by none other than Olof Ohman himself.

It has taken the past century, and the cooperation of scholars from many different fields of study (linguistics, philology, geology, history, runology, dendrology and archaeology) to bring current the

¹ Greywacke or Graywacke is a variety of sandstone generally characterized by its hardness, dark color, and poorly sorted angular grains of quartz, feldspar, and small rock fragments or lithic fragments set in a compact, fine clay matrix.

² Dressed stone has been hand worked to a desired shape, with the faces to be shown smooth.

knowledge we possess today, of a North American past that may have never been known, had it not been for an immigrant farmer and the Kensington Rune Stone.

CHAPTER 2

THE RUNES

“At the center of the Norse cosmos stands the great tree Yggdrasil. Yggdrasil’s upper branches cradle Asgard, the home and fortress of the Æsir and goddesses, of whom Odin is the chief.

Yggdrasil grows out of the Well of Urd, a pool whose fathomless depths hold many of the most powerful forces and beings in the cosmos. Among these beings are the Norns, three sagacious maidens who exert more influence over the course of destiny than any other beings in the cosmos. One of the foremost techniques they use to shape destiny is carving runes into Yggdrasil’s trunk. The symbols then carry these intentions throughout the tree, affecting everything in the Nine Worlds. Odin watched the Norns from his seat in Asgard and envied their powers and their wisdom. And he bent his will toward the task of coming to know the runes.

Since the runes’ native home is in the Well of Urd with the Norns, and since the runes do not reveal themselves to any but those who prove themselves worthy of such fearful insights and abilities, Odin hung himself from a branch of Yggdrasil, pierced himself with his spear, and peered downward into the shadowy waters below. He forbade any of the other gods to grant him the slightest aid, not even a sip of water. And he stared downward, and stared downward, and called to the runes.

He survived in this state, teetering on the precipice that separates the living from the dead, for no less than nine days and nights. At the end of the ninth night, he at last perceived shapes in the depths: the runes! They had accepted his sacrifice and shown themselves to him, revealing to him not only their forms, but also the secrets that lie within them. Having fixed this knowledge in his formidable memory, Odin ended his ordeal with a scream of exultation.³ Having been initiated into the mysteries of the runes, Odin recounted”:

³Edda, The Poetic, The *Hávamál*. stanzas 138-163.

Then I was fertilized and became wise;
I truly grew and thrived.
From a word to a word I was led to a word,
From a work to a work I was led to a work.⁴

The physical origins of the Runes have long been debated among scholars of Indo-European linguistics. Some base similarities between Germanic Runes and characters in the Greek and Latin alphabets have given rise to theories that the latter must have origins in these letter systems. Until 1961, dating of the earliest known set of runes was placed ca. 423 CE, in connection with an inscription found on artifacts known as the Golden Horns of Gallehus.⁵ However, with the 1961 discovery of the Tărtăria Tablets^{6 7}, in Romania, by archaeologist Nicolae Vlăssă, proto-runic symbols on bone and wood, known as Vinča Script⁸, have been carbon dated to ca. 5500 BCE, effectively out dating even proto-Sumerian Cuneiform Script.⁹ Later research would demonstrate a separate and independent development of Rune Script from that of the Greek and Latin alphabets as opposed to a blending which was previously thought. It would also, however, indicate a connection of the Vinča

⁴Turville-Petre, E.O.G., *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, 42-50.

⁵The Golden Horns of Gallehus were two double layer sheets of gold fashioned into horns (their functions have never been determined). They were discovered in the village of Gallehus, Southern Jutland, Denmark in 1639 and 1734. The first and longer of the two horns contained six separate segments, of which five were plain and one which bore Elder Futhark rune script. This horn was discovered by a peasant girl on 20 July, 1639, who turned the horn over to King Christian IV of Denmark. In 1641, Danish antiquarian Olaus Wormius wrote a treatise on the horn which included a detailed sketch. The second horn (discovered by Eric Lassen on 21 April, 1734, and only a few meters from the discovery site of the first horn) had sustained damage and was shorter. It was later determined that both the horns had once been the same length. This horn was turned over to King Christian VI of Denmark who had both horns stored in The Royal Chamber of Art at Christiansborg. Archivist Richard Joachim Paulii would describe the shorter horn in his treatise the same year. 4 May, 1802, the horns were stolen and melted down by Neils Heidenreich, a goldsmith from Foulum. He was arrested in 1803 and after confessing to the theft, was imprisoned until 1840. He died four years later. In 1980, approximate copies were of the horns were created from the sketches made in the earlier treatises.

⁶The Tărtăria Tablets are three inscribed, unbaked clay tablets found along with twenty six clay and stone figurines and a shell bracelet. The artifacts were recovered from a Neolithic grave containing the broken and charred remains of an adult male. The inscriptions include pictographs similar to Sumerian cuneiform and markings that resemble an early form of rune writing.

⁷It is of interest to note that Jesuit scholars in the eighteenth century, had in their libraries, copies of Tărtărian inscriptions.

⁸Neolithic symbols found on artifacts from Southeastern Europe. Considered to be the oldest proto-writing in the world.

⁹Sumerian Cuneiform Script is a writing system, used in the fourth century BCE, which used wedge shaped marks made by a reed stylus and pictographs to create the symbols for the written language. The original was adapted for the use of early Semitic writing and was the basis for the Ugaritic and Old Persian alphabets. It became an extinct writing system by the second century CE, and was only rediscovered and deciphered in the nineteenth century CE.

Script with, “symbols passed down in Europe from the indigenous users of Franco-Cantabrian Art¹⁰ of the Upper Paleolithic”.¹¹ These symbols were then passed on and used in the Balkan-Danube Script and from there to the Vinča Culture which would be the basis for the Northern European Futhark Runes (see figure 1).¹²

Futhark Runes consist of a symbolic alphabet containing twenty four letters, eighteen consonants and six vowels that could be written or read from left to right and right to left. They are so called for the first set of six letters that represent the sounds of: F, U, TH, A, R, K. The twenty four letters are grouped into three sets of eight called *ættir* and each line called an *ætt*, with each rune holding a specific position within the *ættir* also associating that particular rune with two different numbers. For example, F, U, TH, A, R, K, G and W belong to the first *ættir*. H, N, I, J, AE, P and S belong to the second *ættir* and T, B, E, M, L, NG, D and O belong to the third. Therefore K would associate with six and one because it holds the sixth position in the first *ættir* while the letter M would associate with four and three because it holds the fourth position in the third *ættir*.¹³

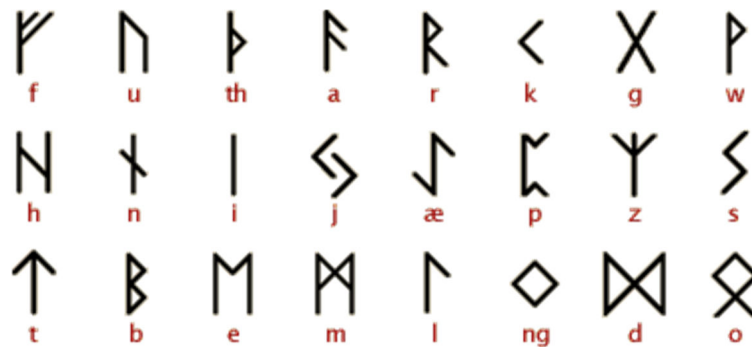


Figure 1: The Elder Futhark Alphabet

The two numbers associated with each rune can then be used in an alternate encoded (see figure 2)

¹⁰Franco-Cantabrian Art is found in a cluster of caves that extend across the southern half of France in the regions of the Ardeche Gorge and the Rhône-Alps.

¹¹Rudgley, Richard, *Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age...*pg 78

¹²Rudgley, Richard, *Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age.*

¹³Ibid

version of horizontal lines, touched by short, vertical lines on the left to represent the *ætt* and short, vertical lines touching the right to determine the rune's position in the *ætt*.¹⁴

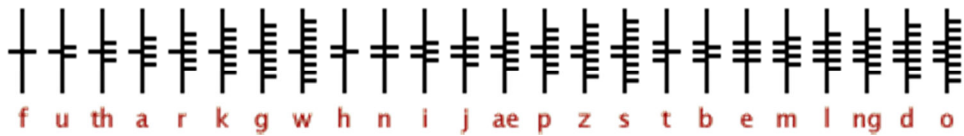


Figure 2: End Codes

It also served the dual purpose of numerical representation up to twenty four. These encoded marks have been found “mixed” with Arabic numerals as well as the written version of the number. Of the rune stones discovered in North America, the Kensington Rune Stone contains the encode marks for two, twenty two, fourteen and eight (which contains a punch mark) along with the Arabic symbol for ten and the word *en* written out for the numeral one.

This particular set of runes were called the Elder Futhark and would be primarily used before the ninth century CE. As more Germanic groups adopted the script, the system and sounds of the symbols would change over time.

The Goths would adopt, and adapt, the Elder Futhark (see figure 3) creating an early off shoot

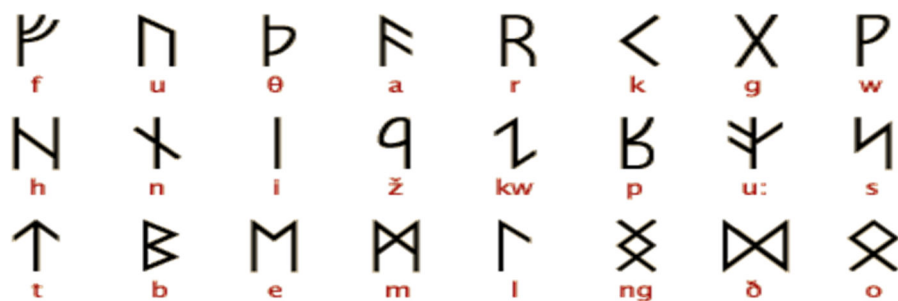


Figure 3: Gothic Adapted Elder Futhark Alphabet

¹⁴Ibid

that would be used until ca 500 CE, when, “it was replaced by the Greek based Gothic alphabet”.¹⁵

The fifth century would also see the use of Rune Script by the Anglo- Saxons in England. There would be further modifications of the system with nine additional letters bringing the count to thirty three symbols. The first six letters would change from the original Futhark to become Futhorc (see figure 4) effectively shifting to accommodate the phonological sounds of Old English. Where the letter K in the Elder Futhark would retain the K sound, it would be the C in Futhorc that was pronounced as K when placed before the mid or back vowels (a,o,u). However, it would retain the original C sound

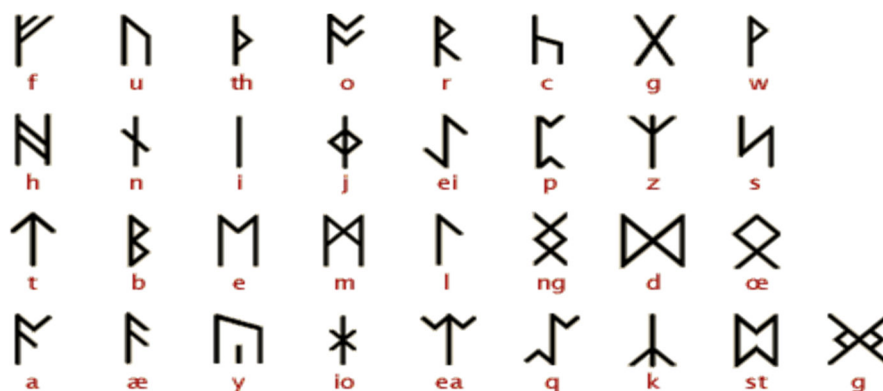


Figure 4: The Younger Futhorc

when placed before the front vowels (e,i). Therefore, a new symbol for the letter K, that would always carry the K sound, was needed. Likewise, a new symbol for G was needed, as the original was used to carry not only the G sound, but the sounds for Y and GH as well. Additionally, new vowel sounds were also created as were bind runes.¹⁶

The evolution of the Younger Futhark Script, in Scandinavia, began ca. ninth century CE. Many of the original twenty four Elder Futhark letters: G, W, Æ, P, Z, E, NG, D and O, would be dropped, leaving only sixteen letters to take on an overload of representative sounds. For example, TH would

¹⁵Markey, T. L. ed., *On Dating Phonological Change*. Michigan: Karoma Publishers, 1978.

¹⁶Bind runes are the combination of two or more runes, although rarely three or more, to create a glyph. They are extremely rare in the Viking Age Rune Script, but are common in proto-Norse and in medieval runic inscriptions. They were most often used as a signature piece for the carver's name on runestones. In addition, long stemmed runes were used in Scandinavian Rune Script, but not in Anglo-Saxon. The long stemmed rune consisted of an exaggerated main stave with several runes crossing it. They were often incorporated into art. Macleod, Mindy, *Ligatures in early Runic and Roman Inscriptions*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006, 194.

carry the P and Ö sounds, U would be U and O; K, /K/G and NG; I, I/E; T, T/D; B, B/P. A new

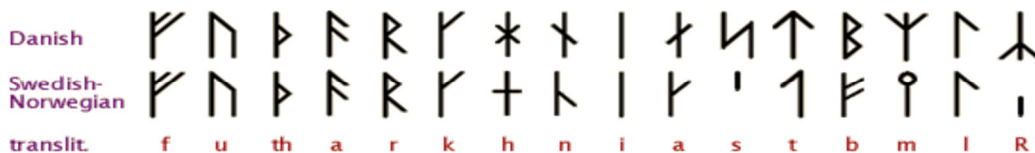


Figure 5: Final Runic Forms and Transliteration

letter, R, would be added. It was intended for the sound of ER in Old Nordic, but later became used for Y in the Scandinavian Runic Script.

Although the use of rune script began to decline in the late ninth and early tenth centuries in Northern Europe, it continued to be used into the early fifteen hundreds in Scandinavia. It would evolve once again in the areas of Gotland and East Götaland in the medieval period.¹⁷ This distinct variation of runic sound representation would not be recognized until the discovery of the diacritic¹⁸ R found at Ukna church in Småland, Sweden, 1935.¹⁹ According to the research of Lis Jacobsen and Erik Moltke, the first inscription in which the diacritic R was found dates to ca.1300. Three years later, 1938, a medieval excavation site, in Lund, Sweden, would yield another inscription, carved on bone, in which two dotted Rs were identified. This inscription would date to the Middle Danish period (ca.1200) and reads, “the eagle's oars are its feathers”.²⁰ The two Rs are found at the ends of the words *araR* (oars) and *fiapraR* (feathers).²¹ The diacritic R would be used until the late 1300's, in Gotland, when it would once again undergo an evolution of sound and representation. While most inscriptions

¹⁷Thompson, Claiborne, *Studies in Upplandic Runograpgy*. Austin: University Press, 1975.

¹⁸Diacritic indicates the presence of a punch mark or dot used in connection with a letter. The phonetic sound, as well as the intended usage of the letter, is determined by the area of the letter where the dot is found. For example, the dotted R found at Ukna church has the punch mark in the center of the open space in the upper portion of the letter. Other Rs have been found with the R punched in the center of the lower portion of the letter. They are thought to carry a palatal sound much like that of a soft trilled R as opposed to the inverted trident shape, illustrated in table 5, that was used interchangeably with the the phonetic sound of a regular R and the vowel Y depending on its placement in the word. Likewise, an undotted R would and could still be representative of the vowel. Several Rs have since been discovered that carry a double dot (:) in the main stave of the R. These have been interpreted as a possible over strike of the letter and a word divider for which the symbol is used. Jacobsen and Moltke, 1942:968.

¹⁹Jacobsen, Lis and Erik Moltke, *Danmark's Runeiskrifter, 3 Volumes*. Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1941-1942, 968.

²⁰Jacobsen, Lis and Erik Moltke, *Danmark's Runeinsdkrifter 3 Volumes*. Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1941-42, 968.

²¹Ibid, 968.

have either been destroyed or weathered beyond the point of being legible, a few containing the dotted Rs have remained intact and well preserved. Remarkable inscriptions have been recovered from Scandinavia, five of which are the Gotland Church inscriptions that were discovered by premier runologists as early as 1864. They were: Hemse Church (ca. 1150), Lye Church (1449), Gothem Church (1305), Guldrupe Church (1500) and Urgude from the Sproge Parish (1514). The significance of these inscriptions would long remain unnoticed. It would, in fact, be many decades later that more diacritic runes were discovered in Gotland.

An inscription discovered at the Norrlanda Church (ca.1300) contains the symbols for both the palatal sounding, un-dotted R and the interchangeable inverted trident R; both occur at the end of the same word. Due to their placement, “it has been theorized that the carver was uncertain as to which letter should be used. The fact that both were used seems to indicate that the two sounds were beginning to coalesce.”²² The Västergarn Church inscription (ca. 1400) revealed the first of the dotted Rs in which the punch mark was located in the center of the lower portion of the letter. It occurs at the end of the word and is therefore believed to carry the same palatal sound as the dotted R with the punch in the top center portion.²³ The 1960 Bergen Wharf (ca. 1150) excavation yielded a carved stake with the inscription “*Botlaifr owns.*”²⁴ The letter at the end of the person's name was the dotted R. Two final inscriptions would be discovered, both containing a double punch marked R. The first one found at Gammelgarn Church (ca. 1300) contains a double punch in the main stave of the R (:). It was initially thought to be an over strike of a premature word divider; however, recent forensic geological inspections have indicated the original strike to be that of the main stave its self and not that of the punch marks.²⁵ A double dotted R rune was discovered in 1923, on the Förtuna Fragment (ca, 1100). This R rune contained a punch mark in the center upper and lower portions of the letter. Because of the

²²Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone*. Lake Superior Agate Publishing, 2006, 53.

²³Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone*. Lake Superior Agate Publishers, 2006, 57.

²⁴*Ibid*, 57.

²⁵Thompson, Claiborne W., *Studies in Upplandic Runography*. Austin: University Press, 1975, 136.

placement of the punches, it has been left undetermined as whether this particular rune was indeed the over strike of a word divider.²⁶ Other examples of rare diacritic, and often inverted runes, are the dotted L (and crossed L), dotted U, dotted F and G. It would be argued, by twentieth century runologist Erik Moltke, that these runes were not legitimate, and that the use of the crossed L rune on the Kensington Rune Stone, along with other previously unrecognized runes found in inscriptions from North America, was a direct indication of a forgery. However rare, the crossed L can be found in both the *Codex Runicus*²⁷ (ca. 1319) and the *Mariaklagen*^{28 29} (ca. 1325) leaving one to justify Moltke's argument as invalid. It would be the twenty first century before the significance of these unusual runes would come to be recognized. The discovery of the crossed L on the Kensington Rune Stone would prove to be vital in the confirmation dating of the artifact to be 1362.³⁰

In conjuncture with runic script, the Pentimal System³¹ of numbering and dating was found to be commonly used; however, pentadic inscribed dates have often inaccurate due to damage or incorrect strikes.³² It would appear that the runic carvers were aware of this and took measures to insure the correct date was preserved in the inscription with the practice of spelling out the appropriate date in rune script. This, as well as the use of the Easter Table of Dionysius Exeguuus,³³ seems to have been a

²⁶Ibid, 136.

²⁷The *Codex Runicus* is a 202 page parchment document, written in rune script ca. 1319. It includes the oldest preserved Nordic provincial law pertaining to the Danish lands, a chronicle of monarchs and a description of the Danish-Swedish border. Society for Danish Language and Literature, 2007.

²⁸The *Mariaklagen* was a secondary medieval runic document containing royal laws for Jutland. (Scanian Law Encyclopedia).

²⁹Thorsen, P.G., *On the use of Runes for Non-Monumental Purposes*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal Press, 1877, 51.

³⁰Nielsen, Richard, *The Kensington Rune Stone and Evidence in Erikskrönikan, Mid- fourteenth century Diplomas and the Kingigtorsuaq Inscription*, Appendix D, Volume 2: D1-D45, 2002.

³¹The Pentimal System of numbering is represented by hash mark notations similar to Roman numerals 1-9 (I-VIII); however, unlike their Roman equivalents, the pentadic number is a vertical line with short, horizontal notches carved on the right hand side to represent the Arabic number.

³²Thompson, Claiborne W., *Studies in Upplandic Runography*. 136.

³³Dionysius Exeguuus's Easter Table was constructed in 525 CE from two previous and incomplete Easter Tables. Its greatest historical importance is twofold: from this table, Bede's Easter Cycle would ultimately be developed by means of which all future Julian calendar dates for Easter Sunday were set. This Table introduced in passing, the Christian Era which would be developed into a full system for dating historical events, two centuries later, and was commonly used by medieval monks to record important occurrences. Three items are need to plot a date on the Easter Table. These are the Sunday Letter, the Golden Year Number and the column number. Research indicates the use of this dating system, in conjuncture with runic inscriptions, on more than a dozen inscriptions in Gotland. Declercq, Georges, *Anno Domini: The*

complimentary method used especially by monks in Gotland.³⁴ For example, in accordance with the Easter Table, “all of the corresponding runes and columns of the Lye Church inscription are correct with the exception of one column in which the number XII which was carved incorrectly as XI. However, the date of 1449 was also carved out in runes as, *af guz byrp fiurtan huntrap ar ok ainu are minna en V tihi ar (from God's birth 1400 years and one less than five tens).*”³⁵ This example demonstrates the importance for the use of a complimentary dating method.³⁶ Two specific inscriptions, found at the Sanda Church, records dates using this method. The Sanda Church bell bears the runic script that when translated into English reads, “K is the Sunday letter and T is the Golden Year in the thirteenth column of the Easter Table.”³⁷ When plotted on the Table it gives the date as 1493. Likewise, a grave inscription at the church gives the symbol for the Sunday Letter as that belonging to the Danish H, the Golden Year as *Lahr* (the Scandinavian name for the L rune) in the seventh column of the Easter Table, giving the grave date as 1324.³⁸

Dialects, abbreviations and orthographic traits³⁹ must also be considered when runic inscriptions are translated. In Medieval times through the nineteenth century, an A dialect was spoken in much of Norway and Sweden. There were, however, regions including those of Gotland and East Götaland in the south, that spoke with an E dialect. The northern A speakers were in the practice of dropping the T consonants from definite articles in words ending in ET, thus leaving only the E in their writing and speech patterns. This practice did not extend into the E dialect regions, and the ET ending

Origins of the Christian era. Turnhout, 2000.

³⁴Nielsen, Richard, *The Translation of the Spirit Pond Runestones of Maine.* San Diego: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, 22, 1993, 158-217.

³⁵Nielsen, Richard, *The Arabic Numbering System on the Kensington Runestone.* San Diego: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, 1986, 15:47-61.

³⁶Nielsen Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence.* Lake Superior Agate Publishing, 2006, 63.

³⁷Wolter, Scott F., *The Geology of the Kensington Rune Stone: Relative Dating of the Inscription Using the Mineral Pyrite.* San Diego: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, 2005, 24: 99-103.

³⁸Ibid, 99-103.

³⁹As pertains to writing styles in rune script.

is still standard in southern Swedish today.⁴⁰ The Kensington Rune Stone was written using the E dialect in the word spellings and included words that ended with the definite article of ET, leaving one to presume a possible Gotland or East Götaland origin of the carver. During the High and Late Middle Ages, Cistercian monks began to expand into areas of Norway and Sweden. Cistercians were adept at Latin and often incorporated Latin abbreviations onto runic inscribed objects. Although common in manuscripts, abbreviation marks are not known to have been included in other inscribed objects. An abbreviated Latin inscription, carved around a runic ring, found at Tofta Church, Gotland is evidence of this practice.⁴¹ The runic inscription reads, “*The year of our Lord 1347 on May 13 the Sunday next after Jesus' ascension date Siglaiv and his son Nikulas were killed. May their souls rest in peace amen.*”⁴² The words of the outer Latin ring are written (and represented here) in capital letters with the remainder of the implied word following in lower case. This was done in order to show the abbreviated portions of the inscribed words. *ANNO: DOfini M: CCC: XLVII: In DIE: DOfinica: RroXImA: POST: ASCEnSIONEm: Domini: OCCISI: SunT: SIGLEW us: C Vm: FILIO SVO: NICHOLAO: QVOrum: AnmE: REQviEScAnT: IN: PACE: AMEN III IdusMAii.*⁴³ It is theorized that this “shorthand” was popular due to the difficulty of carving on the mediums of the day (i.e. stone, bone and wood) with a hammer and chisel as the writing instruments. Similarly, in North America, the Kensington and Heavener Inscriptions bear abbreviations of words, in the first instance, for a prayer that would combine both the Lord's Prayer and Ave Maria, and in the latter, the *GLOMEDAL* runes have been translated as the abbreviation for Glome's Valley.⁴⁴ The Kensington Inscription also contains orthographic traits in common with runic inscriptions not only in Gotland, but over much of Sweden as well. The insertion of medial letters and the use of double consonant letters once viewed as forgeries on

⁴⁰ Vendell, Herman, *Dialects of Nökker*. PhD dissertation. Finland: University of Helingfors, 1881.

⁴¹ Frances, James, *The Cistercians in Scandinavia*. Michigan: Cistercian Publication, Inc. 1992.

⁴² Collins, A. Jefferies, *The Bridgettine Breviary of Syon Abbey. Henry Bradshaw Society, Volumn XCVI*. England: Stanbrook Abbey Press, 1969.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 69.

⁴⁴ Thompsen, Lyle, *An Archaeologists Look at the Oklahoma Rune Stone ESOP 29: 2011 5-43*. Academia.edu, 02/20/2015.

the North American runic inscriptions are now being recognized as a Scandinavian linguistic practice. Medial H insertions in the last two words of the Kensington Rune Stone and the doubled consonants of R and L at several points of the inscription were considered amateur attempts of runic carving, to perpetrate a fraud, in early studies of the artifact. However, the same traits have recently been discovered in Gotland and Sweden on inscriptions containing double B's, N's, D's and F's.⁴⁵ Many are in the same inscriptions previously mentioned in this chapter (Västergarn Church and Guldrupe Church) along with several others including Hejde Church (dated 1506), Väte Church (ca. 1300) and Hejnum Church (ca. 1250). A *gh* digraph⁴⁶ evident in the Kensington Inscription's word *pagh* (day) coincides with inscriptions using the same *gh* digraph in Gotland at the Othem and Lärbro Church sites. There are reports of several Norwegian examples with the same digraphic word forms.⁴⁷

From 1967 through the 1980's, five more North American rune stones would be discovered: the Shawnee, Heavener and Poteau Rune Stones in Oklahoma, the Spirit Pond Rune Stones in Maine and the Narragansett Bay Rune Stone in Rhode Island. Four of these stones (Heavener, Shawnee, Spirit Pond and Narragansett Bay), along with the Kensington stone, features what is perhaps the most interesting and controversial variation in runic script found to date. The “hooked X” and the “double dotted hooked X” would once again leave modern scholars to wonder about the authenticity of symbolic words etched in stone.

⁴⁵Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 75-77.

⁴⁶A digraph is a pair of characters used to write one phoneme (distinct sound) or a sequence of phonemes that do not correspond to the value of the two characters combined. Many Latin based languages use the *gh* digraph (the voiceless velar fricative or consonantal sound) as in the Scottish word *loch*. Webster's Dictionary, 2010.

⁴⁷Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 78.

CHAPTER 3

UNKNOWN SYMBOLS AND FRAUD

Finding rune stones and runic inscriptions, in Europe, is common finding them in North America is phenomenal. When one compounds the discovery of rune script in North American with the fact that the majority of the inscriptions contain a series of “unique” characters, unrecognized by scholars in the field, the discovery becomes incredulous and the terms fake or fraud attach to the artifact. Such has been the case of the Kensington Rune Stone, the first of the rune inscribed stones found in the United States portion of the North America.

The Kesington Rune Stone Inscription as translated in 2004:

First Line: 8 Götalanders and 22 Norwegians on

Second Line: reclaiming land journey

Third Line: far from the west of Vinland we

Fourth Line: had camp by 2 shelters one

Fifth Line: day's journey from this stone

Sixth Line: we were fishing one day after

Seventh Line: we came home we found 10 men red

Eighth Line: from blood and death Ave Maria

Ninth Line: save from evil

Tenth Line: there are 10 men by the sea to look

Eleventh Line: after our ships 14 day's journey

Twelfth Line: from this island year 1362 ⁴⁸

There are two symbols (X and X̄) in runic script which represent the letters A and Æ.⁴⁹ The use

⁴⁸Nielson, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 218-19.

of the X symbols to represent these sounds are well documented in European runic inscriptions. The X̥ has been recorded no less than twenty five times in the *Vestgøtalag* manuscript (ca. 1280).⁵⁰ ⁵¹The same is found on the Kensington stone with the exception of a “hook” being located on the upper right, inside branch of the X's.

It would be these particular variations that lead Professor G.T. Flom of the University of Illinois, in 1899, to declare the Kensington Rune Stone a modern hoax. Flom based this assumption on his comparison of the X symbols to that of the Dalecarlian Alphabet⁵² and argued that their inscriber must be a, “prankster and a modern immigrant from Dalarna”.⁵³ However, when compared side by side with the Dalecarlian and other alphabets from the Middle Ages, it is easily discerned that the Kensington symbols were not taken from the them. Likewise, many orthographic traits common in Dalecarlian, such as the lack of an aspirated H, were not found in the word forms of the Kensington Stone.⁵⁴ To the contrary, the Kensington Inscription contains many aspirated H words: *hem, har, hade, havet* (this word also contains the definite article ET discussed in the previous chapter)⁵⁵. The words *dagh, öh* and *ahr* were found, with each containing the *gh* digraph discussed previously.⁵⁶ This particular trait is also uncommon in the Dalecarlian Alphabet. Linguistically, the Kensington Stone has little to no similarity with the Dalecarlian Alphabet or its runic writing style. Ironically, had the Kensington Inscription been proven to compare with the Dalecarlian Alphabet, it would have been definitive validation of a pre- 1600's date; however, it would have also given validation to a modern

⁴⁹ Vendell, Herman, *Dialects of Nökker*. PhD dissertation. Finland: University of Helsingfors, 1881.

⁵⁰Holand, Hjalmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Ontario: General Publishing Company, 1940, 171.

⁵¹The *Vestgøtalag* is a book of Teutonic mythology, including the line of races in the Middle Ages.

⁵²The Dalecarlian Alphabet was a late version of runic inscription used in the Swedish province of Dalarna until the twentieth century. They were derived from medieval runes and combined with Latin letters.

⁵³Flom, G.T., *The Kensington Rune Stone, An Address*. 1899, 24-30.

⁵⁴Vendell, Herman, *Dialects of Nökker*. PhD dissertation. Finland: University of Helsingfors, 1881.

⁵⁵Ibid

⁵⁶Holand, Hjalmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Ontario: General Publishing Company, 1940, 172.

signature.⁵⁷

In 1910, Flom claimed Old Swedish, a language he asserted was a “well known language” at the time of the Kensington Inscription, should have been found in the linguistics of the Kensington Stone.⁵⁸ Flom compiled a list of words contained therein, declared them to be not of Old Swedish and used them as a basis for a secondary claim of fraud. It has since been proven that Old Swedish was indeed used in portions of the Kensington Inscription; however, despite Flom's claims, Old Swedish was not and could not have been well known in 1910 and most assuredly would not have been widely known or accessible to persons outside of the scholarly realm in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁹ It would be the early and latter part of the twentieth century before an Old Swedish dictionary (1918) and its supplements (1975) would be completed. This is evidenced in the publication of thousands of research papers on Old Swedish since that time.⁶⁰ This fact alone would, through modern research, negate Flom's argument for fraud.

Hand crafted copies (the Hedberg⁶¹ Copy and the Siverts⁶² Copy) of the Kensington Inscription were also sent within the year 1899 to Professor George Curme⁶³ at the University of Illinois, Professor Olaus Breda⁶⁴ at the University of Minnesota and to Professor Oluf Rygh⁶⁵ in Oslo, Norway. Copies

⁵⁷Nielsen, Richard, *Theories on the Hooked X presented in ESOP Vol. 26*, Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, Vol. 27. 2009, 111-127.

⁵⁸Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 10.

⁵⁹Ibid, 6.

⁶⁰Ibid, 6-8.

⁶¹J.P. Hedberg was a business man and president of the village of Kensington, Minnesota at the time the rune stone was discovered. Olof Ohman drafted a copy of the runic inscription and gave it to Hedberg which he later sent to the University of Illinois.

⁶²Samuel Siverts was a banker in the Kensington Township at the time of the stone's discovery. Being a noted calligrapher, Siverts made a copy of the inscription that was sent to Professor Breda. Siverts and three other men would eventually move the stone from the Ohman's home to the bank in Kensington.

⁶³George Curme was an American grammarian and philologist best known for his works, *Grammar of the German Language* and *A Grammar of the English Language*.

⁶⁴Olaus Breda was born in Norway, but in 1879, came he to America where he taught Latin, Greek, History, Norwegian and German before returning to Europe in 1882. Returning again in 1884, he secured a professorship at the University of Minnesota where he taught Latin and the Scandinavian languages and literature.

⁶⁵Oluf Rygh was a noted Norwegian archaeologist, philologist and historian. He was credited as being one of the founders of professional archaeology in Norway.

would later be sent to other leading institutes of the Northwest.⁶⁶ Upon Curme's inspection of the transcribed inscription, an article was posted in *The Chicago Tribune*, February 28, 1899 concerning the discovery of the stone, Professor Curme's findings and actions concerning the stone and included his translation of the inscription. It reads as follows:

“Convinced that they [the Ohmans]⁶⁷ had found a relic of some kind, but not realizing the importance of it, the farmer [Ohman] took it to his minister, who advised to him to acquaint the authorities of the Northwestern University. The letter [copy of the inscription] was received several weeks ago at the University, and turned over to Professor Hatfield. Professor Hatfield being unable to make anything of it sent it to Professor Curme, who carried the letter about in his pocket for several weeks before he was able to make anything of it. The runic characters upon the tracing the farmer had made of them were somewhat inaccurate and difficult to decipher. After a few days of study, light began to break upon Professor Curme's mind of the value of the information that accidentally come to him, and he realized that the tablet [stone] ought to come in to the possession of the University. Curme's first translation: A company of Norsemen are out on expedition of discovery from the Vinland of the west. We had camp along with two boats one day's journey from this stone. We go out daily and fish. One day after we came home we found a man red with blood and dead. Ave (goodbye). Rescue from fire. Has one ever had a comrade such as we have had. We are on our way to look after our ship fourteen day's journey from this island.”

Although Professor Curme was able to decipher portions of the inscription, it is clearly evidenced that he was not familiar with several of the runic symbols (the hooked and dotted X's along with the double consonants and crossed L) nor any of the orthographic or digraphic traits of Gotlandic runic script; neither was he versed in the Pentimal System of numbering, nor was he able to recognize

⁶⁶Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 6-7.

⁶⁷Olof Ohman was the Swedish immigrant farmer who discovered the Kensington Stone under the roots of a tree while clearing land on his Minnesota farm in 1898.

the Arabic symbol for the number ten.⁶⁸ It

The Siverts Copy was sent to Professor Olaus Breda, January, 1899 who attempted a translation of the inscription. His version appeared in *Ariel*, a weekly publication at the University of Minnesota on January 14, 1899, and reads as follows:

“Swedes and Norwegians on a journey of discovery from Vinland of west- we camped?? One day's journey north from this stone- we finished one day-after we came home we found men red with blood and dead-save from evil, Have men at the ocean to look after our ships. ? Day's journey from this island,?year? ”⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, Breda would forward a copy to Norwegian rune expert, Oluf Rygh, who would render his own translation of the inscription, followed by his comments pertaining to the Kensington Rune Stone, in an article published in the *Mogenblodet* (The Morning News) in Oslo, Norway on March 12, 1899. His translation and comments are as follows:

“Goths and 22 Norwegians on a discovery journey from Vinland of west. We had camp 2 sleds one day's march North from this stone. We were to fish one day. After we came home found 5 men red from blood and dead. AVM Save from ???illge? Have 5 men by the sea to look after our ships 14 days journey from this island. Year 1462.

The manufacturer reveals himself to be a Swedish-American who has already become Americanized. Various English words (and, with) have slipped in here or there. He has used several unusual runic symbols; where he has got these from is uncertain, but in any case they are evidence not for not against the genuineness of the inscription. Perhaps he has made up some of the symbols himself. In some cases he has not used the same symbol for two sounds (such as A and Ä or O and Å); a few times, he has used the wrong symbol carelessly.”

There was no demonstrated evidence, either in their translations or reports, that these experts had any knowledge of diverse orthographic/digraphic traits found in runic script, in particularly

⁶⁸Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, 9.

⁶⁹Blegen, Theodore C., *The Kensington Rune Stone: New Light on an Old Riddle*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1968, 20.

Gotlandic runes, for if they had, they would have, “surely recognized that H inserts abound in both initial and medial positions, as did the connective words of (and & with) in Gotland's runic scripts.”⁷⁰ Breda demonstrated no working knowledge of the Pentimal Numbering System and Rygh, only tentative knowledge, as he was able to decipher 2, 22 and 14; however, he misread the year date as 1462 instead of 1362 and was unable to translate the pentadic 8.⁷¹ It would also appear that he had not considered, or perhaps did not know of, the use of the Easter Table for cross dating. The last two sentences in his comments clearly indicates no knowledge or recognition of the either the hooked X⁷² or the double dotted hooked X. Likewise, both were unable to recognize the Arabic 10.⁷³

From 1910 through 2004, ten linguistic experts would review copies of the Kensington Inscription and the stone itself; all would quickly declare it a hoax. For reasons that are still unclear, each person seemed to take the position of their predecessor in declaring that the language and use of runes on the Kensington Stone was a definitive proof of fraud. Had any of them taken up basic research, more than three hundred and sixty years of lost history could have been spared. For each word or symbol argued against, there was adequate evidence of their validity.

The true crux of the continued claims of a hoax concerned several words in the Kensington Inscription. *Opdhagelse*, the longest word on the stone, would be one of the first words targeted as a fraudulent signature.⁷⁴ In 1909, Helge Gjessing, a student of history, studying under Professor Magnus Olson⁷⁵ in Oslo, Norway, argued that the (P) rune in *opdhagelse* represented D making it a modern Swedish word meaning “a discovery”.⁷⁶ This came as an argument against Hjalmar Holand's 1908 assertion that the word *opdhagelse* was Old Swedish and that its use in the Kensington Inscription

⁷⁰Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Kensington Rune Stone: Compelling New Evidence*. 11.

⁷¹Ibid, 10.

⁷²Hooked X is a term coined by forensic geologist Scott Wolter for the represented A (X) rune with the hooked variant on the upper right bar.

⁷³Ibid, 10-11.

⁷⁴Holand, Hjalmar R., *The Norwegian Settlement's History*. Translation by the author. Wisconsin: privately printed. 1908.

⁷⁵Magnus Olson was a Norwegian linguist and professor of Norse philology at the University of Oslo from 1908-1948.

⁷⁶Gjessing, Helge, *Runensten Fra Kensington*. Translation in Minnesota Historical Archives. Iowa. 1909, 5:113-126.

represented a declaration of land claim by the carver. Had Gjessing consulted the 1906 section of the Old Swedish Dictionary, he would have discovered *optaglese* was equivalent to *uptakilse* with the P rune representing *T or Th* which changed the meaning to “a taking up or to take possession of”.⁷⁷ He could have also discovered, through previously documented research, the Gotlandic transitional digraphic sounds of G being represented by K and the orthographic trait of the medial H insert previously discussed in chapter one.

Had this single, complex word been linguistically compared to the current evidence available at the time, the whole scholarly voice concerning the Kensington Stone may have shifted. No longer would the carver of the inscription and his companions have been out scouting and observing a strange land, they would have been on a mission of purpose, a mission to claim what they already knew was there. However, Professor Olson presumed Gjessing to be correct and never pursued the research any further.⁷⁸

Continuing his analysis of the runic language of the Kensington Stone, Gjessing maintained that several English words were found in the inscription. *Fram* (from), *Väster* (west) and *Ded* (dead) were presented as points of fraud; however, basic research would have, once again, corrected this assumption. The word *from*, including its variant spellings of *fraam* and *frä*, were indeed Swedish dialects coming from the colonies of the Estonian Islands.⁷⁹ This evidence had been published as a dissertation in 1881, by Herman Vendell and again in 1890, by famed Swedish linguist, Alex Kock.⁸⁰ Likewise, *fram* occurs as a preposition in the 1904 Old Swedish Grammar page 248. *Väster* and its variation *wäst*, meaning west, occurs in the 1908 section of the Old Swedish Grammar. Gjessing also presented *ded* to be an English interjection into the inscription. *Ded* was not only a Scandinavian word

⁷⁷Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter., 134.

⁷⁸Ibid, 134.

⁷⁹Vendell, Herman, *Dialect of Nökker in Estonia: PhD dissertation*. Finland: University of Helsingfors, 1881.

⁸⁰Kock, Alex, *Some Contributions to Old Norse Grammar*. Archive of Nordic Philology. 1890, 6:31-34.

used in the Middle Ages, but was on several documents available to Gjessing and the others, in 1909.⁸¹ One of the more prominent documents would have been Queen Margethe's⁸² letter, sent from Oslo in the Norwegian Diploma IV 586, in 1390.⁸³ In Medieval Scandinavia, *ded* was used as both an adjective (dead) and a noun (death) depending on its placement when written.⁸⁴ Therefore, it was used correctly, for the year 1362, as a noun (death) on the Kensington Stone.⁸⁵

Perhaps one of the most puzzling accusations of fraud came from Rasmus B. Anderson⁸⁶ in an article published in *Amerika* February 11, 1910, called “*The Kensington Rune Stone Fake*”. In the article Anderson gave a list of reasons why he believed the Kensington Stone was fraudulent. First, Anderson claimed the access route that was indicated in the inscription was impossible in 1362. He then claimed the inscription had the look of a “just carved gravestone”, with the word *opdaglese* being modern. Like Gjessing, he argues that *from* was never used in Scandinavia, and that the *gh* digraph and medial H inserts found in the words *Vinlanth* (Vineland), *dagh* (day) and *ahr* (year) were never used in Old Swedish. Lastly he claimed that runes were not used in 1362, as the Runic Age had long been over.

According to research, none of Anderson's claims were valid, then or now. The route from Minnesota to Quebec, that he declared to be impossible to traverse, was the very same that was traveled by the explorer Radisson⁸⁷, in a thirty day span, in the 1600's. This was accomplished with an accompaniment of two hundred Algonquin Indians and fully loaded canoes. Conditions found in 1362 would have been much the same in the 1600's as Radisson, presumably, was the first white man to set foot in the area since the 1362 date.⁸⁸

⁸¹Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, 135.

⁸²Queen Margethe I, was Queen of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and founder of the Kalmar Union which united Scandinavia for over a century.

⁸³Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, 135.

⁸⁴Vendell, Herman, *Dialects of Nökker*. PhD dissertation. Finland: University of Helingsfors, 1881.

⁸⁵Thompson, Claiborne, *Studies in Upplandic Runograpgy*. Austin: University Press, 1975.

⁸⁶Rasmus B. Anderson was an American author, professor and diplomat. He was well known as an advocate of the Viking discovery of North America and was the originator of Leif Erikson Day. He was the founding head of Scandinavian studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and he authored a book called *America Not Discovered by Columbus*.

⁸⁷Pierre Esprit Radisson was a French explorer and fur trader

⁸⁸Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, 138.

When Olof Ohman discovered the Kensington Stone, he unwittingly scratched the mud from the larger face area giving it a fresh appearance; however, the smaller side portion of the stone, which bore the 1362 date, was untouched and appeared to be very old, a fact Anderson failed to mention. The words *opdhagelse and from* were discussed previously and shown to be of Old Swedish use and not of a modern Norwegian or English lexicon. This evidence was available to scholars in 1910.

As discussed in chapter one, the *gh* digraph as well as the medial H inserts were common in Gotlandic inscriptions and were also found in Swedish Laws and diplomas of the 1300's. Likewise, as previously discussed in chapter one, the Runic Age of Gotland was far from over in the 1300's, a point that should have been well known by Anderson since it was “reported by Nils Sjöberg in 1822 and 1824”.⁸⁹

With Anderson being perhaps the most widely noted proponent of the Norse presence in Pre-Columbian North America, the claims he levies against the authenticity of the Kensington Rune Stone leaves one wondering why he did this.

One of the most recent claims of fraud against the Kensington Stone was published in June, 2005, by Norwegian linguist, Tryggve Sköld. Sköld was credited with discovering the Larson Rune Rows in Sweden, 2004.⁹⁰ This new discovery was expected to be the death knell for any proof or validation of medieval origins of the Kensington Stone. In an attempted comparison of the Larrison Rune Rows with the Kensington Inscription, Tryggve, like his predecessors, reveals himself to be unfamiliar with readily available source material concerning thirteenth century Gotlandic orthographic and digraphic traits. Tryggve concluded that the Kensington Inscription was a modern dialect from the 1700's or later. He based his findings on the use of A and Æ in the forms of the hooked X and double

⁸⁹Ibid, 139.

⁹⁰The Larrison Rune Rows were two pieces of parchment with an unusual set of runes written by Emil and Edmund Larrison in 1883 and 1885. The runes have been compared to many Medieval runic inscriptions; however, they seem to bare little resemblance to basic runes used centuries before. When first discovered in 2004, the Larrison Runes were used in comparison to those on the Kensington Rune Stone in an attempt to negate the validity of the artifact. It has sense been the contention of scholars that most of the runes in the Larrison documents were written using a secret code from the 1800's often found in conjunction with Swedish tradesmen leaving cryptic messages for each other.

dotted hooked X, and with the use of double dotted U and O symbols; the hooked X was found in both the Larrson Runes and on the Kensington Stone. These symbols were found in words he claimed were not recorded in Old Swedish, and did not exist in any form of Old Swedish or modern Norwegian.⁹¹ With the exception of the hook variant on the X's, each word Sköld listed could have been found in at least three sources: the Old Swedish Dictionary, the Old Swedish Grammar and Old Swedish diplomas dating from 1340-1375.⁹² Sköld also indicated that the hooked X's could not be found in any other runic use anywhere in the world, other than the Kensington Inscription or his own discovery of the Larrson Rune Rows, and that the two were, in some way, exclusively connected.⁹³ He was wrong.

⁹¹Ibid, 136-37.

⁹²Ibid, 137.

⁹³Sköld, Tryggve, *Edward Larrson's Alphabet and that of the Kensington Rune Stone*. DAUM Winter Issue, 2205.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE OF THE HOOKED X

“Signs and symbols rule the world, not rules or laws- Confucius

We are symbols and inhabit symbols”- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The present rage for infallibly fixing everything all at once, is highly to be deprecated. Future finds and the progress of Runish studies will doubtless modify some things here given (Handbook of the Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England). We shall know more a hundred years hence, than we do now.”--- *George Stephens, Cheapinghaven, Denmark, February 15, 1884*

There has been great controversy surrounding the mystery of the hooked X symbols first observed on the Kensington Rune Stone. Some scholars, who have researched its inscription, claim that the symbology behind the hooked X is related to the Knights Templar and a Grail Code⁹⁴ linking Jesus and Mary Magdalene with a child. Others claim it to be a modern symbol (late 1800's to early 1900's) used for secret coding, and that it was part of an elaborate hoax, conceived in the mind of a farmer who somehow had knowledge of this made up series of runes. One hundred and seventeen years later, one is still left to puzzle over why or how. Whatever its original intended use or representation in the Scandinavian Runic Alphabet, it is now evident that the use of the hooked X runes on the Kensington Stone and in the Larrson Rune Rows were not isolated incidents. Of the known and established Rune Stones discovered in North American, three contain the controversial hooked X, and recent discoveries in Scotland (2014) have revealed more of the mysterious X's carved into Medieval churches. However, other stone with runic script have been found scattered throughout the southern portions of the United

⁹⁴The Holy Grail was thought to be the cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper. However, Pop Culture books and films, such as Dan Brown's DaVinci Code, has lead some followers to believe the Grail to be Mary Magdalene, who after marrying Jesus, became pregnant with his child. The Grail Code is said to be the link to finding the holy bloodline of Christ.

States as well.

Twenty five years after the discovery of the Kensington Rune Stone in Solem Township near the Kensington Settlement in Minnesota, another stone, carved with runic symbols, was found. In the mountainous area of Heavener, which is located on the eastern border of Le Flore County, Oklahoma, stands the Heavener Stone. It is a huge vertical twelve foot high and sixteen inches thick slab of stone, situated in a hidden ravine under protective, overhanging cliffs. It contains eight of the Elder Futhark Runes.

Oral tradition tells that the stone was first discovered in 1830, by a Choctaw hunting party.⁹⁵ In the 1870's, Wilson King and two other bear hunters were said to be the first European men to tell stories of seeing the strange stone.⁹⁶ The first written record of European discovery was in 1898 (the same year the Kensington Stone was discovered and just one of the few things both stones have in common), by Luther Capps, who was a part of the logging industry that had helped establish the town of Heavener in 1894.⁹⁷

Carl Kemmerer would find the stone again in 1913, but it would be ten years later that he would send a carefully crafted copy of the inscription to the Smithsonian Institute for a studied analysis. Their brief conclusion was consistent with scholarly conjecture being given at the time concerning the Kensington Stone; “the symbols are, for the most part, runic. However, whoever made them had a Scandinavian grammar as a guide, but misused at least two unrecognized characters”.⁹⁸ Mr. Kemmerer's interest in the stone did not flag. He made several more trips into the mountains to view the inscription and kept up inquiries in the town as to who might have carved it. In 1928, he introduced a young Gloria Stewart (Farley)⁹⁹ to the mysterious stone.

⁹⁵Nielsen, Richard, *The Rune Stones of Oklahoma*. San Diego: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, Volume 16, 1987, 1.

⁹⁶Ibid, 1.

⁹⁷Ibid, 1.

⁹⁸Ibid, 2.

⁹⁹ For over fifty years Gloria Farley of Heavener, Oklahoma researched, in the field and in the library, evidence of pre-

Gloria Farley would spend thirty three years researching the Heavener Stone and all possible evidence surrounding its creation. Through extensive interviews with people still alive and familiar with the earlier discoveries of the Heavener Stone, she learned that there had been several more inscriptions found in the area; however, all but two had been destroyed by treasure hunters in the earlier part of the century. No one knew what they were, nor had they thought there to be any importance in making copies of them. Of the remaining stones, one had three symbols left intact in a triangle formation, and the other had only two, a runic R and a possible bind rune.¹⁰⁰

In 1959, Dr. Richard Nielsen¹⁰¹, in the company of a Viking historian, a geologist and members of the Oklahoma State Historical Society, would, after intense study and consultation with experts in the fields of: ancient history, runology, geology, philology, archaeology and anthropology, determine that the Heavener Inscription could not possibly have been carved by any peoples other than the Vikings who would have reached the area by ascending the Mississippi River.¹⁰²

Former U.S. Army Cryptographer, Alf Monge, offered a translation of the inscription in 1967. Although Monge was born in Norway and knew some basic uses of the Easter Table dating, he had little in the way of knowledge concerning alternate readings of rune placement, such as the philology of Gotlandic runic inscriptions; therefore, he claimed not to be able to make sense of the orthography and that the inscription was jumbled gibberish. He did claim to be able to offer a date of November 11, 1012, according to his understanding of the Easter Table.¹⁰³

Even so, and like the Kensington Stone, suppositions of a modern hoax continued to swirl

Columbian visitors to North America. This research has indicated the possible presence of people from such places as Scandinavia, Egypt, Iberia, and Libya in ancient times into the central portion of the United States. While much of this evidence consists of epigraphy (writing) also included are hard artifacts. She gained many honors as a result of her work. She was named a Fellow of the Epigraphic Society, a Fellow of the Explorers Club, and a charter member of the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame. Gloria Farley died in March, 2006. Before her death, she made arrangements that her research would continue through a non-profit organization, Gloria Farley Publications Incorporated.

¹⁰⁰Nielsen, *The Rune Stones of Oklahoma*. 2.

¹⁰¹Dr Richard Nielsen obtained his doctorate at the University of Denmark, but resides in California. He has done extensive and positive research on the North American Rune Stones and has been able to translate the inscriptions using all available Scandinavian literature to do so.

¹⁰²Nielsen, *The Rune Stones of Oklahoma*. 3.

¹⁰³Ibid, 2.

around the Heavener Stone. Many of the same scholars in America and Scandinavia that had investigated the Kensington Stone would adhere to their claims of fraud concerning the Heavener Stone. However, further authentication of the Heavener Stone would come on September 21, 1967 and again in August, 1969.

In the small city of Poteau, which is located less than ten miles (on the opposite mountain) from the site of the Heavener Rune Stone discovery; two twelve year old school boys unearthed a fifteen inch long stone containing seven characters in a straight line. Each symbol was between one and one half to two inches in height with four of the runes appearing to be identical to those on the Heavener Stone and three that seemed to be variants of them.

The stone was discovered on a hill that had been recently bulldozed, less than five feet from the crest. The children (Mike Griffeth and Henry McBride) had been out searching for arrow heads when they came across the stone. One of the boys (McBride), who was part Choctaw, saw the symbols carved on the stone. Having heard the oral accounts of the Choctaw discovery from his family and having seen the Heavener Stone, the child reportedly recognized the runic script as that similar to the Heavener Inscription. He and his friend began trying to remove the piece of stone that bore the runes only to discover it was attached to a much larger ledge under the dirt. Determined to lose their prize and present it to their teacher (Margaret Blake), the boys return the next day with a crow bar and a sledge hammer. It would take two days to for them to remove the piece of stone.¹⁰⁴

Gloria Farley was contacted on September 21, 1967, by the Superintendent of Poteau Schools shortly after the children presented the stone fragment to Ms. Blake. By 5 P.M. that afternoon, Farley, Blake and the two boys returned to the discovery site. Standing on the hill top, Farley would look out across the valley and realize that the Heavener Stone location, as well as the two “remnant stone's”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 2.

locations, were all located within her line of sight.¹⁰⁵ Farley, with the assistance of State Senator Joe Johnson would plot the discovery of the four stones on a map and realize that they ran in a straight line with each other and that they were less than forty miles south of the Arkansas River.¹⁰⁶

In December of that same year, the two boys brought another fragment to their teacher. This one had been found at the bottom of the hill where they had removed the original stone. An X was inscribed on the fragment and when placed next to the larger piece, matched perfectly in color, texture and line up of the other seven runes.¹⁰⁷ Geologist Paul Richardson examined both pieces of stone and declared them to be of the same stone and inscription.¹⁰⁸ Alf Monge would, once again, offer his translation of the date using his knowledge of the Easter Table. He reported it to be November 11, 1017, just five years to the day later than the Heavener Inscription.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, in August of 1969, as the Poteau Discoveries were unfolding one hundred and sixty one miles away, a man (Jim Estep) and two young boys (Mikel Lindsay and David Sersen) were out on a snake hunt in Shawnee, Oklahoma. They were following a wooded path that meandered alongside a small tributary of the North Canadian River. The area was flat with few stones and no rocky ledges or outcrops so when they came across a stone buried just under the dirt and a few weeds, they dislodge it and flipped it over.¹¹⁰ However, instead of the hoped for snake, they found five strange symbols carved on the underside. The stone was left in place and after their hunt ended, Estep recounted the story to his mother in law (Vondell Lindsay), who asked him to retrieve the stone. It measured fourteen and a half inches long, eleven and a half inches wide and two inches thick. The symbols were from one and a half to three inches in height with the first three letters running together and the last two larger than the rest. All together the inscription spanned eight inches of the stone's surface. She found the symbols curious,

¹⁰⁵Farley, Gloria, *In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America*. Georgia: Isac Press, 1991, 98.

¹⁰⁶Ibid, 98.

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 99.

¹⁰⁸Ibid, 101.

¹⁰⁹Ibid, 101.

¹¹⁰Ibid, 103.

but unimportant.

Estep's mother (Mrs. Calvin Estep) would take the stone to the Museum of the Great Plains located in Lawton, Oklahoma, in October, 1969. The Museum was uninterested and sent her away with the stone. In 1970, while reading an article written by O. G. Landsverk in *Oklahoma Today* that discussed the other Oklahoma Rune Stones, and Alf Monge's dating methods, Mrs. Estep recognized the symbols shown to be almost identical to the ones on her son's stone. She immediately gained contact with Landsverk who contacted Monge. From a hand crafted copy sent by Mrs. Estep, Monge translated the runes, using the Elder Futhark, into the Latin letters of MEDOK and gave a date as November, 24, 1024 by the Easter Table.¹¹¹ Monge was, again, unable to decipher the Gotlandic orthography of the runes.

Interest and speculation of the Oklahoma Stones continued for many years. Several theories and translations were attempted, all with varying and vague outcomes. In 1986, Dr. Richard Nielsen would, after privately studying the Oklahoma Rune Stones, as a comparison with Ancient Scandinavian inscriptions, determine the translations and dating of the stones accepted by Scandinavian runic experts today. Dr. Nielsen transliterated the Heavener Stone as GLOMEDAL.¹¹² *Glome* being an ancient Scandinavian name and *dal*, meaning valley (Glome's Valley). This has lead research to indicate that the markers were possible a land claim. As discussed in chapter one, it was common orthographic practice to use a “shorthand” method in Scandinavian runic carving as was evidenced here. The same was found on the Poteau Stone. Dr. Nielsen transliterated these runes as GLOIALLW-(U). After extensive research of Scandinavian literature, Dr. Nielsen found that *Gloi* was a commonly used “nickname” for *Glome* and the word transfer of ALLW or ALLU meant magic or protection, a word most often used in relationship to a death.¹¹³ Therefore, Dr. Nielsen asserts that the Poteau Stone was a

¹¹¹ Landsverk, O.G., *The Rune Stones and the Conditions in which They Were Found*. Glendale: Church Press, 1971.

¹¹²Nielsen, *The Rune Stones of Oklahoma*. 131.

¹¹³Ibid, 131.

memorial to the same *Glome* connected to the Heavener Inscription.¹¹⁴ Based on the dating of the style of runic use on the Heavener and Poteau Stones, Dr. Nielsen stated that the stones were likely carved as boundary markers between 600 and 900 C.E., most probably ca. 800-850 C.E.^{115 116} Dr. Nielsen would publish an article in the Epigraphical Society Occasional Publication Papers volume 27, 2009, pg. 89, entitled, *Runic Inscriptions in North America*. In the article, Dr. Nielsen reveals the very possible route taken by the Norse to reach Oklahoma: “By the 9th century the navigational skills of the Vikings would have allowed them to reach the Straits of Florida via the southern coastal currents (at an average speed of 2 knots/hr. from Baffin Island to the Florida Straits at the Keys). Ingress via the Mississippi River and the Arkansas River basin would have given them easy access to eastern Oklahoma via the Arkansas River (along the recognized trading route of the natives living there at the time). The northern Gulf Stream, whose currents approach near to the coast of Iceland, could have allowed a rapid return to Iceland after leaving the Gulf of Mexico and entering the Atlantic. The language and runes of Heavener and Poteau are much like the transitional runes on the Rök Stone in Sweden from approximately the same time period (9th century). These stones have both the elder runes and younger runes and fully record the transition. The above scenarios show that it was possible to reach Oklahoma from Greenland, in 750, via ocean currents from western Greenland along the east coast of North America, and around Florida to the Gulf of Mexico, to the Runic Inscriptions in Oklahoma.” As for the Shawnee Rune Stone, little research has been completed to date on the inscription. It currently is housed in the Kerr Museum in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Although the Oklahoma Rune Stones have had many skeptics over the decades, one finds it almost perplexing to discover the venom behind the declarations of hoax and fraud in connection with rune stones found in the northern portions of the United States.

¹¹⁴Ibid, 132.

¹¹⁵Ibid, 132.

¹¹⁶ It should be noted that if Dr. Nielsen is correct on the dating of the inscriptions on these stones, it would pre-date the Viking occupation of Iceland by between twenty four to seventy four years. If future evidence corroborates this information, the whole history of oceanic travel, Scandinavian occupations and the discovery of North America will change drastically.

Like the Kensington Stone in Minnesota, Maine lays claim to a set of three runic inscribed stones found at the bank's edge of Spirit Pond in Phippsburg, Maine. In 1971, Walter Elliott, a Maine born carpenter, discovered the stones jutting out from the mud. After pulling them free, he discovered that one of the stones had what has been described as crude markings and drawings on one side and rough map with strange symbols on the other side.¹¹⁷ The second stone had twelve of the symbols placed randomly on one side only, however the third contained a lengthy message in sixteen rows (ten on one side and six on the other). Curious as to what they may be, Elliott took the stones to the Bath Maritime Museum, where director Harold Brown suggested that the symbols might be Ancient Scandinavian runes.¹¹⁸ With Brown's encouragement, Elliott presented the stones to Harvard professor Einar Haugen¹¹⁹ who, in his published evaluation of the Spirit Pond Stones, was adamant in swearing they were a fraud and a hoax: "they are but a few Norse words in a sea of gibberish".¹²⁰ It is imperative to note here, that like the Kensington Inscription, the Inscription Stone of the Spirit Pond series, contains several hooked X symbols as well as the frequent use of pentadic and Arabic numerals. In the same voice as the scholarly contention of the Kensington Stone, all stood behind Haugen's proclamation. One point argued for fraud is that all of the runes used on the Spirit Pond Stones can be found on the Ukna Church Inscription (ca. 1300) in Småland and the Kensington Stone. This has been highly debated in scholarly literature, with the earlier scholarship declaring it a fake due to its similarities with these artifacts and the more recent research tending towards an acceptance of its connection to medieval Scandinavia because of the similarities. Early critics were quick to point out that the Spirit Pond Map Stone also contained the same use of the Gotlandic *gh* digraphic trait in the word *daGH* (day) as that found on the Kensington Stone. Likewise, both the Kensington Inscription and the Spirit Pond Inscription Stone have the Gotlandic medial H inserts in words such as *aHr* (year).

¹¹⁷ Haun, Albert G., "Some History Behind the Spirit Pond." NEARA Journal. Vol. XXIV, No. 3 & 4. 1990, pp. 79-81.

¹¹⁸ Haugen, Einar, "Runestones of Spirit Stone, Maine." *Man in the Northeast*, #4 volume VIII, 1972, 33-64.

¹¹⁹ Einar Haugen was American born to Norwegian parents in Sioux City, Iowa. He was professor of Scandinavian Linguistics at Harvard from 1964-75.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 56.

It was inferred that the use of these orthographic traits demonstrated a forgery and should somehow negate the authenticity of the inscription.¹²¹

In 1992, Dr. Nielsen reported that the language of the Spirit Pond Inscription exhibits both Western Scandinavian traits as well as traits of Scandinavian found in the Southern Baltic, namely Småland and Gotland in Sweden. The word *ahr* followed by two Arabic symbols for ten (year 10 10) and *ahr* followed by the Arabic ten and two Pentadic ones (year 10 11) stood for the Easter Table dating of the years 1401 and 1402.¹²² This orthographic trait was common practice in both areas in the 1300's. In 2006, both Dr. Richard Nielsen and forensic geologist Scott Wolter included this in a report to Joseph Phillips of the Maine State Museum, "The current translation of dates presented in this preliminary report are provisional; however, the senior partner (Nielsen) is currently engaged with a runologist in Europe over the proper translation of dates on this Scandinavian runic inscription."¹²³ This dating translation was bolstered in 2007 by a similar discovery that the Kingigtorsuaq Inscription¹²⁴ has two seven rune counts, which yields the date 1314 on the Easter Table.¹²⁵

In 1985, the short and unreadable Narragansett Inscription was investigated in the shallows of Narragansett Bay near East Ipswich, Rhode Island.¹²⁶ The inscription, which consists of two lines with six symbols in the first and two in the second, was carved into a two and a half ton chunk of stone that sat twenty feet from the extreme low tide line mark making the inscription on the stone only visible for a short period of time between high and low tides. Many, including Dr. Nielsen, have attempted to translate the inscription; however, the runes present no orthographic regularity.¹²⁷ The single symbol on the Narragansett Stone that garnered massive public and scholarly attention was the hooked X. All

¹²¹ Ibid, 64.

¹²² Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Spirit Runestones of Maine-A Preliminary and Tentative Translation*, ESOP. Volume 21, San Diego, 1992, pp 92-113.

¹²³ Ibid, 110.

¹²⁴ The Kingigtorsuaq Runestone was found in 1824, in a group of three cairns that formed an equilateral triangle, on top of the mountain on a small Kingigtorsuaq Island in the south-central part of the Upernavik Archipelago.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 113.

¹²⁶ Nielsen, Richard and Scott Wolter, *The Runes of the Spirit Pond Stones and the Narragansett Inscription can be found in Modern Books*. Report submitted to Maine State Museum, 2009.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 9.

scholars who have investigated the inscription agree that the presence of the hooked X creates a problem of authenticity due to it being on both, the Spirit Pond and Kensington Inscriptions.¹²⁸ Once again, fraud has been the first word voiced. However, mysteriously, and before any strides could be made towards translation or dating authentication, the huge stone disappeared from the Narragansett Bay sometime in 2012. In May 2013, the state Attorney General's Environmental Unit and DEM's¹²⁹ Criminal Investigation Unit announced they had recovered the stone. It was reported that an un-named resident, disgruntled by all of the publicity and rune seekers, had taken the stone to deeper waters and sank it.¹³⁰ The person was ordered to retrieve the stone, and it has since been relocated to the Goddard State Park in East Greenwich, Rhode Island where it awaits further research.¹³¹

Hoaxes and fraud do exist in connection with runic inscriptions, and undeterred by sophisticated scientific research methods that make it almost impossible to perpetrate them, people keep trying. Despite these attempts to alter the reality of historical events, the fundamental core lies in the fact that unknown circumstances did occur in our past. Not all peoples who traversed our great nation have been recorded in history books. Their footsteps and voices are silent; however, the evidence of their presence can be found, if we but look for it.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 9.

¹²⁹ DEM- Department of Environmental Management

¹³⁰ *Mysterious Narragansett Runestone is Recovered*. The Boston Globe. April 26, 2013. Retrieved 11 March, 2015.

¹³¹ *Mysterious Narragansett Runestone is Recovered*. The Boston Globe. April 26, 2013. Retrieved 11 March, 2015.

CHAPTER 5

EVIDENCE OF OCCUPATION

If credit is to be given to Christopher Columbus for the discovery of America in 1492, then so should it also be given to Erik Thorvaldson in 982. According to historian Hjalmar Holand, Thorvaldson, who was also known as Erik the Red, was the first European to officially enter into the Western Hemisphere when he landed on the shores of Greenland.¹³² Like the West Indies, Greenland lies in the Western Hemisphere, and “her western shores are as in close proximity to the North American mainland as the islands of which the fame of Columbus is founded”.¹³³ It has, therefore, been argued that under the same circumstances of proclaimed discovery, Thorvaldson, some five hundred and ten years before Columbus, was the true discoverer of America.

Thorvaldson, a general ruffian, who had met with some unfortunate circumstances, and who had been banished from his district in Iceland because of them, loaded his family and a few men as crew, into a small sailing vessel and headed into the unknown west. Perhaps it was something in his genetics that caused Thorvaldson to sail into an open sea where long armed monsters were said to wrap around ships and drag them into the black abyss. It had, after all, been a kinsman on his father's side by the name of Naddod who had discovered Iceland and sailed completely around it in 865. A hundred years before this, another of his kinsmen out on an exploration, was blown far west of what would become Iceland to some islands called Gunbjörn's Skerries after him.¹³⁴ These islands were Thorvaldson's idea of a destination when he set sail ca.979.¹³⁵

It is unknown how long he sailed westward before he eventually found ,what he described, as an unwelcoming portion of coast on what would later be call Greenland. It can be assumed that he

¹³² Holand, Hjalmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Canada, General Publishing, 1940, 4.

¹³³ Haun, Albert G., “*Some History Behind the Spirit Pond.*” NEARA Journal. Vol. XXIV, No. 3 & 4. 1990, 9.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 8.

traveled in a northwesterly direction after leaving Iceland, as he reported finding many uninhabitable islands on the proximal side of Greenland; most of Greenland's islands are located off the north east coast.¹³⁶ Undeterred, Thorvaldson would sail some five hundred miles south west, down to the southern tip of Greenland and then turn west before he would winter in Cape Farewell, the modern district of Julianehaab. When the seas thawed in spring, Thorvaldson would again set sail, traveling for three years and nearly one thousand miles, exploring both the east and west coast of Greenland, before he settled in a verdant area, teeming with resources, about one hundred miles northwest of Cape Farewell.¹³⁷ What is most amazing about his feat lies in the fact that he was able to sustain himself, his family (a wife and one or two small children) and crewmen with only provisions they found or caught during their journey and with no compass to guide their way.¹³⁸

The time spent in his explorations had accomplished two things for Thorvaldson: the discovery of a new and fertile land beyond what any other person had ever traveled and the passage of time equal to that of his banishment period in Iceland. After he had built his home, a home that would continue to serve as the home of Greenland's chief officials for over four hundred years, Thorvaldson returned to Iceland to recruit people for colonization on Greenland. He would depart for Greenland again in 986, with twenty five ships filled with people. After being pummeled by a terrible storm, only fourteen of the ships and their occupants would reach their new home. Regardless of their losses, the surviving colonists would go on to thrive, under Thorvalson's lead, in an idyllic commonwealth that could only be wished for today.

In 999, around the age of nineteen, Erik Thorvaldson's own son Leif (Eriksson) made a voyage that would afford him much fame and catch the attention of Olaf Tryvegson, King of Norway. On an unprecedented journey, Leif sailed straight from Greenland to Norway without stopping for layover in Iceland. He did this without navigational aid in open boats considered too unstable to make such a

¹³⁶ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 8.

¹³⁸ Fossum, Andrew, *The Norse Discovery of America*. 1918, 46-50.

trip.¹³⁹ Many have argued that Leif could not have made such a trip, that he was most likely blown off course and may have summered in the Hebrides; however, there is nothing recorded in the *sagas*¹⁴⁰ to validate these claims. It was reported, that upon his safe arrival in Norway, Leif Eriksson succeeded in, “setting a new record in oceanic navigation” and impressed with his achievement, King Olaf sent for Leif, and liking him greatly, made him a *hirdmann*.¹⁴¹ Leif would winter in Norway that year as the King's guest. King Olaf, a zealous convert to Christianity, introduced the new faith to Leif who was baptized that same winter. Eager to spread the Christian faith, King Olaf commissioned Leif to take priests back to Greenland as a part of his missionary endeavor. It was thought to be on a proselyte mission, that Leif and his priests reached the settlement of *Herljulfsness* so named for Bjarne Herljulfsness, a sailor who was reputed to have found uninhabited timbered lands to the southwest of Greenland some fifteen years prior. This occurred while searching for his father's home on Greenland. It was told by Bjarne, that his ship lost a favorable wind and they began to drift southwest on a calm sea. It has been theorized that if Bjarne and his crew did indeed make the journey to North America, they were most likely caught in the southern coastal currents as they drifted and were able to later return north, toward Greenland, via the Northern Gulf Stream.¹⁴² This is the same cartographic route proposed by Dr. Richard Nielsen, as a probable route taken centuries later by expedition crews that carved the North American Rune Stones in Oklahoma.¹⁴³ Again, arguments over who was the first to truly discover the American mainland, Bjarne or Leif, are still prevalent in modern scholarship. However, herein lies all that is important of the arguments: whether or not Bjarne actually made it to the North American coast, his story fired what must have already been a great passion for adventure, and the prospects of new land discoveries, in the heart of Leif Eriksson. Leif promptly outfitted himself with a larger vessel than the one used to make the Greenland to Norway journey, committed to memory

¹³⁹ Ibid, 23

¹⁴⁰ Sagas are written versions of older oral traditions.

¹⁴¹ Hirdmann were personal body guards to the king and the royal family.

¹⁴² Ibid, 25.

¹⁴³ See Thesis page 28.

the details of Bjarne's courses and with thirty five men set sail (ca. 1003) , just as his predecessors before him, into the unknown west and into history.

The *sagas* of Leif Eriksson's expeditions tell us that he discovered new lands which he would call Helluland, Markland and Vinland. After years of no definitive proof (beyond the sagas) of Eriksson's voyages, scholars began to believe they were nothing more than medieval tales of grandeur. It was theorized, that if they existed beyond the imagination, these lands were, most likely, modern day Baffin Island, Newfoundland and Labrador on the shores of eastern Canada. However, recent scholarship likewise tells us that, "ever since modern translations of the sagas became available, historians, naturalists, navigators, astronomers, archaeologists and others have tried to identify the location of the saga lands from descriptions in the texts. Theories abound, ranging from Baffin Island to the Bahamas and even Brazil. The obvious arctic and subarctic locations of Helluland (flat-slab land) and Markland (forest land) convinced scholars that Vinland (wine land) must have been located in the more temperate regions between Maine and Newfoundland where resources like grapes, salmon, grass, self-sown wheat, flatfish, and burl-wood (mosur) described in the sagas were available. While this general outline was agreed upon, historians are by no means in agreement on the particulars. In truth, new theories describing the history of the Vinland voyages continue to be published every few years."¹⁴⁴ As Vinland was only known through Old Norse *sagas* and medieval historiography until the mid-twentieth century, it was the reference of the elusive land on the Kensington Inscription in 1898, that would become one of the focal points for the argument of fraud nine hundred years after Leif's ship left Greenland's shores.¹⁴⁵ It is important to mention here that discoveries (2004) in Norway, have recently yielded a runic inscription, dated 1050, that is the earliest recorded mention of Vinland ever found.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, discoveries of a Norse presence have been periodically unearthed over the last two

¹⁴⁴ Rudolf Simek, *The Emergence of the Viking Age: Circumstances and Conditions*", *The Vikings first Europeans VIII - XI century - the new discoveries of archaeology*, 2005, 24-25.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 24

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

hundred years, in the northeastern and North Central sections of America, as well as the deep interior of the Canadian sectors.

In 1731, American born French explorer, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Verendrye, set out on an expedition in 1731, from Quebec to modern day western Minnesota and the Dakota Plains. In 1732, he reached the boundary between Minnesota and Manitoba where he built his headquarters before continuing to push further north and west. During his travels, La Verendrye heard stories from the native peoples about a village of white people living far to the southwest. In 1738, he would discover the Mandan¹⁴⁷ tribe in North Dakota. It was on his journey to find these people that La Verendrye would discover, on the open plain, an upright pillar of stone “inscribed on both sides with strange characters” which he was unable to decipher.¹⁴⁸ La Verendrye would take the stone with him and in 1743, on a trip to Quebec, he would show it to the Jesuits who were likewise unable to read the inscription. However, according to La Verendrye, they were able to successfully compare it with Tărtărian illustrations in books from their library, to which they claimed, one bore an almost exact likeness to the other.^{149/ 150} From Canada, the stone was sent to France, to the secretary of state, the Count of Maurepas. It is unknown what became of it afterwards. In recanting the story of discovery to Professor Peter Kalm of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, La Verendrye in 1749, would recall his expedition coming across several odd stone pillars, “in places where no French or European was supposed to have ever been” before they eventually found the inscribed stone.¹⁵¹

In 1880, an eleventh century Norse ax head, was found by a farmer plowing a field in Tors Bay, Nova Scotia.¹⁵² The ax was reported to be caked with mud, rust and much pitted.¹⁵³ Having no idea

¹⁴⁷ The Mandan Indians are a tribe living in North Dakota. Their significance is found in the notion of others in the eighteenth century, that the Mandan were more white than native. They were thought to be light skinned with European features. Likewise, they were agricultural as opposed to other tribes of hunter-gatherers.

¹⁴⁸ Holand, Hjlmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Canada, General Publishing, 1940, 245.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 246.

¹⁵⁰ As noted in chapter one, the Tărtărian Tablets were not discovered in Romania and analyzed until 1961.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 246.

¹⁵² Holand, Hjlmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Canada, General Publishing, 1940, 42.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 42

what it could be useful for in the condition it was in, the farmer laid it on a shelf where it stayed until 1936. The farmer's granddaughter (known only as Mrs. Grover) would show the ax, in that year, to a prospector by the name of James P. Nolan. Curious about it, he asked if he could clean it in order to get a better look at its design. Mrs. Grover granted permission and Nolan took it to his shack where he put it to soak in kerosene for the purpose of cleaning it. While it was soaking, the shack caught fire and burned to the ground. As Nolan rummaged through the ruins, he located the ax and found that the mud and rust had been loosened by the fire. On the broad face of the ax, he discovered strange markings that he did not understand. It was later examined by Alden B. Greninger, Professor of Metallurgy at Harvard University, who in his concluded investigation statements of the ax, wrote: "The ax is undoubtedly of primitive structure; the actual metallographic structure of the ax metal is about the only one it could be if the ax were about a thousand years old".¹⁵⁴ Despite the age, and the possible runic inscription, the ax is still privately owned and no further research has been conducted.

What has been dubbed a Viking grave site¹⁵⁵ was discovered in 1931, by James E. Dodd, a train conductor and amateur miner from Port Arthur, Ontario. Dodd stated that while working his claim, he found a grave containing a strip of rusted iron, an ax head, rusted metal bent into a handle shape and an iron bowl which fragmented upon removal.¹⁵⁶ He passed them off as having most likely belonged to a previous miner or perhaps as being Indian relics and threw them in the dump heap. He reported that, after some time (he did not say how long) had passed, he became interested in the items and retrieved them. Dodd mentioned the relics to people he knew, but no one seemed to believe him or to show much interest until 1936, when a contact of Dodd's alerted the Royal Ontario Museum to the find. Dodd was invited to bring the artifacts to Toronto where his story of discovery was told and the items were bought by the museum. However, having little knowledge or experience with such items beyond their

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 43.

¹⁵⁵ It was dubbed a grave site due to the fact that items commonly associated with grave goods interred with the corps were found; however, no human remains were mentioned by Dobbs nor were any ever discovered at a later date.

¹⁵⁶ These items were later identified by the Royal Ontario Museum as an eleventh century Norse sword along with the boss and handle of a Norse shield.

obviously antiquated age, the museum's curator, Dr. Currelly and his staff, refrained from announcing anything to the public, concerning their newest procurement, until further research could be conducted. Nevertheless, as is want to happen, news about the relics leaked out in 1938, and following close behind, came the accusations of fraud; this time they would come from Eli Ragotte and a Mr. Hansen, acquaintances¹⁵⁷ of Dodd's. All evidence seemed to point to the affirmation of the accusations until 1938, when Mr. J.W. Curran, editor of the *Sault Daily Star*, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, became curious about what was being called the Lake Nipigon Relics. Having been a history lover who had researched the tradition of early white men, referred to as *mistigoche* “the wooden boat men”, around the Hudson Bay, Curran launched an investigation of great proportion into the circumstances surrounding the relics and those involved.¹⁵⁸ After contacting many colleagues of Johan Bloch, including Mr. Carl Sorenson, Royal Norwegian Vice Consul, all stated with confidence that Mr. Bloch had nothing to do with the relics. Curran then turned his attention to Mr. Ragotte and Mr. Hansen. Both men were quick to admit having made false statements concerning Dodd and the Lake Nipigon Relics and signed affidavits confirming as much.¹⁵⁹ Curran would soon locate eight other witnesses that testified by affidavit, in the office of A.J. McComber, Senior Judge of the Thunder Bay District, to having observed the relics before Dodd had rented the Hansen house. Mr. Curran's original report on his investigation was printed in the *Sault Daily Star* on 4, 6, and 8 October, 1938. Later investigations of the discovery site found that it was located two hundred yards from Blackwater River leading to the speculation that perhaps, the weapons had belonged to a fallen companion of an expedition group who had been traveling the connecting water ways on a journey either in or out of the territory. Of course, this theory would have its own critics in those who claimed that without motive, such as treasure, eleventh century Norsemen would not have been inclined to carry their heavy ships over a large number of portages to an

¹⁵⁷ Eli Ragotte claimed that he had found the relics in the basement of a house Dodd had rented in 1931. The landlord, Mr. Hansen, claimed that he had received the relics from a Norwegian by the name of Johan Bloch a few years before Dodd rented the house.

¹⁵⁸ Holand, Hjlmar R., *Norse Discoveries and Explorations in America 982-1362*. Canada, General Publishing, 1940, 67.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 68.

unforeseen end. However, those in defense of the theory have suggested that perhaps, at this point, they were just beginning explorations and had no clue as to the vastness of the continent; it was merely another large island to them and curiosity was the motive for continuation. After all, it had been this way with these Norsemen many times before.

In 1960, affirmation of Viking occupation of North America was firmly written in historical records. While searching Newfoundland and Labrador for evidence of a Viking presence, archaeologists Helge and Anne Ingstad, came across a fisher man in the village of L'Anse aux Meadows,¹⁶⁰ on the northern tip of Newfoundland, who would show them foundations of ruined sod houses.¹⁶¹ After a decade of archaeological excavation of Norse artifacts and the Carbon 14 dating of charcoal (ca. 990-1050 C.E.) recovered from the site, it became conclusive that it was the remnants of a one thousand year old Viking settlement built in North America some five hundred years before Columbus, effectively validating the *sagas*.¹⁶²

The remains consisted of what has been identified as dwellings and workshops of carpentry and iron smithy.¹⁶³ An ancient iron slag and forge yielded worn rivets, as did an area that appeared to be used for ship repair.¹⁶⁴ A few common household items and food stuffs were recovered, the most interesting to archaeological and historical research being the use of Butternut wood for bowls and Butternuts for food.¹⁶⁵ The significance in the presence of these items is in the fact that Butternuts do not grow north of New Brunswick, Maine. It would be evidenced in later archaeological excavations of the site, that L'Anse aux Meadows appeared to be a mid-point layover station, somewhere between Greenland and the North American East Coast, for the purpose of ship repair, and perhaps, a winter

¹⁶⁰ Translated from French as Jellyfish Cove

¹⁶¹ The Norse used a type of structure known as sod house. These buildings were usually partially subterranean with a stone foundation on the exposed portions. A timber roof frame, constructed like a dome, was built and sections of sod, roots intact, would be placed over it like a living carpet. The sod roots would mesh together and continue to grow, making the roof weather proof.

¹⁶² L'Anse aux Meadows National Historical Site of Canada

¹⁶³ Ingstad, Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad, *The Viking Discovery of America*, 2000, p. 134.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 134.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 135.

camp for expedition parties and not that of a larger homesteading settlement.¹⁶⁶

As active as the Norse were, it would seem foolish to assume that they did not venture past the bounds of L'Anse aux Meadows. Their later missions in North America are still shrouded in mystery. Perhaps the arguments should no longer focus on the matter of them being here, but rather on who they were and why they were here.

¹⁶⁶ Kolodny, Annette, *In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland*. Duke University Press, 2012. 95.

CHAPTER 6

WHO WERE THEY

“It seems to me that engaging in immediate debate closes one's mind for good and all. Debating gives most of us a much more psychological satisfaction than thinking does; but it deprives us of whatever chance there is of getting closer to the truth.” The Two Lectures- Prof. Charles P. Snow

Decades of debate have been waged over the North American Rune Stones, and who authored their inscriptions. Many have argued for a Cistercian-Templar connection, but have been thoroughly dismissed by mainstream historians. It would be a scant dedicated few, who would maintain this possibility, and through their persistent efforts, affirmative information regarding a Cistercian-Templar connection has been continuously fed into these debates. Scholars from many different fields of study, have uncovered tangible evidence of Cistercian-Templar influence in conjunction with the rune stones; however, determining exactly who they were and what they were doing here is still debated.

Our most significant clue to date, as to the identity of the authors of the North American Rune Stones, lies in the connection of the inscribed date of the Kensington Stone, the blended use of runic language and the unusual symbology of the hooked X. The X has been found, not only on the North American stones, but also in European documents and buildings affiliated with the Knights Templar as well as in the sigla of Christopher Columbus himself. It is inappropriate for an aspiring historian to give into the Pop Culture buzz, and that is not what is intended here; however, one may often discern a bud of truth in the most elaborate of myths and it is, therefore, appropriate and incumbent upon the historian to investigate all avenues of information and to sort fact from fiction or supposition.

Pop Culture brought back to life, the mystery of the Order of the Knights Templar.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶⁷ The Knights Templar were a monastic order of warriors who had banded together under the leadership of Hugues De Payens in 1119. The combination of soldier and monk was also a powerful one, as to the Templars, martyrdom in battle was one of the most glorious ways to die. The Templars were also shrewd tacticians, following the dream of Saint Bernard who had declared that a small force, under the right conditions, could defeat a much larger enemy. Though

Templars were rumored to have found King Solomon's treasure buried deep beneath the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, or to have even found the Ark of the Covenant. After the first of their brethren were murdered, in 1307, a band of the Templars were rumored to have loaded their bounty on ships and sailed away in order to hide the treasure and avoid death. One argument for a hiding place has been Oak Island, Nova Scotia in North America.

The presence of the hooked X on the Kensington Stone, et al, as well as its existence in Europe does, in fact, lead one in a possible and plausible direction, a Templar connection; however, this is

initially an Order of poor monks, the official papal sanction made the Knights Templar a charity across Europe. Further resources came in when members joined the Order, as they had to take oaths of poverty and therefore often donated large amounts of their original cash or property to the Order. Additional revenue came from business dealings. Since the monks themselves were sworn to poverty, but had the strength of a large and trusted international infrastructure behind them, nobles would occasionally use them as a kind of bank. If a noble wished to join the Crusades, this might entail an absence of years from their home. Nobles would place all of their wealth and businesses under the control of Templars, to safeguard it for them until their return. The Order's financial power became substantial, and the majority of the Order's infrastructure was devoted not to combat, but to economic pursuits. By 1150, the Order's original mission of guarding pilgrims had changed into a mission of guarding their valuables through an innovative way of issuing letters of credit, an early precursor of modern banking. Pilgrims would visit a Templar house in their home country, depositing their deeds and valuables. The Templars would then give them a letter which would describe their holdings. Modern scholars have stated that the letters were encrypted with a cipher alphabet. While traveling, the pilgrims could present the letter to other Templars along the way, to "withdraw" funds from their accounts. This kept the pilgrims safe since they were not carrying valuables, and further increased the power of the Templars. The Knights' involvement in banking grew over time into a new basis for money, as Templars became increasingly involved in banking activities. One indication of their powerful political connections is that the Templars' involvement in usury did not lead to more controversy within the Order and the church at large. Officially the idea of lending money in return for interest was forbidden by the church, but the Order sidestepped this with clever loopholes, such as a stipulation that the Templars retained the rights to the production of mortgaged property. The Templars' political connections and awareness of the essentially urban and commercial nature of their communities led the Order to a position of significant power both in Europe and the Holy Lands. They owned large tracts of land both in Europe and the Middle East, built churches and castles, bought farms and vineyards, were involved in manufacturing and import/export, had their own fleet of ships, and for a time even "owned" the entire island of Cyprus. Jaques De Molay, who was to be the last of the Order's Grand Masters, took office around 1292. One of his first tasks was to tour across Europe, to raise support for the Order and try to organise another Crusade. He met the newly invested Pope Boniface VIII, who agreed to grant the Templars the same privileges at Cyprus as they had held in the Holy Land. Charles II of Naples and Edward I also pledged varying types of support, either continuing to exempt the Templars from taxes, or pledging future support towards building a new army. With the loss of Arwad, the Crusaders had lost their last foothold in the Holy Land. Though they still had a base of operations in Cyprus, and controlled considerable financial resources, the Order of the Templars became an Order without a clear purpose or support, but which still had enormous financial power. This unstable situation contributed to their downfall. King Philip had inherited an impoverished kingdom from his father and was already deeply in debt to the Templars, it is theorized that this led to him actively seeking the disbanding and death of the Templars; however, recent studies emphasize the political and religious motivations of the French king. It seems that, with the "discovery" and repression of the "Templars' heresy," the Capetian monarchy claimed for itself the mystic foundations of the papal theocracy. The Temple case was the last step of a process of appropriating these foundations, which had begun with the Franco-papal rift at the time of Boniface VIII. Being the ultimate defender of the Catholic faith, the Capetian king was invested with a Christlike function that put him above the pope: what was at stake in the Templars' trial, then, was the establishment of a royal theocracy. At dawn on Friday, October 13, 1307, scores of French Templars were simultaneously arrested by agents of King Philip, later to be tortured into admitting heresy and other sacrilegious offenses in the Order. Then they were put to death. - Addison, Charles Greenstreet, *The History of the Knights Templar*. 1842, pp. 141-149.

where fact must separate from the grandeur of fiction and from the bonds of supposition.

To begin unraveling the mystery of the hooked X, we must first begin with St. Bernard de Clairvaux.¹⁶⁸ St. Bernard, was a French Cistercian monk who, along with thirty of his companions, helped to rapidly spread Christianity in Europe, focusing most of their efforts in Gotland and Sweden. In 1128, St. Bernard became the Protector of the Order of the Knights Templar. He would take members of the Templars with him, into Gotland, as he expanded the building of Cistercian Abbeys. Bernard exerted a heavy religious influence on both the Cistercian Order and the Templars who had begun working in unison to build churches and to protect Gotland from raiding bands of Estonian and Rügen pirates.

During times of peace, when attention could focus on building, the Cistercians would introduce ashlar masonry¹⁶⁹, and the rudimentary ideas of freemasonry¹⁷⁰, to the Templars. The Templars would, in return, teach the Cistercians great mathematical skills they had acquired from the Arabs while on

¹⁶⁸ Cistercians were a religious order of monks and nuns who, with the Knights Templar, excelled in the art of Gothic architecture. This included masonry and the secrets of freemasonry or the Master Mason's secret of the keystone arch. A keystone is the wedge-shaped stone piece at the apex of a masonry vault or arch, which is the final piece placed during construction and locks all the stones into position, allowing the arch to bear weight. Although a masonry arch or vault cannot be self-supporting until the keystone is placed, the keystone experiences the least stress of any of the voussoirs, due to its position at the apex.

¹⁶⁹ Ashlar is finely dressed (cut, worked) masonry either an individual stone that has been worked until squared or the masonry built of such stone. It is the finest stone masonry unit, generally cubed or less frequently trapezoidal. Precisely cut on all faces adjacent to those of other stones, ashlar is capable of very thin joints between blocks, and the visible face of the stone may be as quarry-faced or feature a variety of treatments: tooled, smoothly polished or rendered with another material for decorative effect. Ashlar is in contrast to rubble masonry which employs irregularly shaped stones, although sometimes minimally worked or selected for similar size, or both. Ashlar is related but distinct from other stone masonry that is finely dressed but not quadrilateral, such as curvilinear masonry and polygonal masonry. In some Masonic groupings, which such societies term jurisdictions ashlar are used as a symbolic metaphor for progress. As described in the explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board, in Emulation (and other) rituals the rough ashlar is a stone as taken directly from the quarry, and allegorically represents the Freemason prior to his initiation; a smooth ashlar (or "perfect ashlar") is a stone that has been smoothed and dressed by the experienced stonemason, and allegorically represents the Freemason who, through education and diligence, has learned the lessons of Freemasonry and who lives an upstanding life. -*Rough and Perfect Ashlar*: Masonic Lodge of Education. Retrieved 20, March, 2015.

¹⁷⁰ Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that traces its origins to the local fraternities of stonemasons, which from the end of the fourteenth century regulated the qualifications of masons and their interaction with authorities and clients. The degrees of freemasonry, its gradual system, retain the three grades of medieval craft guilds, those of Apprentice, journeyman or fellow (now called Fellowcraft), and Master Mason. These are the degrees offered by craft knowledge. There are additional degrees, which vary with locality and jurisdiction, and are now administered by different bodies than the craft degrees. Freemasonry describes itself as a *beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols*. The symbolism is mainly, but not exclusively, drawn from the manual tools of stonemasons – the square and compasses, the level and plumb rule, the trowel, among others. A moral lesson is attached to each of these tools, although the assignment is by no means consistent. The meaning of the symbolism is taught and explored through ritual.

crusades to the Holy Lands.¹⁷¹ These skills were such that the Templars were able to calculate angles to a ninth of a degree.¹⁷² The amazing architecture that resulted from the combined knowledge of these orders were such that had never before been seen in Europe. Cathedrals such as Notre Dame (1163) and Chartres (1194) were inspired by their, so named, Gothic methods.¹⁷³ By the 1300's, "over eighty Gothic structures were completed in the Cistercian-Templar model".¹⁷⁴ The construction of the Great Cathedral in Uppsala began in 1270, under the work force and instruction of Cistercian -Templar masons brought in from Gotland for the project. The formation of Cistercian-Templar masonry schools would prove to be an important future link with the Templars, Christopher Columbus and the Hooked X.

As building and expansion was happening on Gotland, continued pirate raids on Scandinavia prompted the pope to issue a Papal crusade against Estonia and Rügen. He would form the German Order of Teutonic Knights in 1191 and sanctioned them to join forces with the Templars by 1192, in an attempt to stop the attacks. In 1202, the Cistercians would form the Order of the Sword Brethren as a offshoot of the Templars, strengthening bonds and adding greater numbers to the ranks of warrior monks in Scandinavia. Together, after years of Papal crusades through the eastern Baltic, the Orders of the Sword Brethren and the Teutonic would amalgamate and gain possession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, collectively called Livonia.¹⁷⁵ With their combined presence in Gotland and Sweden, the addition of Livonia gave the Orders a powerful hold in the north. This would be a saving grace for the Templars, a few years later, when disaster would befall the Order.

In 1307, under charges of heresy, Grand Master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was arrested by orders of King Philip the Fair and Pope Clement V, and scores of French Knights Templars

¹⁷¹ Luddy, Ailbe J., *The Order of Citeaux*. Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son Ltd. 1932, 61.

¹⁷² Ibid, 64.

¹⁷³ Gothic, from the Greek meaning magical.

¹⁷⁴ Mackey, Albert J. and Kevin Massey-Gillespie, *Medieval Elements in the Kensington Stone*. San Francisco: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, Vol. 24. 2005, 175.

¹⁷⁵ Luddy, Ailbe J., *The Order of Citeaux*. 65.

were seized, tortured and burned at the stake. To avoid arrest and prosecution, many Templars fled France and sought refuge in other countries, being absorbed into unaffected branches of the Order, where French and Papal rule could not follow. Gotland and Scotland were two of the safe havens. Many branches of the Order were cleared of charges by 1308; nevertheless, countries such as Portugal and Spain, would change their Order's name to the Knights of Christ in an attempt to distance themselves from the stigma of heresy.

Henry the Navigator was a Grand Master for the Knights of Christ in Tomar, Portugal, (1394-1360).¹⁷⁶ Under his command was one Bartholomew Perestrello, a nobleman of Portugal who, in 1468, would become the father in law of Christopher Columbus. After the death of Pesterello, his widow endowed Columbus with her husband's nautical charts, diaries and maritime records from the time of his service under Prince Henry. Columbus, who soon after a short stay in England on unknown business, claimed to have made a voyage to the north seas where he stayed for a period of time in Iceland ca.1477.¹⁷⁷ This claim has been gravely disputed by Dr. Luciano de Sylva, but perhaps it is not to be rejected.¹⁷⁸ It is after this supposed journey that Columbus became steeped in Templar lore, and it is believed that he may have learned of the Kensington expedition of 1362, while he was in Iceland.¹⁷⁹ Proof of his knowledge may be found in the form of letters and documents from Columbus, where instead of his signature, we see a sigla¹⁸⁰ bearing the mark of a hooked X strikingly similar to those found on the North American Rune Stones. This sigla has been investigated by Dr. Mascarenhas Barreto for over fifteen years. Dr. Barreto argues that the stylistic representation of Columbus's name

¹⁷⁶ Tomar is one of Portugal's historical jewels and more significantly was the last Templar town to be commissioned for construction. Tomar was especially important in the 15th century when it was a centre of Portuguese overseas expansion under Henry the Navigator, the Grand Master of the Knights of Christ, successor organization to the Templars in Portugal.

¹⁷⁷ Mackey, Albert J. and Kevin Massey-Gillespie, *Medieval Elements in the Kensington Stone*. San Francisco: Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications, Vol. 24. 2005, 176.

¹⁷⁸ Pohl, Frederick J., *Prince Henry Sinclair: His Expedition ToThe New World In 1398*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1974.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 76.

¹⁸⁰ From the Latin siglum meaning signal or signature. Siglas are secretive and always have a hidden meaning making them hard to interpret.

was a coded form used by the Hebrews and the Knights Templar so that the sigla would seemingly point to an affiliation with the latter.¹⁸¹ Likewise, Barreto claims that furthering the evidence of a Columbus-Templar affiliation would come from his choosing to display the red cross patteé on a field of white¹⁸², as his ship's sails, in his quest for the New World. The cross patteé was a direct link between the Cistercians and the Templars as it was standard Templar uniform wear, decreed by St. Bernard, and it was used as ornamental accoutrements for the chapels built by the combined Orders, on Gotland and throughout Scandinavia. Examples of Scandinavian churches inscribed with the cross patteé include: Hejnum Church (ca. 1250), Nylar Church (ca. 1200), Låbro Church (ca. 1340), Uppsala (1270) and Othem (1400).¹⁸³ The same designs have been discovered in Templar churches built in Scotland, including the now famous, Rosslyn Chapel.

Rosslyn Chapel was built in the 1440's by Sir William St. Clair, Jarl of Orkney, one hundred and forty years after the dissolution of the Knights Templar. William, was the grandson of Prince Henry St. Clair, the last Earl, as well as, the last Templar Grand Master of Scotland. Cistercian-Templar iconography, similar to that found in Gotland, adorn Rosslyn Chapel.¹⁸⁴

In 1558, Venetian historian Nicoló Zeno, wrote a book known as *The Zeno Narrative*, in which he tells of a voyage, undertaken by two of his ancestors who had sailed west, in a fleet commanded by a Prince of Scotland, to a new land in the North Atlantic (ca. 1398). Included in the book is a map that greatly resembles Nova Scotia and portions of the east coast of North America.

Henry St. Clair was born in Edinburgh in 1345, to Sir William St. Clair, the eighth Baron of Rosslyn and Isabella, the daughter of the Norse Jarl of Orkney. The St. Clairs (Sinclair in modern

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 77.

¹⁸² A white over tunic with a red cross (similar to that of a Maltese Cross) was designated by St. Bernard as the only acceptable uniform for the Knights Templar. It continued to be worn by the Knights of Christ long after the Templars were ordered to disband.

¹⁸³ Murphy, Timothy Wallace and Marilyn Hopkins, *Templars In America: From The Crusades To The New World*. Weiser: Red Wheel Publishing, 2004, 112.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 112.

times) were originally from the Viking family name, Møre.¹⁸⁵ They adopted the name St. Clair from the Norman town of Saint Clair sur Epte, France, after settling there in the tenth century.¹⁸⁶ Several members of the family fought with William the Conqueror in 1066 and were later granted Roslin Castle in Midlothian, Scotland, for their loyal efforts.

In May, 1358, William St. Clair, joined the Teutonic Knights, in Gotland, as they fought to gain possession of Livonia. William died in Lithuania in 1357, leaving his thirteen year old son, Henry to succeed his title. The Norse title of Earl (Jarl) carried greater status than the Scottish or British equivalent, coming immediately below princes in the royal blood line.¹⁸⁷ Although Henry was the legal heir, in accordance with the charters drawn up by the Earl Malise, there were other claimants to the title and, in truth, it could only be granted by the King of Norway, Magnus II.¹⁸⁸ For a time Magnus would give the title to a rival of Henry's, but would shortly afterwards strip him of it for attempted treason. In 1362, the same date carved on the Kensington Stone, Henry would go to Copenhagen to press his claim for title. Henry's ownership of the Orkney land was upheld; however, his title of Earl was not. It was in his time in Scandinavia, that historian John J. Robinson believes Henry learned of an expedition party either departing, or having already set sail by this time, for Vinland.¹⁸⁹ Robinson argues that, if this is indeed the case, it could very well be the same expedition party that carved the Kensington Stone that same year. In 1365, Henry joined the Crusade called for by Peter I, King of Cyprus, to conquer the Port of Alexandria in Egypt. If the *Zeno Narrative* is authentic, it was during this campaign that Henry first met Nicolò Zeno's ancestors, who would later enter into his service and sail with him to North America. It is also during this time that Henry would have become exposed to the society of the Templar Order.

In August 1379, Sir Henry finally persuaded the Norwegian King to recognise him as Earl of

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 138.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 178.

¹⁸⁷ Pohl, Frederick J., *Prince Henry Sinclair: His Expedition to the New World in 1398*. London: Davis-Poynter, 1974.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 79.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 81.

Orkney on the promise that he could restore order and the King's authority. Henry managed a diplomatic coup a month after his investiture as Earl, persuading Robert II of Scotland to formally renounce any claim to Orkney and recognise it as a Norwegian possession.¹⁹⁰ Part of Henry's duties was to impose the King of Norway's authority on the lawless islands, and to reunite Orkney and Shetland for the Norwegian Crown.¹⁹¹ Frederick Pohl described Orkney as a buffer state between Scotland and Norway. Henry, who was a Scottish noble of Norse descent, and was considered the perfect ruler of such a sensitive place.¹⁹² Because of his position, he became known as 'Prince' Henry, although never formally holding the title. It hardly mattered; his power in Orkney was almost that of a king.¹⁹³

If, in fact, Henry did sail to Nova Scotia, it has been theorized that he did so on a prompt by Queen Margarethe I, in order to create a Norse Commonwealth and gain unlimited potential for maritime commerce in the new land.¹⁹⁴ This was in retaliation to the Germanic Hanseatic League, who had forged a monopoly on trade in the north.¹⁹⁵ His prior knowledge of, what we now know as the Kensington Expedition, is thought to have inspired the direction of the voyage. Arguments against this early journey are based on the lack of official recorded documentation concerning the details of the voyage; however, counter arguments suggest that secrecy of the trip was paramount in order to conceal his endeavours from others who would seize the opportunity first.¹⁹⁶ There are, oddly enough, no records that exist of Henry, in Orkney or Scotland, from 1398-99. It is, however, recorded that Henry died in August, 1400, at Kirkwall in Orkney. An expedition journey could account for his absence from the records dated to this time.

¹⁹⁰ Pohl, Frederick J. *Atlantic Crossings before Columbus*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 83.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 86.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 86.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 90.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 91.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 91.

The final link between the Cistercian-Templars and North America is, once again, grounded in the existence of the hooked X. As discussed in previous chapters, the rune stones contain a significant number of unusual runes. Outside of the North American Rune Stones, the Larrison Rune Rows, and the hooked X in Columbus's sigla, no other hooked X symbol had ever been recorded. However, in 2004, that would change. It was disclosed to scholars, that a hooked X symbol was, likewise, carved into a pillar in Rosslyn Chapel.¹⁹⁷ This was the first definitive evidence of a Cistercian-Templar connection with the Kensington Expedition and the rune stones of Heavener, Spirit Pond and Narragansett. In January 2015, the discovery of two additional hooked X symbols were discovered in Tomar, Portugal. The first was found in the chapel of a Templar castle overlooking the city. The second one is located in the church of Santa Maria de Olival, where twenty two Templar Grand Masters are interred.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Wolter, Scott, *America Unearthed*, 2015.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 2015.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The historical objective of the preceding chapters has focused on a European presence in Pre-Columbian North America. It has been an attempt to look beyond the culture bound notions that the Western Hemisphere lay undisturbed by the tread of European passing until the fifteenth century. The discovery of the North American Rune Stones has opened new ideas to the exploration and occupation of the continent centuries before the 1492 voyage. While we may never know the exact identity of the people who authored the stone carved runic inscriptions, we can now place definitive links to their time and origins.

Through the extensive study of the linguistics and orthographic traits found on the Kensington Stone, scholars have traced the inscription to their Viking provenance, and later fourteenth century use, on the island of Gotland. Beginning in the late twentieth and continuing through the twenty first centuries, scholars have forged into areas of Nordic runology long forgotten by all, including those bound by a Scandinavian heritage. .

Along with the discovery of the North American Rune Stones, the mainstream media has, in the past few decades, brought about a Viking/Templar revival. Because of this, more attention has been devoted to their existence and activities in North America than ever before. Likewise, the 1960 discovery of the Viking settlement in L'Anse aux Meadows, has caused the idea of a Norse discovery of the continent to generally be considered fact rather than fiction. However, the depth in which they penetrated the mainland has still been dismissed, by most scholars, as a farce even with the discovery of more and more rune stones.

It would take years of devoted research, and the discovery of the Hooked X, to bring to light the connections and sequences of dramatic historical events that have truly shaped man's expansion

westward. The push to discover what lay beyond the setting sun was not born of the Middle Ages, but rather, it has been inherent since our human beginnings.

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